

Major repairs complete as railway through Telford reopens to passengers

April 2, 2024



The railway between Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury has fully reopened to passenger trains after engineers complete emergency repairs to a failed railway embankment.

Network Rail is thanking passengers for their patience after three weeks of disruption following a landslip between Oakengates and Wellington stations.

New time-lapse video footage has been released showing the scale of work by Network Rail and its contractor Murphy to rebuild the embankment so that trains can safely resume.

Video credit: Network Rail

On Friday 8 March Network Rail closed the line near Oakengates station in both directions for safety reasons following a landslip on a steep railway embankment.

More than 5,000 tonnes of material slipped beneath a 50-metre section of the railway after persistent heavy rainfall over the winter months had weakened the earthwork beneath it.

Engineers have been working around the clock to shore up the landslip. Work to restabilise the railway

embankment – which is approximately 15 metres in height – involved digging out material that's slipped to create a new profile for the slope. Large 'steps' were cut into the slope before engineers backfilled it with over 16,000 tonnes of locally sourced stone, helping to reduce the gradient and strengthen the embankment.

Network Rail has worked closely with its train operator partners to keep passengers moving during the closure with an amended timetable and bus replacement services. A full timetable has resumed on the route this morning in time for people to travel over the Easter bank holiday weekend.

Adam Checkley, infrastructure director for Network Rail's Central route, said: "I want to say a huge thanks to passengers and the local community who've been disrupted over the last three weeks while we completed emergency repairs after prolonged heavy rain caused a significant landslip in Telford.

"Our repairs have involved bringing over 16,000 tonnes of material from local quarries to shore up the Victorian-built embankment to make it safe for trains to resume in time for the Easter weekend.

"We're pleased to say that this important route has reopened this morning and advise people travelling to check www.nationalrail.co.uk for journey information."

Jonny Wiseman, West Midlands Railway customer experience director, said: "I'd like to thank customers for their patience as Network Rail has been carrying out essential works to fix the landslip and it's good news that the railway can now reopen fully.

"I would urge passengers to continue to check their journeys ahead of travelling on Friday, as we move trains to their correct location to resume a normal service."

Councillor Shaun Davies, Leader of Telford & Wrekin Council added, "We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Network Rail and its partners for their swift and dedicated response in restoring the railway line between Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury.

"Their tireless efforts not only ensured the timely repair of the embankment but also facilitated the provision of temporary bus services, allowing residents and passengers to seamlessly continue their journeys to and from Telford.

"We have been working hard to convene partners and coordinate efforts to minimise disruption, and this collaborative approach exemplifies our commitment to ensuring the safety and convenience of our community."