

Work starts on £3 million track upgrade in Cornwall

January 5, 2021



Network Rail has started work to deliver what has been described as the biggest track upgrade in Cornwall for over 60 years.

Vital work to renew the track on the St Ives bay line between Carbis Bay and St Ives started last weekend and is due to take place until Monday 8 February 2021. It is costing over £3 million.

Over the five-week period around 1.5 miles of new track, 3,600 new sleepers and over 400 tonnes of new ballast – which is the stones that supports the track – will be installed.

GWR will continue to operate a half-hourly replacement bus service between St Ives and St Erth during the day, but to allow for users to be able to socially distance with ease, the operator is asking those intending to travel to plan ahead and to check journey times before travelling.

Train services on the main line between Plymouth and Penzance will continue to operate whilst this improvement work takes place.

Lee Hildreth, Network Rail's project manager, said: "This is a huge piece of work, but it will make a real difference as it will reduce delays and improve reliability for passengers in Cornwall.

"It is the biggest track upgrade for generations, and it has been planned so it can be done as safely and as quickly as possible.

"However, buses will replace trains while the work is ongoing, so we urge passengers to check before they travel and thanks them in advance for their patience."

Mark Chorley, GWR Regional Station Manager, West, said: "We have been working hard to make sure that people can be confident to travel safely, and that includes running as many replacement buses as we can to make extra room, as well as enhanced cleaning and social distancing measures.

"This work is important to ensure we can continue to maintain and improve reliability on this very popular and scenic branch line and we thank customers for their patience in advance."

Councillor Andrea Davis, chair of Peninsula Rail Task Force, said: "At this time of uncertainty with the ongoing pandemic it is heartening that Network Rail are investing in the Cornish network, this substantial upgrade is very welcome and will give a much needed boost to the far South West economy as we move to the recovery phase."

GWR has been providing rail services throughout the pandemic and has worked to ensure that these are as safe as possible. This includes increased cleaning regimes and the use of a virucidal spray; extra staff at key stations to offer help and guidance; and processes in place to help customers maintain a safe distance where possible, such as restricting the number of reservations available.

For more information www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering/st-ives

Photo credit: Network Rail - St Ives track renewal