

Contact our HS2 Helpdesk team on **08081 434 434**

HS2 Update

Brackley to Southam | June 2020

High Speed Two (HS2) is the new high speed railway for Britain. In response to the Covid-19 virus we have worked hard to ensure that our working practices are fully aligned with the Site Operating Procedures produced by the Construction Leadership Council. These have been endorsed by Public Health England.



What is coming up in your area?

In preparation for our main works to start, we are undertaking the following works over the summer months:

- on site archaeology
- species translocation
- ecology site maintenance
- ecological surveys
- boundary fencing

We have taken a brief pause in places to fully assess how to work as safely as possible during the Covid-19 crisis. Over summer however, we are gearing up for a programme of activity which will lead to lots of archaeological and ecological discovery in your local area.

We have found evidence of significant Roman and Iron Age activity in the area. We will be digging trenches to confirm this evidence over the summer. Look out for our webinars where we will be sharing our discoveries in the coming months.

We are carrying on with our ecological surveying looking for great crested newts, bats, reptiles and water voles.

As the summer is the season where newt and reptile species are active, we will also be moving populations to their new habitat sites.

Ecological mitigation sites which we have recently established will go through routine summer maintenance. Boundary fencing has progressed well onsite and will largely be complete by mid-June.

We will be keeping our local websites www.hs2innorthants.co.uk and www.hs2inwarwickshire.co.uk up to date with information on our works, and the measures we have in place to maintain the safety of the community and our workforce.

Fusion works

These works will continue throughout 2020.

Working hours:

Monday to Friday
8.00am – 6.00pm
Some brief non-invasive weekend work may be required for newt translocation.

Our contractors may be on site for one hour's start-up and shutdown either side of these times

Temporary traffic lights may be in place to facilitate the safe operation of these works. We will update you as this work progresses.

Sites may be manned with 24-hour security and temporary flood lighting with site storage and welfare vehicles.

We will mitigate impacts such as traffic and noise as far as possible.



We are boarding onto a journey through time...

Archaeological works

As part of HS2's enabling works, hundreds of field archaeologists, specialists and scientists will be exploring and recording sites between Brackley and Southam.

This work is part of the largest archaeological dig in Europe and recent surveys have indicated that there may be a wealth of exciting finds to uncover. Specialists are currently undergoing work to confirm the evidence of significant prehistoric Roman and Iron Age settlements in the area.

What are we looking for?

Excavation works are likely to identify a rich archaeological landscape likely to date from 3000BC or even older. Finds are likely to include those associated with settlement, agricultural and possibly burials. The results will provide archaeologists extensive information on how the landscape looked during the time. Current results indicate that the area was extensively populated due to its rich agricultural land.

Methods

Desktop study

Before work commences, archaeologists conduct research to first establish what may be contained within the site area. A desktop study is conducted, which is a search of the archives to uncover records of any historic settlements or activity. Desktop research, for example, was conducted around the Battle of Edgcote to uncover clues that may help when carrying out work onsite.

Geophysical survey

Once the desktop study has concluded, a geophysical survey is undertaken. Specialists walk the site with scanning equipment to produce a detailed map of the area. This map shows features below the earth's surface that can be interpreted to indicate specific archaeology. This method is neither invasive nor destructive which means we can get useful information on a large area without affecting the environment.



Trial Trenching

Trial trenching is the first work that breaks soil. Shallow trenches roughly 2 metres by 25 or 50 metres are dug to confirm the results of the geophysical survey. The trenches are usually spread evenly across the site to give the best chance of capturing finds. Once this evaluation has been complete, an assessment of whether excavation will need to be conducted begins. The shallow trenches are filled back in once completed.

Excavation works

When archaeology of significance has been identified, larger areas will be stripped to open up the archaeology in full. This will allow the archaeological teams to create a more complete picture of the findings.

We will be hosting a series of a webinars to illustrate what life would have been like in the area over 1000 years ago to local communities. This is an exciting opportunity for discovery and learning and we will be sharing our finds with you as they emerge.

