

Community Newsletter

Eryri Visual Impact Provision (VIP) project



Project update

Welcome to our latest newsletter, which celebrates an exciting period for the Eryri VIP project as we complete over a third of the tunnel we are constructing underneath the Dwyryd Estuary between Minffordd and Llandecwyn.

We have had a busy and productive year. We saw the safe arrival, blessing and launch of Buddug, our Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) and we're making great progress on our tunnelling work. Efforts are also continuing at pace to prepare the reception shaft at our Llandecwyn site.

As always, we'd like to thank you, the local community, for your support in helping us reach our project milestones. I hope you find this update useful and enjoy learning more about our progress.

We're always keen to hear your feedback, so if there's something you'd like us to feature more of in



Steve Ellison
Senior Project Manager, Eryri VIP, National Grid

the newsletter, a community event we should know about, or if you'd like to suggest an opportunity for us to volunteer in the community, please do get in touch.

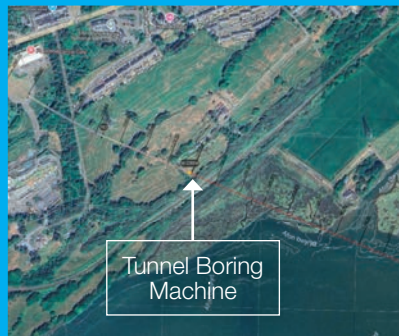
Buddug has been working hard and at pace

Following the start of tunnelling in May this year, Buddug is making good progress. Working 24 hours a day, seven days a week, her task is to bore a total of 3329 metres and install 2774 concrete rings to create our tunnel.

By late October 2025, she had tunnelled over 1200 metres and installed over 1000 rings – completing over a third of the journey.

The aerial photo here shows where she had reached by late October. She has now tunnelled past the Minffordd roundabout and is currently to the east of Ysgol Hafod Lon.

Tunnelling is due to be completed in 2026 when Buddug reaches Llandecwyn.



To date, Buddug has:

Worked for

24 hours a day

7 days a week



Tunnelled over

1200 metres



Installed over

1000 concrete rings



Collaboration is key

Along her journey, Buddug has successfully passed under several important local assets, including the Porthmadog bypass, the Cambrian Coast Railway Line, the Ffestiniog Railway Line, Minffordd roundabout and Eryri Business Park.

National Grid and the Eryri VIP team has worked closely with the owners of these assets, as well as local stakeholders, to plan the route for the tunnel construction carefully, to ensure seamless coordination across key areas such as access logistics, construction safety, and environmental compliance, and to avoid disruption to road and railway users.

“We’re proud to have completed this important and delicate stage of our tunnelling journey without issue. This is testament to the close working relationship we have had with asset owners and the high level of skill and expertise from all teams involved.”

Steve Ellison
Senior Project Manager,
Eryri VIP,
National Grid



Arisings: quick facts

With over 1,200 metres now tunnelled, how much material has been removed and where does this go? Here are some quick facts and figures:

- Over 50,000 tonnes of material has been excavated to date
- Removed from site via approximately 2,000 lorry movements, strictly following our Construction Traffic Management Plan to minimise local impact
- 85% of material sent for re-use at local quarry (Breedon, Minffordd), remainder sent to other sites in Gwynedd
- Circa. 75,000 tonnes of arisings remaining to be mined



