



# Project:

## M40 Chalk Cliffs, Stokenchurch, Oxfordshire

### Project Summary

**Project Activity:** Specialist Maintenance Works

**Hours of Works:** Weekday nights

**Summary of Works:** Crown Plus were commissioned by UK Highways (M40) Ltd to undertake essential maintenance works along the iconic and geologically important Chalk Cliffs between Junction 5 and 6 of the M40 in Oxfordshire.

As part of ongoing geotechnical earthwork reviews, inspections of the high chalk cliffs provided several recommendations for maintenance works to be undertaken to the cutting to minimise risks to the motorway, its users, and to meet design life expectations.

The scheme was undertaken over a period of 2 weeks in October 2023. The works were undertaken within nighttime lane closures utilising a 12m long reach excavator, where approximately 1300m<sup>3</sup> of material was carefully removed and taken off site.

Crown Plus undertook the site clearance of trees, rock fall debris from the face of the debris fence, together with the re-establishment of the drainage ditches.

The iconic Stokenchurch Chalk Cliff cutting was constructed through the Chiltern Hills, during the early 1970s for the M40 motorway. It is 1,200 metres (3,900 ft) long and up to 47 metres (154 ft) deep. It forms part of Aston Rowant Cutting a 3.5-hectare (8.6-acre) geological SSSI and Geological Conservation Review site.

The cutting itself is of significant geological importance as it provides the best exposure in central England dating to the Coniacian stage of the Late Cretaceous, this being approximately 88 million years ago. It is part of the Upper Chalk succession, and at its base there is a fossil rich section which is important in defining the boundary between the Coniacian and the preceding Turonian stage.

**Location** M40, Oxfordshire

**Client** UK Highways  
(M40) Ltd

**Date** Oct 2023

**Category** Special Projects



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