Two years into the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme and the project has passed its half-way point on target and on budget.

Work to upgrade 21 miles of the A14 started in November 2016 and is on course for completion by December 2020. On most days, up to 2,700 team members have been working to transform this critical section of the A14 into a high-standard route that will improve journey times, reduce accidents and delays and strengthen the local and national economy.

More than eight million working hours have been worked on the project to date, and eight million cubic metres of earthworks have been moved, with two million more to move before completion.

The opening of Offord Road Bridge just before Christmas and the new bridge at Swavesey, brought the number of new bridges carrying traffic to nine. At Swavesey, the opening was quickly followed by the demolition of the old bridge. This was completed well ahead of schedule on a single November weekend. Before Christmas we completed the complex 750 metre River Great Ouse Viaduct, which is now ready for surfacing.
Two years on...
Work on the project started in November 2016, meaning we’re now over halfway through.

We’re working with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust to examine the role of road verges in bumblebee conservation.

Volunteers from across the project spent a day moving the rare plant Slender Tare to a safe place to be replanted when landscaping work begins.

We’ve welcomed 57 young people to work experience, and employed over 100 apprentices and 63 graduates.

We’ve moved 80% of the 10,000,000m³ of material needed to build the scheme and worked over 8 million construction hours.

Individual archaeology finds include ice age animal remains to rare Iron Age coins.

We’ve secured funding to support four flood prevention projects in local communities.

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We’ve uncovered:
- 3 Neolithic henges
- 3 Bronze Age burial mounds
- 16 Iron Age settlements
- 15 Roman sites
- 3 Anglo-saxon villages (including one with royal connections)

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Classifying the road as a motorway will also remove slow-moving traffic (such as farm vehicles and mopeds, which will be able to use local roads and the new local access road), further improving journey times.

The design of the route will not change. Blue signs will replace green ones on the motorway sections. We will add the technology to allow us to use mandatory variable speed limits to manage traffic flow when appropriate. We still plan on opening the road by the end of 2020.

The Planning Inspectorate’s process includes a consultation period which starts when we submit our application. See their website for the full application and to have your say on the proposal:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/a14-cambridge-to-huntingdon-improvement-scheme/

Have your say! Our annual communications survey is now live and we want to hear from you. The survey takes about five minutes to complete and can be found at: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/A14C2H18-19
£3.5 million funding to provide routes for cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders

We’re not only improving a nationally important route through Cambridgeshire, we’re also making it easier for people to get around the county on two wheels, two legs – or even four.

From the outset the A14 project included 13 miles of routes for cyclists, walkers and horse riders. By working with Cambridgeshire County Council, these routes are being improved even further to fully link into existing routes to leave a much larger and better-connected network for non-motorised users.

A £3.5m programme funded by Highways England and the County Council includes eight projects, such as the extension of a route ending at Girton to provide a cycling and equestrian route into Cambridge, and a footway/cycleway path along the A1198 (Ermine Street) to improve a popular rural route between Graveley and Hilton.

We’re working closely with Cambridgeshire County Council to finalise the design, with work expected to start this year (2019).

Working to protect your communities

We work closely in partnership with local councils and other groups to identify ways the scheme can contribute to the community over and above the provision of the road.

We’ve successfully secured over half a million pounds in funding to deliver a package of schemes aimed at flood mitigation. The largest project will be at Histon and Impington and will benefit 59 residential properties, including 43 which are currently at significant risk of flooding. We’re also installing protection at 18 residential properties in the village of Girton, which has historically suffered from flooding.

The final project in the programme of work is located around Bar Hill Primary School, which has experienced six recent incidents of flooding within 11 years. This has caused significant disruption to the school, high costs of repairs and health and safety concerns given the vulnerabilities of the site users. By working in partnership with Anglian Water and Cambridgeshire County Council, we’ll install a drainage network, surface water sewer and also mitigate floods through landscaping in the playing field.
Over £300,000 of the A14 Community Fund now distributed

Over £300,000 has now been distributed from our A14 Community Fund, supporting over 40 local projects. It’s been great to see how our local communities have responded by developing such a range of projects, all unified by their links to the A14. The fund has also attracted wider interest, with Grafham Community Pub featuring on BBC Look East on 27 November 2018 as part of the project’s two years construction anniversary.

Towards the end of the year, ‘Acting Now’ gave performances at venues along the length of the A14 scheme. The documentary performance of ‘Side Roads’ featured the stories of 12 people experiencing mental health issues, focussing on journeys taken in life: on the road, down memory lane and in our imagination. It explored the anxieties, fears, unexpected discoveries as well as the immense sense of freedom of travel.

The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group have set up an ‘A14 Farmer Cluster’ to explore ways that small parcels of land can be used to maximise environmental benefits. It is early days but we look forward to seeing our local landowners put in conservation measures which will conserve wildlife, create new habitat, improve water quality and mitigate flooding.

If you feel inspired by these projects, there is still time to apply. To make applications easier for community groups we have introduced an Expression of Interest stage, to give applicants advice and an early indication of whether their idea is eligible.

For more information go to our website www.cambscf.org.uk/A14.html

Archaeology update: using our findings to understand 6,000 years of history

The astonishing richness of Cambridgeshire’s deep history has been captured in one of the UK’s largest ever archaeological projects along the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme.

With two years of excavations behind them, the task for the team is now to use their findings – including huge quantities of artefacts – to develop a more detailed picture of the last 6,000 years.

More than 40 separate excavations, covering some 350 hectares, have unearthed:

- Three Neolithic henges, between 4000 and 5000 years old, and seven prehistoric burial grounds, most from the Bronze Age
- Fifteen Iron Age (800 BC - 43 AD) and Roman (43 - 410 AD) settlements, three Anglo-Saxon (410-1066 AD) settlements and one deserted medieval (1066 - 1539 AD) village
- Around 8,000 objects such as coins, brooches and ironwork, 375 human burials and cremations, more than six tonnes of pottery and almost five tonnes of animal bone

All this material will help archaeologists understand how people lived, how their societies worked, their spiritual lives and the impact of major events such as the Roman conquest and collapse of Roman rule.

A 30-strong expert team is now recording and analysing the material. Several years of work lie ahead, but during that time there will be regular updates as the story of thousands of years of human occupation starts to emerge. One exciting story is the discovery of the earliest beer in Britain on an Iron Age site, as presented on BBC’s The One Show in December.
Ice age animal bones found

Our work has also uncovered evidence of ancient animal inhabitants - the tusks and bones of woolly mammoth and rhino from some 100,000 years ago.

One of the tusks was over one metre long and weighed over 40lbs. We are presently working to produce a replica of this tusk that has generated a tremendous amount of public interest. Work is ongoing to date the remains of these extinct giants more precisely, and to understand the climate and vegetational history from the ancient past.

A14 staff support Community Foodbank Collection

While Christmas was a time of indulgence and plenty for most, Godmanchester Foodbank was supporting people living close to the project who could not afford daily essentials – including food.

For people going through a personal crisis, the festive season can increase pressure, leading to family breakdown, housing loss, mental health problems and crime.

A simple box of food can help people cope, and the project team rallied round to support the Foodbank by making donations at collection points set up at four construction compounds.

In just one week donations included:
- 80kg pasta
- 70 litres fruit squash
- 10 Christmas puddings
- 130 nappies
- 35kg coffee
- 54 tins of fruit and veg
- 60 rolls of toilet roll
- 42 jars of pasta sauce
- 13kg sugar

Volunteers from the project helped weigh, sort and store the donated food before it was parcelled up for people to collect before Christmas.