

# Newsletter

## Lower Otter Restoration Project

### Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts



## Welcome



This newsletter is to keep you up to date with progress as we construct the Lower Otter Restoration Project (LORP) on behalf of the Environment Agency. We are working closely with Jacobs who are the design consultant and landowner Clinton Devon Estates.

LORP is about adapting to climate change and safeguarding the Lower Otter for future generations. Adaptation is necessary because of threats from rising sea levels, greater intensity of storms and more frequent flood flows in the river. When finished, LORP will reconnect the river to its floodplain, allowing it to drain naturally. This will create intertidal saltmarshes, mudflats and freshwater habitats at Big Marsh and Little Marsh.

Key benefits of the project include

- a new footbridge on the SW Coast Path
- the raising and surfacing of some footpaths
- a new raised embankment to carry South Farm Road
- new parking provision
- re-naturalisation of Budleigh Brook
- Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club is being relocated

The cost of the scheme is approximately £15m. Funding will come from Environment Agency Flood Defence Grant in Aid, £6.6m from the EU programme Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts (PACCo) and financial support from Clinton Devon Estates.

If you would like to find out more about the project please take a look at the LORP information website: [www.lowerotterrestorationproject.co.uk](http://www.lowerotterrestorationproject.co.uk)

## Kier Construction Update

LORP got underway at the beginning of June 2021 with the creation of the new Budleigh Salterton cricket pitches.

Over the autumn / winter tree and vegetation clearance across the site has been substantially completed, however maintenance of the area will continue throughout the year.

In March we completed installation of forty-four 18 metre long, 1 metre diameter reinforced concrete piles which form the foundations for the new South Farm Road (SFR) Bridge. Works on the bridge abutments and piers will commence in April.

Import of the material for the new South Farm Road embankment will be largely complete by May and, subject to ground conditions, work will commence on building the embankment in April. Works will also commence at this time on excavation of the southern creek network and raising of the western footpath north of SFR.

We would like to thank local residents and businesses for their patience and understanding while we carry out our work. We will continue to share information regularly to keep you up to date on our progress via newsletters and site noticeboards located at the Kier site compound, the new Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club site, South Farm Road, and the back of Lime Kiln car park.

### KEY PROGRAMME DATES

- **Spring 2022**—Commence works on new South Farm Road embankment, completion of creek networks (which will ultimately connect the site to the floodplain) and drainage structures. Raising and surfacing of some footpaths
- **Autumn 2022**—Start road surface construction. Commence new footbridge north of Lime Kiln Carpark
- **Winter 2022**—Tree planting and landscaping works
- **Scheme completion 2023**

March 2022 - Concrete piling works for the new South Farm Road Bridge



## Environment Agency

*“Whilst considerable construction activities remain ahead of us, our clearance activities have largely been completed. Our ecologists meticulously searched habitats ahead of clearance, but did not find these areas held significant numbers of wildlife (such as small mammals or reptiles).”*

*We are now at the point where we are starting to ‘build back’ and have started planting the new hedgerow, providing a cover to the area that will be richer and support more diverse wildlife. This is just the tip of the iceberg and the vast majority of this planting works will be taking place at the end of next year once construction activities have ceased around the wider site.*

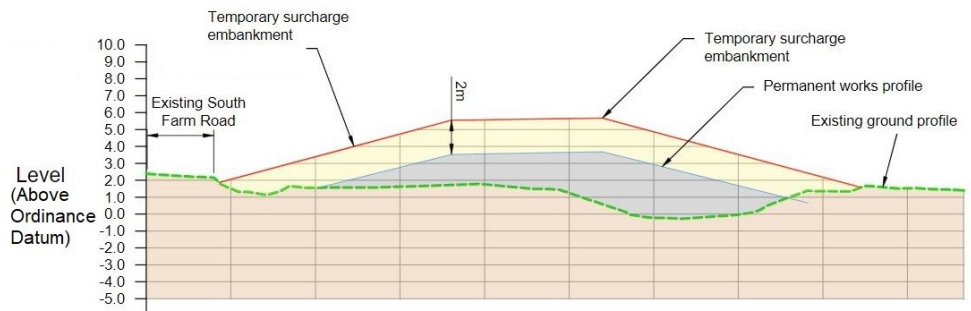
*By the end of the project we will have planted at least 1 kilometre of new species-rich hedgerow (and improved over 1.8km of existing hedgerow) in places in the Otter Valley where it can thrive and survive into the future. By the end of next year we will also have planted 2.89 hectares (that’s about 4 football pitches) of new woodland. We will have planted significantly more vegetation than we have removed and this will be a wide variety of native species (replacing many of the non-native trees previously in the valley) to benefit the diversity of the valley greatly”.*

Dan Boswell—Environment Agency Project Manager



If you would like to sign up for project updates, please visit [Updates](https://lowerotterrestorationproject.co.uk)  
([lowerotterrestorationproject.co.uk](https://lowerotterrestorationproject.co.uk))

## South Farm Road, Embankment Engineering



Construction of the embankment to carry the new South Farm Road will commence in April. Once completed, the realigned road will be up to 2.5 metres above the existing ground level. To help you visualise it: the final level of the new South Farm Road will be on the same level as the current road level at White Bridge. No changes are being made to White Bridge itself.

