

# Railway through Oxfordshire on track for return in June as Nuneham viaduct repairs pass key milestone

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Work to repair Nuneham viaduct in Oxfordshire has passed a key milestone.

The abutment on the south bank of the River Thames has now been completely removed and work is underway to install solid foundations for a new structure to be built that will support the viaduct for generations to come.

The railway between Didcot and Oxford was closed on Monday 3 April after significant movements in the viaduct were detected due to emerging structural issues with the south bank abutment. The abutment was built as part of the original viaduct in 1856.

Network Rail's engineers have been working round the clock to carry out the emergency repairs to reopen the viaduct on Saturday 10 June.

The rail industry, including Network Rail, GWR, Chiltern Railways and CrossCountry, has been working

closely to keep passengers moving while this section of railway is closed. This includes running trains with more carriages on the routes that remain open, regular buses where the railway is closed, and arranging for local bus companies to accept rail tickets on key routes for affected customers.

The repair of the viaduct is complex, challenging and requires some heavy engineering:

- 24 x 15m long steel piles have been driven into the bed of the River Thames to create a solid platform for the temporary structure that is currently holding the weight of the viaduct.
- A 750-tonne crane was used to lift the temporary structure into place.
- 3,000m<sup>3</sup> of material has been removed from the embankment to create space to build a new abutment.
- Eight more piles have been driven up to 20m into the embankment to support the new structure.

Network Rail capital delivery director Stuart Calvert said: “The progress we have made on what is an extremely challenging project is testament to the diligence and talent of our teams.

“There is more hard work to come but we continue to operate round the clock to reopen the viaduct by 10 June.

“We apologise for the continued disruption for railway users but we are doing everything we can to get the railway running again as quickly as possible.”

*Photo credit: Network Rail*