



## Welcome



**Welcome to the Winter 2020/2021 issue of the East West Rail Alliance project newsletter. I hope you are all keeping safe and well in these challenging times.**



Despite the additional challenges Covid-19 presented in 2020, I am pleased to report that - as a critical national infrastructure project - and thanks to the commitment of the team and the measures we have put in place to keep our project team as safe as possible - we have continued to operate throughout the pandemic so far and remain committed to doing so.



2020 was a significant year for the Alliance and the EWR2 project. In February 2020 the Transport Works Act Order for the project was awarded, which sparked an intense period of working collaboratively with local planning authorities to get all the permissions and consents needed for the project in place. Once again, I would like to thank everyone who supported the successful completion of this phase of the project and enabled the Alliance to commence the construction works.



**Read the interactive, electronic version of this newsletter by scanning the QR Code:**



Now, twelve months on, the main construction compounds are nearly all operational and the highway improvement works are well advanced in all areas across the project. Within the project boundary we have carried out the essential environmental



A section of Bletchley flyover is removed

and ecological mitigation works and made the site ready for the new railway construction.

We have also been able to progress a number of our main construction activities, such as carrying out bridge repairs, dismantling the sections of the Bletchley Flyover, and opening the temporary traffic diversion which is required to facilitate the construction of the new overbridge at Charbridge Lane.

In another significant development for the project, in the last week the government has confirmed its funding commitment to the scheme by providing the £760m required to complete the project. With full funding in place the Alliance can now focus on continuing our collaboration with our partners and supply chain to deliver this challenging infrastructure project.

2020 was a key year for establishing the project and preparing for the construction delivery. 2021 will be equally as critical as the project targets to achieve completion of most of the main civil works. We are acutely aware that setting up our sites has caused disruption across the project areas and we sincerely apologise for the inconvenience this has caused. Going forward we will continue to strive to plan and deliver our works so as to minimise the disruption for local residents and businesses. We remain committed to engaging with the community and listening to feedback so that we can improve our performance.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in the project.

**Mark Cuzner, Alliance Director**



Traffic has been successfully diverted at Charbridge Lane

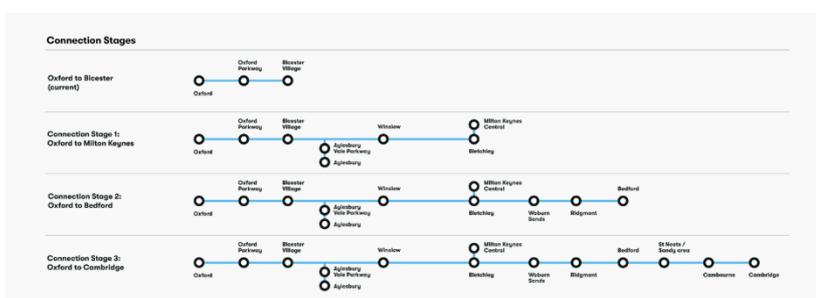
## £760m commitment made to support delivery of next phase of East West Rail

**We're delighted that the Government has announced £760 million to support the delivery of the East West Rail line between Oxford and Bletchley/Milton Keynes and means this section of East West Rail is expected to be up and running by 2025.**

Delivery of this stage is expected to provide work for 1,500 people, injecting an estimated £1.1bn pounds into the local economy.

