

East West Rail Phase 2

Project Newsletter, Spring 2021

Welcome

Welcome to the spring 2021 issue of the East West Rail Alliance (EWRA) project newsletter. I hope that you are keeping safe and well during these challenging times.

I would like to once again apologise on behalf of EWRA for the disruption caused by our works. We appreciate the patience and understanding of the community and we remain committed to both minimising the disruption, while also trying to complete our works sooner to reduce the duration of the disruption.

As reported in the winter issue of the newsletter, 2021 will be a significant year for the East West Rail Phase 2 (EWR2) project with the substantial part of the main civils works (comprising mainly of excavation, new structures and drainage) to be completed by the second quarter of 2022. Following completion of the civil works the project will be focused on track construction and installation of the railway systems with most of the required materials being delivered by rail, which means construction traffic generated by the EWR2 project will be significantly reduced after the second quarter of 2022.

Since our last newsletter the project has made good progress and several key project milestones have been successfully achieved, which you can read more about below.

As ever, we have included local progress update tailored to your area and we have also created a new section dedicated to our earthworks programme, which continue to ramp up over the coming months.

At the time of print, the Alliance is preparing for our May Bank Holiday which will see over 100 precast concrete beams will be installed above the West Coast Main Line during a three day closure of the railway. The new beams will form the deck structure for the new Bletchley Flyover structure that will carry the East West Rail line over the existing West Coast Mainline.

Finally, I wanted to thank all those who took part in our recent newsletter survey. We have had largely positive feedback on the format, frequency, and usefulness of the newsletter as well as some constructive feedback on how it can be improved which we have tried to incorporate into this issue. You can read more on the results below and I hope you find this latest edition of the newsletter of use.

We are acutely aware that our works are having an impact on the communities near to the project and we will continue to strive to minimise these impacts wherever we can. In the event that you do observe something that causes concern please do not hesitate to contact our project hotline.

Once again thank you for your continued support and interest in the project.

Mark Cuzner, EWR Alliance Director



Over 100 beams wait to be installed on Bletchley Flyover

ATKINS
Member of the SNC-Lavalin Group

NetworkRail

LAING O'Rourke

VolkerRail

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Project Progress

Since the last issue of the newsletter we have continued to make significant progress across all areas of the project.

Our work to the local highways in the vicinity of the project are now substantially complete. These improvements included over 130 separate activities to widen roads, create passing bays, construct accesses to our work sites, compounds and haul roads, all designed to reduce our impact on the local road network. Our highways teams will now focus on completing the small number of remaining activities as well as carrying out ongoing repairs and maintenance as and when required.

We have completed piling activities for all the bridges required for the project (except for Winslow cutting), which has allowed significant progress on the construction of the five new overbridges required for the project. You can read more about progress of each bridge in the area updates. We have also successfully installed the first of ten new footbridges for the project at Jarvis Lane near the western boundary of the project.

At Bletchley we have continued to carry out the complex work required to bring the Bletchley Flyover up to modern standards. The existing structure above the West Coast Mainline has been successfully dismantled and the bridge abutments that will support the new bridge beams across the railway have been constructed. The new bridge beams will be placed over the West Coast Mainline during a major railway possession that will take place over the early May Bank Holiday.



Charbridge Lane overbridge, April 2021

At the north end of Bletchley Flyover work has also started on the new high-level station that will extend from the existing Bletchley Station and provide passenger access to the new railway. Piling and foundations have been completed and work will start shortly on the station construction.

Finally, in mid-April, the first section of new track for the EWR2 project was successfully installed near Bicester. This is a key milestone for the project because it is not only the first section of track, but it will also enable access for the engineering trains that will carry out the track construction across the whole project.

Station Road overbridge takes shape

One of the five new overbridges to be constructed on the project, the Station Road overbridge has made significant progress in recent months.

As reported in the winter 2020/2021 issue of the newsletter, the team were busy installing all the precast concrete shell abutments ahead of the bridge beams being lifted into place.

The beams were successfully installed on site in March and the structure is now largely completed. The team will now focus on the significant amount of earthworks that are required to tie the bridge into the local road network.



Station Road Overbridge, April 2021



Sandhill Road Closure

Over recent weeks and months, we have been engaging with local residents and stakeholders regarding the closure of Sandhill Road, a road that crosses over the railway to the south east of Steeple Claydon via a road bridge. Due to the age and condition of the Sandhill Road bridge the structure requires replacing and upgrading to modern day standards.

