

# Multi-million pound project to upgrade 1980s railway means no trains through Horsham for 9 days this summer

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Passengers are advised to plan ahead for major work on the Arun Valley Line in the summer. Network Rail engineers will be rebuilding a crucial section of West Sussex's railway, including a nine day period in August when there will be no trains through Horsham, plus five weekends of engineering closures in July, September and October.

From Saturday 14 to Sunday 22 August 2021, buses will replace trains along much of the Arun Valley line, from Arundel to Three Bridges including Horsham and Crawley, and the Mole Valley line between Horsham and Dorking.

Additionally, there will be three weekends of engineering closures ahead of the main work and these will take place on Sunday 11 July, Saturday 17 to Sunday 18 July, and Saturday 31 July to Sunday 1 August 2021. Following the main closure, there will be a further two weekend closures on Saturday 4 September to Sunday 5 September and Sunday 3 October.

Network Rail Southern region's investment director Paul Harwood said: "We never take the decision to close the railway for extended periods lightly and would like to thank passengers for their patience as we work to address historic underinvestment in the region's railway and enhance the capability of the line.

"This investment was originally planned for several bank holiday closures, supported by a long series of weekend closures over two to three years. By doing the work over nine consecutive days and two weekends, the overall disruption to passengers can be significantly reduced, while fast-tracking the delivery of the reliability, safety and connectivity benefits of the project.

"Recognising the importance of the railway to the leisure and tourism industry, we'll ensure that alternative routes are fully open on these dates, and we've timed the work to avoid Brighton Pride.

"Over the next months, we will continue to work closely with Southern, Thameslink and South Western Railway colleagues, as well as local stakeholders to ensure passengers are made aware of the changes to their journeys and the alternative options to keep them moving."

Chris Fowler, Customer Services Director for Southern, said: "Network Rail have worked closely with us to plan this vital work so that our customers' journeys are disrupted as little as possible. The upgrade will improve the reliability of services on the Arun Valley line, and I thank customers in advance for their patience while work is under way in the summer. We'll be giving more detailed advice about alternative travel options over the coming months."

This investment will be used to replace 1980s track and infrastructure, with new, more reliable equipment that will improve journeys for customers on the two routes, as well as the wider region by reducing delays.

Passengers wishing to travel on these dates will need to allow considerably more time for their journeys and should expect to use either diverted trains via longer routes or a replacement bus or coach to connect with rail services to the South Coast.

Work has also been timed to avoid disrupting Brighton Pride at the start of August and other routes including the Brighton Main Line will be open for travel. Services on longer distance coastal journeys to Chichester, Littlehampton, Bognor Regis and Portsmouth will still be running, but will go via an alternative route using the Brighton Main Line, meaning journeys will take longer.

Crawley station will remain open on weekdays during the nine-day period but will be closed on all affected weekends.

### **What work is taking place?**

- The work will help facilitate enhanced reliability and safety, minimising disruption to passengers.
- It will involve the complete renewal of 9 sets of old switches and crossings, the movable sections of track that guide trains from one track to another and allow them to cross paths. The existing equipment has been in place since the 1980s, is old and unreliable and needs to be replaced. The new, more reliable equipment will reduce faults and delays to passengers.
- A section of rail, sleepers and ballast will be renewed, and track drainage replaced at Horsham station. The upgraded track will give passengers smoother, more reliable journeys, while the drainage improvements will maintain track quality for the long-term.
- Enabling work for the upgrade of Parsonage Road level crossing to a full barrier CCTV crossing to improve safety, and recontrol of Littlehaven signal box to the Three Bridges Rail Operating Centre (ROC) in June 2022.
- To give passengers additional benefits Network Rail and train operators are looking at options to refurbish stations when they are closed.

Customers can find out more about the project at [www.networkrail.co.uk/ArunValley](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/ArunValley). The site will also be updated with detailed travel advice when alternative travel options are published.

*Photo credit: Network Rail*