The investment announcement also sees the East West Railway Company (EWR Co), set up by the Secretary of State for Transport in 2018 to develop and oversee the delivery of East West Rail, set out a phased approach to delivering the East West Rail project. EWR Co is designing the delivery of the service with the community in mind, by minimising disruption to local communities, spending taxpayer money in the best way, and delivering reliable services. To do this East West Rail will be delivered in three "Connection Stages", which relate directly to a full journey – not just a piece of track:

- **Connection Stage One:** Oxford to Bletchley and Milton Keynes
- **Connection Stage Two:** Oxford to Bedford
- **Connection Stage Three:** Oxford to Cambridge



East West Rail Connection Stages

## What does this mean for your area?

For Connection Stage 1 – communities between Oxford and Bletchley and Milton Keynes – East West Rail Alliance will continue to deliver construction works for this section of the railway on behalf of EWR Co. This includes:

- Constructing a new station at Winslow and new high-level platforms at Bletchley station
- Making railway crossings safer
- Upgrading track and infrastructure

While EWR Alliance is carrying out the construction works between Bicester and Bletchley, EWR Co is also designing the section of the railway between Bletchley and Cambridge.

The Alliance is responsible for the construction of the Bicester – Bletchley section of Connection Stage One and receiving the funding for this stage of the project means we can continue our work already started at Bletchley Flyover, Winslow Station and across the whole project footprint.

## Consultation in 2021

EWR Co is planning a non-statutory public consultation soon to hear your views on proposals for the exact route of the new section of railway line that would run between Bedford and Cambridge. The consultation will also cover more detailed plans for sections of the line between Oxford and Bedford which we have developed in response to earlier consultation with our stakeholders and communities.

Find out more here:

<https://eastwestrail.co.uk/latest-news/project-updates/consultation-in-early-2021>



## Bletchley Flyover Update

Since April 2020, the Alliance has been dismantling sections of the 1960s-built Bletchley flyover so that a new flyover can be built to modern standards.

Three of the largest mobile cranes in the UK have been used to remove huge sections of the flyover, with many of the lifts needing to take place overnight so as not to impact the operation of the West Coast Main Line below – one of the busiest railways in Europe.

As part of the work, 14 of the flyover's 37 spans that crossed the West Coast Main Line and Buckingham Road have been dismantled. The first span, which weighed in at a hefty 295 tonnes, was lifted out at the end of April 2020 with the following spans removed over the course of the summer and autumn.

The final span was lifted out by crane in October and the last of the supporting piers and pillars were removed over the weekend of 9-10 January 2021.

In addition to the dismantling works, over Christmas Day and Boxing day, the team in Bletchley completed a 50-hour possession whilst the West Coast Main Line was closed, installing 130m of new overhead line equipment.



Precast concrete bridge abutments are installed at Station Road

## Temporary Traffic Diversion Opened at Charbridge Lane

In the early hours of Tuesday 19 January, a new temporary diversion road opened to road traffic on Charbridge Lane. Opening the traffic diversion was a major milestone for the project team, as it means the Alliance can now start to build the new overbridge which will carry traffic over the new East West Rail line once it is built. It is expected that the temporary diversion will be in place until the summer of 2022. During this time access to Tythe Barn and the local allotments will remain in place.

Elsewhere on the project we have continued to carry out bridge refurbishment and repair works, and have opened several of our construction compounds, built 'haul roads' for construction traffic to travel between a number of sites and made highways improvements to ensure local roads are able to cope with construction traffic and relieve any potential congestion at entrances to our sites. In addition, we have completed drainage works at Winslow cutting ahead of the construction of the new Winslow Station, and we have undertaken a variety of environmental mitigation works to reduce our impact on the environment.



A pier from Bletchley flyover is lifted from the West Coast Main Line



## Traffic Management

Prior to Christmas we received a number of complaints regarding mud on the roads, this was also raised at our monthly Buckinghamshire Community Board meeting on 10th December where councillors raised their concerns. We take our obligations to road safety and our commitments under the TWAO seriously and have carried out a number of actions to ensure roads are kept as clean as possible.

As part of our plan to restore roads to the required state, prior to Christmas we carried out a full location to location survey along the whole route to thoroughly assess conditions and put in place additional cleaning, extra road sweepers and deployed additional manpower to remove material tracked onto Furze Lane, which was highlighted as particularly muddy.

