



# Contractors Mechanical Plant Engineers

## NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

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**Welcome to another edition of your National Newsletter.**

### **CMPE NATIONAL NEWS**

The next CMPE National AGM Weekend has just been announced by our National Vice-Chairman, Chairman Elect, Michael Farrington. Please diarise the date. Further information will be forwarded in due course.



**SAVE THE DATE !**



**CMPE NAGM Weekend.**

**20th—22nd June 2025**

**Botleigh Grange Hotel and Spa.**

**SO30 2AF**

**More Details to Follow.**

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## INDUSTRY NEWS

### **Preston Tram Bridge demolition begins.**

Demolition has been going on since the middle of August of a 200-year-old footbridge over the River Ribble in Preston.



*Above: The Old Tram Bridge is coming down*

The Old Tram Bridge, which links Avenham Park and Penwortham, was shut by Preston City Council in 2019 due to risk of collapse.

Eric Wright Civil Engineering has a £6.6m contract to replace it with a new crossing. Demolition and removal of the old structure has been subcontracted to Preston based Pete Marquis Ltd.

The method of demolition, agreed with the Marine Management Organisation and the Environment Agency, involves creating an access track into the river and using a large excavator to cut the bridge into sections before lifting out and removing from site.

The demolition has been timed to avoid impacts to smelt and coarse fish spawning in the River Ribble. This window has been carefully selected to ensure that the project timeline remains on track, whilst protecting local wildlife. Demolition is expected to be completed by mid-September.

Lancashire County Council is project managing and supporting the project working with Eric Wright Civil Engineering on the design and construction of the bridge.

Demolition should take just a couple of weeks. After that, work on the foundations for the first of two piers in the river will start, in order to complete before the winter period. Work to the abutments and the land pier can then be completed before work starts on the second river pier in summer 2025.

According to the timetable, the new bridge will be lifted into place in autumn 2025 and work will complete by early 2026.

Structural engineering firm Dyse is supporting Billington-based steelwork fabricator Harrison Engineering, which is providing a design and build service to Eric Wright.

The old bridge was originally built to carry a horse and cart trackway for coal wagons to be delivered from the canal at Walton Summit into Preston. It was delivered initially as a timber bridge when John Rennie's 1800 design for an aqueduct was deemed too costly. After separate deck and pier reconstructions, the bridge is now a concrete bridge. A Facebook group, Friends of Old Tram Bridge group has more than 2,500 members.

Preston city councillor Valerie Wise, cabinet member for community wealth building, said: "Given the rich history of the bridge, the demolition will bring mixed emotions to local residents. This is an important step in delivering a new bridge that will serve the community for decades to come and restore this key transport link for people between Preston and South Ribble."



Above: CGI of the new bridge



## New AI cameras will catch UK drivers breaking the law.



*The new cameras will be deployed across Greater Manchester and elsewhere.*

Motorists could face a hefty £1,000 fine or six points on their licence if they're caught by new Artificial Intelligence (AI) cameras for using their mobile phones while driving. The cutting-edge devices are engineered to catch drivers using mobile phones and those not wearing seatbelts - both of which are considered "key factors" in road accidents. National Highways and police forces are keen to promote safer roads and have therefore expanded an ongoing trial of these state-of-the-art cameras to additional regions across the country, including Greater Manchester, Sussex and Durham.

Greater Manchester's cameras, which will be in operation from September 2nd, have been built by technology company Acusensus, which says the devices "provide automated recognition of drivers using mobile phones while driving in order to enforce traffic safety laws intended to prevent distracted driving". Nine other police forces have agreed to participate in the extended AI camera rollout, namely; Durham, Humberside, Staffordshire, West Mercia, Northamptonshire, Wiltshire, Norfolk, Thames Valley and Sussex.

The artificial intelligence "Heads Up" software was first trailed by National Highways in 2021. It captures footage of passing vehicles (going up to 300km or 186miles an hour), which is then run through AI to detect whether someone is using their smartphone while driving or if someone in the car is not wearing a seatbelt

Two photos are taken: one of a shallow angle which captures if a driver has a phone to their ear and checks whether a seat belt is being worn, and a second deeper angle which can see if a person is texting in front of them. The AI footage is then examined by a human to confirm that the software is correct, and an offence has indeed been committed.

If the human check confirms an offence's been committed then the driver is issued with a penalty charge notice. However, if the image is incorrect and shows no offence has been committed then Acusensus says it is immediately deleted from the archives.

### **How will data be used?**

Safer Roads Greater Manchester says data from its county will be used as part of a survey to find out how many drivers break the law and to strategise future road safety campaigns relating to mobile phones and seatbelts.

Likewise, Safer Roads' Touch Screen used information for similar purposes when it ran a campaign around road safety and the dangers of using a smartphone while driving in recent years.

Department for Transport (DfT) data found that 400,000 drivers a year still use a mobile device when behind the wheel, with drivers four times more likely to be in a crash if you use your phone while driving. You're also twice as likely to die in a crash if you don't wear a seat belt.

### **When does the trial finish?**

The AI camera rollout will now run until March 2025. However, should it be deemed successful, AI cameras will be attached to gantries on motorways across the country for the foreseeable future.