However, please be aware that to achieve the final 2.5 metre height of new South Farm Road it is necessary to temporarily ‘over-build’ or ‘surcharge’ the structure to around 4.5 metres (an extra 2 metres). This is to compress the underlying ground to ensure that the material under the new road is sufficiently strong to carry it.

The surcharged embankment will be left to settle over a period of approximately 4 months. Gauges will be used to measure & monitor settlement before, during and after the surcharge is removed.

This is a fascinating opportunity to see civil engineering in action. Although it will look very big, please don’t worry, after the settlement period the surcharged embankment will be re-shaped and reduced in height before the final road surfacing is constructed.

Towards the end of the year the new embankment will be connected to White Bridge before it crosses the River Otter. While the new road is being built and connected to the section of existing road that is to remain, a short section of temporary private road will be provided to give access east of the river with minimal disruption.

Meanwhile, material for the embankment is continuing to be brought in and stockpiled. At the end of March this will total approximately 9,000 m3. This material will be used for the core of the embankment

An additional 10,000 m3 material will be used to surcharge the embankment. To do this we will be making as much use of site won material as we can to reduce the amount of vehicle movements to the site.



Site looking east along South Farm Road



## Ecology

### Lower Otter Restoration Project (LORP) saves rare plants from sea level rise

Some of Devon's rarest plants were moved to new local sites in the county in March.

The Lower Otter is currently the only known place in Devon where the divided sedge (*Carex divisa*) is found and is one of only a few sites in the South West where it grows – it is deemed nationally scarce. The survival of these plants is threatened by rising sea levels and the deterioration of embankments at the Lower Otter. Volunteers helped to move the yellow-tipped grass-like plant to new sites nearby.

Also moved were some populations of galingale (*Cyperus longus*), which is also scarce nationally, though less so in Devon than the divided sedge. Unlike the divided sedge, the galingale will be able to continue to survive in some areas of the lower Otter valley.

Three sites with similar ecological characteristics have been chosen to replant these rare species and their progress will be monitored over the next 12 months. One of the chosen sites is grazing marsh associated with the Axe estuary, where divided sedge had been known to grow but was last recorded as present in 1934.



Photo above showing sample of divided sedge

Moving the rare plants follows on from 400 southern marsh orchids that grew on the Lower Otter being relocated elsewhere last year.

Dr Sam Bridgewater, Head of Wildlife and Conservation for landowners, Clinton Devon Estates, said:

*"The divided sedge is an unassuming little plant which you could be forgiven for overlooking, but it's the rarest living thing that the LORP scheme will provide help to. We hope it will thrive in the new sites it is to be moved to."*

Hedgerows to the north of Little Bank have been infilled. Native species, including hawthorn, blackthorn and dog rose, were planted in among gaps to existing hedgerows. The LORP project will see a net gain of 1.5km of hedgerow when completed.



Infill Hedgerow planting along the south-west coastal path

Also about 100 volunteers helped Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club plant 100m of hedgerow and 3 copses around the new pitches. This planting will establish over the coming years. A great day was had by all.



Hedgerow planting at the new cricket pitch

### BBC Countryfile Visit

BBC Countryfile visited Clinton Devon Estates and towards the end of the programme the scheme received some good coverage which can be downloaded on BBC iplayer:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0014318/countryfile-clinton-devon-estates>

## Schools Engagement

Over the last few months Kate Ponting from Clinton Devon Estates has been visiting schools and provided 25 presentations about the scheme and Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts (PACCo). Kate is also hosting educational visits to the Otter Estuary for primary and secondary schools in the area throughout the summer term.

Kier have produced an educational virtual presentation about Construction Site Safety. School children are introduced to Ivor and Honor Goodsite. You can also visit their website and learn more about construction



site safety, follow the link below to visit the educational interactive kidszone area.

<https://www.ivorgoodsite.org.uk/kidszone/>

## Careers in Construction



Kier attended a careers fair at Torquay Grammar School in January.

Please visit <https://www.kier.co.uk/careers> to see our latest vacancies.

Further information on Careers in Construction can be found here

<https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/careers-construction-things-need-know/>

<https://www.goconstruct.org/learn-about-construction/>

<https://www.stem.org.uk/>





## Footpaths Access Update

The Eastern footpath north and south of South Farm Road (Lime Kiln Carpark through to Otterton) is OPEN, but on occasion may be marshalled, and pedestrians may be asked to wait until it is safe for them to continue.