Moving forward we have a back-to-black wet wash sweeper which has been deployed to areas identified as particularly problematic. This sweeper is deployed at least once a week and is in addition to our normal regime of street sweeping every day. Our 24hr mobile security patrol, as a further measure, will now be monitoring the conditions of the roads in our areas of responsibility to ensure we receive early warning of spills and hazards, thus enabling us to respond in the quickest manner possible. Street sweepers will continue to be targeted at problem areas and compounds will be developed as quickly as possible and have tarmacked internal roads which will alleviate vehicles tracking mud onto the roads.

Wheel washers are installed at Bicester, Poundon and Bletchley, and will be installed at Winslow, Newton Longville, Swanbourne, Queen Catherine Road and Verney Junction once received from our supplier. We plan on Winslow and Newton Longville being installed week of 18 January 21, followed by Swanbourne two weeks later and finally Queen Catherine Road and Verney Junction by the end of February. In the meantime, we have jet washes in place at Winslow which was identified as an area of particular concern.

## Salt spreading

A sub-contractor and additional plant is being employed to salt those sections of road that are not normally covered by Buckinghamshire Council for East West Rail designated supply routes or where a section of road has been specified as a recommended diversion to East West Rail road works.

## Creating Social Value

With the ongoing pandemic, many of the community engagement projects the Alliance had planned for 2020 were naturally postponed. Despite that, we have continued to engage with the local community, carrying out a number of projects at a safe, social distance whilst also continuing to carry out charitable activity raising money for local and national charities.

Shortly before Christmas, Alliance project team members held a food collection for Winslow Rotary Club, who went on to distribute the donations amongst local food banks in Winslow, Buckingham and surrounding villages.

The team also raised £320 for Save the Children's Christmas Jumper campaign and colleagues at our construction compound in Bicester – in partnership with our supply chain partners, Buckingham Group, raised a fantastic £1,053.50 by holding a series of cake sales, curry lunches and a raffle. Our thanks to Buckingham Group, who then donated an extra £1,000 to the total, which will be split between three local charities: Marsh Gibbon Pre School, The Hummingbird Cancer Support and Therapy Centre and Aspire Oxfordshire Community Enterprise (for homeless, vulnerable and poverty-stricken people).

Finally, a team of volunteers from the Alliance have been carrying out gardening improvements a refurbishment at Grendon Underwood School, with plans to complete further work with the school in February 2021.



Our team at A1 raised over £2,000 for local charities last Christmas



## Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy Published

The EWR Alliance has committed to creating a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain through the delivery of the EWR2 project. We believe we are the largest UK infrastructure project to commit to this ambitious goal and in order to help us achieve our target, the Alliance has worked closely with Natural England and various environmental bodies to create a Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy, which was submitted to the relevant Local in late 2020 and is now awaiting approval.

The Alliance is working closely with stakeholders to identify opportunities to support us in achieving a 10% net gain in biodiversity across the project and will be running workshops and, if possible, site visits in 2021.

The Alliance has been busy delivering some fantastic benefits to wildlife and has so far constructed a network of Ecological Compensation Sites (ECS) across the project which combined equal the size of the urban area of Winslow. Through monitoring visits, our ecologists have confirmed use of these sites by bats, great crested newts, badger, reptiles, and a host of other protected and notable species. You can read more about the development of our "B24" ECS site below.

With the support of our valued stakeholders we look forward to the exciting things to come in our future Biodiversity Net Gain journey on EWR2.



7000 trees have been planted at our ECS near Winslow

## A year in the life of an Ecological Compensation Site

A key component of the Alliance's Sustainability strategy and our commitment to have a Biodiversity Net Gain of 10% is the creation of Ecological Compensation Sites ECS across the project.

These strategically located sites have been established to help us offset the environmental impact of the project by providing large areas of land for the environment to flourish. The Alliance has established 9 of the 20 ECS due to be created, and has been planting trees, flora and fauna, translocating calcareous grass and other plant species from areas we will be working and providing new habitats for local wildlife.

