

Notice of works near Mixbury

May 2021 | www.hs2.org.uk

High Speed Two (HS2) is the new high speed railway for Britain. We are continually reviewing the works on our construction sites in line with Government and Public Health England (PHE) advice on dealing with COVID-19. The Government's current strategy makes it clear that construction activity can continue as long as it complies with this guidance.

Please be assured that only sites that can operate within the guidelines are operational. All sites will remain under constant review. We have postponed all face-to-face engagement events and meetings and have put in place a number of channels to communicate with communities, such as letters and phone calls, as well as updates and alerts from each of the local community websites. You can sign up for regular updates in your local area at www.hs2inbucksandox.co.uk

Why are we doing this works now?

We have a number of preparatory activities taking place over the coming weeks ahead of the future construction of the railway. We recently wrote to you with information about the construction of a temporary compound, archaeology works, ecology and utility surveys. We now need to let you know about the next phase of vegetation clearance to enable the construction of an internal access road between Chetwode and Turweston. The temporary access road will be used to transport excavated materials and construction equipment along the line of route.

This access road will help us keep HGVs (heavy good vehicles) within our working areas and it will reduce the need for transporting large loads on the local road network. Once our preparatory works are completed, and the internal haul road is built, we will start the construction of the railway.

If you have a question about HS2 or our works, please contact our HS2 Helpdesk team on 08081 434 434 or email hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk

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Duration of works

Phase 1 works will begin in early May 2021 until end May 2021

What to expect

To complete this work, we need to; undertake ecology surveys, undertake planting, clear vegetation and move woodland soil

You may notice some extra traffic on the roads and noise from the machinery. Our normal working hours are between 8:00am and 6:00pm Monday – Friday and Saturday 8:00am – 1:00pm

What we will do

We will be working hard to ensure any impact on residents is kept to a minimum during these works.

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What will we be doing?

Before the construction of the railway can start, we need to undertake several activities, including:

- Site compound (as previously detailed)
- ecology surveys
- track matting
- woodland clearance
- ancient woodland soil movement

Site compound

As previously advised a site compound is set up off Featherbed Lane to facilitate these works. The compound set up will be used for welfare vehicles, staff car parking and the site storage of machinery and materials. The site will be secured with 24/7 security and have track matting and temporary lighting.

Ecology surveys

Work will be conducted in compliance with all applicable HS2 and Natural England licenses for protected species. Before any vegetation is cleared it will be thoroughly inspected by qualified ecologists. Any protected species found to be present will be recorded, appropriate buffers established, and no vegetation will be cleared until appropriate mitigation is in place or the species have naturally left the site, including any nesting birds. The vegetation clearance will be undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation and where appropriate in accordance with:

- HS2 Organisational European Protected Species Licence for Badger WML-024
- HS2 Organisational European Protected Species Great for Crested Newt Licences WML025
- Natural England bat licence.

Further details are on the environmental statement are available online.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-phase-one-environmental-statement-volume-5-ecology>

The work on HS2 is guided by High-Speed Rail (LondonWestMidlands) Act 2017.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/7/contents/enacted>

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Site preparation

Ahead of the main construction works we need to prepare the line of route. This includes the partial clearance of Mossycorner Spinney and the woodland to the north. Details of the clearance areas, areas of soils translocation and planting can be found on the map in this notification. The vegetation and ancient woodland soils will be removed by a specialist team using machinery and handheld tools. We will be installing additional temporary track matting between Mossycorner Spinney and the receptor site.

The remaining requirement at Mossycorner Spinney and the adjacent woodland will be removed later in the year under phase two. We will write to you again ahead of these works.

Phase 1: May 2021

Through comprehensive ecological surveys, including tree climbing, two areas of woodland tree clearance have been identified to form a 7 metre wide vehicle access route through the woodland. A bat licence has been approved by Natural England. All works will be undertaken in accordance with that licence.

In accordance with the licence we will begin clearing a 7 metre strip through Mossycorner Spinney, which will proceed through the existing woodland to the north, also 7 metres wide. There will be a 0.5 metre buffer zone either side of the 6 metres required width for the access haul road.

As part of the 7 metre wide clearance of Mossycorner Spinney we will be progressively transferring the woodland soils and identified saplings to the receptor site which will have been secured with fencing to protect from damage by animals. Please see map enclosed.

Phase 2 works are planned for later this year and we will write to you ahead of these works.

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Public rights of way

The public rights of way in this area will not be affected by any of these works and shall remain open as usual.

How will you ensure that you do not affect nesting birds and other ecology?

Our work is programmed to take place during the early part of the bird nesting season, therefore much of the ground level vegetation within the two areas will also be cleared to reduce the likelihood of birds nesting in the area.

