

Crinan Canal Planned Winter Works 2023/24

This third year of works continues our lock gate replacement programme, with the installation of new gates at lock 15, the Crinan sea lock and also be upgrading the existing life-expired operating equipment for new electrical gate actuators.

The revised winter works completion date will work towards a canal reopening date of 12 April 2024, a month earlier than originally advised, and a completion date of Mid-May 2024 rather than Mid-June 2024.

The lock gate replacement programme is essential to ensure the continued safe operation of the canal, following local consultation, the works start date were moved back to the end of October. In addition, the engineering team and principal contractors Mackenzie Construction have been working hard behind the scenes with support from our partners Argyll and Bute Council, to investigate new methods of working to further reduce the impact of the works and have now received approval for the commissioning of an innovative 'over-lock crane platform'.

This method of working has been developed by our engineers and contractors and is a first for Scottish Canals. The crane platform is a modular system; while the system is in use elsewhere, it is rarely seen at the scale required for our works. The platform sections will be floated along the canal to the works site to ensure minimal local disruption during their delivery.

The new crane arrangement will facilitate efficient lifting of the old lock gates out of the lock chamber and lift the new gates into place, as well as for various other activities throughout the works. Without the platform, the crane would be situated on the road alongside the canal basin, requiring multiple temporary road closures. The platform will significantly reduce the road closures required, minimising disruption as far as possible.

The over-lock crane platform will also provide more favourable lifting conditions for our operations; the lifting radius will be reduced as the crane will be closer to the lock gates, and lifting will therefore be at a slightly lower level. This allows us to use a smaller and lower crane which will reduce the risk of weather impact.

During last year's winter works there was a success trial of a new method as part of the lock gate installation process, carrying out works to the gates before they are installed rather than during the installation process. This year, the site team have developed this a stage further, carrying out additional pre-attachment works to the new lock 15 gates. This is anticipated to add further efficiencies during the gate installation works.

Additionally, Argyll and Bute Council have now approved our Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO). With this critical confirmation now in place alongside the approval of the over-lock crane platform, the works programme has been revised. A note of caution though; as with any construction works, dates are subject to change. Scottish Canals are committed to delivering a safe, efficient programme; the revised timetable is more challenging. The schedule will be reviewed in November and again in January to assess the impact of any extreme weather or unexpected site conditions.

Updates on these reviews will continue to be shared in conjunction with our regular planned communications.

Preparations for crane platform installation

The over-lock crane platform will be built on site, and the site team will shortly begin excavating small areas on the island between lock 15 and the dummy lock for the installation of the platform's foundations. The foundations are temporary and will be removed after the works. These localised works won't require a diversion, but please note that the team will set up a safe working area and that there will be machinery on the island.

Closure of layby and removal of layby wall from Monday 16th October

It is anticipated closing the layby alongside the sea lock office/sea lock chamber last month, however our site team worked to enable us to postpone these restrictions, to minimise local disruption. The layby will now be closed from Monday 16th October. It will be necessary to temporarily take down the wall running alongside the layby to create a safe working area and will reinstate the wall on completion of the works.

Closure of lock 15 from Monday 16th October

Lock 15 will be closed to the public from Monday 16th October as our preparation works for the crane platform continue. There will be a safe diversion route via lock 14, with signage in place. The canal navigation will remain open until 5pm on the 25th of October 2023.

Lock 10 car park closure from Saturday 21st October

It will be necessary to close the car park at Lock 10 only for short periods at the beginning and end of the works. The first closure is anticipated to be from Saturday 21st October to Sunday 29th October. This is to allow us to transport a crane and plant machinery along the canal from Lock 10 to Crinan, removing construction traffic from the road.

First road closure from Monday 23rd October

Our Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) application has been approved by Argyll and Bute Council. The process required an application for an 'umbrella' closure period – any required road closures will NOT be in place for the full duration of the TTRO.

The proposed road closure from Monday 23rd October will begin as planned, alongside Crinan Basin as far as the Crinan Hotel, on the Crinan loop road. The closure will be from 8am to 5pm each day, with restricted and residential access only. This closure is required for setting up the crane platform as well as to allow some temporary works to facilitate these operations. It is expected the closure to be in place for up to four weeks. During this period, the Crinan Hotel can be accessed via the western side of the loop road.

As during the previous years' works, details of road closures closer to the works and specific activities will be communicated and they will all be indicated by signage on the ground. Scottish Canals endeavours to only close roads for as short a period as necessary, and on as few occasions as possible.

Crinan Canal Basin fencing from Monday 23rd October

Crinan Basin will be fully fenced off for the duration of the works with safety fencing installed from Monday 23rd October.

Keep up to date

Scottish Canals are committed to keeping local residents, businesses and other stakeholders informed of the winter works programme, and will do so via:

Email updates

Email updates will be circulated regularly throughout the works programme; if you would like to receive these updates, please email CrinanWinterWorks@scottishcanals.co.uk. Your details will not be held for any other purpose and will not be passed on to any third parties. Anyone already signed up to receive Crinan winter works updates will continue to do so unless you advise us otherwise.

Community meetings

The next quarterly community forum meeting will be on Thursday 26th October (6:30pm at The Egg Shed).

Online updates

Updates will continue to be shared along with notice of specific road closures, towpath closures, and diversions, on [Ongoing Works page](#).

Updates will also be shared on the [Crinan Canal Facebook page](#) and the [Scottish Canals' Facebook page](#).

If you have any concerns during this programme of works, you can contact Donna Mallan, Customer Operations Manager (Scottish Canals), on 01546 603210 (9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday) or you can email CrinanWinterWorks@scottishcanals.co.uk

Alternatively, you can contact Mackenzie Construction on 0141 633 5555 (8am – 5pm, Monday to Friday).

Crinan Canal Winter Works

Year 3 Programme 2023/24

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