A high pressure gas main supply line runs across Sandhill road on the north side of the bridge and initial surveys which were presented during consultation showed that a protection slab could be installed to protect the gas line without it having to be replaced, resulting in a 12 week closure of Sandhill Road.

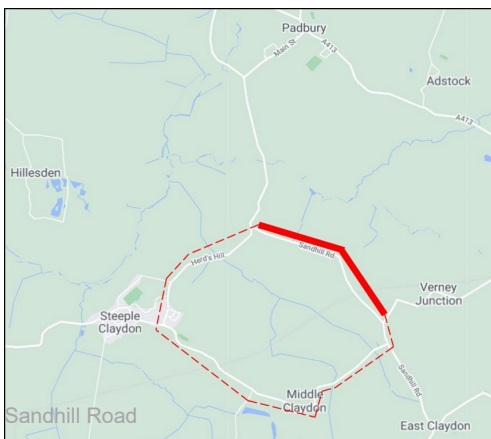
The owner and operator of the high pressure gas supply line, Southern Gas Network (SGN) carried out further surveys to the gas supply line crossing over Sandhill Road and concluded it would necessitate considerably more work, requiring shutting down the supply leading to an outage. This can only be carried out in the summer months when gas usage is lower than at other times of the year.

Due to the additional work to the gas line and having to revise the bridge replacement work around this has resulted in having to close Sandhill Road for a longer period than originally anticipated.

After receiving feedback from residents and we have carried out a full review of all work with SGN who will carry out the pipeline replacement and our supply partners shorten the time frame.

As a result, some key changes have been made to both the SGN and EWRA works plans, allowing us to shorten the length of time the road is closed by nearly 50%.

In summary, the High Pressure Gas main work will take place from 10 May - 17 August. The final bridge and road work will then take place from 17 August - 5 September, a total 17 week closure. Access to all properties will remain throughout.



A final notification to residents and businesses impacted by the upcoming closure has been issued and thank you to all those who have been involved in the feedback process, including those who dialled into the live webinar we hosted earlier in the year to provide an update on our plans.

Traffic Ambassadors and Variable Message Signs deployed

As part of our plans to monitor and improve the flow of EWR2 construction traffic (including vehicles used by the Alliance and our supply chain partners), Traffic ambassadors have been recruited and deployed to local areas across the project.

The Ambassadors will monitor the performance of the projects traffic flows and will report any issues they observe to our Logistics and Construction Managers who will be able to take immediate action.

In addition, the Ambassadors will monitor delivery vehicles to ensure they comply with requirement to display EWR2 identification, and to ensure EWR2 construction vehicles stick to the approved construction routes for the project. Finally, they will monitor driving behaviours to ensure compliance with the law. Our ambassadors will be identifiable by their hi-vis EWRA branded jackets and EWRA labelled vehicles.

The Alliance has also installed 14 Variable Message Signs (VMS) across the Bicester to Bletchley area, with messaging will displayed to request EWR2 construction traffic to follow the "20 is Plenty Campaign" where applicable, direct vehicles from unapproved construction routes and warn of potential delays due to traffic in the area.

It is hoped the appointment of these Traffic Ambassadors will help us manage the flow and performance of our construction vehicles across the project, however, should you spot any issues caused by any vehicle associated with the EWR2 project, please report this to publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk or via the Network Rail Helpline on 0345 711 4141.



Lending a hand in the local community

The Alliance has continued to carry out a number of community engagement projects and volunteering opportunities, despite the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Since the last issue of the newsletter:

- Our team has worked with students at Aylesbury Grammar School on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) project to come up with a design for the new Winslow Station.
- A member of the project team has volunteered with Bux & Oxon 4x4 Response Group (BORG) to help with the Covid-19 vaccination programme in Winslow.
- Continued our gardening and maintenance project at Grendon Underwood Combined School near Bicester.

If you have any thoughts and suggestions for community projects we may be able to get involved with, please contact publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk.

Artificial otter holts in use

We're delighted to report that we now have evidence of the artificial otter holts constructed across the project being used by the local otter population.

The otter holt - located in one of the Environmental Compensation Sites constructed to offset the environmental impact that the project will have during the construction stage – has been regularly monitored by our Ecology team since it's construction. During this time the team has also been trying to entice the otters to the holt by adding additional features such stepping stones and spraints (otter droppings) at the entrances.

All the team's efforts were rewarded in early March of this year, as the cameras that have been installed under licence recorded evidence of otters using the holt on a regular basis.