Traffic management

Throughout some of the more involved work such as trial trenching and excavations, you may notice increase traffic in the local area. To access some sites, we may be required to use temporary traffic lights for safe movement of machinery.

Our environmental management includes...

Habitat creation

We have built a number of new habitat sites along the HS2 route that will be populated not just by protected species, but also by a naturally diverse range of plants and animals. Some of the key features that have been put in place include:

- wildlife ponds with aquatic planting,
- hibernacula's – places where reptiles can go in the winter,
- bat boxes,
- reptile basking banks,
- planting of wetland and dry grassland and
- planting of Alder and Black Poplar trees.

We will be shortly begin moving species to their new habitats. Before we can do this, we have a range of work to do first.

Newt capture

We will move the newts from an area scheduled for future works to a new habitat site. Ecologists use pit fall traps (buckets that the newts walk into) and mats which are set along the line of the fencing (please see images below). When the newts move from the breeding pond, they move towards the line of the fence until they either fall into the trap or hide under a mat. All traps are checked daily by experienced ecologists who are accredited under the HS2 Great Crested Newt Licence.



Grass and shrub maintenance

Grass and shrub cutting works are undertaken under the instructions of the ecologist on site, who decides the appropriate methods based on the

vegetation present. This involves a detailed hand search to determine if any ecology is present. If it is found that the area is clear then the works will be allowed to take place. A small workforce will use machinery and hand-held equipment to cut sections grass of hedgerows. Vegetation such as hedges will be cut down to 150 millimetres above ground.

Maintenance of sites

Areas that have been cleared will be maintained in a condition that makes it unsuitable for newts. The area will be checked by an ecologist and any suitable hibernation or vegetation that may provide habitat for newts will be hand searched and then strimmed down to 150 millimetres. A second cut will be undertaken on the following day, after a recheck of the area by the ecologist. The second cut should take the vegetation down to 50 millimetres above ground level, the vegetation will then be maintained at this height to discourage newts from entering the area.

