

A500 Stoke Pathfinder Newsletter

Issue 4 – November 2005

Welcome to the fourth issue of our newsletter for the A500 Stoke Pathfinder project. We hope this newsletter will bring you up to date with progress and will let you know what work is still to be completed.

The £40 million project is now two thirds of the way through and is still on target for completion in Summer 2006. The project will bring long-term benefits for motorists and will boost the economic regeneration of the area.

Due to the complexity of the scheme, slow but steady progress has been made. Work includes the replacement of the Stoke Road and City Road roundabouts with new junctions and the diversion of the Trent and Mersey Canal, the River Trent and Fowlea Brook.

Working within the limits of the existing road layout has taken careful planning to minimise disruption to motorists and wherever possible two narrow lanes of traffic in each direction have been kept open.

The traffic management and speed limits throughout the site are there for the safety of motorists and our workforce. Motorists are thanked for their patience and for adhering to the road signs helping create a safer environment.

In the New Year the current road layout will be improved, this should help reduce delays and when it's completed the new road layout will bring significant congestion relief to the busy A500 corridor through Stoke on Trent.

Once finished, the new road layout will provide much easier and safer access across the A500 for public transport, cyclists and pedestrians. As a result, the road will contribute to the integration of other transport systems.

Graham Dakin

A500 Stoke Pathfinder
Project Leader
Highways Agency



Pathfinder Progress

Good progress has been made with construction of carriageways, bridges and other structures continuing steadily. The shape of the scheme is becoming clear.

Work to strengthen the old Fowlea Brook culvert under the A500 is continuing and it is hoped that the new slip road from City Road junction can be opened very soon.

The Fowlea Brook and River Trent channels are almost complete and both watercourses will be diverted when the old and new channels are linked together. The new canal channel was opened with a ceremony early in November. Most of the Woodhouse Street culvert has been built but the final central section can only be completed once the southbound A500 has been diverted.

Most of the street lighting has now been installed throughout the scheme, however some temporary lighting will remain in place during the winter period.

Drivers have coped well with the changes to the traffic management layouts that have been needed. We apologise for the inconvenience that our works are causing you.

Construction Progress

Work at City Road junction is very complicated because of the watercourses, a lot of it can't be seen by drivers as it's below ground. The construction of the new Fowlea Brook channel is progressing from Brook Street, where it will meet the new River Trent channel just north of the underpass. This complicated work is now under way and will be completed in the new year.

The most striking features at City Road are the tree pits on top of the bridge (see the aerial photo on the cover). The blue protective layer will eventually be covered with paving and other landscaped features.

The construction of Stoke Road junction has had a significant impact on traffic using it and it's been a challenge to ensure that traffic keeps flowing as freely as possible during our work.

The main excavation work for the underpass at the Stoke Road junction is mostly complete and things are taking shape. Because part of the underpass is below the water table a pumping station is needed to make sure that the underpass doesn't get flooded. The drainage system from the pumping station is finished and the station itself is now being built and will be working in the new year.

The foundations for the new carriageway will be laid soon, then the road through the underpass can be built.



Trent and Mersey Canal - View looking north from the new Stoke Road canal bridge showing the temporary steel dam enabling work to start on the new canal basin.

Site Safety

The project has reached over six months without a reportable accident, which equates to over 425,000 man-hours. A safety first ethos has been created on site with the introduction of the "don't walk by" scheme and a zero tolerance approach to health, safety and environmental issues.

This safety record is the result of a well-trained and dedicated workforce and is a credit to the A500 project team.

Looking Ahead

This major project has temporarily reduced the traffic capacity at both Stoke Road and City Road junctions. Early in the New Year we will be able to improve traffic flows and the benefits of the project will gradually become apparent.

The complex nature of the road works has required traffic management schemes to be used to ensure the safety of the workforce and to keep traffic moving as freely as possible. The next major changes will be:

- Southbound traffic travelling between Stoke Road and City Road junctions will be switched onto the permanent carriageway before switching back onto the temporary alignment at Brook St.
- Southbound traffic exiting City Road junction will travel on a temporary carriageway to the east of the current road to enable the completion of work to the Woodhouse Street culvert.
- Surfacing work on the permanent carriageways will be carried out at both the northern and southern ends of the scheme. This will require night time lane closures and temporary diversions.

Other areas of work to be completed soon include the environmental barrier at Whieldon Road and the watercourse channels that will allow the underpass carriageways to be built.

By driving safely and courteously through the works, and by observing the speed limits and road signs you are helping to create a safe environment for both the workforce and road users alike. Please keep us informed of any problems you are having with the roadworks so we can rectify them.

Environmental Works

The project team are committed to delivering a scheme that enhances the area visually while minimising its environmental impact.

Work has continued along the canal towpath with visually enhanced barriers and walls. A lot of the construction work takes place out of sight of drivers, so it can be difficult to get an appreciation of the work and to see what progress has been made.

The river will pass below the underpass at the City Road junction and under the new carriageway before opening up in the new landscaped area at Woodhouse Street. The river channel will have a meandering stream running down the centre, with a ripple pool and deep areas. The outer edges of the channel will be covered with stone boulders to make the habitat as natural as possible. It is hoped that the meander will encourage the migration and breeding of fish along the channel. The boulders will trap silt and encourage the growth of natural plant and flower species, which in turn will attract dragonfly and butterfly species to the area. The channel will also have an otter ledge running along its length with a 'habitat pipe' connecting the otter ledge to the Trent and Mersey canal.

During the scheme, we have tried to recycle as much material as we can for re-use in other areas. Concrete from the demolished Fowlea Brook and the River Trent culverts has been crushed and re-used as fill material, this has proved to be successful in both environmental

and economic terms. Old carriageway surface material that is planed off is re-cycled and used in the new road construction.

Where can I find more information?

We hope that you have found this newsletter both interesting and informative, however it would be useful if you could let us have some feedback regarding the sort of information you would like and how you like to receive this information. Please send comments to:

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M1 4BE.

Further information about this project can be found at www.highways.gov.uk in the **Road Projects** Section.

Scheme Liaison Officer

The liaison officer Steve Cook of Edmund Nuttall Ltd. is working on the site and will be on hand to answer day to day queries. Telephone 01782 843600

For real time traffic information:

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Driving through roadworks

If you do have to drive through roadworks, please take extra care.



- Keep to the speed limit - it is there for your safety
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not on the roadworks
- Keep a safe distance - there could be queues in front

- Get into the correct lane in good time - don't keep switching
- Be alert for works traffic leaving or entering roadworks
- Observe all signs - they are there to help you

Remember that tiredness can kill. Take regular breaks from driving.