1 August 2014

Ref No: WSA 5m 0ch - 6m 45ch Weeks 20 - 22

Dear Neighbour,

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT WORKS – Park Street Station to St Albans Abbey Station

I am writing to inform you that Network Rail needs to remove trees and vegetation affecting railway operations near to your property. The aim of this letter is to explain where, when and why these works will occur.

Works will be undertaken everyday from:

07:30 – 18:00 Saturday 9 August – Monday 25 August 2014

Lineside vegetation can obscure signals, get blown onto the tracks, onto overhead line equipment or grow to an extent where our staff do not have a safe place to wait whilst trains pass. Vegetation management can also help prevent leaves falling on the line which hampers train acceleration and braking.

During the storms last year we experienced and recorded significant incidents whereby trees fell onto the railway lines into the path of trains or onto overline equipment causing significant delays and safety risks to the travelling public.

It is our priority to improve safety and performance to deliver a better railway for Britain.

Therefore, it is essential vegetation is properly controlled and managed. For this reason, the work proposed will involve cutting back all trees and bushes to provide a 6m clear strip from the outer running rail towards the railway boundary. This ensures that vegetation does not interfere with, for example, signalling equipment, signal visibility and the safety of workers on or near the track.
We will also be removing any ‘taller than’ trees which are at risk of striking the overhead line equipment or potential to fall onto the track into the path of an oncoming train.

In addition, any trees which have been identified as posing a risk to either the railway or third party land due to their condition.

Before works start Network Rail or our representatives carry out an ecological survey. Any protected species or nesting birds are identified and appropriate methods of working are put into place. Although the works do not require the submission of a planning application, where appropriate we will notify your local authority and any relevant statutory bodies.

Every effort will be made to keep noise levels to an absolute minimum although due to the nature of the work and the equipment required to carry it out, some residents may experience disturbance. We apologise for any inconvenience that this may cause but we are sure you can appreciate the long-term benefits that the works will bring to the travelling public in terms of a more reliable and safer rail network.

To undertake these works, we will use a variety of equipment that can include chainsaws, flail machines, chipping machines or handsaws. Where suitable, logs and branches will either be left to create a safe habitat for wildlife; chipped and spread evenly; or will be completely removed from site.

Works will often be required to take place when trains are not running, but every effort is made to keep controllable noise to a minimum and our staff are briefed on working responsibly in the local community.

I hope this information is helpful and we apologise for any inconvenience these essential works may cause. I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to explain the importance of our vegetation management programme and hope you will appreciate the critical role it plays in operating a safe rail network.

However, if you have any additional questions or concerns, please visit www.networkrail.co.uk or telephone our 24-Hour National Helpline on 08457 11 41 41.

Yours sincerely

Sarah McArdle
Community Relations Manager