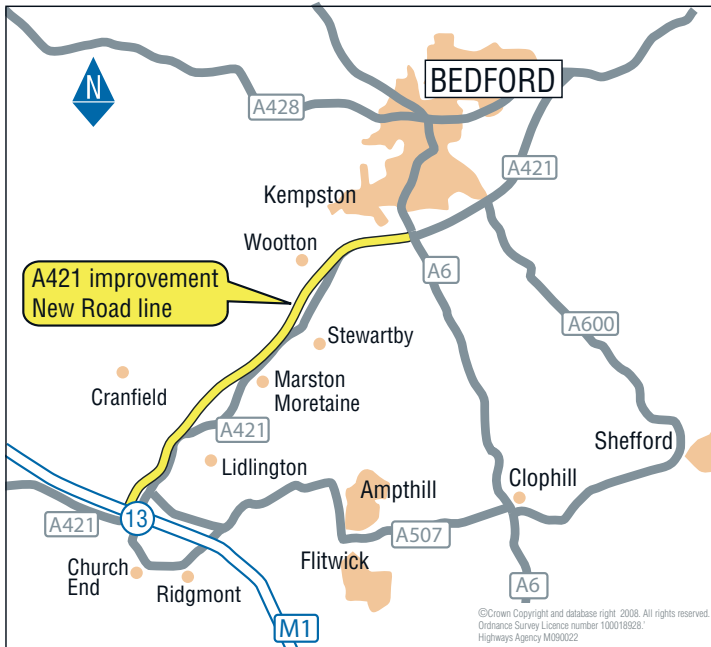


A421 - Bedford to M1 Junction 13 Improvements Newsletter Issue 2 - July 2009

Introduction...

This is the latest newsletter informing you about progress on the A421 road improvement scheme. To ensure the public has every opportunity to access the information in this newsletter, public information boards have also been put up at several locations along the site as well as at the public viewing gallery at Brogborough.



Update

Works have been progressing well since our last update in April.

Notable developments include:

- Fencing has been completed along the whole route. How the road will look on completion is now becoming clearer as a result.
- Embankment on the west side of the M1 is now complete.
- Support structures for the Brogborough

bridge going over M1 are now complete.

- Work has begun on the Salford Road bridge.
- A new site compound opened in Salford Road.
- Manor Farm and Woodland Trust access tracks complete.
- Work to construct the embankment for the diverted A421 has begun, using lightweight fill materials and recycled tyres (see environment section).
- Newts now rehomed.
- Work underway on the new junction at Marston. Construction on support structures for the bridge is in progress.
- Lower Shelton Road has been closed from 11th May for safety reasons. A new access road is now being installed.
- Hoo Lane closed except for access to the Balfour Beatty compound.
- Construction has begun on the Fields Road bridge.
- We took over the Marsh Leys roundabout on 8th June from Carillion and have begun foundation work on the flyover.
- Construction started on new rail bridge over the Bedford to Bletchley line to carry new westbound carriageway

Traffic Management

Current traffic management in place

- Temporary 50mph speed restriction on M1 from Junctions 10 to 13, with lane closures and hard-shoulder running.
- M1 Junction 13 slip roads – overnight closures.

- A421 temporary 40mph speed restriction and single lane running from M1 Junction 13 to approximately 1 mile east of the junction with the A6.
- A421 Marston Moretaine contraflow, gap and layby closures. Permanent closure of Lower Shelton Road.
- No right turns to or from the A421 westbound carriageway at the site of the former Interchange Retail Park roundabout.
- A6 narrow lanes and temporary 30mph speed restriction between Elstow Junction and A421/A6 roundabout for upgrade to signalised junctions and road widening until Autumn 2009.

Future Traffic Management for bridge construction works

- Overnight closures of A421 at Fields Road, Wootton from Tuesday 1 until Friday 11 September.
- Overnight closure of M1 between Junctions 13 and 14 from Monday 14 September for up to 3 weeks.
- Weekend closure of A421 at Marsh Leys railway from Friday 23 to Monday 26 October.

To further improve road safety along the project, Average Speed cameras will come into operation during July, These will help to ease congestion, give more reliable journey times and a smooth flow of traffic. Research also shows that where these cameras are installed there is a reduction in the number of collisions and accidents.

School Visit - Lincroft Middle School

Our contractors Balfour Beatty were delighted to host a visit by staff and pupils from Lincroft Middle School. All were treated to a minibus tour of the site and a presentation about the scheme. Pupils were invited to enter a competition to produce a poster for Balfour Beatty's Zero Harm initiative as part of the experience.

Archaeology

Archaeological fieldwork is now coming to an end, although there are currently two excavations being carried out along the route. Archaeological remains dating to the Roman Period (2 - 3rd Century AD) have been found. Features include settlement activity in the form of field boundaries, pits, and quarries. Also relating to this historic period, pottery, metal objects, and bone have been found. Another site, this time dating from the Iron Age (1 - 2nd Century BC) has also been discovered. This site might have been a farmstead and includes many ditches and pits.

Following the conclusion of fieldwork along the proposed scheme a full report will be produced and made available to the public through Bedfordshire Borough Council's Sites and Monument Record.

