

The UK's first stainless steel road bridge of its kind is expected to open for traffic in the coming weeks.

By **Siobhan Doyle**

# The Measure Of

Pooley Bridge

CUMBRIA COUNTY Council announced that its £5m project at Pooley Bridge in the Eden District will hit its key milestone soon, after work resumed on the bridge at the end of April following a brief suspension due to the coronavirus pandemic. The main span was built in sections off-site and then assembled next to the river. It will be lifted into place by a crawler crane.

Designed by Knight Architects in collaboration with contractor Eric Wright Civil Engineering, and engineering consultancy firms Mott MacDonald and GHD, the bridge has been planned since the original three-span 18th-century stone arch bridge collapsed after Storm Desmond hit Cumbria in December 2015. Since then, a temporary bridge has been in place.

The new bridge is a stainless steel concrete composite structure. According to

the team, this three-layer structure will straddle the River Eamont when it opens this summer. They added that they sought to create a future-proof design: one which was flood resilient, which would comply with Environment Agency regulations, and which could meet the wishes of local people.

The stainless steel and concrete composite structure is unique – a combination of durable and light material with environmental benefits, the team explained. In comparison to ordinary steel, the stainless alternative is two and a half times more expensive but its light weight and longer durability gives it an advantage.

“To ensure stakeholders and residents of Pooley Bridge are able to appreciate and comprehend the complexity of this major milestone, we have commissioned a drone photographer to capture the lift from start

to finish,” says managing director Diane Bourne of Eric Wright Civil Engineering. “To ensure the welfare and safety of our staff and contractors, we would ask that everyone adheres to the restrictions put in place by Cumbria County Council.”

The town of Pooley Bridge is the north-eastern gateway into the Lake District National Park, a Unesco World Heritage Site with a uniquely beautiful landscape. The original Pooley Bridge was a Grade II-listed three-span stone arch, built in 1764, which served as a critical link in the daily life of the area.

The new Pooley Bridge will be the first stainless steel road bridge of its kind in the country. It was scheduled to be completed and the bridge opened in June 2020. However, the temporary suspension of works means the timescale for completion of the project is subject to change.

£123.6m

of emergency funding to the area's Infrastructure Recovery Programme (IRP) granted by Cumbria County Council

£5m

Cost of project

2015

Storm Desmond in December

1764

Year original bridge was built

2.5

year project

3-span

18th-century stone arch bridge collapsed in storm. One of more than 700 bridges in Cumbria to be damaged.

3

layer structure

7.5m - 9.5m

Width of bridge (variation)

2

pavements and a single road lane

40m

Length of bridge

1,200t

crane anticipated to lift and place bridge over River Eamont

450t

Weight

