

Summer 2026

Community Newsletter

North Wessex Downs
Visual Impact Provision (VIP) project



Welcome

Welcome to the Summer 2026 newsletter for the North Wessex Downs Visual Impact Provision (VIP) project. We're pleased to share the latest progress on our work to improve views across the North Wessex Downs landscape.

Read on for the latest construction and community updates, including a roundup of our STEM outreach with local schools, volunteering, a special royal visit for one of the local causes supported by our Community Grant Programme, and more.

We welcome your feedback and questions, so please get in touch if you have any questions or comments about the project.



Amardeep Malhi
National Grid
Project Manager

Project update

We've achieved several construction milestones since our last newsletter.

All 12 new underground cables are now successfully installed and have been tested at high voltage to ensure they can safely transmit electricity. We've also completed construction of other important infrastructure – you can find out more about some of these achievements on page two.

Our focus this summer is on returning the land to its previous condition before construction began in 2024.

Over the next few months, you'll see us removing the temporary haul road that our construction vehicles used. We are working closely with specialist contractors, landowners and local farmers to reinstate the subsoil and topsoil to a high standard.

We are also working with the National Energy System Operator (NESO) to confirm when we can switch the power supply from the existing overhead line to the new underground cables. We currently expect this to happen later this autumn.

As part of this, we are waiting for a new shunt reactor to come online. This equipment helps regulate voltage and maintain stability across the electricity network.

Once the switchover date is confirmed, we will be able to finalise the programme for removing the pylons, which will mark the completion of the project.

We will continue to keep the local community updated as the project progresses.



nationalgrid

Construction progress

New underground cables pass the test

Following the installation of the new underground cables – including digging trenches, laying ducting and jointing – we carried out high-voltage testing to make sure the cables can operate safely and reliably once connected.

A specialist company, KEMA Labs, carried out this testing using equipment brought to site to energise the cables at 260 kV. This confirmed that the cables can safely transmit electricity at the required voltage once in operation.

Given the level of technical planning and expertise involved, we expected the testing to go smoothly – and it was great to see everything perform exactly as designed.



Jointing the new underground cables



High-voltage testing

Cable sealing end compounds complete

We have completed construction of the two new cable sealing end compounds (CSECs) at either end of the project route. These connect the remaining overhead lines to the new underground cables.

These structures are located north of Conscience Lane in the west and south of Horton Road in the east.

Each compound includes a pylon, cable terminations, electrical equipment, support structures and control equipment for remote monitoring. There are security fences around both compounds to protect people and the equipment.

The location of each CSEC was carefully chosen to minimise visual impact. We will also carry out landscaping and planting around the sites to help screen the equipment and blend it into the surrounding landscape.



In the community

Sparking STEM inspiration in local schools

Alongside our construction work, we're committed to engaging with young people and inspiring the next generation of engineers and construction professionals.

Recently, members of the project team returned to the classroom to deliver tailored STEM sessions at Bishops Cannings C of E Primary School, St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School and Rowde C of E Primary Academy.

Equipped with buzzers, bulbs and crocodile clips, pupils got stuck into building their own circuits. They even became part of the experiment by linking hands to power an 'energy stick', demonstrating how different materials – and even people – can conduct electricity.

We will continue working with local schools as part of our ongoing education and community outreach programme.



Green fingered volunteers lend a helping hand

This isn't the first time the project team has supported Bishops Cannings Primary School. Previously, they were joined by colleagues from Wiltshire Concrete, Balfour Beatty and National Grid for a day of volunteering.

Teachers at the primary school wanted to restore

their outdoor conservation area by transforming it into an outdoor classroom (for more on this – see the next page).

Together, the volunteers removed an impressive six tonnes of overgrown vegetation, helping to reopen and revitalise the space for pupils and staff.



Community Liaison Group

Our Community Liaison Group continues to meet twice a year, with the most recent meeting taking place in May 2026. It provides an important forum for sharing project updates, answering questions and hearing directly from local stakeholders and the wider community.

We would like to thank representatives from local organisations, town and parish councils and community groups for their continued support, feedback and input at these sessions.

Re-chalking the Millennium White Horse

As part of our commitment to leaving a long-lasting legacy for the landscape and local community, we are working with Devizes Town Council to support the re-chalking of the Millennium White Horse on Roundway Hill.

This project will help preserve an important local landmark and enhance the surrounding landscape for years to come.

We're keen to involve local volunteers in bringing this project to life and we will share more information on how to get involved soon.



Community Grant Programme

The Community Grant Programme supports community organisations and charities in areas impacted by National Grid's operations and construction activities.

Local non-profit groups and organisations impacted by the North Wessex Downs VIP project may apply for grants of up to £20,000.

Bromham Community Hub receives the royal treatment

Project Manager Amardeep Malhi joined more than 100 local residents and community leaders in Bromham for the official reopening of the village's Community Hub by Her Majesty The Queen.

The Hub's reconstruction has been four years in the making, following a devastating fire in June 2021. Since then the facility has been rebuilt, with support from the National Lottery, the government's Levelling Up Fund and our grant programme.



Projects in the North Wessex Downs VIP area have been awarded £161,652.99 since 2024.

Latest recipients include:

- **South Western Ambulance Charity** (right) – for a Devizes-based Community Response Vehicle to provide timely medical assistance to the local area.
- **Bishops Cannings Village Hall** – to re-thatch the building's roof, improving safety for the local community.
- **Friends of Bishops Cannings C of E Primary School** – to help create an outdoor learning area with a balance trail and new pond platform.
- **The Mind Tree Café** – to help install air source heat pumps at the affordable counselling and wellbeing centre.



Project Manager Amardeep Malhi and South Western Ambulance Charity members Darren Bone and Chris Jones

How to apply

If you know of a local organisation that could benefit from our Community Grant Programme, we encourage you to apply. To find out about the eligibility criteria and application process, please visit our website: nationalgrid.com/community-grant-programme.

Get in touch

Staying connected with our neighbours and the local community is our priority and we'd love to hear from you. If you have any questions about the project or would like more information, please get in touch with our team on 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



Please
recycle