

RE: Archaeological assessments for initial telecoms cables - Welsh waters

Dr Julian Whitewright [redacted]  
Mon 15/05/2023 15:56

To: Darren Glazier [redacted]  
Cc: Michael Walsh [redacted]; Kevin Whyte [redacted]; Tom McMahon [redacted]; Jim McMahon [redacted]; Rory Ryan [redacted]  
Dear Darren,

Many thanks for your email outlining the proposed work. From our perspective, thinking about any potential impact on marine archaeology, we have no objections to any of the geophysical survey, and actively look forward to the results being shared as a means to enhance collective knowledge of an historic assets within the cable corridors.

In terms of the geotechnical investigations. Nearer the time, it would be helpful if possible, for any finalised borehole/sample locations to be shared, to ensure that they are not in conflict with a known historic asset – or if you are going to do this as part of the process following the geophysical survey, then to briefly discuss that with ourselves. We of course realise that in some instances the geotechnical sample locations are not known in detail in advance.

Yours

Julian



Dr Julian Whitewright  
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Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn peri oedi. We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay.

Yn unol â Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 2) 2016, mae genym hawl i gyfarhobu a gohebu â Chomisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru yn eich dewis iaith. Er mwyn sicrhau ein bod yn cyflwyni'r hawl, rhowch wybod i ni a dych yn dymuno derbyn gohebiaeth a/neu alwadau ffôn oddi wrthym yn y Gymraeg. Bydd yr wybodaeth hon yn cael ei chofnodi genym ni, a byddwn yn defnyddio'r iaith o'ch dewis ym mhob cyfarhob yn y dyfodol. Diolch.

Under the Welsh Language Standards (No. 2) Regulations 2016, you have the right to communicate and correspond with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales in your preferred language. To ensure we uphold this right, please let us know whether you wish to receive correspondence and/or telephone calls from us in Welsh. This information will be recorded by us, and we will use your preferred language in all future communication. Thank you.

From: Darren Glazier [redacted]  
Sent: Monday, May 15, 2023 1:17 PM  
To: Dr Julian Whitewright [redacted]  
Cc: Michael Walsh [redacted]; Kevin Whyte [redacted]; Tom McMahon [redacted]; Jim McMahon [redacted]; Rory Ryan [redacted]  
Subject: Archaeological assessments for initial telecoms cables - Welsh waters

Dear Julian  
I hope this email finds you well? Coracle Archaeology has recently been commissioned to provide archaeological services in support of licence applications to undertake marine surveys and site investigations for four subsea fibre optic cables, each with landfall in Wales. It is anticipated that site investigations will begin in UK waters in Q3 of 2023, with data assessments and route design completed by Q2 of 2024, and full marine licence applications submitted in Q3 2024. The four cables include:

- SOBR 1 cable, with landfall at Trearddur Bay, Anglesey;
- SOBR 2 cable, with landfall at Colwyn Bay;
- TUSKAR cable, with landfall at Newgale; and
- Newport connect, with landfalls at Newport and Weston-super-Mare on the English coast.

The proposed cable systems will aim to provide high speed strategic international telecommunications connectivity between the UK (specifically Wales) and Ireland, or between Wales and England in the case of Newport Connect. The installation of these cables will underpin existing, planned and future developments in Wales. Indicative cable routes in Welsh waters are attached.

Initial surveys will include the collection of marine geophysical survey data (multibeam echosounder, sidescan sonar, sub-bottom profiler and magnetometer) within a potential route corridor, followed by benthic and geotechnical investigations. The latter will include vibrocores, CPT's and grab samples. Best practice measures will be adhered to throughout the survey works to ensure safe working and no significant risk to archaeological interests. Slit trenching or sampling will also be undertaken at the landfall locations, to investigate sediment layers for trenching and / or potential HDD.

At present, Coracle has been commissioned to provide the following marine archaeological assessments in support of initial licence applications to be submitted to NRW:

- a full marine archaeological desk-based assessment, from mean-high springs at the landfall locations to the UK-Ireland median line, or from Newport to Weston-super-Mare in the case of Newport Connect. This will focus on both the route corridor, and an additional wider study area to facilitate the assessment of marine archaeological potential;
- a marine archaeological written scheme of investigation, including a method statement outlining mitigation for works that disturb the seabed (including geotechnical works and sampling / slit trenches at the landfall locations); and
- a marine archaeological Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries.

Additional archaeological assessments will be undertaken as part of the marine environmental assessment process in support of marine licence applications for cable installation, to be submitted in in 2024.

We hope that this meets with your approval, but we would very much welcome your comments on the proposed assessments. We have sent data requests to both the NMR and the HER's for the relevant archaeological trusts, and are also consulting with your colleagues at the Marine Planning Unit, Historic England, with reference to Newport Connect.

As part of the licence applications to the NRW, our client requires written confirmation from the archaeological curators that the planned works will not pose a significant risk to cultural heritage assets. We would be grateful if you would be able to provide us with a response, to be included with the initial licence applications in early summer. An email has also been sent to the various trusts for the landfall locations.

As ever, please don't hesitate to get in touch with any questions or queries,

All the very best

Darren

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