

Barmouth Viaduct Restoration

Frequently Asked Questions – June 2020

1. Why are you restoring Barmouth Viaduct?

We know how much the iconic Barmouth Viaduct means to the community and the local economy so we are investing £25m over the next three years on the biggest upgrade in its history. This will help protect our industrial heritage and safeguard this vital transport link so it can continue to serve local people and attract visitors to the area for generations to come.

At over 150 years old, the viaduct is currently in poor condition. Many of the timber elements of the viaduct have decayed significantly over time and a large proportion of the metallic elements have corroded.

Our programme will see us completely restoring the viaduct in a way that does not threaten its industrial heritage and its Grade II* listed status. This means that we will replace its components on a 'like-for-like' basis so that it retains its magnificent appearance. We've been working closely with Cadw, Gwynedd County Council and other stakeholders over several years to develop and agree our plans.

2. When will the work take place?

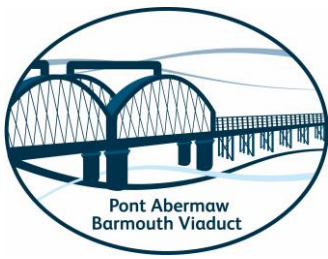
To reduce the impact on the local community and tourism in Barmouth, we've carefully planned our work to take place over three years - with three shorter full closures of the viaduct, rather than one longer full closure. We would like to thank you in advance for bearing with us during this work.

At the end of June, you will see our team busy starting work - setting up our site compounds and delivering some of the preparation work we need to complete before we can start working on the viaduct. The following information provides an overview of our current planned timescales. Should any of these dates change in the future, we will let you know.

	Starting work on site	Temporary closure of Barmouth Viaduct	Moving off site
2020	End June - mid-Oct	16 Oct (23.40) – 2 Nov (05.30)	Nov - Dec
2021	June - Sep	17 Sep (22.40) – 18 Dec (05.10)	Mid-Dec - Jan
2022	June - Oct	TBC, likely Oct – Dec	Dec - Jan

3. What does the work consist of?

Our work will include replacing a large number of the timber and metal elements of the viaduct, as well as the entire 820m length of track across it.



We'll start by replacing the timber elements of the viaduct and associated track which will take us the first two years. Our principal contractor for this phase of work is Alun Griffiths Ltd.

During 2022, we'll replace the metallic spans of the viaduct and the associated track.

We'll also be upgrading the track at the north and south end of the viaduct in 2022.

4. Will the swing bridge be operational after completion?

For operational and safety reasons, the bridge will not swing after the works but all key mechanisms associated with the swing bridge will be retained in situ in accordance with the Grade II* listing of the structure. This approach has been agreed with Cadw and Gwynedd Council.

5. Why are you proceeding with this project now, considering the Covid-19 pandemic?

To protect our people and the communities we serve, we have reviewed all planned railway work to ensure we can deliver the work safely in line with Government guidance. We've made changes to the way we work and are confident that we are able to deliver this work safely, and in line with social distancing guidelines for construction work.

We know that far fewer passengers are travelling at the moment, but unfortunately, we're not able to completely close the railway completely to carry out all of our work on Barmouth Viaduct now. There are critical workers who still rely on rail to get to and from their place of work – so we have to minimise disruption to them.

Because this project has been planned years in advance, with access to the railway and the supply of materials agreed far in advance with our supply chain, Transport for Wales and other partners, re-programming it simply wouldn't have been possible.

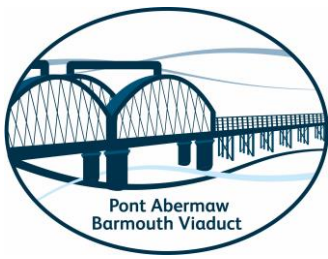
6. How will you ensure you're complying with Government guidelines re Covid-19?

We have made a number of changes to the way we work to ensure we comply with Government guidance.

Some of the measures we are implementing include employing Covid-19 marshals to ensure all staff adhere to the new way of working; staggering breaks for staff so that we don't have a large number of employees in the breakout areas at the same time and using facemasks and visors for staff when they're carrying out tasks where social distancing is simply not possible. We are constantly reviewing the way we work as Government advice evolves and will make any changes as and when required.

