

## ESSENTIAL NEW OLYMPIC PARK LINK COMPLETED

A challenging engineering project to create a new link into the Olympic Park beneath the busy A12 dual-carriageway has been completed on schedule. The underpass was constructed beneath the A12, a busy six-lane dual carriageway, while it remained fully operational to daily traffic. Fifty workers were involved in the project working 24 hours a day to oversee the installation of the underpass which was completed in just 28 days.



ODA Chairman John Armitt said: ‘The delivery of this critical engineering project on time is a significant achievement given the complexities and challenges involved. It is a testament to the hard work and ingenuity of our workers and engineers working round the clock to construct the new underpass beneath a busy dual carriageway, without causing any disruption to motorists.

‘The completion of this underpass creates another essential new link into the Olympic Park and continues the work to build new roads and bridges right across the site, helping to deliver an open and accessible Park and creating new links between existing communities.’

The new underpass was delivered using a ‘jacked box’ method which involved a pre-constructed concrete box ‘pushed’ through the ground beneath the A12. Tunnelling techniques were used to excavate the ground ahead of the box while a series of hydraulic rams then pushed the box into the excavated tunnel face. The concrete box forming the underpass was constructed in three sections and measures 50 metres-long, 11.5m-wide and 8m-high in total and weighs 3,500 tonnes.

Construction work is now underway on 21 of 30 new bridges and underpasses that will cross waterways, roads and rivers to create a connected, open and accessible Olympic Park for the Games and legacy.

## CHRISTMAS DRINK-DRIVE FIGURES HIGHLIGHT NEED FOR REVIEW OF LAW

Although many people used their common sense and took taxis over the Christmas period, the number of people caught drink-driving over Christmas shows a review of drink-drive laws cannot come too soon, says the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. A total of 7,638 drivers were arrested after breath tests in England and Wales between December 1, 2009 and January 1, 2010. Although the figure is 16.51% lower than the number caught drink-driving in the previous year’s campaign, it demonstrates that far too many drivers are still putting themselves and others at risk in such an irresponsible and avoidable way.

Figures published by the Association of Chief Police Officers, show 223,423 drivers were breath tested during the month-long blitz – a rise of 21.82% on the previous year. 3% of all drivers breath tested were over the limit, but the percentage rose to 4% for drivers under the age of 25 and to 7% for drivers involved in an accident. In December, the Government announced it had commissioned Sir Peter North to conduct an independent review of drink-driving and drug-driving laws. RoSPA will be contributing to the review. The safety charity has for many years called for a reduction in the legal alcohol limit from 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood to 50mg, a move which would save around 65 lives and 230 serious injuries on Britain’s roads each year. At blood alcohol levels between 50mg and 80mg, you are two to two-and-a-half times more likely to be involved in an accident and six times more likely to be in a fatal crash than with no alcohol in your system.

RoSPA also wants to see the police being given extra powers, such as being able to breathalyse drivers anywhere at any time, and supports continuing education campaigns. Kevin Clinton, RoSPA head of road safety, said: “The Christmas figures once again show action is needed to change the behaviour of a stubborn minority who continue to drink and drive despite years of education and enforcement campaigns.

“We are pleased the police increased the number of breath tests because one of the best ways of persuading people not to drink and drive is for them to realise there is a good chance they will get caught if they do. If you are caught, the legal consequences can be devastating on your life and livelihood. And, given the percentage of drivers arrested after a crash, these figures provide yet more evidence, if any was needed, that alcohol and driving do not mix.

“Drink-driving is simply not worth the risk. A little bit of forethought, like planning how you are going to get home, is all that is needed so you do not get behind the wheel after drinking alcohol.”

Provisional figures show that 430 people were killed in drink-drive accidents in Britain in 2008.

## STEP UP EFFORTS ON AIR QUALITY SAYS LDA

The London Assembly has urged Boris Johnson to step up his efforts to make London’s air safer. A motion agreed recently expressed deep concern that the capital is the only area in the country still to exceed limits on PM10.

Assembly Members called on the Mayor to revise his air quality strategy to ensure the next draft contains measures that will meet the EU air quality limits in 2010.

Murad Qureshi AM, who proposed the motion, said: “Reducing air pollution is not just an abstract environmental consideration, it’s about saving lives and addressing lower life expectancy issues in areas that suffer from poor air quality in particular. This is an urgent problem that needs to be addressed not only to reduce premature deaths, but also to avoid a potential EU fine of £300m.”

## MOBILE PHONES TO BEGIN REPLACING CASH

A new mobile phone technology called near field communication (NFC) could begin to replace traditional wallets and purses from 2011, according to a new research report. Banks and mobile network operators will both be seeking to make money from the introduction of the new mobile payments technology, the report predicts and are set to go head to head in a bid to gain control of the market.

“NFC technology will be used to replace everything from credit cards and loyalty cards to bus and train tickets, library cards, door keys and even cash,” says Sarah Clark, author of ‘NFC: The Road to Commercial Deployment’. “What hasn’t yet been decided, however, is who will win the battle to provide consumers with their new hi-tech mobile wallets.”

The UK, France, United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Taiwan and Korea will be the first countries to get the new mobile wallets, the report predicts. The US, Canada, Spain, Germany, Italy, Norway, the Czech Republic, Romania and Australia are also expected to be early adopters of

NFC. Businesses ranging from retail and travel to fast food, consumer goods, tourism and entertainment are all expected to be affected by the arrival of NFC services. Government and educational service providers will also be impacted by its arrival.

“Decisions made in 2010 will be critical in determining which mobile network operators, which banks, which industry suppliers and which service providers become the leaders in the field,” she adds. “Ultimately, only two or three companies in each country will succeed in building a major new business providing NFC services to businesses and consumers. The winners could be banks or mobile operators, or even a new entrant to the market.”

Consumers with NFC-enabled phones will be able to simply touch their phone to a ‘smart’ poster or product label containing an RFID chip to sign up for a loyalty programme, collect a money-off coupon, download a trailer for a new movie, access the latest travel information or go straight to a product’s website to read customer ratings and reviews and compare prices. Social networks will also get

a major boost. Touch your phone to a smart poster as you go into a restaurant to automatically update your Facebook status and get an offer coupon from the venue as a thank you for telling your friends you’re there. Commuters will be able to store their travel pass on their phone and mobile versions of airline boarding cards, hotel room keys and even passports will make it quicker and easier to get from place to place. Paying bills will become much simpler, too. Simply touch two NFC phones together to transfer money to a friend, buy a drink or pay for a service.

“No more rummaging around for the right change, card, keys or paperwork and no more texting your location to your friends -- with NFC everything can be handled by your mobile device,” says Clark. “And, of course, NFC is a highly secure technology. Consumers will be able to instantly lock all the mobile wallet services on their phone if it is lost or stolen and then get them automatically transferred onto a new phone as soon as it arrives. They will also be able to use their phone to make payments even when the battery is flat.”