

Ryde Pier to re-open to trains next month

June 2, 2023



South Western Railway (SWR) and Network Rail have confirmed that Ryde Pier will reopen to trains on Monday 10 July.

The 143-year-old pier, which is undergoing a large programme of heavy maintenance and renewal to give it a further 60 years of life, was due to re-open to Island Line services in June.

Engineers have worked hard to recover from a three-month delay due to extreme weather where storms damaged scaffolding and made it unsafe to work. Since April, at Ryde Pier Head, track and steelwork replacements have been completed and a new weather screen has been installed.

However, in recent weeks, engineers have been forced to revise their designs in one of the pier's six different zones, changing the components used to secure new rails and sleepers.

The re-design, and the sourcing and supply of new components at a critical point in the programme, has added complexity to an already challenging project. As a result, the reopening date has been moved back by one month to Monday 10 July.

Until that date, two trains an hour will operate between Ryde Esplanade and Shanklin stations, with a

minibus service helping customers travel from Ryde Pier Head to Ryde Esplanade. SWR has confirmed it will increase the capacity of the minibus service during the Isle of Wight Festival.

Alex Foulds, SWR's projects and change director, said: "We know just how important the Island Line is to local businesses and the local community, which is why we aimed to re-open the line between Ryde Pier Head and Ryde Esplanade in time for the Isle of Wight Festival. We're sorry we haven't been able to meet that target.

"We always knew this would be a challenging project for a number of reasons. This is the world's second longest pier and it was designed and constructed in the Victorian era, using five different designs. Our focus now is to ensure that the pier is ready for the school holidays and to resume train services along the length of the Island Line as soon as possible."

Mark Killick, Network Rail's Wessex Route Director, said: "We're really disappointed and sorry that we will not be able to reopen the pier to allow trains to run for customers between Ryde Pier Head and Ryde Esplanade station this June.

"Unfortunately, due to several challenges the project has been delayed. We fully understand the important role the line plays in supporting local tourism and the economy, particularly during the busy summer holidays, and our main focus is continuing to work closely with SWR to ensure we reopen on Monday 10 July."

To fully complete the Ryde Pier programme a further closure will be needed towards the end of the year. Further details of this closure will be confirmed at a later date.

Photo credit: Network Rail