

Iconic swing bridges receive essential upgrades

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Network Rail is carrying out extensive work on a series of iconic swing bridges between Norwich and Lowestoft.

Passengers are reminded that the essential upgrades to the swing bridges at Reedham, Somerleyton and Oulton Broad, which include upgrades to electrical and mechanical systems will mean that buses will replace trains between Saturday 22 October to Sunday 30 October.

The bridges are designed to carry trains over waterways and swing open to allow boats to pass beneath. The bridges are over 100 years old and their internal parts have become increasingly unreliable, so during the project, Network Rail engineers will replace worn parts, helping ensure that the bridges are less likely to develop faults and reduce the need for costly ongoing maintenance.



Oulton Road swing bridge

During the works, river access for vessels will be limited, but there will be short windows of opportunity to open the bridges during the period of closure. The Broads Authority is communicating this information directly to boat users.

Ellie Burrows, Network Rail's route director for Anglia, said: "These bridges on the Wherry and East Suffolk lines are an important part of our railway heritage and also critical pieces of infrastructure that keep both rail and boat traffic moving. Renewing the components will reduce the risk of mechanical problems and help keep services running safely, smoothly and reliably for our passengers, as well as maintaining access to the ports and marinas."

Jamie Burles, Greater Anglia managing director, said: "Our new trains have already improved reliability on our Norwich and Ipswich to Lowestoft lines and this work will make it even better, which I know our customers will welcome. While the work is going on we will make sure customers can still complete their journeys with a rail replacement bus service."

Rob Rogers, Broads Authority Director of Operations, said: "This much-needed investment by Network Rail into the Broads' swing bridges is very much welcomed by the Broads Authority and our boating communities."

"It has been a challenging few years for our river users regarding the bridges and we are delighted to hear

that work is progressing to allow them to reliably open for river traffic.

“We urge the boating community to note the periods of closure above and to check our website as the works progress for any navigation updates.”

Further work is planned to take place on the three bridges in spring 2023, with dates of closures to be advised.

Image credits: Network Rail