You can view the camera footage of an otter entering and exiting the holt in the online version of our EWR2 Project Newsletter.



An otter uses one of the artificial holts constructed by the Alliance

Thanks for your feedback!

The EWR2 Project newsletter plays a key role in how the Alliance keeps local stakeholders and residents informed of project progress and upcoming works.

We have strived to make the newsletter as useful and informative as possible, embracing interactive technology via our online version to bring the project to life with videos and photos whilst also including localised sections to keep the communities in which we are working up to date with progress and upcoming activity.

Earlier this year we gave readers the chance to share their feedback on the newsletter with us via an online survey which ran for two weeks.

The results are now in and we're delighted to report that on average the newsletter scored 4 out of 5 in terms of its overall usefulness, with the local sections also scoring 4 out of 5 for their usefulness.

Respondents found the newsletter generally interesting and informative and the local area updates provided useful information about works in their area. As a response to feedback we've made some amendments to maps to make them clearer.

For clarity, you can contact us via publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk or via Network Rail's 24/7 helpline on 0345 711 4141 and your query will be directed to the most appropriate person.

You can also use the publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk address to let us know if you have any further feedback or suggestions for future issues of the newsletter.

Once again, thank you for your feedback and input into the readership survey.



Progress in your area – Marsh Gibbon, Poundon, Charndon & Twyford

The coded maps in this section mark out areas of Marsh Gibbon, Poundon, Charndon & Twyford where we will be working. Use the numbers to find out what is happening in each area, and what activity is coming up in the next three months.

Marsh Gibbon



1. Marsh Gibbon Footbridge

Description: We will build a new footbridge to allow people to cross the new railway safely.

Duration: Work started in late 2020 and is due for completion in winter 2021.

Disruption: The footpath will be closed intermittently during this work. Signage will be displayed to advise as to when the closures will be in place.

Upcoming Activity: Over the next few months we will complete the pile cap foundations needed to provide the structural support for the new footbridge. The earthworks to the area will then take priority with the bridge planned to be installed late summer 2021.

2. Environmental Compensation

These sites have been established to mitigate our impact on the local ecology. They include the creation of aquatic habitat features like river back waters, grasslands, scrub and woodland with specific species and features for badger, otter, reptiles, great crested newts, bats, butterflies etc.

3. Railway works

Track formation earthworks have commenced using the newly constructed compounds at Poundon. The track formation provides the surface on which the new railway track will be built. The installation of the track is due to begin in summer of 2022. In addition, we have built new haul roads for our construction traffic to use in these areas to minimise our use of public highways.

4. Poundon Footbridge

Description: We will build a new footbridge to allow people to cross the new railway safely.

Duration: Work began in late 2020 and is due for completion in autumn 2021.

Disruption: The footpath will be closed during this work. Signage will be displayed to advise as to when the closures will be in place.

Upcoming Activity: Over the next few months we will complete the pile cap foundations needed to provide the structural support for the new footbridge. The earthworks to the area will then take priority with the bridge planned to be installed late summer 2021.

5. Poundon/Marsh Gibbon Compound construction

Description: We have built a compound to provide staff offices, welfare facilities and materials storage. The compound will be used for the duration of our construction work.

Duration: Work on the construction of the new compound began in summer 2020, with archaeological investigations currently taking place, as well as work to prepare the site for the construction of the compound. When our work has been completed the site will be re-instated to its former condition in late 2022.

Disruption: All works to the compound are complete so there should be no road closures until it is necessary to undertake repairs to the highway and remove the temporary highways works in late 2022. This will be carefully coordinated with other works in the area to minimise disruption. All closures will be published on [one.network](#) and appropriate signage will be displayed.

Upcoming Activity: No works are expected other than maintenance and repair work to the approved HGV construction route to site.

6. Station Road underbridge replacement works

Description: We will replace the existing bridge deck with a new steel deck and repair and strengthen the bridge structure to accommodate the new railway.

Duration: Demolition of the existing structure began in April 2021 in preparation for the installation of the new structure in summer 2021. The work is due for completion in autumn 2021.

Disruption: There will be some temporary road closures during the spring and then in late summer, which will be notified on [one.network](#) and appropriate signage will be displayed.

Upcoming Activity: Demolition of the existing structure will continue in preparation for the new structure to be built later this year.

7. Haul road construction

Description: We have constructed a new haul road which will allow us to move our construction vehicles and machinery across some of our sites which will minimise disruption to local roads.

Duration: Work on the haul road began in summer 2020 and was recently completed.

