

# Historic Oxfordshire railway bridge to be restored to its former glory

A deteriorating nineteenth century railway bridge in Oxfordshire will be given a new lease of life as part of a renovation project led by National Highways.

Restoration of the railway bridge in Horspath was announced in May, and, following a number of preparatory surveys, work is now set to start on 11 October.

The bridge was built in the mid-nineteenth century – during the reign of Queen Victoria – as part of the Princess Risborough to Oxford line and was in use until the 1960s when a decline in passengers led to the line being decommissioned.

The renovation is set to take ten weeks to complete, with work finishing on 17 December, and will ensure the bridge's continued use for local residents for many years to come, while preserving an important piece of British heritage.

Work on the bridge includes:

- Replacement of all missing and fractured brickwork on the arches with all open joints re-pointed. The full arch will also be cross-stitched and grouted.
- Repair of all masonry fractures to the north east, north west and south east abutments.
- The parapets which were removed earlier this year due to safety concerns will be fully re-built using the re-claimed bricks, with new sympathetically matched bricks making up the shortfall.
- Fractures to the north and south spandrels will be repaired and re-grouted.
- All four wing walls will be fully renovated, repairing all fractures, re-laying displaced copings and re-pointing all brickwork.

Speaking on the upcoming work Fiona Smith, Highways England Historical Railways Estate civil engineer said:

We are delighted that this work has now been confirmed and we can set about restoring the bridge for the residents of Horspath to enjoy in the future. We have been working closely with the local community on planning this work and are looking forward to returning this bridge to its former glory.

It has always been our wish to fully renovate this bridge and we have been working closely with Horspath Parish Council, Oxfordshire County Council and the local community to ensure this positive outcome.

The project to restore the bridge attracted huge interest from the residents of Horspath earlier this year when ongoing deterioration led National Highways to remove the brick parapets due to safety concerns. A team of local residents, under the supervision of fellow resident Spencer Timmo, volunteered to clean up and repair over 3,000 old bricks which were removed from the bridge. This was a huge undertaking, and the result of their efforts has meant that up to half over the bricks needed for the work will be the original bricks, ensuring a sympathetic renovation can be undertaken.

During the work to renovate the bridge, Cuddesdon road under the bridge will be closed and traffic will be diverted from Cuddesdon Road onto Wheatley Road, Oxford Road and the Eastern By-pass.

National Highways maintains more than 3,000 structures for the Department for Transport across the length of Great Britain. All structures are former operational structures and consists of surplus railway property, mainly resulting from the closure of railway lines in the 1960s.

### **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the National Highways customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

### **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the National Highways press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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## **[PM call with Emma Raducanu: 14 September 2021](#)**

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Emma Raducanu this afternoon.



The Prime Minister spoke to Emma Raducanu this afternoon to congratulate her on her fantastic victory at the US Open.

He praised her determination, skill and mental strength during a series of tough matches, and said the whole of the UK had united behind her success.

Both the Prime Minister and Emma agreed on the importance of continuing to support grassroots tennis, and in encouraging young people to take up the game.

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## Prime Minister sets out autumn and winter Covid plan

- Boosters, testing and refreshed public health advice will help keep the virus under control in the coming months
- Plan B prepared to protect NHS if necessary
- PM continues to warn the pandemic is not over and public need to remain vigilant

The Prime Minister has today set out the government's plan to manage Covid throughout autumn and winter.

Thanks to the phenomenal success of the vaccination programme, the data continues to show the link between cases, hospitalisations and deaths has weakened significantly.

In England, the number of hospital admissions with Covid has remained relatively stable over the last month.

And although deaths increased at the beginning of the summer, they have remained far below the levels in either of the previous waves.

Over autumn and winter, the government will aim to sustain this progress through:

- Building our defences through pharmaceutical interventions
- Identifying and isolating positive cases to limit transmission
- Supporting the NHS and social care
- Advising people on how to protect themselves and others
- Pursuing an international approach

Vaccines will continue to be our first line of defence. All those who were vaccinated during Phase 1 of the vaccine programme (priority groups 1 to 9)

will be offered booster jabs from this month – to boost immunity amongst the most vulnerable groups during winter.

The Test, Trace and Isolate programme will continue its important work, with symptomatic PCR testing continuing throughout the autumn and winter.

Lateral flow tests will also remain free of charge but at a later stage, as our response to the virus changes, this will end and individuals and businesses will be expected to bear the cost. The government will engage widely on this before any changes are made.

The legal obligation to self-isolate for those who have tested positive and their unvaccinated contacts will continue, and the financial support payment for those self-isolating on certain benefits will continue in its current format until the end of March.

Our NHS will continue to get the support it needs, with an extra £5.4 billion recently announced for the next 6 months alone for the Covid response.

The public will be offered continued guidance on how to protect themselves and each other – including letting fresh air in, wearing a face covering in crowded and enclosed places where you come into contact with people you don't normally meet, getting testing and self-isolating if required.

Our tough border policy will remain in place and genomic sequencing capability will be increased to help scientists update our vaccines to defeat new variants.

As the PM also set out, autumn and winter could pose renewed challenges and it is difficult to predict the path of the virus with certainty.

So as the public would expect, there will be a range of 'Plan B' measures kept under review to help control transmission of the virus while minimising economic and social damage.

Plan B would include:

- Introducing mandatory vaccine only Covid status certification in certain, riskier settings.
- Legally mandating face coverings in certain settings, such as public transport and shops.
- Communicating clearly and urgently to the public if the risk level increases.