7. Where will the site compounds be located?

To access the viaduct easily throughout our work, we will be setting up our site compounds over the summer months. There will be two site compounds relatively close to the viaduct



– one on the northern side and one on the southern side. Another will be situated in the town of Barmouth, near Marine Parade, with additional parking for our contractors in Barmouth town centre.

For those of you who live near one of the compounds, we will do our best to keep any disruption to a minimum. At times, the machinery we're using and the activities we're delivering will inevitably generate some noise – and we're sorry for any disturbance. All our staff and contractors are briefed on working responsibly in the community and if you have any concerns please get in touch via our national helpline on 03457 11 41 41 or by contacting cwales@networkrail.co.uk.

8. How will passengers continue to travel during the temporary closures of the viaduct?

We understand how important the Cambrian Coast Line is for local people and visitors to the area so we have carefully planned three shorter closures of the line, over three years, and outside of the peak tourist season.

Working closely with Transport for Wales, we will provide a bus replacement service between Pwllheli and Machynlleth stations, and all stations in between. There will also be an additional bus service for local school pupils to take them to and from school. Our advice for passengers is to plan ahead and allow additional time for travelling.

9. What will the temporary closures mean for pedestrians and cyclists who use the viaduct?

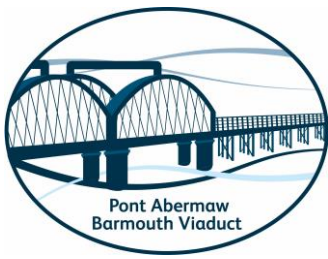
Due to the safety of the public and staff, we need to completely close the footpath whilst we temporarily close the viaduct. We know that many people walk and cycle across Barmouth Viaduct on a daily basis so there is never an ideal time to close it. However, investing significantly in the viaduct now will help reduce future maintenance requirements, preventing future periods of planned and unplanned disruption and safeguarding the future of the viaduct for all users.

We are working closely with local partners to communicate these temporary closures well in advance so that people are able to make alternative arrangements.

10. Will the footpath along the viaduct be refurbished at the same time?

As there are many areas where the handrails and deck planks have decayed, we will be repairing many of the timbers and associated metallic fixings, to improve the longevity of the path for years to come.

The proposals include the replacement and repair of any rotten timbers which support the walkway which will also help towards prolonging the life of the walkway planks above. The maintenance of the walkway is the responsibility of Gwynedd Council and during the course of these works Network Rail will look to repair any elements of the walkway of a safety critical nature. We will also work with Council Officers to identify opportunities to re-use any timber for the walkway where this is possible.



11. What hours will you be working?

Once our site compounds have been set up, we will carry out some preparation work over the summer months. Some of this work will be dependent on the tides – as we need a low tide to work on certain parts of the viaduct. This means you will see us working at different times throughout the day, including some work taking place at night time

During the temporary closures of the viaduct, we will work 24/7 to maximise the time we have on site. Our staff are always briefed to keep any disruption to a minimum, but we're sorry if we do cause any inconvenience to the local community. We will aim to keep you updated regularly throughout the work.

12. Will the timber come from a sustainable source?

We will be replacing the timber elements with a sustainably sourced tropical hardwood. This timber has been specifically chosen for its structural properties and durability in marine environments, following trials of different hardwoods on similar structures in similar environments. It is also resistant to the sea worm attacks previously encountered on the structure.

The timber will be FSC (Forest Stewardship Council)/PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) compliant with a full chain of custody on delivery to site. This will enable us to check the history of the timber right back to the point it was grown to ensure it has originated from a sustainable location.

13. Where will the steel come from for the metallic phase?

The contract for the metallic phase is currently out to tender so we do not yet have a contractor but we will ensure we follow Government guidance for steel procurement for major projects.

14. Who can I contact if I have any further questions?

If you have any further questions, please contact us via our national helpline on 03457 11 41 41 or by emailing crwales@networkrail.co.uk.