Leisure

For more than 60 years Silverstone has been one of the world’s leading motorsport venues. Home to the Formula One British Grand Prix and the MotoGP Motorcycle Grand Prix, Silverstone hosts a variety of two and four wheel world-class racing events throughout the year. Renowned as one of the fastest and most challenging tracks, with its new 3.66 mile Grand Prix circuit, Silverstone has come a long way from its beginning as a wartime airfield.
Today Silverstone is undergoing a multi-million pound investment to modernise the venue and campus including a new pit and paddock complex that will be completed in 2011. As part of the 2010 developments a new Grand Prix race circuit has been designed and built.

“Changing the track circuit design significantly disrupted our existing fibre cabling,” says Kevin O’Brien, IT Manager.

“Gantries containing fibre cable were removed and one of our major cable routes – the bridge near the medical centre – was demolished.”

These fibre cables were essential for the operation of the track safety cameras, 18 of which required repositioning as part of the new circuit design.

The track changes enabled Silverstone to accelerate its plans to complete the fibre ring installation encompassing the whole campus and with it the ability to serve all parts of the Silverstone operation from race track to business park. ICS is a preferred infrastructure supplier having completed an installation for the new Lotus Silverstone dealership when it opened recently on the site.

“We had already started to design, in conjunction with ICS, a fibre ring solution for the site,” says O’Brien.

“ICS recommended the Brand-Rex MicroBlo Air Blown Fibre cable solution as being reliable, robust and extremely future proof.”

As Silverstone develops and expands additional infrastructure will be required.

The Brand-Rex air blown fibre solution, MicroBlo, was chosen specifically for the project due to its flexibility and scalability, allowing additional connectivity for further services and devices in the future without disruption. The unique MicroBlo system uses compressed air to blow specially coated optical fibres into pre-installed plastic tubes and microducts, providing a flexible and cost effective method of installing optical fibre with extensive future-proofing potential.

With 90 per cent of the new fibre cabling being installed underground to the delivery point, resilience was extremely important. The Brand-Rex MicroBlo solution is armoured and rodent proof as well as flame and water resilient. Currently five nodes, supporting 80 per cent of the site, have been installed and commissioned. The final two nodes will complete the fibre ring as part of the contemporary pit and paddock complex which will also house the new race control centre and provide a central distribution point for voice and data services throughout the venue.

As additional fibre is required, it is simply air blown into the existing fibre duct infrastructure, reducing initial capital expenditure and the need to install dark fibre.

“We now understand where our cable runs are and all the termination points,” says O’Brien. “This enables us to quickly deploy services across the whole site.”

The network has been designed to carry voice, data and video to support racing events and gives the potential to offer a wide range of managed services to businesses that are located within the site, now and in the future.

The 7.5 kilometre MicroBlo fibre ring will cover the whole of the circuit with the capability to extend the Silverstone network into all parts of the site using radiating links. “Our fibre network has the potential to grow significantly as the site is developed in the future, how much it will increase to, we really don’t know,” says O’Brien.

“However, the work we are doing now will give us the ability to expand as necessary, adding value to the Silverstone offering whether to the public, event organisers or to our 100 permanent tenants.”

Brand-Rex and ICS have provided Silverstone with a future-proofed, high performance, resilient, expandable fibre infrastructure befitting a historic racing circuit committed to its future.