

Stonehaven-Montrose railway set to reopen for customers

February 17, 2021



The railway between Stonehaven and Montrose will reopen for passenger and freight customers on Monday, February 22, following the successful completion of repair works on a damaged bridge between the towns.

The rail bridge – which dates from the 1840s and is located three miles north of Carmont – has been closed since January 15 after masonry fell from the sidewall (parapet) on the southbound side of the structure.

Network Rail engineers, and specialist contractors, have been working around-the-clock since to carry out full structural assessments of the bridge, complete parapet repairs and strengthen the structure.

These works have included:

- Installing additional concrete supports on the bridge deck to help retain and support the track and ballast.
- Reconstructing the failed parapet wall.
- Installing ties through the bridge to strengthen the overall structure.
- Relaying new track and supporting ballast on the southbound side on the bridge.

Kris Kinnear, Network Rail's capital delivery director for Scotland's Railway, said: "Our engineers have been working hard to complete these repairs and reopen the railway as quickly as possible for our customers.

"The rural location and height of the structure – coupled with the extreme weather conditions we have seen in recent weeks – made this a very challenging project for our team.

"We invest millions of pounds each year on our bridges and have also carried out extensive additional checks on the line between Stonehaven and Montrose ahead of reopening the line on Monday."

The bridge was last inspected in October 2020 and also received a detailed examination in March 2018.

No significant deterioration in its structural condition was found during these inspections and investigations to establish the cause of the parapet's failure are ongoing.

Network Rail invests heavily each year in projects to renew and refurbish bridges and will invest £376m in structures between 2019 and 2024. Over £10m is also spent each year on inspecting structures.

As a response to this incident, additional inspections have also been carried out as a precaution on other similar bridges between Aberdeen and Montrose, and elsewhere on Scotland's Railway.

Extensive trackside and aerial surveys of the railway between Stonehaven and Montrose have also been carried out in advance of reopening, with final line checks to be completed on Sunday morning.

Photo credit: Network Rail