GRIFFITHS
civil engineering and construction

Cross Hands

Project Bulletin
Autumn Edition

Project Update

As the construction of the Cross Hands Economic Link Road enters its final phase this newsletter captures some of the changes and developments which have taken place. The site required considerable clearance with careful management of the environment being a key element. Several tons of wood were chipped and used for biomass. Various challenges along the way, including the impact of Covid have been dealt with and the site team has more recently faced extreme weather conditions; unusually heat related rather than wet weather although this has on occasion disrupted working hours. The increased cost of materials and issues in the supply chain has created difficulties but the support of a very local work force at Cross Hands and sourcing local materials has lessened the impact faced by many other companies.

Environment

Habitat surveys undertaken by ecologists, some as long ago as 2015 described much of the land as marshy grassland with some semi-improved grassland. Key species within this are Purple Moorgrass, Devils Bit Scabious and Rush Pasture. Devils Bit Scabious is a plant food for the caterpillars of the Marsh Fritillary Butterfly common in the area.

The presence of otters and other wildlife has been carefully considered throughout the works and a mammal underpass has been constructed to minimise disruption. A cattle underpass also forms part of the scheme. The creation of attenuation ponds, a natural filtration system also encourages wildlife. Hedgerow translocation was only carried out during the winter months when the plants are dormant and before the nesting season starts - October to February/early March inclusive, depending on the year, but avoiding frosty weather and in compliance with the restrictions imposed by the Dormouse licence.

Griffiths is committed to safeguarding the environment and has moved towards using solar powered generators at this scheme and some sites use electric vehicles and HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil) instead of diesel to reduce carbon emissions. The site was visited by Gorslas Primary School pupils who studied the ecology at the site and pupils from Dyffryn Taf Secondary School enjoyed a 'behind the scenes' visit during the first phase of construction meeting the site team and exploring the many different career options in the industry.

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Community Benefits

Griffiths has been pleased to support local initiatives such as the surfacing works and donation of drainage pipes at Carmel Hall, the preparation of the land and more recently surfacing works at Gât Hall Multi-Use Games Area, sponsorship for local sports teams and the solar panel installation at Penybanc Rugby Club. Keep Wales Tidy has also been supported locally.

Contribution to Education

A number of young people have been employed by this scheme and have undertaken different qualifications whether HNC, HND or degrees. They have gained extensive experience progressing their career paths with the company. Work placements have provided an opportunity for new entrants to experience civil engineering and construction before committing to a career in the industry.

The Griffiths Public Liaison Officer has worked closely with Careers Wales in supporting careers fairs and school activities such as supporting pupils with mock interviews. Presentations were made online during lockdown and the return of the school visits has been welcomed.

We would love to hear your comments, please get in touch via our webpage community.alungriffiths.co.uk or contact our Community Liaison Officer, Jane Howells on **0330 0414651*** or **jane.howells@alungriffiths.co.uk**

*Calls are charged at national rates and included in inclusive minute plans for landlines and mobiles