Many of the sites have been transformed from low value, arable land into purpose-built havens designed to benefit invertebrates, butterflies, birds, bats, great crested newts, otters and badgers.

One of the largest ECS sites we have created is the "B24" site near Winslow. Scroll through the gallery below to see how the B24 site has developed over the past twelve months.



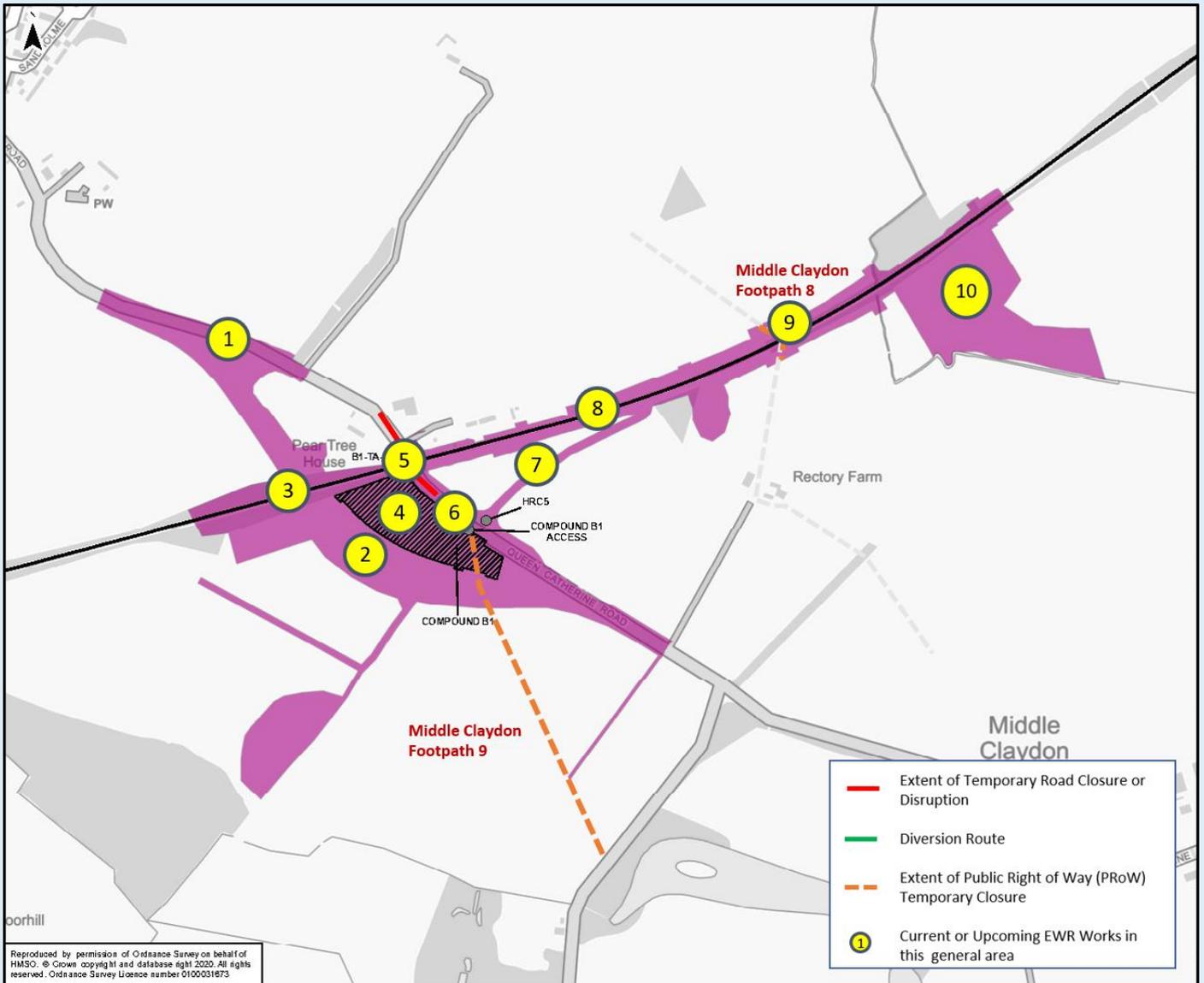
Our Ecological Compensation site near Winslow



## Progress in your area – Steeple Claydon & Verney Junction

The coded maps in this section mark out areas of Steeple Claydon & Verney Junction 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.