Prior to any vegetation removal an ecologist will survey the area to be cleared and record any findings. Any vegetation that cannot be removed, due to the presence of breeding birds, or any other protected species, will be left undisturbed with the appropriate buffer until further surveys confirm that the birds have fledged and the nest is no longer in use, or other mitigation is put in place as necessary.

Ancient Woodland clearance

Where effects on ancient woodland cannot be reasonably avoided, we have committed to provide a range of compensation measures, in line with advice provided by Natural England and the Forestry Commission, including ancient woodland soil transfer and new planting. The compensatory planting in our plans aims to join up existing ancient woodlands to deliver a more joined environment that will support biodiversity. We will maintain, monitor and manage these sites for up to 50 years to ensure they are established correctly.

We have published an Ancient Woodland Strategy, outlining each directly impacted ancient woodland and the proposed compensation measures to be taken in response to any losses at these woodlands. This is based on the impacts identified in the Environmental Statement and taking account of the Supplementary Environmental Statements and Additional Provisions. We have subsequently further developed the design for Mossycorner Spinney based upon further surveys of the site: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-phase-one-ancient-woodland-strategy>

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Seasonality of ancient woodland soils translocation

Ancient woodlands are extremely important for the environment, typically, they are areas that have been continuously wooded since 1600 AD and provide complex and unique ecosystems. The aim of ancient woodland soils transfer is to create a woodland that replicates as much as possible the characteristics of ancient woodland, acknowledging that it will never be possible to directly compensate for ancient woodland loss. We will transfer the soil by excavating it from the area known as the donor site and moving it to a suitable new area known as the receptor site.

A suitable receptor site adjacent to Mossycorner Spinney has been chosen to allow this.

The phase one soil transfer is scheduled outside the optimum part of the season and this may have a detrimental effect. We will look to identify ways to mitigate this. The majority of the works take place under Phase two, these works are scheduled for the optimum season later this year.

The location for the soil transfer is known as the receptor site. The design of the site has been informed by site surveys carried out by experienced surveyors. During this process the team has identified woodland items such as deadwood, coppice stools and saplings that are to be translocated to the new site. The Phase 1 site will now be cleared of trees and vegetation and the pre-identified key woodland items are to be translocated. Soil is then carefully excavated and transferred to the receptor site. The new site will then be monitored and managed to ensure that new vegetation can become established.

We are working with a team of experienced habitat translocation contractors to ensure that protected species, deadwood habitats and the unique flora associated with these environments are transferred successfully.

The receptor site, will be surrounded with deer and rabbit proof fencing to protect the planted saplings and soils that have been transferred.

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What is the benefit of transferring woodland soils?

We believe that translocating ancient woodland soils will provide a better outcome for these important soil resources which have developed over many hundreds of years compared to, for example, the disposal of this material to landfill. The area where the soil is moved from is known as a 'donor site' and the area where the soil will be moved to is known as a 'receptor site'. In terms of soils handling, it is also considered better in some cases to conduct this operation outside of the dormant season as the soils are less likely to be wet or frozen and the soil structure (and therefore potential soil structure) is easier to preserve. However, the impacts on plants of soil transfer in the growing season is difficult to predict.

Soil survey data has been used to design soil transfer by:

- designing and plan the work, including the selection of the most suitable transfer process;
- guiding the overseeing soil scientist and ecologist;
- providing a permanent record of the original woodland soil against which soil development in the receptor site can be compared; and,
- helping replicate the soil profile from donor to receptor site (along with other data such as hydrological conditions and topography).

Considerations such as low value and/or unsuitable soils for transfer are assessed by a soil scientist and ecologist. Reasons for low value may be compaction from pedestrian traffic caused by protester activity or due to the presence of invasive non-native species.

Once the soils have been transferred, daily soil checks are required during the translocation programme of both donor and receptor sites to check if soils can be transferred and whether any remedial measures are required, such as watering or shading due to seasonal changes in climate.

How will this affect you?

We will be working hard to ensure any impact on residents is kept to a minimum during these and all works. You may notice some extra traffic on the roads immediately around the site with workers moving to and from the site. You may notice some noise from the machinery while our work is taking place. Our normal working hours are between 8:00am and 6:00pm Monday – Friday and 8:00am – 1:00pm Saturdays. The site will be open an hour either side of these times for the workforce to start up and shut down.

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

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Location of preparation works and receptor site



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

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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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-speed-two-ltd-privacy-notice>

Reference number: FUS_AWN_0202.

HS2-EW-Fusion -Ph1-Ar-Ce-C2-Eco-20-25/03/2021

High Speed Two (HS2) Limited, registered in England and Wales.

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Company registration number: 06791686. VAT registration number: 888 8512 56.