

Thousands of Extra Seats to St Ives Following West Cornwall Rail Upgrades

3 years ago



Over the past nine days, Network Rail and its contractor BAM Nuttall have extended the station platforms at Lelant and St Erth as part of a £1.14m investment into this ever-popular branch line. These upgrades will enable GWR to run longer five-carriage trains which will then be able to stop at all stations along the St Ives branch line.

The ability to operate trains with an additional carriage means a 25% increase in capacity, providing an additional 2,000 seats and a total of 10,000 seats to and from St Ives during peak summer days.

This extra provision will greatly support business and tourism in and around St Ives, with this iconic railway line transporting large numbers of passengers to and from this picturesque harbour town, particularly during the busy summer months when thousands of tourists visit this part of Cornwall.

At Lelant the existing platform has been extended by 13 metres while at St Erth the platform has been extended by six metres. The platforms are expected to be commissioned and approved to welcome the first five-carriage trains later this year with GWR planning on operating these longer trains following the May 2022 timetable change during the peak summer months.

These upgrades are the latest example of Network Rail's continued investment into the railway in West Cornwall and in particular the St Ives branch line, following the £3m track upgrade in February 2021 which saw Network Rail complete the biggest track investment on the St Ives branch line in 60 years.

On the mainline between Truro and Penzance, Network Rail's team of engineers also renewed 1.8km of new track, sleepers and ballast, helping support the reliability and lifespan of this important mainline railway into Cornwall, while also replacing the life expired Bodriggy bridge in Hayle.

Dan Parkes, Network Rail Programme Manager – Capital Delivery Building & Civils, said: “We are delighted to have completed our upgrade work in West Cornwall.

“On the St Ives branch line, the longer platforms will have a really positive impact in supporting business and tourism in and around St Ives by enabling GWR to run an additional carriage during the busy summer months. These platform extensions open up the opportunity to increase capacity by 25% and provide up to 10,000 daily seats to and from St Ives and is the latest demonstration of our ongoing investment into this highly popular branch line.

“The mainline improvements mean the reliability and lifespan of this stretch of railway has been increased, helping support regular and reliable train services to and from Cornwall.

“We appreciate the disruption caused when we have to temporarily shut the railway to make these upgrades but we hope passengers, local residents and visitors alike will enjoy the benefits of these improvements over the coming months.”

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 trains and carriages as we can to make extra room.

“Last year the St Ives branch line saw its busiest ever period and this work will enable us to provide additional summer services, providing much needed extra capacity.”

Philip Sheen, BAM Nuttall Contracts Manager, said: “St Erth and Lelant stations provide crucial public transport connections for the Cornish community and these platform extensions will provide train operators with the option to run longer trains going forward, particularly during the busy summer season.

“Works were carried out within challenging timescales and I would like to thank all the team for their hard work and the local community for their patience whilst we delivered these improvements.”

Image: Shutterstock