### Steeple Claydon





## 1 & 2. Queen Catherine Road overbridge works

**Description:** We will build a new road bridge to provide access over the railway line enabling the removal of the current level crossing on Queen Catherine Road.

**Duration:** Work started in winter 2020 and is due for completion in the summer of 2022.

**Disruption:** There will be some partial road closures as we build the access to the site of the new bridge and the compound is constructed. For details of the road closures please visit [one.network](#). Appropriate signage will also be displayed.

**Recent progress:** We have carried out site clearance work in the area.

**Upcoming Activity:** We will start piling and construction of the bridge foundations in early 2021.

## 3 & 8. Railway works

In spring 2021 we will begin preparing the formation for the new railway to be constructed in these areas. The formation provides the ground upon which the new railway will be installed, consisting of earthworks and drainage installation. The installation of the track is due to begin summer of 2022.

**Recent progress:** We have installed fencing to the rear of the Railway Cottages and completed site clearance works.

## 4. Queen Catherine Road, Steeple Claydon Compound construction

**Description:** We will build a construction compound to provide staff welfare and material storage.

**Duration:** Construction of the compound started in autumn 2020 and once work has been completed the site will be re-instated to its former condition in late 2022.

**Disruption:** A partial road closure has been in place since works to construct the access to the compound began in winter 2020 and will remain in place until the access is finished in early 2021. Once the compound has been built there will be an increase in construction traffic as the new bridge on Queen Catherine Road is constructed.

**Recent progress:** We have started preparing the ground required for the compound construction works and installed the perimeter fencing.

**Upcoming Activity:** We will continue construction of the site compound in early 2021.

## 5. Queen Catherine Road Level Crossing Works

**Description:** When the new Queen Catherine Road overbridge comes into use, the existing level crossing will be removed which will allow us to build the new railway.

**Duration:** Work will take place during spring 2022.

**Disruption:** None for this specific activity.

## 6. Queen Catherine Road utility works

**Description:** We have diverted an existing water main which runs underneath the railway.

**Duration:** Work started in early autumn 2020 and was completed in early winter 2020.

**Recent progress:** Anglian Water have completed the diversion of their existing water main, and the road has been re-opened to traffic.

## 7. Haul Road construction

**Description:** We will construct a new haul road which will allow us to move our construction vehicles and machinery from the compound on Queen Catherine Road along the railway, keeping these vehicles away from local roads.

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

**Disruption:** There will be a partial road closure as the access to the compound is constructed, and a general increase in construction traffic from early 2021.

