

Summer 2025

Community Newsletter

North Wessex Downs
Visual Impact Provision (VIP) project



Welcome and introduction

Hello and welcome to the latest newsletter for the North Wessex Downs Visual Impact Provision project (VIP). We're keen to update you on our work to transform the landscape in the North Wessex Downs.

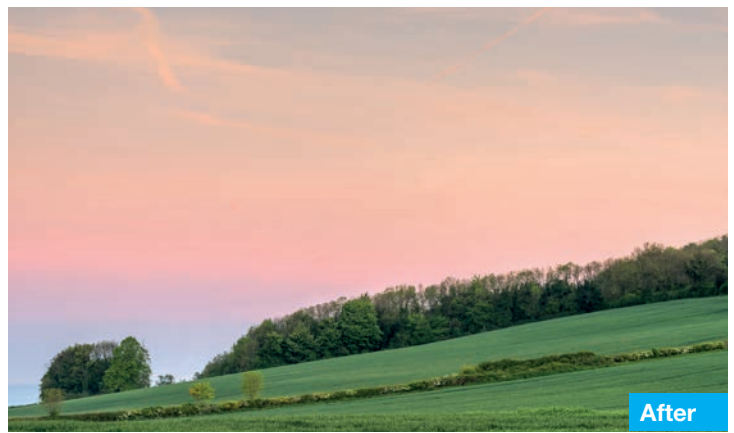
Work is continuing on the project, and we're excited to share the progress that we've made so far. We reached a major milestone this year as we begun installing our underground cables, putting us on track to remove the pylons next year.

We've also continued to work closely with the local community and have enjoyed seeing local organisations and charities benefit from our Community Grant programme.

We're always keen to hear your views, so please get in touch with any comments and feedback using our contact details on the back page.



Amardeep Malhi
National Grid
Project Manager



"Since we started our main construction works in spring 2024, it's been great getting involved in the local community and seeing the amazing work carried out by groups like Wiltshire Search and Rescue.

We're working hard to minimise disruption during construction wherever we can and we would like to thank everyone for their continued patience and understanding as we work to transform the glorious North Wessex Downs landscape."

Matt Taylor, Balfour Beatty



nationalgrid

Project updates

We've made significant progress over the past few months. We're currently in the process of installing the new underground cables that will then allow us to remove the pylons in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

Here's a short summary of what we've been doing on-site...

Have you spotted our unusual pylons?

We've installed a pair of temporary 'one armed' transmission pylons near Horton Road and at Rickpiece Plantation, which are key to making sure there is no disruption to the power network while work continues on the project.

By moving the overhead line, the team has been able to safely start construction of the two new cable sealing end compounds (CSECs).

These CSECs will connect the new underground cable to the remaining existing overhead

line on completion of the North Wessex Downs project, meaning our team will be able to safely and smoothly switch over power with no interruption to supplies.

We recently received permission from Wiltshire Council to extend working hours for the construction work on the CSECs from 8am-9pm on Mondays to Fridays. Work will also continue to take place at weekends on an ad hoc basis between the hours of 8am-4pm.



New cable delivery and installation

With the construction of a temporary haul road completed last year, our current phase of activity is focused on installing the underground cables along the 4.6 km route. This temporary road allows the project team to deliver essential supplies without having to use public roads.

The specialist cables have been delivered all the way from South Korea. A total of 72 deliveries have been made to the project site, with the cables arriving on 5-metre diameter drums that weigh an enormous 50 tonnes each.

Once the pylons have been taken down and the project is completed, the temporary haul road will be removed and the land restored. Below you can see an example of how the land has been restored on another one of our VIP projects in Dorset.



Footpath diversions

With the complex engineering work taking place on the project, we had to make the difficult decision to close two public rights of way (DEVI36 and DEV63) that cross our construction site.

We have been working closely with Wiltshire Council and local community groups to make sure that everyone is kept up-to-date, and we are sorry for any inconvenience caused.

