

A new station for Hassocks. After ten years, the signals have at last changed to 'green for go'! The plans were revealed by Southern on December 6th. Over the previous months, the Hassocks Amenity Association rail group had poured over drafts, made suggestions, supplied critiques of other modular stations in the area, and invited representatives of the County, District and Parish Councils to join in the scrutiny. Due to HAA input, brick cladding will be used where possible to provide a link not only to the Victorian cottages opposite, but also to our old much loved brick built Victorian station.

The resulting design is of a modern, modular building which has features which HAA hopes will make residents' rail journeys pleasanter. A unique integrated canopy will help shield users from the weather and new, hopefully draught-free, soft seating should make life more comfortable when there are delays. There will be a new, accessible unisex toilet with baby changing facilities, a retail kiosk, a cash machine and an info pod. This will supply visitors with everything they need to know about Hassocks and the South Downs as well as railway information. For people in wheelchairs, the ticket office window will have an adjustable counter and everybody will benefit from the improved layout which will make it easier to move through the station, particularly at the busiest times of the day.

Work is planned to start in the spring and is due for completion in the autumn. There will be a public information day in the near future to tell us more about the new station and the arrangements that will be made whilst the building work is going ahead. When the improvements are complete, Network Rail will then start on installing lifts in the subway, so that no longer will we be forced to climb those long flights of steps. Unfortunately, only when all that work has been completed, will any improvements to the Brighton side of the station be considered. Crucially, will there be any money left in the kitty? We are not likely to know the answer for some time.

We are, however, very fortunate in securing this greatly improved station at a time when the economic situation could not be bleaker. But it was not a matter of chance that Hassocks was awarded funding under the National Stations Improvement programme, and then selected for the provision of step-free access. Fortune favours the brave, and it is thanks to those who, even when a successful outcome seemed hopeless, refused to be daunted, kept up the pressure, and finally achieved this hard-won success.

The Future



Proposed Station Building Modular Layout