**Recent progress:** We have started construction of the new haul road.

**Upcoming Activity:** Construction of the haul road and highways access will be completed in early 2021.

## 9. Middle Claydon footbridge construction

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

**Duration:** Work started in winter 2020 and is due for completion in autumn/early winter 2021.

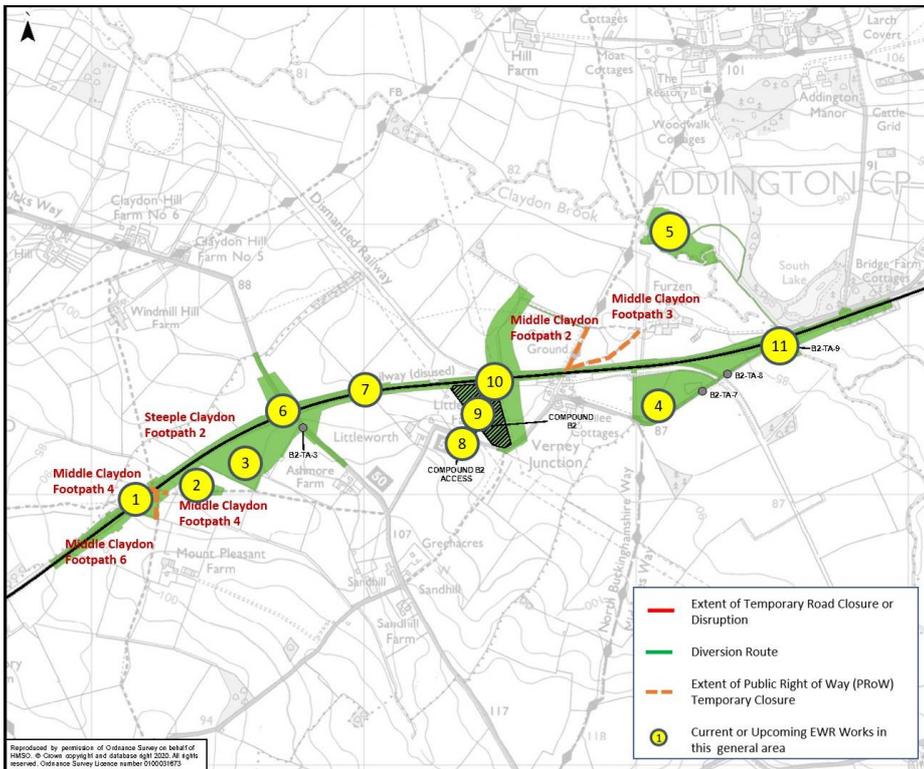
**Disruption:** The existing footpath will be temporarily closed whilst the new footbridge is constructed.

**Recent progress:** We have started preparing the site for the piling works that will be needed to provide the foundation for the new footbridge.

**Upcoming Activity:** Piling and construction of concrete foundations for the new footbridge will begin in early 2021.

## 10. Environmental Compensation Site

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.



## Verney Junction

### 1. Middle Claydon footbridge construction

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

**Duration:** Work will start in early 2021 and is due for completion in late autumn/early winter 2021.

**Disruption:** The existing footpath will be temporarily closed whilst the new footbridge is constructed.

**Recent progress:** We have started preparing the site for the piling works that will be needed to provide the foundation for the new footbridge.

**Upcoming Activity:** Piling and construction of concrete foundations for the new footbridge will begin in early 2021.

### 2, 3, 4 & 5. 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.

### 6. Sandhill Road overbridge repairs

**Description:** We will refurbish the existing Sandhill Road bridge. Works will include new water proofing, brickwork repairs and new decks.

**Duration:** Work started in winter 2020 and is due for completion by the end of 2021.

**Disruption:** We will need to close Sandhill Road when the existing bridge deck is demolished and replaced between spring and summer 2021. Specific details will be published on [one.network](#) and appropriate signage will be displayed.

**Recent progress:** We have cleared the site and constructed concrete slabs to protect the existing gas main which crosses the works site.

**Upcoming Activity:** We will start construction of the haul road around the bridge structure in late winter. This will enable demolition of the existing bridge to start.

### 7. Railway works

In spring 2021 we will begin preparing the formation for the new railway to be constructed in these areas. The formation provides the ground upon which the new railway will be installed, consisting of earthworks and drainage installation. The installation of the track is due to begin summer of 2022.

### 8 & 9. Verney Junction compound construction and access

**Description:** We will build a construction compound to facilitate the new bridge construction at Verney Junction, providing staff welfare and material storage facilities.

**Duration:** Compound construction began in late autumn/early winter 2020 and once work has been completed the site will be re-instated to its former condition in summer 2022.

**Disruption:** There will be a partial road closure during the construction of the compound and an increase in construction traffic throughout the work. All road closures will be published on [one.network](#) and appropriate signage will be displayed.

