

Ocean Railway Bridge Stonehouse



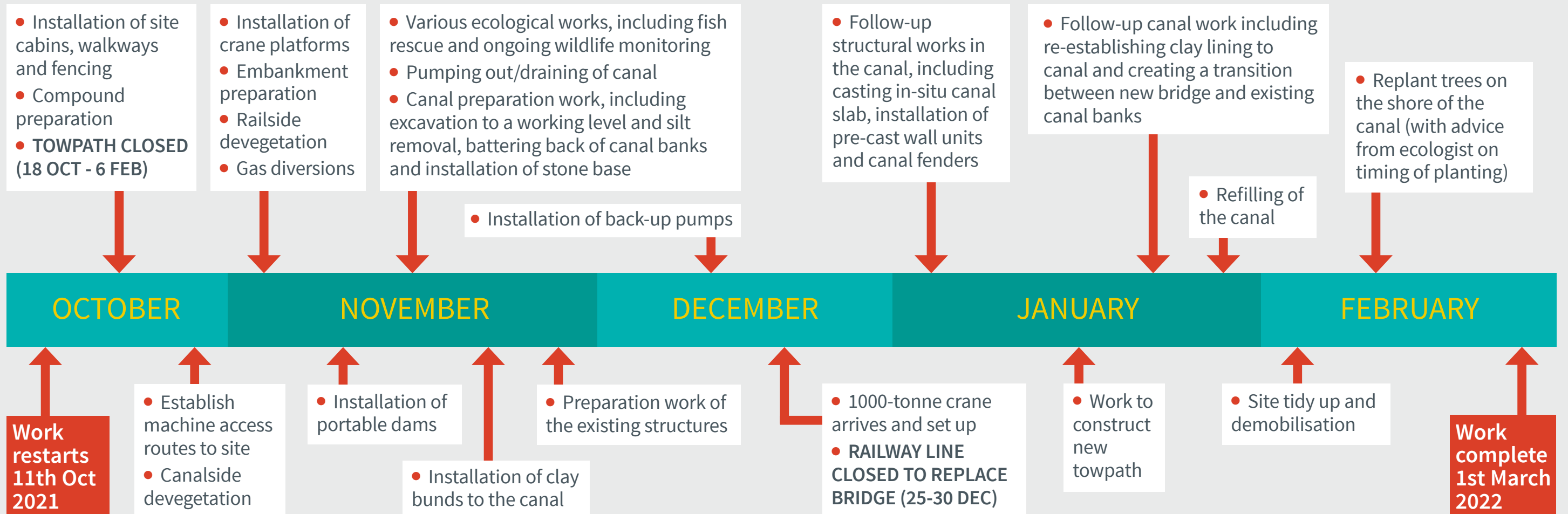
New milestone for canal restoration

Work to replace the railway bridge over the canal at Stonehouse Ocean is due to restart in October 2021 and the new structure will be installed between 25 - 30 December. Network Rail is carrying out the work on behalf of Cotswold Canals Connected.



This is part of the project to restore four miles of canal between Stonehouse and Saul Junction, connecting the five miles of restored canal to the national waterway network. The Cotswold Canals Connected partnership is committed to significant outcomes for wildlife, people and communities, and our canal heritage.

Ocean bridge construction timeline



Key considerations

- For safety reasons, the bridge needs to be installed when trains are not running during a temporary closure of the line. Such closures are planned in advance and their availability is limited.
- A three-day line closure was booked for May 2021. However, this was changed to five days (from December 25 to 30) after further ground investigations in early 2021 identified that the base layer beneath the railway bridge was at a deeper level than our previous surveys had reported. The depth of the excavation will be around the equivalent of a double decker bus (from towpath level).
- Working close to the water carries additional risks – not just to the project (eg. flooding in bad weather), but primarily to the staff. Our working method is driven by minimising this risk, while finding a balanced approach regarding access, timescales, cost and environmental factors.



What can our neighbours expect?

Some of our work will be noisy. We are aware we are working close to people's homes and will do all we can to keep any disturbance to a minimum.

We will need to cut down more vegetation when we return to site in the autumn to enable the safe operation of the crane to lift in the new bridge. Details will be provided as they are finalised. Once the water management system is put into place in the autumn, there will be background noise from the pumps.

There will be disturbance over the Christmas period when we will be demolishing the existing structure and digging the foundations for the new one.

We would like to apologise in advance for any disturbance caused by this work.

Find out more...

For enquiries about the construction scheme, please call the Network Rail Helpline on **03457 114141** or email crwest@networkrail.co.uk

For enquiries about wildlife conservation relating to the current phase of restoration please contact Anna Tarbet, Canal Environment Manager at anna.tarbet@gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk or on **01452 383333** ext. 255.

For more information about the CCC project please visit cotswoldcanalsconnected.org where you can have a look at our Activity Plan for ways you can be involved and how the project will deliver for local communities, wildlife and heritage.



Protecting wildlife

Cotswold Canals Connected is working with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and Network Rail to minimise any impact on wildlife and the surrounding environment.

Network Rail has collaborated with its principal contractor to identify any environmental risks early on through ecological surveys and site visits by its environmental specialist. All works are compliant with national environmental legislation. The Ecological Clerk of Works (ECow) will visit the site to oversee the work and to step in if there are deemed there to be any environmental risks. We are working with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust to find the best solutions to minimise any impacts on wildlife and the surrounding environment and keeping disruption to local wildlife to a minimum.

The surrounding land will be protected by a network of pumps and pipes to support water flow through the site, along with flow control of the canal. To control the risk of pollution from construction work measures will be in place, including retention booms.

The area of the Ocean, from the existing swing bridge to the Railway Bridge itself and an area to the west of the railway bridge as far as the Narrows, will be drained fully but gradually, giving species the opportunity to relocate themselves, adjust to the changing water levels and preventing them from becoming trapped.

This will take place in late autumn, when the main bird nesting season is over, so breeding birds and their young are unlikely to be disturbed. However, nesting checks will



still be conducted and recorded before work starts each day. When water levels return habitats will be reinstated and waterbirds will return freely.

Ecological surveys showed no activity to suggest dormice, water voles, otters or bats were present. Reptiles are likely to be in hibernation in the autumn and care will be taken to clear vegetation under the supervision of a qualified ecologist to ensure hibernating individuals are not disturbed. Those fish that do not leave the area by themselves will be rescued, moved to oxygenated tanks and then moved to another part of the canal. Fish recover quickly from the rescue process and fish health checks will be undertaken. After the canal is refilled existing fish populations either side of the works will be encouraged to return to the area naturally.

Canalside vegetation will be re-established to provide an appropriate and diverse habitat to support the existing wildlife, and in consultation with specialists and the local communities.