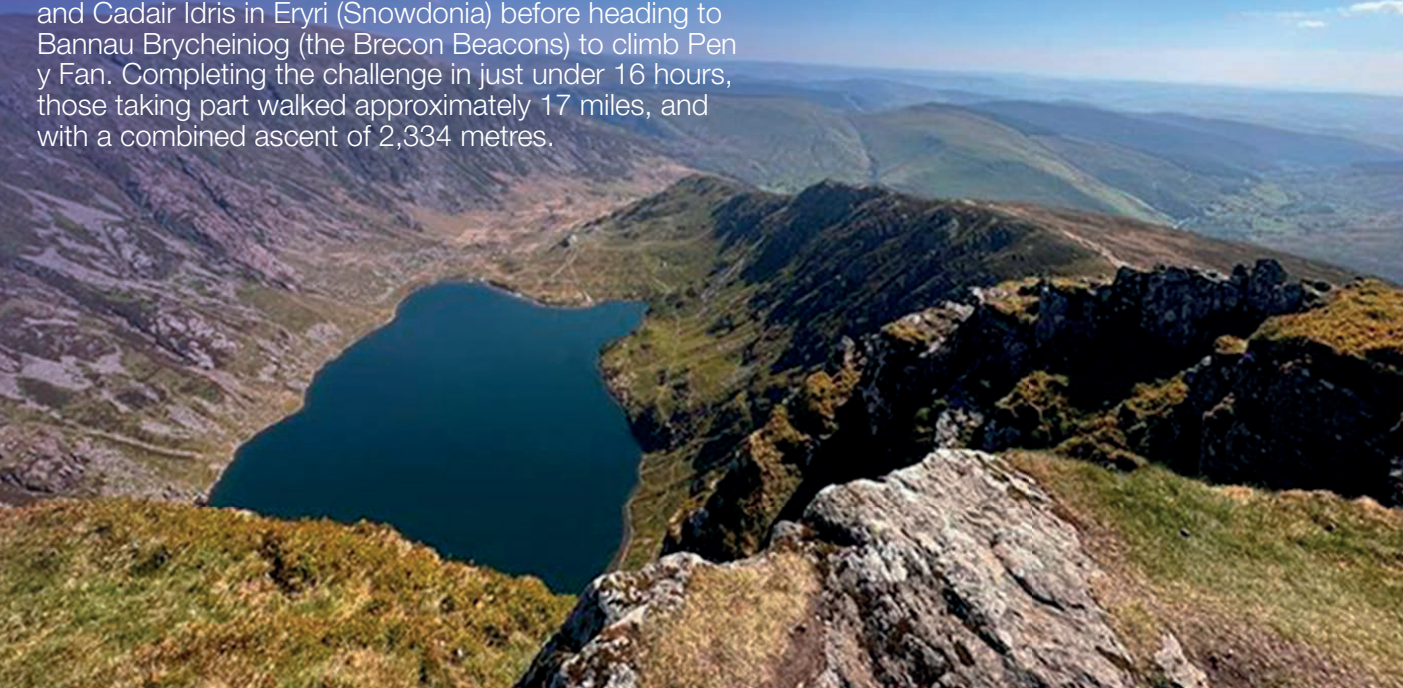


Community updates

Welsh walkers raise over £5,000 for Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance

Members of the North Wessex Downs VIP project team donned their walking boots and successfully completed the Welsh Three Peaks Challenge, raising over £5,000 for the Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance charity.

The team which included colleagues from National Grid and Balfour Beatty, summited Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon) and Cadair Idris in Eryri (Snowdonia) before heading to Bannau Brycheiniog (the Brecon Beacons) to climb Pen y Fan. Completing the challenge in just under 16 hours, those taking part walked approximately 17 miles, and with a combined ascent of 2,334 metres.



Supporting Wiltshire Search and Rescue

Wiltshire Search and Rescue is a local voluntary organisation that locates high-risk and vulnerable missing persons. The charity provides lifesaving medical care and returns people to a place of safety across Wiltshire.

The team works with a variety of organisations, including local councils and utility providers, to provide help during incidents like flooding or other adverse weather conditions. They spend significant time training across all disciplines, which often includes using the fields next to our VIP project.

Since construction began, National Grid has been working closely with the Wiltshire Search and Rescue team to ensure that our project does not impact their training.



Community Grant Programme

The Community Grant Programme is aimed at community organisations and charities in areas where National Grid's work is impacting local people. It supports initiatives that will benefit communities close to the scheme.

Local organisations and charities in areas impacted by the North Wessex Downs VIP project can apply for grants of up to £20,000. Here are some of the local groups and projects that have benefited from funding to date:

- **Devizes Outdoor Celebratory Arts** – received a grant of £20,000 to carry out its YEA! Devizes project (which stands for Youth Event Area Devizes). This initiative works with a group of 45 young people, helping them to develop and deliver their own outdoor public and cultural event.
- **Wiltshire Search and Rescue** – received £20,000 to purchase a new vehicle to replace its current incident support unit, which is crucial to its operations.
- **The Mind Tree Café** – just over £10,000 was awarded to redecorate the café in Rowde and revamp its outside space. This refurbishment now allows them to host workshops, providing a space for the community to come together, selling fruit, vegetables and flowers at an affordable price for around 500 community members.

How to apply

If you think that your organisation or local group could benefit from the Community Grant Programme or know of a project that meets our criteria, we'd love to hear from you. Visit our website to find out how to apply: nationalgrid.com/community-grant-programme.

Get in touch

Engaging with stakeholders and local communities is really important to us and we will continue to work with you during the project. We're committed to providing updates throughout construction and will be sending regular newsletters.

If you want to find out more about the VIP project, meet the team, or if you would like any further information about any of the stories you've read about, please do get in touch using the details below.

Email: visualimpact@nationalgrid.com
or call: **0330 134 0051** 9am–5:30pm, Monday–Friday.
You can find out more about the project on our website:
nationalgrid.com/northwessexdownsvip



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