The government could also consider asking people to work from home again if necessary, but a final decision on this would be made at the time, dependent on the latest data – recognising the extra disruption this causes to individuals and businesses.

Ministers would only decide to implement these measures if necessary, and if a range of metrics and indicators mean the NHS is at risk of becoming overwhelmed.

Plan B recognises the success of our vaccination programme – meaning smaller interventions which are far less disruptive can have a much bigger impact on reducing the spread.

The Prime Minister committed to taking whatever action is necessary to protect the NHS, but stressed his belief that the combined efforts of the public and the vaccination programme mean we can avoid plan B and protect our freedoms in the coming months.

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## [PM statement at coronavirus press conference: 14 September 2021](#)

Good afternoon everybody.

I want to set out our plan for managing Covid this autumn and winter.

And I want you to cast your mind back exactly a year and think where we were last September, as schools went back and the colder months approached.

Because in one way our position today is actually more challenging.

We have higher levels of daily cases – thousands more.

But in many other crucial respects, the British people – all of us collectively and individually – are incomparably better placed to fight the disease.

We have more than 80 per cent of all over-16s now double jabbed, double vaccinated.

And we have Covid antibodies in around 90 per cent of the adult population.

And those vaccines are working.

We have seen the extraordinary vaccine-induced falls in deaths and serious disease.

And depending on your age, you're up to nine times more likely to die, sadly, if you're unvaccinated, than if you've had both jabs.

And the result of this vaccination campaign is that we have one of the most free societies and one of the most open economies in Europe.

And that's why we are now sticking with our strategy.

In essence, we're going to keep going.

We will continue to offer testing.

We will continue to urge everyone to be sensible, to be responsible.

Wash your hands.

Use ventilation.

Consider wearing a face covering in crowded places with people that you don't know.

Stay at home if you feel unwell.

Download and use the app.

And we're investing massively in our NHS to meet the pressures of Covid with an additional £5.4 billion in England over the next six months.

And that's on top of almost £36 billion over the next three years to help our NHS recover and fix the long-standing problems of social care as well, as I was saying last week.

And we are helping to vaccinate the world with 100 million doses for developing countries by next June.

And I think this country should be proud, continue to be very proud, that the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine remains the workhorse of global immunisation.

And we will keep further measures in reserve – a Plan B.

We do not see the need now to proceed for instance with mandatory certification.

But we will continue to work with the many businesses that are getting ready for such a scheme.

indeed over 200 events have already used Covid certification voluntarily.

And it is just not sensible to rule out completely this kind of option now when we must face the fact that it might still make the difference between keeping businesses open at full capacity or not.

We will also keep open the option of mandating face coverings as they have elsewhere, or advising people again to work from home, reflecting the fact that when you've got a large proportion of the country as we have now with immunity, then smaller changes can make a bigger difference and give us the confidence that we don't need to go back to the lockdowns of the past.

And of course, we will continue to update our advice to you based on the latest data.

But in the meantime, we are confident in the vaccines that have made such a difference to our lives.

And we are now intensifying that effort, offering jabs to 12 to 15 year olds on the advice of the Chief Medical Officers, who've given that advice based on the health, wellbeing and educational prospects of the children themselves.

And for over 50s – and the under 50s who are at risk, or more at risk, we're now motoring ahead with the booster programme.

A third dose six months after your second dose.

So that's going to mean we're going to be building even higher walls of immunisation of vaccine protection in this country.

And the UK government has procured at scale jabs for every part of the UK.

And we will be sending doses to the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Covid is still out there.

The disease sadly still remains a risk.

But I'm confident we can keep going with our plan to turn jabs jabs jabs into jobs jobs jobs.

And protect the gains that we have made together.

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## [Scottish Secretary responds to September Labour Market Statistics](#)

Press release

As the latest employment figures are published, Scottish Secretary Alister Jack says the UK Government will continue to do all it can to get the economy back on track.



**Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:**

Today's labour market figures have encouraging signs and, as we recover from the pandemic, we will continue to do all we can to get people back into work, support businesses and see the economy flourish again.

Throughout the crisis the furlough scheme alone supported over 900,000 Scottish jobs and by the end of July this year, that figure was down to 116,000. People are getting back to work and our Plan For Jobs is aiding that process, while our Kickstart initiative is creating opportunities for young people.

The unprecedented success of the UK Government-funded vaccine rollout is allowing us to move forward from restrictive lockdown measures. The UK Government remains focused on recovery from the pandemic.

**Background points:**

- The UK Government's furlough and self-employed schemes will run till the end of September 2021. At their peak, these schemes supported more than 900,000 Scottish jobs.
- More than 100,000 Scottish businesses have benefitted from £4 billion of UK Government loans.
- The UK Government has provided billions in extra funding for the welfare system for those unable to access other forms of support. This includes the £20 Universal Credit uplift which will run until the end of September 2021.
- This direct support is on top of the additional £14.5 billion provided to the Scottish Government since the start of the pandemic.
- The UK Government is investing billions to help people of all ages back into work, including our £2 billion Kickstart scheme for young people, sector-based work programmes and recruitment of thousands of additional work coaches.
- The UK Government is funding the UK-wide vaccine programme, and continues to provide all Covid testing in Scotland outside of the NHS.

Figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that unemployment in Scotland fell to 4.3% between May and July, a 0.1% decrease from the previous quarter. The rate of employment in Scotland increased by 0.2% over the same period.

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