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Video: Stourbridge Town branch line reopens following track upgrade

Passenger journeys on the country's shortest branch line are now much smoother after a track upgrade between Stourbridge Town and Stourbridge Junction.

Network Rail engineers replaced just under a mile of track in seven days, with the line reopening on Saturday 13 March. Video released today filmed in the driver's cab shows one of the first trains running over the new tracks.

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During the work old baseplates – the metal components which connect the steel rails to the old wooden sleepers underneath - were discovered dating as far back as 1905.

From planning to completion, the track upgrade has taken eight weeks – normally it would take 18 months.

The super-fast approach has been made possible by working closing with train operator West Midlands Railway to complete the upgrade while passenger numbers are low during the latest lockdown to stop the spread of Covid-19.

Dave Penney, central route director for Network Rail, said:

“This speedy upgrade of the Stourbridge Town branch line shows how the rail industry is coming together to get West Midlands routes in the best possible shape for passengers when they return once coronavirus travel restrictions are eased.

“This is all part of our commitment to build back better as the region emerges from the pandemic. Of course, for the moment, we ask passengers to only use the railway for essential travel.”

Jonny Wiseman, customer experience director for West Midlands Railway, said:

“This important work will ensure a smoother journey for our customers on this popular route and follows hot on the heels of recent upgrades we have made to the trains on the line.

“With the railway currently reserved for essential journeys only and fewer people travelling, it is a good time to complete this project. We thank customers for their patience while this important work has taken place.”

Over the next few weeks, engineers will return while trains aren't running to tidy up old materials and complete final track checks.

Those using the rail network for essential journeys should leave more time to complete their journeys and check before travelling at www.nationalrail.co.uk or with their train operator.

About West Midlands Trains

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- **London Northwestern Railway** services operate between Liverpool and Birmingham, and on the West Coast Main Line to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street and Birmingham Snow Hill.

For more information on these services visit westmidlandsrailway.co.uk or londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk

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