

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

# Ecology Update

Various locations | Spring 2022

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. We will be keeping our local website [www.hs2inyourarea.co.uk](http://www.hs2inyourarea.co.uk) up to date with information on our works.



## What are we doing?

We will be continuing our ecology works from March until Summer 2022. The works will consist of;

- Species translocation
- Vegetation clearance
- Ecology site maintenance
- Fencing
- Bat mitigation works

## Installation of newt fencing

Newt fencing consists mainly of plastic membrane which is buried into the ground and supported by stakes. This fencing is important to prevent newts entering the work area.

Collected newts are then taken to an ecology approved mitigation site that has been prepared for them and is suitable to support the population of newts (i.e., suitable aquatic vegetation and bankside vegetation).

## Newt trapping

We will move the newts from an area scheduled for future works to a new habitat site. Ecologists use pit fall traps and mats which are set along the line of the fencing.

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.

The works are due to start during March and will continue until Summer 2022.

## Working hours:

Monday to Friday

8.00am – 6.00pm

Saturday

8:00am – 1:00pm

Bat activity surveys take place between dusk and dawn. During these surveys torches may be seen.

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

Take care to respect your community



## Future works

### Vegetation clearance

All clearance works are undertaken under the instructions of the ecologist on site, who decides the appropriate methods of clearance 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 vegetation clearance will be allowed to take place. A small workforce will use machinery and hand-held equipment to clear sections of hedgerows and trees. Vegetation, trees and hedges will be cut down to 15 centimetres above ground.

### Ecology site maintenance

Once vegetation has been removed, it is important to maintain the area, to prevent species from re-entering. 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 trimmed down to 15 centimetres. A second cut will be undertaken on the following day, after a further check of the area by the ecologist, who will move any newts found to the new habitat site. The second cut should take the vegetation down to 5 centimetres above ground level, the vegetation will then be maintained at this height to discourage newts from entering the area.

### Fencing

Where appropriate, some sections of vegetation will be replaced with temporary fencing, this will help keep the site secure ahead of future construction activities. The boundary fencing will mainly be of post and wire construction.

### Bat Surveys

As part of our continued mitigation work, we will be gathering further information about the bats in your area, this includes their foraging, commuting and roosting activities. To understand this, we need to complete bat surveys, the following information explains how we do this and what you may see happening locally.

In order to ensure that no bat roosts are damaged and to update the knowledge of known bat roosts we need to complete two types of bat surveys

- Structures and tree inspections – daytime
- Bat activity surveys – dusk and dawn

The following sections give more detail on each activity.

### Structures and tree inspections

Structures and tree surveys are carried during the day in order to check for potential bat roosting features or evidence of roosting bats.

### Structures

The entire structures will be checked for bats with particular attention being paid to the loft or roof spaces. This is a simple check by the ecologist who will search the structure, looking for the signs that would reveal the presence of bats; such as bat droppings. Internal and external inspections may need ladders or mobile working platforms or other access facilitation depending on the structure such as buildings or bridges.

## Future works

### Bat activity survey

Once a potential bat roosting site has been identified, a bat activity survey may take place. This will depend on the category of bat roost potential the feature is given. These surveys are carried out either at dusk or dawn or both and last between 2 – 3 hours and will begin 15 minutes before dusk or dawn. Generally, a pre-planned route is walked this may include listening stops to sample the bat activity. Two people carry out night time surveys. During these surveys' torches may be seen, but generally we try not to use them.

### Licensing and Mitigation

Where surveys and assessments have identified that there is likely to be an impact on roosting bats, then we will apply for a bat licence to Natural England. Once the licence has been granted, the trees in the licence area will have a pre fell-tree inspection usually via a tree climb. When the further inspection is complete, and the tree is found to be free of any bats the feature, such as a tree limb containing a hole, will be removed before the rest of the tree is felled. Any bats found during the inspections will be safely relocated to a pre-installed bat box.

Mitigation for the effects on bats is identified in the approved licence area. This can include installation of bat boxes on nearby retained trees to provide roost habitat and creation of habitat for bat foraging and commuting.

Example of ecologist checking tree for a bat roost



Example of a suitable tree for bat roosts



# 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 you.

## The Residents' Commissioner

The independent Residents' Commissioner oversees and monitors our commitments to you.

The commissioner's reports and our responses can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-ltd-residents-commissioner](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-ltd-residents-commissioner)

The Residents' Commissioner makes sure we fulfil the commitments in the HS2 Community Engagement Strategy (<https://bit.ly/3oOA25j>).

The Residents' Commissioner can be contacted on: [residentscommissioner@hs2.org.uk](mailto:residentscommissioner@hs2.org.uk)

## Construction Commissioner

The independent Construction Commissioner regularly meets our Chief Executive Officer to raise any concerns or emerging trends across HS2.

The Construction Commissioner's role has been developed to monitor the way we manage and respond to construction complaints.

The commissioner mediates on disputes about construction, involving individuals and organisations, that we can't resolve. The commissioner advises members of the public about how to make a complaint about construction.

The Construction Commissioner can be contacted on: [complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk](mailto:complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk)

## Property and compensation

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

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-property](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-property)

Find out if you can claim compensation at:

[www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2](http://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 the HS2 Helpdesk. For more details on our complaints process, please visit:

[www.hs2.org.uk/in-your-area/contact-us/how-to-complain/](http://www.hs2.org.uk/in-your-area/contact-us/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](http://www.hs2.org.uk)**

To keep up to date with what is happening in your local area, visit: **[www.HS2inyourarea.co.uk](http://www.HS2inyourarea.co.uk)**

**Please contact us if you'd like a free copy of this document in large print, Braille, audio or 'easy read' format. You can also contact us for help and information in a different language.**

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