The Environment - Recycle

In the UK alone it is estimated that up to 40 million vehicle tyres reach the end of their life each year. Traditionally much of these were sent to landfill for disposal. In 2003 a ban of disposal to landfill was introduced and therefore alternative environmentally friendly solutions were required.

Recently, uses in engineering & construction have begun to be introduced. Typically this has been to use tyre bales as an alternative to traditional fill materials.

So far, uses of tyre bales have been for small projects and these uses include:

- aiding slope stabilisation to prevent erosion or landslips
- used as a fill in constructing minor roads for light traffic flow
- as waterway & flood control barriers
- recreational projects e.g. golf course landscaping

Here at the A421 Project the use of tyre bales has been dramatically scaled up to help build a lightweight embankment on soft ground next to Brogborough Lake to allow the re-alignment of the existing A421.

Each tyre bale is about 1.5m x 0.8m x 1.3m in size

and consists of around 100 – 115 tyres. In building the new embankment it is estimated that 4500 tyre bales will be required during this work, equating to around 500,000 tyres.

The tyre bales used on the A421 conform to relevant standards, so there is no threat to public health or the environment. This is just one example that shows how the A421 Project team is employing innovative engineering techniques whilst also working to protect the environment.

A 14m deep cutting is underway at Brogborough. The material from this is being used to form alignments of the southbound off-slip from the M1 and the new Salford Road.

Ecology

Spring saw the emergence of great crested newts from hibernation, allowing ecologists to return to the site and re-home them. A further 116 great crested newts were safely moved this spring, bringing the scheme total to almost 400. As part of the same process around 3500 common amphibians (frog, toad and smooth newts) have been captured from land within the route corridor and released into retained areas of suitable habitat.

The discovery of a new badger sett within the route corridor during winter gave the project team a challenge. Badgers breed during the winter months and in order to prevent harm to young it is not normally possible to gain a licence to close a sett during the winter months. Following close correspondence with Natural England a variety of methods were utilised to investigate the sett. This included the use of night vision and fibre optic cameras mounted on remote controlled vehicles. Through this we were able to demonstrate that the sett had not been used for several weeks which meant the sett could be closed under licence from Natural England. Use of these novel techniques has prevented a possible delay to works on this scheme and crucially ensured that no badgers were harmed.

Renew

The 5th of June was the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) annual **World Environment Day**. The A421 project contribution

to this day & UNEP **Plant for the Planet: Billion Tree Campaign** has been to pledge to plant a tree for every member of staff on site that day. We are delighted to announce that 360 new trees will be planted locally in the Forest of Marston Vale.

Future Work

- Bridge beams installation at Fields Road and M1 Junction 13.
- Lower Shelton Link road due to open in the Autumn.
- Start work on the second stage of the Lower Shelton Underpass.
- Changeover of Marston Bypass to allow reconstruction of existing roundabout.
- Roadworks on Westbound carriageway Marsh Leys to A6.
- Works to East and West bridges at Marsh Leys.
- Installation of Marsh Leys Railway bridge.
- Ongoing works at Cowbridge.

Considerate Constructors Scheme

This project is a member of the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) which requires all workers to be more aware of the impact the works may have on the local residents and anyone else who may be affected. We will pay close attention to environmental issues such as noise, dust, mud and waste management.

If you have any comments or would like further information, you can contact, Balfour Beatty's Public Liaison Officer Jan Bath (see right panel for details) or the Highways Agency's Project Manager Roy Brunsten on (01234) 796099 ,



Roy Brunsten



Jan Bath

Email: A421M1toBedford@highways.gsi.gov.uk

or visit our website
www.highways.gov.uk/roads/projects/4584.aspx

Contacting the Highways Agency

You can also get in touch with the Highways Agency about the A421 Improvement:

Email: A421M1toBedford@highways.gsi.gov.uk

Tel: **01234 796099**

Website: www.highways.gov.uk/roads/projects/4584.aspx

By post: **Highways Agency, Major Projects, Woodlands, Bedford MK41 7LW**

A421 Project Helpline

If you have any questions, please contact:

Jan Bath,
Balfour Beatty Public Liaison Officer,
A421 Improvement Scheme,
Hoo Lane (off Woburn Road),
Wootton,
Bedfordshire,
MK43 9EH

Email: Jan.bath@bbcel.co.uk

Tel: 0845 481 0867.

For general information about motorways and trunk roads please call

Information Line:

08457 50 40 30

Lines open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

BT landlines 4p/min; calls from mobiles usually cost more

Real-time traffic information:

08700 660 115

Available 24 hours.

BT landline calls cost no more than 8p/min; calls from mobiles usually cost more

Safety at roadworks



The Highways Agency is working with the industry and road users to reduce the risks of working on the roads.

For the safety of roadworkers and all road users, when you are approaching roadworks:

- Keep within the speed limit – it is there for your safety.
- Get into the correct lane in good time – don't keep switching.
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not the roadworks.
- Be alert for works traffic leaving or entering roadworks.
- Keep a safe distance – there could be queues in front.
- Observe all signs – they are there to help you.

For further copies of this leaflet please contact the Highways Agency Information line: 08457 50 40 30 Email: ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk.