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## NORTHSIDE GETS PLENTY OF GOOD VIBRATIONS FROM BUILDING WORK

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The massive project to build Workington's new Northside Bridge has become a way of life for those living next to the site.

Residents at Northside Road may be overshadowed by the huge machinery and heavy plant being used – but they say they are only getting good vibrations from the work.

Their front windows look directly on to the busy contractor's compound.

Work continues on the replacement for the old Northside Bridge, which was destroyed in the floods of 2009.

But far from complaining, residents say they are satisfied with the progress.

Raymond Winthrop, 65, has been provided with a vibration monitor at the front of his house after raising concern about tremors caused by the work.

But he said: "It hasn't been as bad as we thought it might be.

"They have listened to our side so that makes a difference. We work with them. The quicker we get it up the better."

Dot Routledge, 68, said the vibrations caused when steel piles were driven into the ground was the worst part of the work so far, but it had since improved.

She added: "It felt as though your house had a heartbeat. It's like living on a building site but it's got to be done. The quicker they get on with it the better."

Bill Davey added: "It's impossible to build a bridge without some inconvenience. They're trying not to be inconvenient."

Stuart Macfarlane, Birse Civils project manager, said the bridge was expected to be open to traffic in early May rather than April next year, with full completion still expected in August.

Work has been delayed by about two weeks because of unexpected ground conditions.

Birse Civils has had to change the way it is filling piles with concrete.

It is now using a more time-consuming technique, using fluid in the bored piles to support the ground before the addition of concrete.

The contractor had expected to use this technique on some parts of the site but its use has had to be extended.

The delay means the arrival of the central span of the bridge, which was due in December, has been put back to January or February.

A weekend road closure, needed to allow the giant crane to access the site, will take place on either January 14 and 15, January 21 and 22, January 28 and 29 or February 4 and 5.

The closure will allow the crane and the 40 lorries carrying sections of the counterweight to get to the site and lift the steel beam.

Mr Macfarlane added: "It's unfortunate that we have incurred some change in ground conditions which has slowed us up in the initial stages, but overall it's going well.

"Just because it's delayed at the start doesn't mean those delays and setbacks are going to carry on."

The next visible stage of the project will be work to build piers which will support the main span.

Concrete structures should be visible above the water line in the River Derwent before Christmas.



UNDER WAY: Work on the new Northside Bridge in Workington

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