Disruption: No works are expected other than minor maintenance and emergency repair work to the highway where required. Any road closures will be published on [one.network](#) and appropriate signage will be displayed. In addition, there will be marshalling of construction traffic throughout 2021 as the haul road comes into use. The haul road will reduce the amount of construction traffic that would use the local road network within the area.

Upcoming Activity: No works are expected other than minor maintenance and emergency repair work to the highway.

8. Railway works

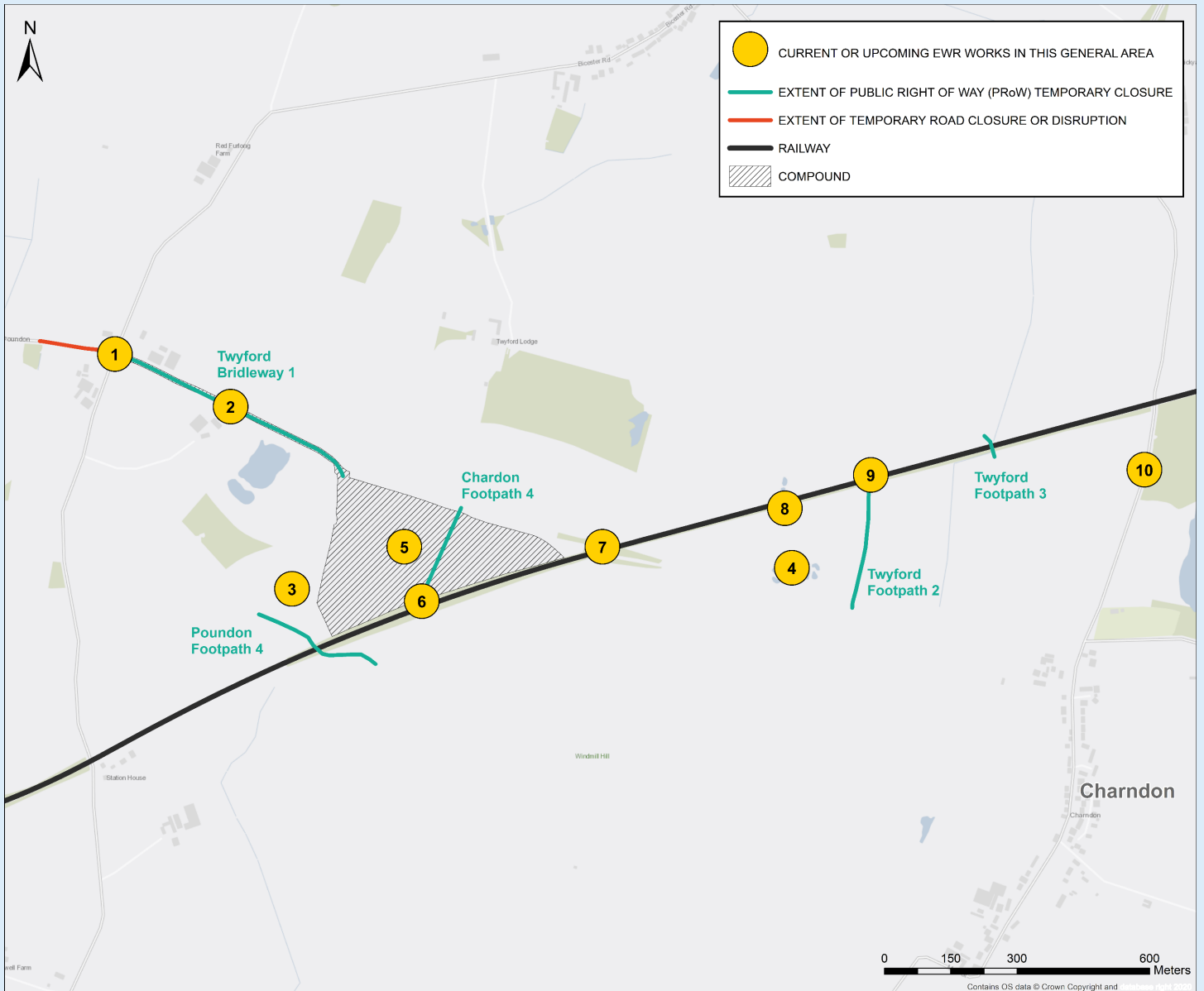
Track formation earthworks have started, with our teams using the newly constructed compounds at Poundon. The track formation provides the surface on which the new railway track will be built. The installation of the track is due to begin in summer of 2022. In addition, we have built new haul roads for our construction traffic to use in these areas to minimise our use of public highways.