Existing pond removal

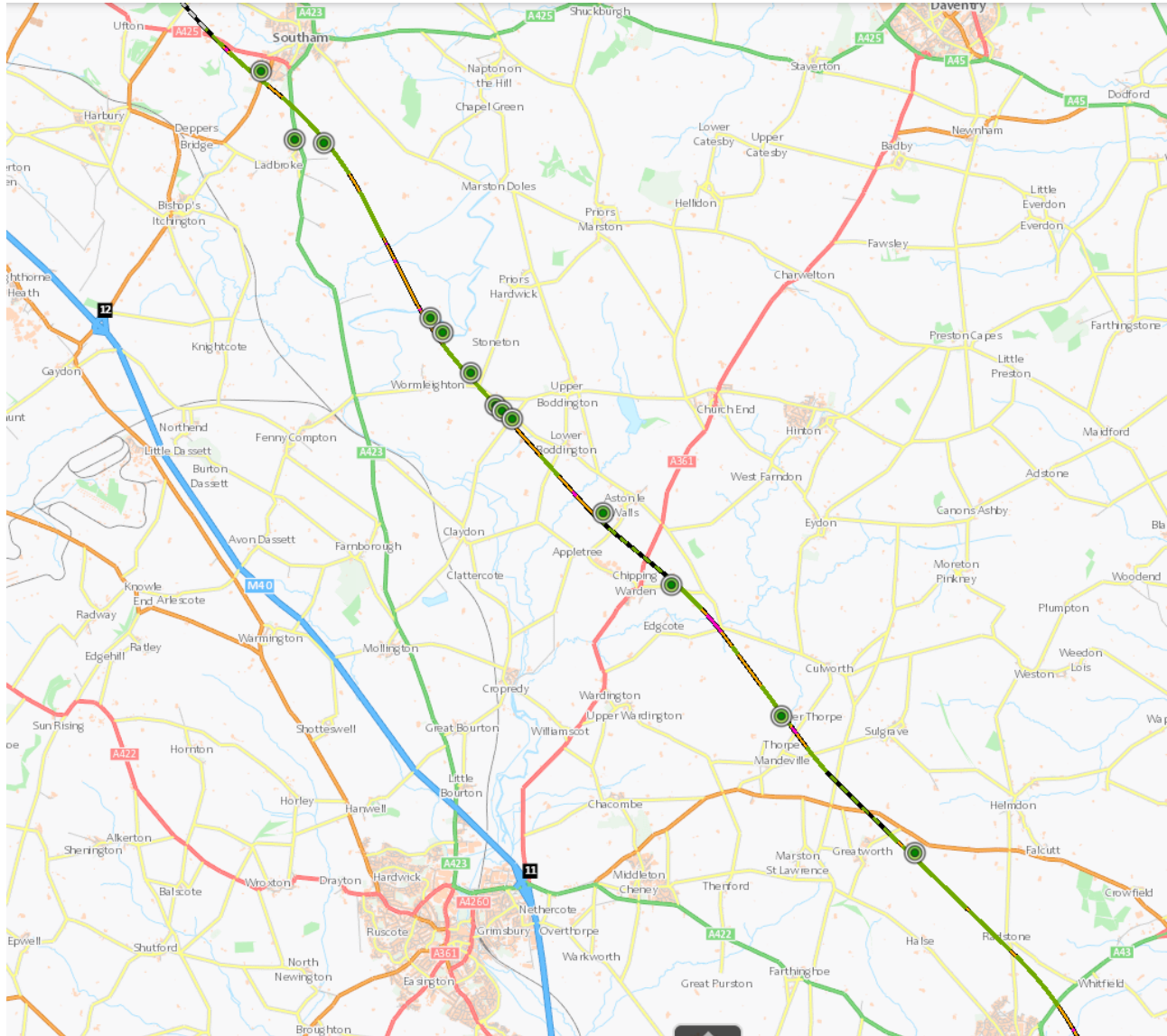
Once newts have been moved to their new habitat, all vegetation is to be removed from the existing pond before any clearance works start. The pond will be drained using a pump with suitable filters to prevent any newts being drained with the water. This work will all be carried out under the supervision of an ecologist. A fingertip search for newts will be undertaken and once it is confirmed that there are no newts present, the pond will then be filled in.

Traffic management

Whilst we are carrying out any works that is near to the public highway, we will complete the works using temporary traffic lights. This is to manage the traffic for the safety of road users and personnel involved in the works. We will provide updates to the locations and duration of any traffic management to the local Parish Council and on www.hs2northants.co.uk and www.hs2inwarwickshire.co.uk.

Ecological works between Brackley to Southam

The green symbols represent areas where some of our ecological works are taking place over summer 2020



