

Six day closure between Staines and Windsor & Eton Riverside to prepare for major signalling upgrade

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A wide programme of maintenance and improvements will take place on the railway between Staines and Windsor & Eton Riverside, with no trains from Saturday 6 to Friday 12 March.

The Windsor Branch of the South Western Railway (SWR) network will close for seven days to allow engineers to prepare the ground for new signals, carry out track and bridge maintenance and clear litter and graffiti.

Foundations for 21 new signals will be installed along the five mile line as part of the Feltham-Wokingham Resignalling Programme, a long-term upgrade project to replace signalling dating back to the 1970s, controlled by Network Rail's Feltham Area Signalling Centre and Wokingham Signal Box.

Mark Killick, Network Rail Wessex route director, said: "We're making the most of this quieter time on our railway to make improvements and carry out important maintenance, and this week-long closure will allow us to complete a whole programme of work that would otherwise take many more weekend closures,

stretching through the year.

“The work forms an important part of our Feltham-Wokingham Re-signalling Programme, which will transform reliability for passengers travelling around South West London and towards Reading and Windsor. Our existing signalling is becoming harder and harder to maintain, so this is an important project to improve reliability and keep both trains and passengers moving.

“We’re grateful to our passengers and those living close to the line for their patience while we complete these improvements. Although not many people are travelling with us now, those that are travelling are so important to the country and we are working hard to look after them and create a better railway for everyone.”

Alan Penlington, SWR’s customer experience director, said: “This closure is part of a major signalling upgrade which will see greater reliability and ensure the resilience of train services in the area which is good for customers.

“Whilst there is never a good time to close the railway, these works are taking place when fewer people are travelling. I realise that any closure will disrupt our customers that need to travel, however, replacement buses will be in operation and staff will be on hand to help customers complete their journey.

“I’d like to thank customers for their patience and remind anyone who is making an essential journey to check online before they travel.”

As well as laying foundations in preparation for new signalling equipment, engineers will also work on signal cabling at two level crossings in Datchet and at both Datchet and Sunnymeads stations.

New signals will be commissioned in 2023, transforming the line’s reliability thanks to a new, state-of-the-art signalling system controlled from Network Rail’s Rail Operating Centre in Basingstoke.

On Sunday 7 March essential work will take place on the A30 Staines bypass bridge, crossing the railway between Staines and Wraysbury stations. One lane on the bypass will be closed between 0100 and 1400 as engineers complete repairs to brickwork and remove scaffolding at track-level.

Completing the programme of work, railway bridges at Black Potts Ait, an island on the River Thames near Windsor, and crossing the Colne Brook river in Wraysbury, will be improved. Engineers will install new timber supports for rails to improve each structure’s resilience.

Rail replacement bus services will be in operation between Staines and Windsor & Eton Riverside throughout the closure. Passengers are advised to check before they travel, with Great Western Railway (GWR) services also replaced by buses in the Windsor area due to a closure on the line towards London Paddington.

Photo credit: Network Rail