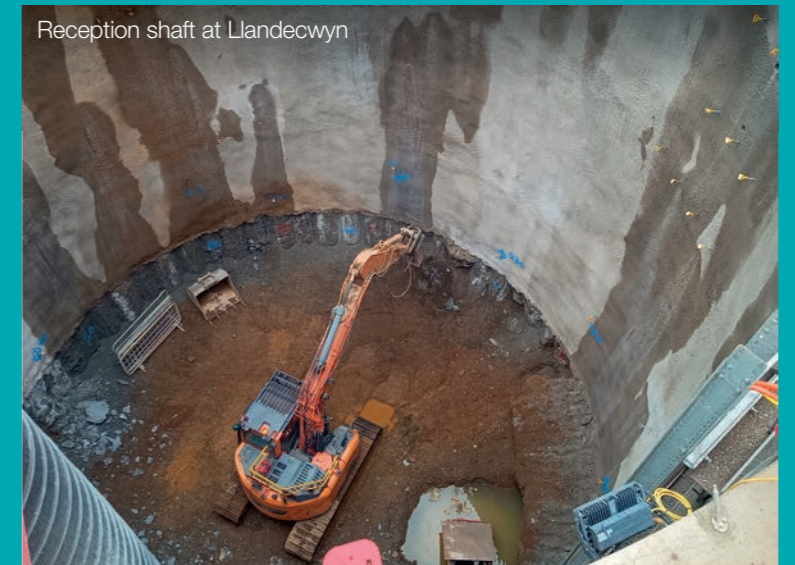
Arisings extracted from the tunnel and transported by conveyor belt to a temporary storage area at our Garth site

Digging deep at Llandecwyn

As Buddug makes great progress, the project team has been busy constructing the reception shaft at Llandecwyn which will lift her out of the ground once she finishes tunnelling across the estuary in 2026.

The main ground treatment works for the shaft have been completed, with excavation work now well underway. Excavation has revealed some interesting geological findings, with the team uncovering a variety of rocks, sediment and even a few boulders. The material is being sent for processing and re-use at sites in Gwynedd.

Once completed, the shaft will measure 57 metres deep.



Reception shaft at Llandecwyn

What's coming next?

Once the tunnelling is completed next year, we will begin to insert the cables into the tunnel which will replace the overhead line and pylons that cross the Dwyryd Estuary. Pylon and overhead line removal is due to be completed in 2029.

Following this, the project team will start working on the construction of the tunnel headhouse and sealing end compound which will connect the underground cables to the existing overhead line.



Geological finds from shaft excavation

When Scarlett met Buddug

In our last newsletter we reported that local pupil Scarlett Harvey had won our TBM naming competition with her entry, Buddug.

As part of her prize, Scarlett and her parents were invited to meet Buddug for themselves at Minffordd.

We had a fantastic afternoon and it was a pleasure to show Scarlett around the site and answer her questions about our work.





Buddug travelling along the A55



On the A55 in Denbighshire



Travelling past Penmaenmawr



Travelling along the A487



A long journey to the starting line

After months of careful planning and preparation, the Eryri VIP team finally welcomed Buddug to the project site in Minffordd in November 2024.

The TBM is a highly specialised piece of equipment measuring 166m and weighing 436 tonnes. Buddug was previously used to excavate 1.5km of tunnel in Singapore and was then remanufactured in Germany for Eryri VIP by Herrenknecht.

She was initially transported to us in sections across the North Sea to Immingham Docks in Lincolnshire, before making her way to Chester services.

She then travelled across North Wales via 27 different deliveries along the A55 and A487 to our construction compound.

On Monday 25 November 2024, we welcomed the delivery of the 'shield' that forms part of the front section. To celebrate the occasion, we were joined at the Minffordd site by environmentalist Chris Baines and CEO of Eryri National Park Authority, Jonathan Cawley. Members of the local community lined the route and visited the site entrance in anticipation of the shield's arrival.



At the Porthmadog roundabout



Arriving at the Eryri VIP project site in Minffordd



Cutter head and erector with carrier beam arriving on site



Gantries arriving on site

In the Community... Underground and on the ground

With Buddug busy boring underground, we will be continuing with our **educational outreach**, extending our work to share information about STEM subjects with the next generation of engineers and scientists.

We've also been getting our boots on the ground helping more community groups through our **volunteering programme**.

We'll also continue to seek feedback and share information through our **Community Liaison Group** and open events.

Our **Community Grant Programme** continues to support important local causes.

Here's a snapshot of just a portion of the work we've been doing. Keep an eye on our project website for regular updates on our activities.

Coleg Menai visit

In June, we were joined by Level 3 Construction and Built Environment students from Coleg Menai for a tour of the Eryri VIP project site in Minffordd, where they were able to experience real-world civil engineering in action.



