

Inverness West Link Stage 2 - June 2019 Update

Progress

Works commenced on site following the turf cutting ceremony on the 4th June. The initial works comprised, the erection of heras fencing to the South of the A82. This was followed by the stripping of topsoil across the compound and road alignment area, all undertaken under an archaeological watching brief. Despite the site being a former golf course, a large amount of archaeological remains have been uncovered and investigated.

The site cabins were delivered to the site and are in the process of being connected to the relevant services.

The Eastern SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage) has been excavated and the gravels used as fill material on the surrounding access roads.



Placing & compacting of fill material on new access road

Planned Works

The planned works for the next month will comprise of :

- The disconnection of services to the clubhouse and the commencement with the demolition.
- The erection of heras fencing and the stripping of topsoil to the North of the A82.
- Installation of drainage on the South of the A82

- Complete excavation of the SUDS pond and the placement of fill material on the new access roads.
- Installation of trial piles on each side of the canal and complete the site office establishment.

Archaeology



A Flint Knife uncovered on the former Torvean Golf Course

Groundworks for Phase 2 of the Inverness West Link Road on the north side of the Caledonian Canal have uncovered remnants of prehistoric archaeological remains buried below the former Torvean Golf Course.

Groups of hearth pits and the remains of structures represent periods of settlement and occupation on the site from at least the Neolithic Period, approximately 5,500 years ago. The archaeological team from AOC Archaeology's Inverness office are working closely with RJ McLeod to ensure work for the new road continues during the course of the archaeological excavation.

“We have been recovering some really interesting finds, including a significant amount of flint artefacts from the site. It looks like they were manufacturing flint tools, such as knives and arrowheads, and discarding incomplete or broken ones in the pits. While groups of post-holes appear to represent timber-built structures, other areas contain a number of fire-pits or hearths, as well as one large feature interpreted as a possible standing stone hole,” said AOC's Operations Manager, Mary Peteranna.

Ecology

The site was surveyed for various protected species prior to works commencing. As it was an existing golf course, with the A82 on one side and the canal on the other it is a busy and noisy location therefore no species were found. There is however historic evidence of otters along the canal banks which we will keep a closer eye when we commence work in this area.

An E-DNA survey was undertaken on the surrounding water habitat to determine if it was suitable for Great Crested Newt, this was found not to be the case.

Community Benefit

Various members of staff from the RJ McLeod site team, sub-contractors, family and friends recently entered 2 teams in the annual Highland Cross. In doing so they raised almost £5000 for local charities, one of the teams were fast enough to win the first business team title!



Highland Cross – Over The Hill 2 team!



Cycling Without Age

Members of staff have volunteered for Cycling Without Age, a social enterprise which offers mobility to the elderly often collecting them from care homes and hospitals and takes them on tours around Inverness.

We are hoping to run a Bridges to Schools event for Primary schools in Inverness. This is based on ICE Activity that aims to raise awareness of civil engineering. It is for P6-P7 pupils and involves an introductory presentation from a civil engineer before building a 12m long model of a cable stayed bridge. We would aim to link it to the new bridge and provide some information on the design. RJ McLeod have been involved in this activity before and would welcome any volunteers from the delivery team companies if they are interested. Given the time of the school term we will communicate further with the schools in August/ September and aim to run the event in September/October based on school feedback in relation to topics.

The site team are currently investigating the installation of a time capsule in the new swing bridge abutments.

Opportunities

We have received a number of CV's from local personnel and are currently reviewing to see if what roles we require.

Training

RJ McLeod continue to provide our workforce with training opportunities. The operatives have recently attended a buried services and CAT Scanning course, along with first aid and site safety awareness.