**Recent progress:** We have cleared the site, installed perimeter fencing and started the earthworks and the construction of the new access to the site compound.

**Upcoming Activity:** The construction of the compound will be completed in late winter.

### 10. Verney Junction overbridge construction

**Description:** A new road bridge will be built over the new railway line which will replace the existing crossing at Littleworth Farm.

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

**Disruption:** There will be an increase in construction traffic during the construction period, however, we are building the structure away from the existing highway to minimise disruption to the local community and minimise impact on Littleworth Farm.

**Upcoming Activity:** We will start clearing the site in winter 2020 and start foundation works in spring 2021.

## 11. Addington Brook and Verney Road underbridge repairs

**Description:** We will refurbish the existing bridge over Addington Brook on Verney Road. Work will include new waterproofing, brickwork repairs and installing new parapets.

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

**Disruption:** There will be temporary road closures required throughout the duration of the work. All road closures will be published on [one.network](#) and appropriate signage will be displayed.

**Recent progress:** Site clearance works have been undertaken and brickwork repairs to Addington underbridge have started. We have also started the construction of a haul road between the Verney Road and Addington bridges, parallel to the existing rail corridor. This will take construction traffic away from the existing highway to minimise disruption to the local community.

**Upcoming Activity:** The brickwork repairs and construction of the haul road will be completed in early 2021. We will then proceed with further strengthening works to the bridge structure.

## Scheme wide earthworks programme

In November 2020 the Alliance began its main earthworks and drainage programme in the Bicester Fringe area. This involves preparing and forming the earthworks required for the construction of the railway infrastructure and track, for example by creating embankments, slopes and cuttings needed for trains to run smoothly. We have aimed to minimise the amount of earthworks required by utilising the existing railway land wherever possible, however, to ensure East West Rail meet modern specifications, it will be necessary to complete circa 1 million m3 of earthworks.

The earthworks programme will be delivered by our two supply chain specialists, J Murphy & Sons and Buckingham Group, who will both be operating out of the construction compounds we are establishing along the route. Most of the work will take place on the railway line itself, however residents may see an increase in construction traffic as the works are completed and there may occasionally be roadworks and closures required in certain locations. These will be publicised on [one.network](#) and appropriate signage will be displayed.

The list below provides a summary of our earthworks programme across the project.

- **Jarvis Lane – Charbridge Lane (approx. 0.5km):** Late 2020 – spring 2021
- **Charbridge Lane to Marsh Gibbon (approx. 3.5km):** summer 2021 – early 2022
- **Marsh Gibbon to Main Street, Charndon (approx. 4.5km):** spring 2021 – summer 2021
- **Charbridge Lane overbridge (phase 1):** completed early 2021
- **Charbridge Lane (phase 2):** spring 2021 – late autumn 2021
- **Charbridge Lane (phase 3):** late 2021 – spring 2022
- **Charbridge Lane (phase 4):** spring 2022 – summer 2022
- **Station Road Launton:** spring 2021 – late autumn 2021
- **Queen Catherine Road to Verney Junction (approx. 3km):** spring 2021 – late autumn 2021
- **Queen Catherine Road embankments:** spring 2021 – summer 2022
- **Verney Junction Overbridge south approach:** Spring 2021 - early 2022
- **Winslow New Station – Furze Lane Compound:** spring 2021 – early 2022
- **Whaddon Road, Newton Longville to Station Road, Swanbourne Compound:** spring 2021 – spring 2022
- **Whaddon Road, Newton Longville to Station Road Compound:** spring 2021 – winter 2021
- **Whaddon Road, Newton Longville to Whaddon Road Compound:** spring 2021 – late 2021
- **Whaddon Road, Newton Longville to Bletchley Road Compound:** spring 2021 – late autumn 2021

→ For any queries or questions please contact us on: [publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk](mailto:publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk)