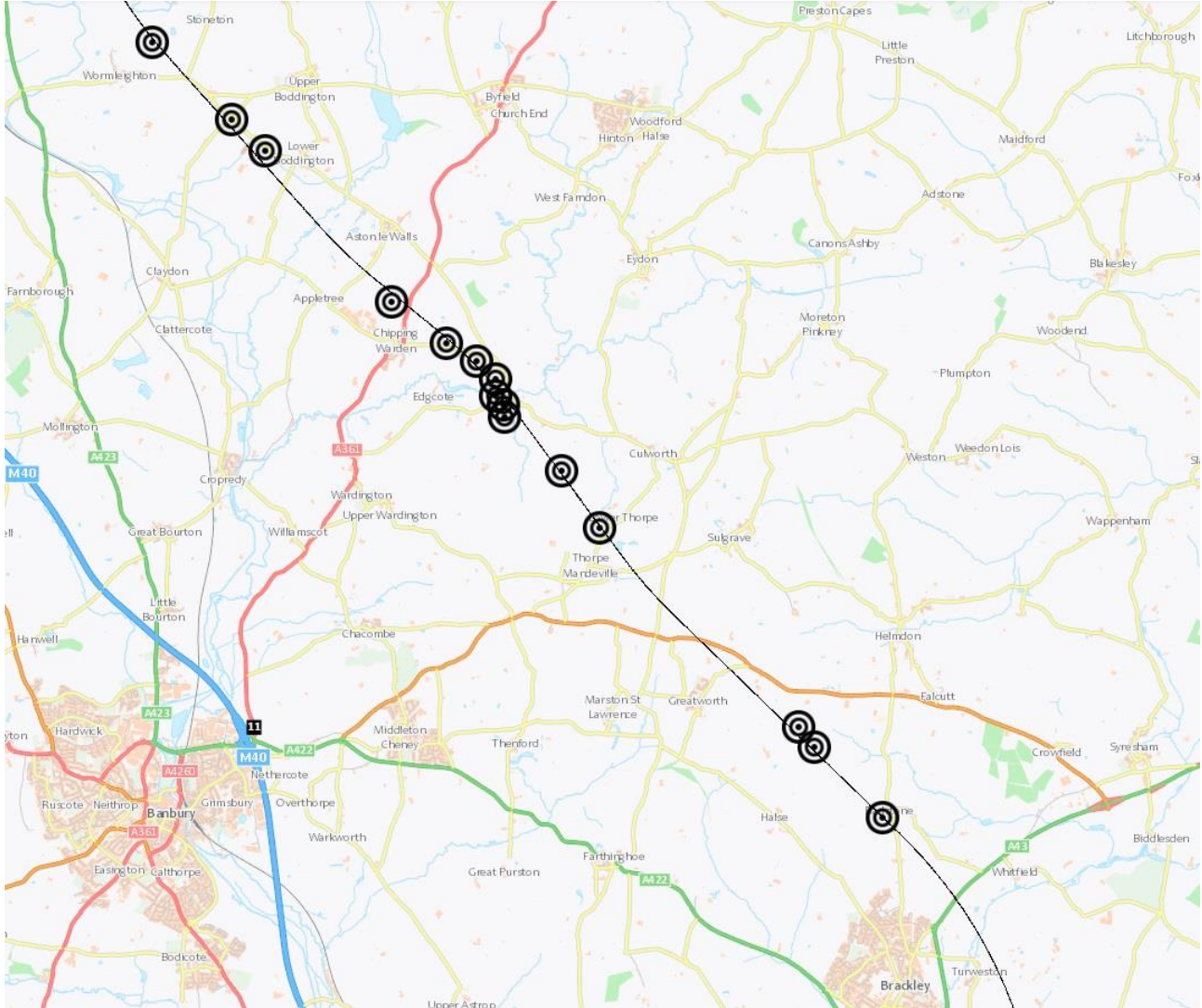
Archaeological works coming up in Warwickshire

Black symbols represent areas where works are taking place over summer 2020



Archaeological works coming up in Northamptonshire

Black symbols represent areas where works are taking place



Keeping you informed

We are committed to keeping you informed about work on HS2. This includes ensuring you know what to expect and when to expect it, as well as how we can help.

Residents' Charter and Commissioner

The Residents' Charter is our promise to communicate as clearly as we possibly can with people who live along or near the HS2 route.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-residents-charter

We also have an independent Residents' Commissioner whose job is to make sure we keep to the promises we make in the Charter and to keep it under constant review. Find reports at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-ltd-residents-commissioner

You can contact the Commissioner at:
residentscommissioner@hs2.org.uk

Construction Commissioner

The Construction Commissioner's role is to mediate and monitor the way in which HS2 Ltd manages and responds to construction complaints. You can contact the Construction Commissioner by emailing:
complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk

Property and compensation

You can find out all about HS2 and properties along the line of route by visiting:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-property

Find out if you're eligible for compensation at:

www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2

Holding us to account

If you are unhappy for any reason you can make a complaint by contacting our HS2 Helpdesk team. For more details on our complaints process, please visit our website:

www.hs2.org.uk/how-to-complain

Contact Us

Contact our HS2 Helpdesk team all day, every day of the year on:

 Freephone **08081 434 434**

 Minicom **08081 456 472**

 Email **HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk**

Write to:

FREEPOST

HS2 Community Engagement

Website **www.hs2.org.uk**

To keep up to date with what is happening in your local area, visit:
www.HS2inyourarea.co.uk

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