Peter Boulton, Transport for Greater Manchester's network director for highways, said: "In Greater Manchester we know that distractions and not wearing seat belts are key factors in a number of road traffic collisions on our roads which have resulted in people being killed or seriously injured.

"By utilising this state-of-the-art technology provided by Acusensus, we hope to gain a better understanding of how many drivers break the law in this way, whilst also helping to reduce these dangerous driving practices and make our roads safer for everyone."

### **How effective are the cameras?**

New freestanding AI cameras on the A30 near Launceston in Devon had caught 117 people using their mobile phones while driving in just a 72-hour period. A further 130 people were snapped not wearing their seatbelt.

And in July 2023 Hampshire Constabulary and the Thames Valley Police caught almost 500 offences in just a week after using a van with AI cameras mounted on it.

Rod Dennis, RAC road safety spokesman, said: "Despite the penalties for using a handheld phone having doubled to six penalty points and a £200 fine seven years ago, it's clear far too many drivers are still prepared to put lives at risk by engaging in this dangerous practice.

"We suspect a major reason for this is a lack of enforcement, meaning many drivers have no fear of being caught. AI-equipped cameras that can automatically detect drivers breaking the law offer a chance for the tide to be turned.

"The police can't be everywhere all of the time, so it makes sense that forces look to the best available technology that can help them catch drivers acting illegally."



### **Watling takes over Midlands JCB.**

**JCB dealer Watling JCB has expanded its territory into the West Midlands with the acquisition of Midlands JCB.**



Watling JCB has been JCB’s dealer in the East Midlands and East Anglia since 1976.

Midlands JCB was spun out of Gunn JCB last year when owner and managing director Paul Hartshorn sold it to a management buyout. He then sold the remaining Gunn JCB to neighbouring JCB dealer TC Harrison, a deal that completed in July this year.

Watling JCB has now been appointed as the dealer for Staffordshire, Herefordshire,

Warwickshire, and Worcestershire, acquiring and operating from the existing Midlands JCB depots at Smethwick, Hereford and Stoke-on-Trent. All existing Watling JCB depots remain unaffected by the expansion.

Watling JCB managing director Richard Telfer said: “It has been my life’s mission to create a business providing world-class customer support while maintaining our core family values. This new development creates an opportunity to bring these industry-leading service levels to a whole new customer base and I really look forward to working closely with our new customers.”

JCB UK sales director Gareth Lumsdaine said: “We are delighted to see Watling JCB expand its remit into the West Midlands as we further strengthen the dealer network in selling and supporting JCB equipment across the UK. It is a superb family business,

renowned for its professionalism and expertise and it is exciting that JCB customers across Staffordshire, Herefordshire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire will now benefit from the team's exceptional customer service."

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## Plant associations push for expansion of full expensing allowance.



Three construction machinery trade associations have joined forces to renew the campaign for the full expensing allowance to be extended to short-term rented plant in the construction sector.

The Construction Equipment Association (CEA), Construction Plant Hire Association (CPA), and Hire Association Europe (HAE) have jointly sent a letter to chancellor of the exchequer Rachel Reeves MP pushing for plant hire firms to be allowed to benefit from tax breaks on their machinery investments.

It was back in the budget of April 2021, when he was chancellor, that Rishi Sunak introduced what was then call the super-deduction for companies investing in new plant and machinery, enabling them to reduce their taxable profits by 130% of the cost. It was initially for two years only, as a post-covid economic stimulus. However, only end-users were able to benefit from it, not companies hiring out unoperated plant.

This full expensing allowance was then made permanent in Jeremy Hunt's November 2023 financial statement. Despite industry lobbying, hire companies remained outside the scope of the scheme, although Hunt promised to keep this under consideration.

The letter from the CEA, CPA and HAE tells Reeves that extending the full expensing allowance for short-term rented plant in the construction sector would not only correct an anomaly and simplify the tax system but also boost to industry capacity to deliver the National Infrastructure Pipeline and help meet the government's ambitious house-building aspirations.

