

# Network Rail teams battle wintry weather to upgrade 1940's track on Esk Valley line

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Heavy snow in North Yorkshire didn't stop Network Rail teams upgrading the track on the Esk Valley line, which dates back to the mid-1940's.

Although the scenic route looked like a winter wonderland, the weather brought many challenges for the team.

In freezing temperatures, they had to battle the icy conditions on the roads to get to site, clear as much snow as possible from the railway before they could even begin improving the track. When they were preparing for the start of the work, overnight temperatures dropped as low as -17°C.

Between Friday 12 and Sunday 21 February, teams lifted, removed and replaced sections of the track, as well as the ballast and wooden sleepers which support it, in Castleton Moor and Danby.

Some of the track had served the line for well over half a century. The improvements mean smoother journeys and more reliable services can connect passengers between Middlesbrough and Whitby – as well as trains going to and from the North Yorkshire Moors Railway – for generations to come. It also reduces

the amount of maintenance work required along the route.

Matt Rice, Route Director for Network Rail's North and East route, said: "I'm proud of our teams for completing these improvements to the track in such difficult conditions. The wintry weather in such a rural location coupled with the COVID-19 restrictions meant this was a significant challenge, but our teams were able to adapt and delivered the work safely and effectively.

"The upgraded track means safe and reliable services can continue to connect communities along the route between Whitby and Middlesbrough, as well as to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, for years to come. I'd also like to say a big thank you to our neighbours in the communities we worked in over the past few weeks for their patience and support.

"We had bus replacement services in place for passengers making essential journeys and we want to thank people for their patience whilst this vital work was carried out."

*Photo credit: Network Rail*