

Bonfire Night travel misery still on schedule despite rail strike cancellation

Travellers across Scotland will face rail misery on Saturday despite a union calling off its strike.


Members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union had been due to stage 24-hour walkouts on Saturday, Monday and Wednesday in their bitter dispute with Network Rail, but bosses cancelled the strikes after securing “unconditional” talks.

ScotRail said there would still be a reduced service due to the industrial action being called off at the 11th hour.

David Simpson, the newly nationalised railway’s delivery director, said ScotRail was working “hard to restore the timetable to normal as soon as possible, but this will take time”.

“It’s too late to restore a full timetable for Saturday because of the complexity of rewriting timetables and rosters for thousands of our staff,” the director said.

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It means the called-off strikes will still cause chaos on Bonfire Night, which was when staff at Network Rail were set to walk out in their battle for higher pay.

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ScotRail will still operate a limited timetable of 11 routes between 7.30am and 6.30pm, mainly in the central belt.

Services still running include two trains an hour between Edinburgh Waverly and Glasgow Queen Street, via Falkirk High, two services an hour between Glasgow Central and Lanark, and one an hour between Waverly and Larbert.

"We'd encourage anyone planning to travel by rail over the next few days to check their journey before travel on our website or social media channels," said Mr Simpson, who also welcomed the announcement from the RMT the three strike dates had been called off.

But the RMT is still threatening yet more disruption to the network, and the union said the dispute with Network Rail remained "very much live".

It is continuing its re-ballot of members to secure a fresh mandate for action with the result due on 15 November.

Mick Lynch, the union's general secretary, said: "The threat of strike action and our strongly supported industrial campaign has made the rail employers see sense.

"We have always wanted to secure a negotiated settlement and that is what we will continue to push for in this next phase of intensive talks.

“Our priority is our members, and we are working towards securing a deal on job security, a decent pay rise and good working conditions.

Despite the strikes at National Rail being called off on Saturday and next week, the threat of further rail chaos in Scotland looms with the union threatening to walkout every Friday and Saturday in the run up to Christmas as part of a separate dispute with ScotRail.

Mr Simpson said: “Strike action does nothing for the railway’s recovery or reputation at this fragile time. It impacts customers, staff, and the economy.”