

New school reaches highest point



Work on building a new secondary school at Pembroke is progressing well.

And just six months after the first sod of turf was cut to signal the start of construction, a special ceremony has been held on site.

Known as a 'topping-out' ceremony, it is a traditional construction milestone to mark the highest part of the structure being completed.

Guests invited to witness the occasion were asked to sign the one-ton metal beam before it was hoisted by crane and fixed in position.



The ceremony was organised by leading UK construction company Bouygues UK who are the main contractors for the new build - a 1,463 place, 11 to 18 year secondary school and autism centre for 30 learners which is being constructed on the site of the current comprehensive school.

Costing £38.3 million, the flagship project is the largest ever undertaken by Pembrokeshire County Council and is part of the 21st Century Schools investment programme in collaboration with the Welsh Government.

Guests at the ceremony included the County Council Cabinet Member for Education, David Lloyd, Pembroke School headteacher Frank Ciccotti and 16 of his students.

The pupils act as 'construction ambassadors', meeting regularly with the construction team so that they can keep their peers informed of the new school's progress.

Guests were welcomed by Bouygues UK Project Director, Peter Sharpe, while the company's Operations Director, Justin Moore, spoke of the long history and tradition of 'topping-out' ceremonies.

The company's Chief Operating Officer, Craig Tatton, said the project was already in week 38 of a 169-week long schedule.

He said: "We are very proud to be involved in the delivery of this fantastic new learning campus for the community, with the diverse range of facilities it includes.

"Work is progressing well and we are on track to finish on time for the September 2018 academic year."

Darren Thomas, the County Council's Head of Highways and Construction, told guests that some £120 million worth of work was currently being carried out on nine sites around Pembrokeshire as part of the 21st Century Schools programme.

During the ceremony a cheque for £990 was presented by Peter Sharpe to Elly's flag fund - a charity set up by six-year-old Elly Neville from Pembroke to raise funds for a dedicated cancer ward at Withybush Hospital in Haverfordwest.

The money was donated by Bouygues UK and its sub-contractors working on site.

The new school is due to open in September, 2018, when work will begin to demolish the current comprehensive school on the site.

All work is due to finish in August, 2019.

- The Bouygues UK workforce on site includes 20 individuals who are trainees or apprentices - 18 of whom were previously unemployed.
- Half of the workforce is local while 93 per cent of the orders for the site are placed locally.
- The Pembroke site was the first in Wales to sign up to Build UK's 2017 Open Doors event and the site will be open to the public on 31st March and 1st April.
- The project is also delivering a 'Girls Only' career fair for Pembrokeshire schools on International Women's Day on 8th March.
- Workers on site have donated in-kind contributions of materials and fundraising to a value of £20,000 for various local good causes.

Captions

Above

County Councillor David Lloyd (left) and Craig Tatton from Bouygues UK sign the 'topping-out' beam.

Below

Six-year-old Elly Neville with her collage of the Pembrokeshire flag. Her father, Lyn (right) holds a certificate commemorating the donation of £990 to Elly's flag fund from Peter Sharp (left) on behalf of Bouygues UK. With them is Elly's mum, Ann.

