

If you need help using this or any other Highways Agency information, please call **0300 123 5000** and we will assist you.

How can I find out more information?

For further details on the scheme construction over the coming months please visit the project website.

You can also sign up to receive email updates from our road project page:

www.highways.gov.uk/roads/road-projects/A21-Tonbridge-to-Pembury-Dualling

Contact details:

Our site office has recently been moved from our temporary home at May Day Farm to a compound on the east side of the A21, just north of Dislingbury Road.

The project team can be contacted in the following ways:

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What is Highways England?

Highways England will be the new company responsible for the Strategic Road Network in England from April 2015.

For more information about Highways England, visit: www.highways.gov.uk

Tonbridge to Pembury Dualling **A21**

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Introduction

Welcome to the fifth issue of the A21 Tonbridge to Pembury Dualling newsletter. This is the second newsletter since we started work in September 2014 and the fifth newsletter in all and includes details of what we have done so far and what we will be doing in the next few months. We hope you find it an informative and enjoyable read.

Update

The public exhibition at the Mercure Hotel in October 2014 was attended by over 500 people and was a great opportunity for us to meet and talk to local residents. Since then, there has been significant progress with the scheme.

Heritage

The barn and stable block at May Day Farm have now been dismantled. Specialists from the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum have been recording the demolition and marking different elements of the buildings so they can be re-erected at the Museum.



Roofs removed from barn and stable



Stable removed and barn partly removed



Barn and stable removed

Archaeology

Our archaeology consultant, Oxford Archaeology, has been monitoring the early construction activities. Only once areas have been confirmed clear of anything of archaeological interest can machinery be allowed in to start work. This is called a 'watching brief' and will continue until the archaeologists are content no artefacts or interesting features are likely to be found.

So far we have found items from three different historical periods:

- 4000BC – Flints which would have been used as blades by early British farmers.
- Iron Age (800BC - AD43) – Evidence of enclosures with doorways and ditches indicate inhabitation in the area at this period in time.
- Early 1800s – Sections of the brickworks near Castle Hill which eventually closed in 1963.

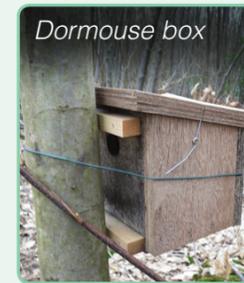
Oxford Archaeology are currently assessing the items we have found and we hope to share their findings in a later newsletter.

Ecology

To protect dormice, bats and other wildlife, we undertook coppicing* of trees during the autumn. This avoided disturbing the wildlife during sensitive breeding and hibernating periods throughout the wintertime. We have installed 150 dormice boxes in areas of vegetation that will be retained. This will provide resting places for the dormice while the new woodland becomes mature.

*What is coppicing?

When a tree or shrub is periodically cut back to ground level to stimulate growth.



We have put up 33 bat boxes, and will put up a further three, to replace the roosting holes in trees that have been cut down. The low level plastic fencing, which you may have noticed, cordoned off the areas of the works where we trapped 165 reptiles (common lizards and slow worms) and one amphibian (a great crested newt) under licence from Natural England. These creatures were then moved to safe areas away from the works.

Translocation (the moving of Ancient Woodland)

In addition to the ecological works, site clearance and environmental mitigation have been the first significant phase of the scheme. As part of this, we have been undertaking necessary translocation of coppiced trees, some shrubs and topsoil from the Ancient Woodland areas. This, together with new trees and shrubs, will be re-planted in several woodland creation areas next to the scheme. This is one of our commitments in the Environmental Statement.



Although the Ancient Woodland cannot be replaced, translocation will ensure that its characteristics, wildlife habitat and local species will be retained. All the coppicing has now been completed and the translocation is progressing well, albeit a little slower than we had anticipated due to the wet start to the year. Where the donor and receptor sites are on the same side of the A21 there is no impact on traffic. However, in some cases, the locations are on opposite sides of the A21, so temporary traffic lights are used during off-peak periods to allow the vehicles to cross the road.

What's next?

Night Time Lane Closures

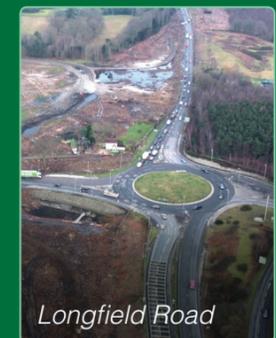
We currently have night time lane closures and these will continue to allow a number of different activities to be undertaken which can only happen when there is a lane closure. These will include work by utility companies, installation of traffic management, investigation works, temporary carriageway construction and excavation works to Longfield Roundabout. Traffic lights will be used between approximately 21:00 and 5:00. However, vehicles will only be held at a red traffic light for 1-2 minutes.

Day Time Traffic Changes (Early April 2015):

The first phase of traffic management, changes will begin at the end of March when we will be setting up a 40mph speed limit on the A21 throughout the scheme length for the safety of our workforce and that of the travelling public. We will also be implementing a right turn ban for traffic entering or leaving Half Moon Lane, Pembury Walks or Fairthorne garage. This will improve the flow of traffic on the A21 and also reduce the potential of increased rat running through the villages on the east side of the scheme.

Longfield Road Phase

Work to enlarge the Longfield Road roundabout will start in early April. To minimise disruption we will be doing the initial work at night with all lanes open during the day time.



Public Rights of Way

A number of public footpaths and bridleways either cross or stop at the A21. For the safety of walkers, cyclists and horse riders we have agreed with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council that we can close the footpaths and bridleways throughout the construction period. The paths affected are WT188, WT192A, WT210 and WT213 - WB6. We will be providing new routes as part of the road improvement scheme.