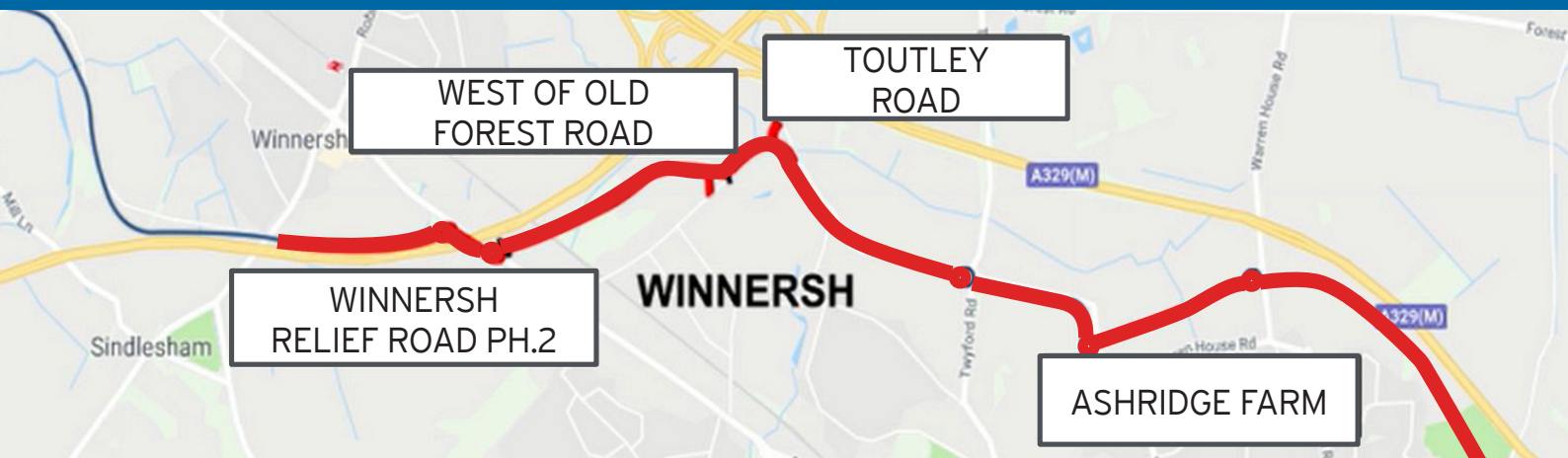


# North Wokingham Distributor Road Newsletter

## May 2020

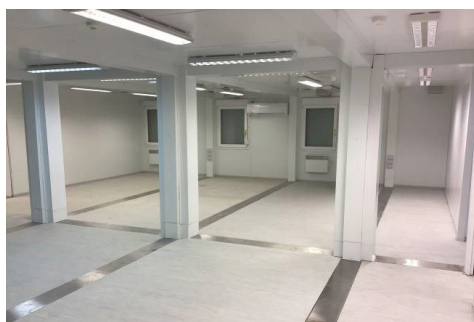


### » Work to date

Works have been progressing well and in the last quarter we have completed vegetation clearance along the new West of Old Forest Road (WoFR) corridor; set up our compound and storage facilities; and constructed a temporary haul road to enable easier access during scheme construction. We are continuing to progress works, in line with the current guidance on COVID-19 from the UK Government and are still on track to complete this scheme around Winter 2021/early 2022.



Aerial view of West of Old Forest Road section of North Wokingham Distributor Road



New compound at west of Old Forest Road now almost complete with new fixtures and fittings being installed in preparation for opening in a few weeks.



Works are progressing at former allotment site next to the BP Garage on the main Reading Road in readiness for the bridge abutment works.



Temporary haul road which runs from Old Forest Road will enable easier access during main construction.



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## » Upcoming Works (April - May)

- Construction of piling platforms for the foundations of the new railway bridge on both the east and west sides of the road to continue.
- Set up of compound and storage areas will be completed.
- Destructive search activities along Old Forest Road will be completed. We need to undertake these without damaging the gas pipe that currently sits in the verge on the north side of Old Forest Road, using a technique called vacuum excavation.
- Adjustments to our vacuum excavation works on Old Forest Road have been put in place as of last week. The key change has been to relocate the current vacuum excavator teams to the far end of Old Forest Road (OFR) which should, for the next few weeks as works progress back up the OFR, provide a period of respite and hopefully get us closer to the possible end of the COVID-19 lockdown. The works will return to their original location early in May with around 3-4 days of work to be completed at that point. The main reason for us to press ahead with our works during this lockdown period, in line with current guidance on COVID-19 from the UK Government, is to allow this section of work to be completed within the timescales allowed for within our Great Crested Newt licence from Natural England. Failing to do so puts the project at risk of significant delay. Temporary traffic management will be in place during off-peak hours (9.30am - 3.30pm), later this Spring for up to five weeks. Please refer to the Council social media/Facebook pages for further information on these closures. Alternatively, details of upcoming road closures can be found at <https://one.network>

## » Planned Utility Works

Between now and late Spring, there is a list (available on request) of planned utility works which are scheduled to be carried out by utility providers including SSE, Thames Water, BT and SGN. The list includes: cable diversions; replacing and relocating a sub-station; lowering and diverting existing ducts; decommissioning an old chamber; installing portable mains. While these works are necessary, timings may change for reasons beyond our control.

## » Country Park

A significant focus of our works to date has been the creation of a new seven-hectare Country Park.

The park features 2,500 new trees, four new ponds and wildflower meadows. Completing these works in advance of main construction was necessary in order to enable us to 'translocate' protected environmental species living along the route of the new road into a habitat.

So far the team have moved reptiles (slow worms, common lizard, great crested newts), all species which are legally protected and considered to be of significance in terms of biodiversity conservation. In total over 200 amphibians and reptiles were translocated, including 75 great crested newts.



Colony of great crested newts (GCNs) on left; and right, a smooth newt, also known as the 'common newt'.



Great crested newt, left, also known as the 'warty newt' and right, a slow worm which is a legless lizard.



Shown here is BLEC machinery, a fast and effective way of seeding all areas. The low ground pressure exerted by the Cultipack Seeder makes it particularly effective on sensitive ground.



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The scheme was granted a licence from Natural England to move great crested newts from the construction area into the new habitat. This involved putting up a fence around the construction zone (temporary amphibian fencing) and ecologists attending the site daily over a two month period to check pitfall traps (buckets dug into the ground) for GCNs and other common amphibians such as frogs and toads.

### Country Park Access Arrangements



Certain areas of the Country Park remain closed whilst grass seeding takes root but there are plenty of paths and other amenities for the public. Wheelchair users are asked to use the access gate next to Old Forest Road bridge, as shown on this location plan. We kindly ask you to bear with us while we carry out these necessary works which, once complete will be a lovely asset for the whole community to enjoy.



Artist's Impression of the new Railway Bridge on WoFR



Artist's Impression of Toutley Road on WoFR

### Contact Us:

If you know of anyone in your local community who does not have access to the internet but would like to receive this e-newsletter, please let us know. For all enquiries relating to this scheme please e-mail **NWDR@balfourbeatty.com** which is monitored regularly or telephone **0800 121 4444**.

For further information please visit: [www.wokingham.gov.uk/roadworks-and-outdoor-maintenance/major-new-roads/](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/roadworks-and-outdoor-maintenance/major-new-roads/)