Progress in your area – Marsh Gibbon, Poundon, Charndon & Twyford

The coded maps in this section mark out areas of Marsh Gibbon, Poundon, Charndon & Twyford where we will be working. Use the numbers to find out what is happening in each area, and what activity is coming up in the next three months.

Poundon





1. Main Street, Poundon road improvements

Description: We have carried out junction improvements and road widening between the A4421 and Poundon to allow construction traffic to keep to the agreed construction traffic routes on main roads and minimise traffic using local public roads.

Duration: Work began in summer 2020 and was completed recently.

Disruption: All highway works are complete so there should be no road closures until it is necessary to undertake repairs to the highway and remove the temporary highways works in late 2022. This will be carefully coordinated with other works in the area to minimise disruption. All road closures will be published on [one.network](#) and appropriate signage will be displayed.

Upcoming Activity: No works are expected other than minor maintenance and emergency repair work to the highway.

2. Twyford Bridleway 1 haul road construction

Description: We are carrying out work to upgrade the current bridleway for construction traffic. This will allow us to move our construction vehicles and machinery across some of our sites which will minimise disruption to local roads.

Duration: This haul road will form part of the traffic route to be used in conjunction with the compound at Green Lane Twyford from summer 2020 through to summer 2022.

Disruption: No further disruption should be encountered until the compound is removed once work is completed in late 2022. The haul road will however be used for HGVs accessing the site.

Upcoming Activity: No works are expected other than minor maintenance and emergency repair work to the highway.

3 & 4. Environmental Compensation Sites

These sites have been established to mitigate our impact on the local ecology. They include the creation of aquatic habitat features like river back waters, grasslands, scrub and woodland with specific species and features for badger, otter, reptiles, great crested newts, bats, butterflies etc.

5. Green Lane, Twyford Compound construction

Description: A compound has been built to provide offices, welfare facilities and materials storage which will be used intermittently throughout the duration of our construction work.

Duration: Work started in summer 2020 and once work has been completed the site will be re-instated to its former condition in late 2022.

Upcoming Activity: Over the next few months the compound will be used to start earthworks to the railway corridor.

6. Marsh Gibbon overbridge repair

Description: We will carry out repairs and upgrade the existing bridge that goes over the railway at Marsh Gibbon. This will include a new bridge deck, brickwork repairs, new waterproofing and re-surfacing.

Duration: Work will start in late spring 2021 and is due for completion in the summer of 2021.

Disruption: During the repair works the footpaths under the bridge will be temporarily closed.

Upcoming Activity: Over the next three months we will clear the site and undertake the initial demolition of the main span of the existing bridge ready for a replacement precast concrete span to be installed.

7. Green Lane overbridge improvement

Description: We will carry out repairs and upgrade the bridge that goes over the railway at Green Lane. This will include brickwork repairs and new waterproofing.

Duration: Work will start in autumn 2021 and is due for completion in early 2022.

Disruption: There will be an increase in construction traffic accessing the site from Station Road through to the compound at Green Lane.

Upcoming Activity: Apart from the compound construction, no works are planned on this structure until autumn 2021.

8. Railway works

Track formation earthworks have started with our teams using the newly constructed compounds at Poundon. The track formation provides the surface on which the new railway track will be built. The installation of the track is due to begin in summer of 2022. In addition, we have built new haul roads for our construction traffic to use in these areas to minimise our use of public highways.

9. Twyford footbridge construction

Description: We will build a new footbridge to allow people to cross the new railway safely.

Duration: Work began in winter 2020 and is due for completion in late 2021.

Disruption: The footpath will be temporarily closed whilst we build the new footbridge across the railway.

Upcoming Activity: Over the next few months we will complete the pile cap foundations needed to provide structural support for the new footbridge. The earthworks to the area will then take priority with the bridge planned to be installed late summer.

10. Access point construction

Description: We have constructed a new access from the highway (Main Street) to provide construction access on to the railway alignment. There will also be some upgrade works to the Main Street railway bridge to improve safety. This will include the installation of new parapets and general repairs.

Duration: Work will start in spring 21 and is due for completion in summer 2022.

Disruption: There will be temporary partial closures of the highway during the works. All road closures will be published on [one.network](#) and appropriate signage will be displayed.

Upcoming Activity: Over the next few months we will be closing the highway to commence the bridge refurbishment works

→ For any queries or questions please contact us on: publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk

