

Swing bridge work in East Anglia to take place this autumn

September 22, 2022



Network Rail will start work to upgrade electrical and mechanical systems inside three swing bridges this autumn, including for nine consecutive days in late October.

The bridges at Reedham, Somerleyton and Oulton Broad are designed to carry trains over waterways and swing open to let boats through, but they are over 100 years old and their internal parts have become unreliable. During the project, Network Rail's engineers will replace these parts, making the bridges less likely to develop faults and reducing the need for costly maintenance.

The upgrade will help Greater Anglia train passengers and boat users get to their destinations on time for years to come, while enabling the historic structures to keep being used in the modern day.

To allow the work to be carried out, there will be times when sections of the Wherry and East Suffolk Lines need to be closed.

Buses will replace trains between Norwich and Lowestoft on 24 and 25 September and again on 8 and 9 October. There will be a bus replacement between Norwich and Lowestoft for nine consecutive days from

22 October to 30 October, although this has been reduced from the previously planned 16 consecutive days.

Buses will also replace trains between Halesworth and Lowestoft on 22 and 23 October.

On Saturday 8, Sunday 9, Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 October, due to other engineering work, buses will additionally replace trains on the Norwich to Great Yarmouth and Norwich to Sheringham routes.

Ellie Burrows, Network Rail's route director for Anglia, said: "These bridges are an important part of our railway heritage and also critical pieces of infrastructure that keep both rail and boat traffic moving. Renewing the components will reduce the risk of mechanical problems and help keep services running safely, smoothly and reliably for our passengers, as well as maintaining access to the ports and marinas."

Jamie Burles, Greater Anglia managing director, said: "This work will make our Norwich and Ipswich to Lowestoft lines even more reliable, which I know our customers will welcome. While the work is going on we will make sure customers can still complete their journeys with a rail replacement bus service."

Rob Rogers, Broads Authority Director of Operations, said: "This much-needed investment by Network Rail into the Broads' swing bridges is very much welcomed by the Broads Authority and our boating communities.

"It has been a challenging few years for our river users regarding the bridges and we are delighted to hear that work is progressing to allow them to reliably open for river traffic.

"We urge the boating community to note the periods of closure above and to check our website as the works progress for any navigation updates."