

Unrecorded mine shaft found under road in East Lothian, Scotland



The site of the unrecorded mine shaft in East Lothian, Scotland

Enabling works will commence during the week beginning 4 November 2019 so a shaft under the B1361 road and adjacent footpath can be stabilised.

The existing traffic management system will continue throughout the works which will avoid the need for a full road closure, with the project scheduled to take 6 weeks to complete.

Coal Authority engineers have designed a permanent solution to remediate the mine shaft after various challenging factors were encountered at the site.

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Michael Owens, from the Coal Authority's Public Safety and Subsidence Team, said:

This is an unrecorded coal mine shaft, meaning we hold no records of the depth, location or any specific information regarding the previous treatment method.

The mine shaft is located under a road which has live services beneath, including a medium pressure gas main that will need to be isolated and supported during works.

This coupled with the close proximity to a Category B listed wall and protected trees, meant we've had to coordinate our efforts alongside various stakeholders to design a suitable solution.

The permanent safety solution is to excavate and cast a reinforced concrete cap over the position of the suspected unrecorded, rectangular coal mine shaft.

The reinforced concrete cap will be constructed to withstand all traffic, with East Lothian Council responsible for overseeing the reinstatement of the road.

It is inevitable that when an unrecorded mine shaft is discovered, the local community will be inconvenienced. The Coal Authority sincerely apologises for this disruption and would like to thank the local community for their continued patience while the works are being carried out.

East Lothian Council's Service Manager for Roads, Alan Stubbs, said: "This has been a challenging situation however our priority is to ensure the safety of all road users. We continue to work with the Coal Authority to ensure all required consents are granted to achieve a timely completion."

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1. 15 October 2019 Added the start date, the week beginning 4 November, for when the works will commence
2. 28 August 2019 First published.