

Vital rail link reopens as stage two of £30m Barmouth Viaduct restoration concludes

January 2, 2022



The railway over the Grade II* listed Barmouth Viaduct has reopened after more than three months of intensive restoration work.

Engineers worked round the clock to complete repairs to the timber viaduct, despite very challenging winter weather, the impact of the Omicron variant, and the condition of the bridge – which was found to be much worse than anticipated.

The reopening of the Cambrian Coast line to passengers marks the completion of stage two of a three year restoration programme, the biggest in its 153 year lifetime. The entire restoration involves replacing more than 1,000 timber and metal elements of the viaduct, which are rotting or decaying, as well as the entire 820m length of track.

Network Rail is doing this on a ‘like for like’ basis to maintain the viaduct’s magnificent appearance and has worked closely with Cadw, Gwynedd County Council, Transport for Wales and others over several years to develop plans to upgrade the bridge.

To reduce the impact on rail services, the community and local economy, the work has been planned over three years, with three shorter closures of the 19th century viaduct, rather than one longer closure.

The walkway over Barmouth Viaduct has temporarily reopened to allow pedestrians and cyclists to use it over the Christmas period. It will close again on 10 January and reopen to allow Network Rail to repair and replace any elements of the walkway and handrailing of a safety critical nature.

Bill Kelly, Network Rail Wales and Borders route director, said: "I'd like to thank passengers and the local community for their patience and continued support over the last three and half months – it made a huge difference as our team worked to overcome a range of different challenges on site.

"This once in a lifetime restoration will secure the future of Barmouth Viaduct for generations to come protecting a vital transport link that is amongst Wales' most iconic landmarks."

Colin Lea, Transport for Wales' Planning and Performance Director, said: "We're delighted that Network Rail are making great progress in their work to safeguard the future of this iconic structure and the Cambrian Coast Line. Their investment in refurbishing Barmouth Viaduct sits alongside our own investment in transforming services throughout the Wales and Borders network, including brand new trains for the Cambrian Coast Line in the years to come.

"Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, it's important for anyone travelling with us to check before you travel. You can do this on the TfW website www.tfw.wales or the TfW app."

TfW announced a new timetable on 22 December in response to the Omicron surge. Passengers are advised to follow up-to-date guidance from Welsh Government and check before travelling via journeycheck.com/tfw.

During 2022, Network Rail will replace the metallic spans of the viaduct and the associated track. They will also be upgrading the track at the north and south end of the viaduct in 2022. The bridge will be closed from Sunday 11 September to Sunday 11 December 2022.

Further information about the project can be found here: www.networkrail.co.uk/barmouth.

Photo credit: Network Rail