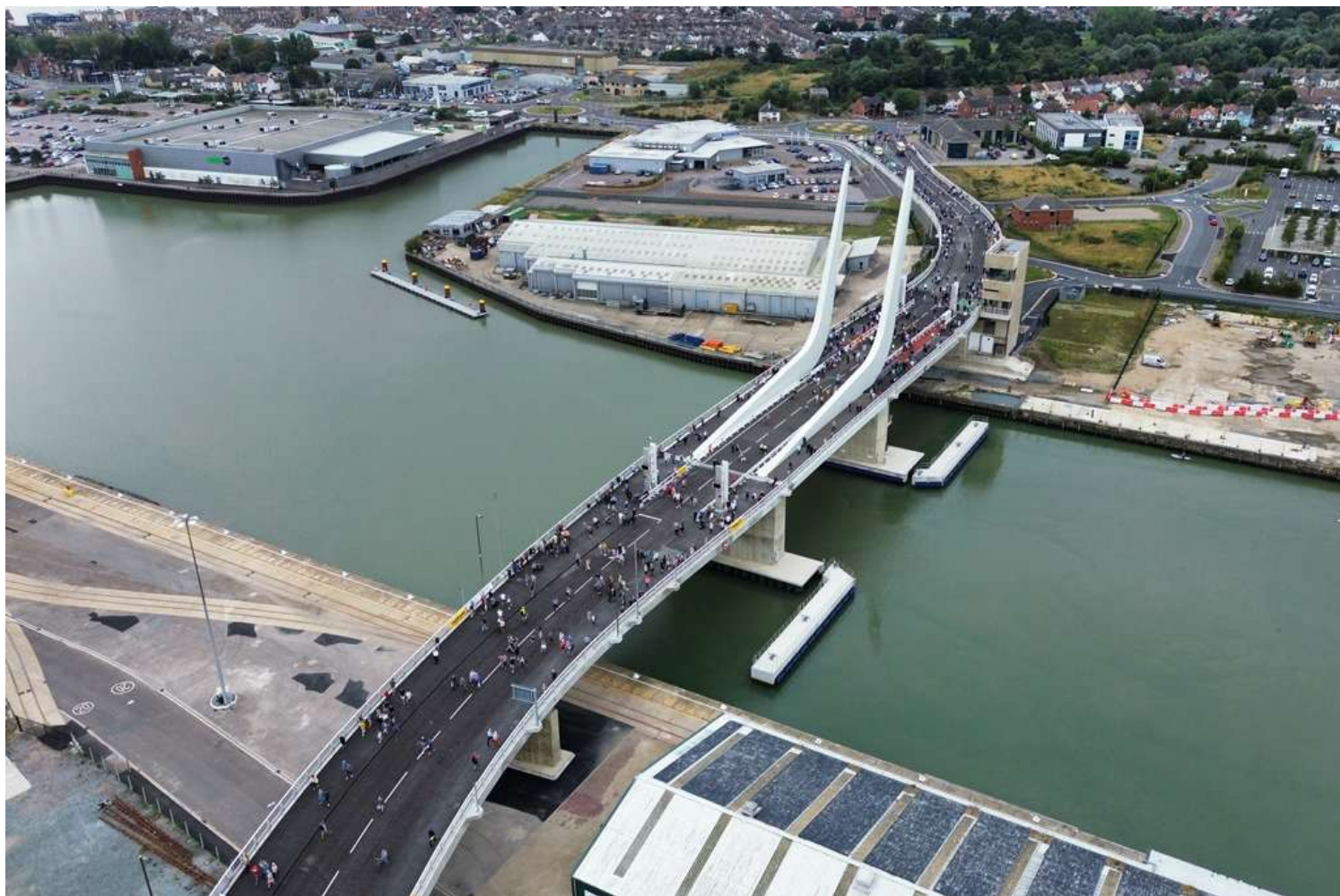
It is also likely to unlock investment in new cleaner, greener machines with reduced emissions and a lower carbon footprint.

And, as 43% of construction machines sold in the UK are manufactured here, the tax revenue generated from increased sales could be worth a £26m net benefit to the Treasury, the trade associations argue.

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## Double bridge celebrations for Farrans.

Civil engineering contractor Farrans celebrated the opening of not one but two of its bridges.



*Above: Lowestoft's Gull Wing bridge opens for traffic*

Both Lowestoft's Gull Wing bridge and Glasgow's Govan-Partick footbridge opened to traffic on Saturday 7th September 2024 – both were built by Farrans and by coincidence both are bridges that open to let taller river traffic pass through.

Saturday saw thousands of Lowestoft residents walk, cycle and drive for the first time across the town's distinctive new Gull Wing bridge, the town's long-awaited third crossing of Lake Lothing.

The £150m bridge was built by Farrans for Suffolk County Council, whose leader Cllr Matthew Hicks said: "The people of Lowestoft have waited decades for a third river crossing. Suffolk County Council promised to build it, and we have. I am delighted that we have delivered on that promise.

"The Gull Wing will not only serve as a vital transport link between north and south Lowestoft, but also stands as an iconic new landmark for the town. It represents a new era of development and prosperity for Lowestoft."



The 345-metre long Gull Wing is the largest rolling bascule bridge in the world that is lifted using hydraulic cylinders.

The main bascule span across the navigation channel leaves a clear gap of 32 metres for marine vessels. The bridge sits clear of the highest tide by 12 metres, meaning that the tips of the J-beams will usually be well over 50 metre above the sea below.

A formal civic opening and naming ceremony for the bridge is set to take place on Tuesday 19th November.

Saturday 7th September 2024 also saw the formal opening of the £29.5m Govan-Partick bridge over the Clyde in Glasgow, re-establishing an historic connection between Govan and Partick, with the bridge crossing between Water Row on the south side and Pointhouse Quay on the north.

Construction of the fabricated steel cable-stayed opening swing bridge began in April 2022.

It is one of the longest opening pedestrian/cycle bridges in Europe, with a 15.7-metre fixed span and a 99-metre moving span. The fixed span weighs 45 tonnes and the moving span weighs 650 tonnes.

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Above: Govan-Partick footbridge over the Clyde



Approved



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