

Refurbishment of the Saltash Tunnel and overhead traffic management system on the Tamar Bridge

The Parish Council felt residents of Pillaton should be aware of the proposed works, as recently reported by Saltash Town Council. The last major work was in 2004, and since then, the technological and electrical systems have reached end of life, with no availability of spares to repair them if they fail, necessitating a full replacement to maintain operation safety and functionality of the tunnel, and traffic management over the Tamar Bridge.

The refurbishment involves replacing all existing electrical distribution and tunnel technology equipment with modernised units. Key elements such as the traffic control system, signage in the approaches to the tunnel and Bridge, tunnel lighting, overhead gantries inside the tunnel, communication units, tunnel air quality monitors, tunnel drainage system and electrical distribution systems will be replaced and upgraded.

National Highways has explored various methods to ensure the project's longevity and minimise future impact. The project also addresses the current energy consumption and carbon footprint with technological equipment to be relocated outside the tunnel, with the aim of reducing routine maintenance closures during the year.

National Highways has refined the project to try to minimise disruption and to deliver in two phases.

First Phase - Civil Engineering (starting October 2024 to February 2025):

This phase involves installing advanced warning signs on both tunnel approaches to communicate various information to users. Traffic management measures include narrower lanes, reduction of lanes and reduced speed limits, ensuring continued capacity and safety. Expected peak-hour delays are 15-20 minutes for three months.

Second Phase - Technology Works (starting October 2024 to October 2025):

Overnight tunnel closures will occur, while the Civil Engineering works are taking place during the daytime.

From the end of January, the control system will be switched off to allow installation of new equipment, losing the tidal flow capability and reducing the bridge and tunnel to one lane in each direction for five months. Delays of up to 45 minutes are expected until the new tidal flow control system can be commissioned and switched on by summer. The rest of the technology install, and commissioning shall continue until October under nightly tunnel closures.