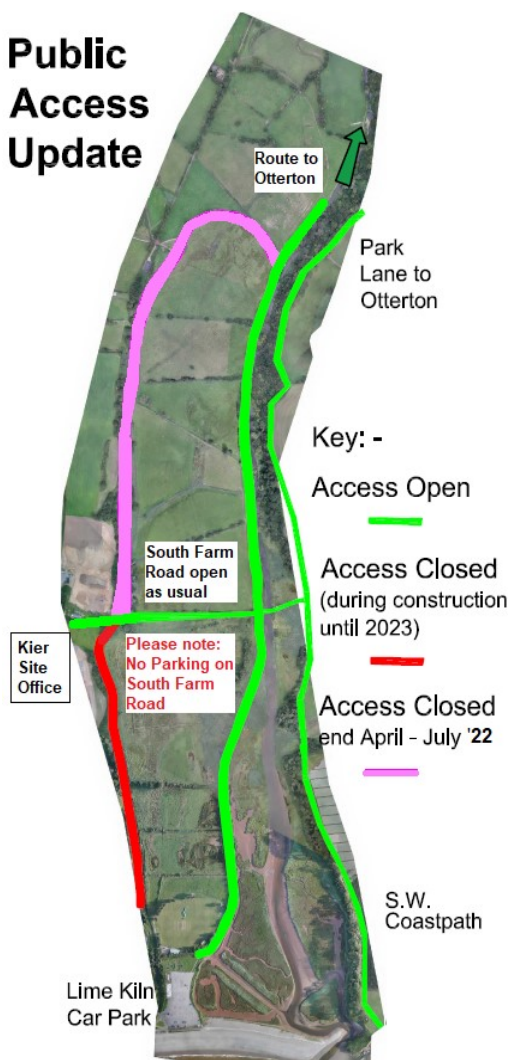
The Western footpath (left of Cricket Club) to South Farm Road is CLOSED during the works.

Please note in late April 2022 we will commence raising and resurfacing the north section of the Western Footpath, (ref East Budleigh PROW 3) between South Farm Road and Big Bank. A footpath closure from April – July 2022 will be required to carry out these works.

The South Western Coast Path and access along Park Lane to Otterton will remain OPEN.

All updates will be displayed in the LORP noticeboards. We thank you for your patience and understanding while we carry out our work.

## Public Access Update



## Community Engagement

To keep everyone posted on construction activities and any updates such as changes to public access Kier have set up a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/KIER-at-Lower-Otter-109330674991760/>



Kier have been donating wood chippings to local residents & businesses including Budleigh in Bloom.

We are also helping the local Chamber of Commerce with production of leaflets and notices for the Big Budleigh Street Party on the 4 June.



In March Tony, Danny and Wayne from Kier helped Budleigh in Bloom with getting their boat 'Digger Rogers' in place and ready for planting. We are looking forward to watching the flowers bloom.

We would like to thank local artist, John Washington, for allowing us to purchase his lovely sketches which he has been busy doing showing our works in progress from a different perspective.



Sketch by John Washington

## Considerate Constructors

As a site we are registered with the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS). The scheme monitor visited site in February and the site received an "Excellent" performance rating. ( For info. LORP Site CCS ID is 125886)

If you would like to find out more, please visit [www.ccscheme.org.uk](http://www.ccscheme.org.uk)

Respect the Community

Excellent - 14 / 15

Protect the Environment

Excellent - 14 / 15

Value their Workforce

Excellent - 14 / 15

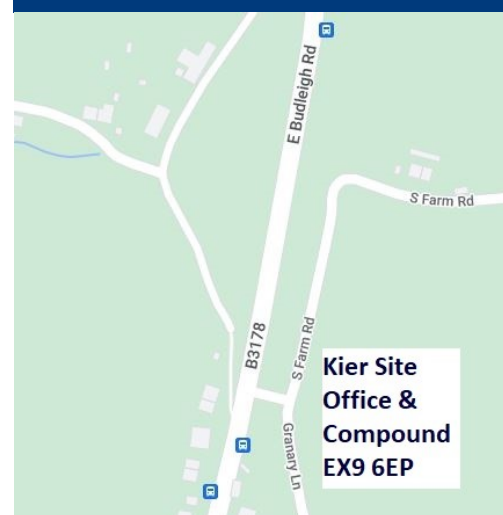
Overall summary

Excellent - 42 / 45



**Registered site**  
[www.ccscheme.org.uk](http://www.ccscheme.org.uk)

## Kier are HERE!



## We welcome your comments .....

Your comments and feedback are important to us. We have a post box on our Lower Otter Restoration Project noticeboard outside the site compound at the top of Granary Lane, if you would like to get in touch or alternatively contact our public liaison officer as detailed below:

Email: [exmouth.PLO@kier.co.uk](mailto:exmouth.PLO@kier.co.uk)

Mobile : 07716 223056

To receive regular construction progress updates and our newsletter please email us so we can add you to our distribution list.