Community Grant Programme

We are delighted that, in March 2025, Ysgol Cefn Coch was awarded £16,429 to create a dedicated childcare and after-school learning area and safe play space, enabling further educational and community support.

During the June 2025 funding round, CPD Penrhyndeudraeth was awarded £19,680 to construct a hardstanding area for spectators and Aberglaslyn Mountain Rescue Team were awarded £18,444 to equip eight new volunteers and upgrade casualty evacuation systems.

Speaking about the funding, Owen Senior, fundraising officer at Aberglaslyn MRT, said: "The funding that we've received from the National Grid Community Grant Programme is absolutely game-changing for our volunteers and the wider community we serve.

"This grant funding will help us with vital, life-saving equipment upgrades and help us to access even more training. This will directly enhance our ability to respond swiftly and safely to those in need across our challenging mountain terrain. It's an investment in the safety of everyone who lives in or explores our areas."

For more information about eligibility criteria and how to apply to the fund, visit: nationalgrid.com/responsibility/community/community-grant-programme



Volunteering

Our team has recently enjoyed various volunteering opportunities in the local area and we're grateful to the community representatives who helped us arrange these. We're also working with Eryri National Park on a monthly programme of activity. The team recently tackled Himalayan Balsam on the Mawddach Trail and headed to Cwm Prysor to clear branches to help make the footpath safer for the public.

day of volunteering at the Millennium Park. Their work included installing base protection around several trees, weeding around flower beds and spreading mulch to minimise weed growth in future.

The team also got stuck into volunteering at Maentwrog, including assisting with eradicating the bamboo in the local church and helping to install bat boxes in the area. In preparation for Remembrance Sunday, the team also carried out some voluntary maintenance and landscaping works around the Cenotaph.

Working with Penrhyndeudraeth Town Council, the project team carried out a



Community Liaison Group

Our Community Liaison Group continues to meet twice a year and we are grateful to our local stakeholders for their continued attendance, feedback and helpful guidance.



A big 'Diolch yn fawr'

To mark the important milestone of being ready to commence tunnelling, and to show our appreciation to those who had helped us get to that point, we held a series of events in April 2025.

TBM blessing

Buddug is not working alone as she bores our tunnel; she is piloted by several incredibly skilled and brave miners. Buddug and her crew work deep underground and far from daylight, and this will increasingly be the case by the latter stages of the operation.

It is understandable, therefore, that it is customary to bless TBMs ahead of launch. On 15 April we were delighted to be joined at the Eryri VIP project site by Fr Francis Arinze Ayogu MSP of Porthmadog who carried out the blessing ceremony for Buddug, saying a few words about the project, recognising St Barbara, the patron saint of tunnellers and miners, and wishing Buddug good luck for her journey.



Neighbours' site visit

As our site preparations ahead of launch progressed, it was important to us to recognise our nearest site neighbours for their continued patience and support.

We were pleased to welcome over 30 members of the Minffordd community to our site on Saturday 26 April for an exclusive visit so that they could witness and understand a little bit more about the work we are doing behind the fences. This included a tour of the site and an opportunity to see Buddug up-close in her launch box.

Stakeholder launch event

Following our neighbours' open day, we held a stakeholder launch event at Castell Deudraeth, Portmeirion. We invited strategic partners and advisory group stakeholders who have been involved since the project's inception, along with senior National Grid executives.

The day included speeches from the Eryri VIP project team, leading environmentalist Chris Baines, Chair of the independent Stakeholder Advisory Group for VIP projects and the president of National Grid Electricity Transmission, Alice Delahunty. The guests then enjoyed a visit to the project site.



Get in touch

We will be providing updates throughout construction to keep local people updated about our progress. We are always keen to hear from you if you have any questions or feedback.

Please get in touch by calling **0800 019 1898**

by writing to **Freepost VISUAL IMPACT PROVISION**

or by sending an email to **visualimpact@nationalgrid.com**

You can find out more about the project on our dedicated website: **nationalgrid.com/eryrivip**

