

Glenfinnan Viaduct is the back drop to railway protection work



Work is underway to protect the railway from potential landslips and rock-falls from the hillsides and embankments around the iconic Glenfinnan viaduct, which stars in the Harry Potter film series.

Network Rail is investing £1.7m to remove loose vegetation from the slopes above the railway and install rock netting – proactively protecting the line that runs between Mallaig and Fort William.



The work will protect 14 rock cuttings over a two and a half mile stretch of single-track railway between Locheilside and Lochailort encompassing both Glenfinnan station and viaduct. It will improve the resilience and reliability of this line for passenger services.

The project will also include renewal of sections of boundary fencing to protect the thousands of visitors to the area who follow the tourist path up the hillside to get better

views of the monument, mountains and viaduct, and to stop them from putting themselves at risk by straying onto the railway.

In advance of installing the rock netting, dangerous trees on the slopes above the railway are cut down before specialist abseil teams remove smaller vegetation and debris from the rock-face. Top and bottom anchors are drilled and grouted into the hillside before the metal mesh is secured. On some sections at higher risk of rock fall, this mesh is high-tensile to give further protection.

Diane Jones, Network Rail's project manager for the work at Glenfinnan said, "The work on the line between Fort William and Mallaig is part a wider maintenance programme which identifies areas prone to land-slip or rock fall and proactively works to protect the railway from this.

"With an ever-growing number of tourists visiting the area, it is important that we deliver these works out-with the main tourist season, where possible, or in the evenings so people can continue to get to Glenfinnan by rail.

"Doing this proactively to protect the railway reduces the likelihood of having to carry-out costly emergency repairs but more importantly, it helps avoid any potential closure of this key rural route which is a lifeline connection for passenger and freight."

In total the project will clear 11,500m² of vegetation, scale 8,800m² of rockface, insert 89 three-metre-long rock reinforcement dowels, install 7,000m² of draped rockfall netting and 2,800m² of high tensile rockfall netting. The work is being delivered by QTS on behalf of Network Rail.

The work in the Glenfinnan area will be ongoing until April this year.

For social media

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More information here <https://gapi.io/6t9M>

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