The Great Grid Upgrade

Sea Link

Archaeology surveys and ground investigation works update



nationalgrid

National Grid will be undertaking a range of archaeology surveys and ground investigation works in Kent from August 2026. This update explains what these works involve and what you can expect to see whilst we carry them out.

Summary of works

As part of our Sea Link application for development consent, we published an Environment Statement (ES) that sets out the results of a range of detailed environmental surveys that we have undertaken in recent years. The ES also explains that there are some areas where further survey work would be required.

From August 2026, we need to undertake two sets of work. These are:

1. Archaeological excavation within the land close to our proposed converter station south of Minster
2. ground investigation works to understand the locations of any potential unexploded ordnance (such as wartime bombs), and geoarchaeology surveys of the soil.

We have sought consent for these works through two separate submissions to Thanet District Council:

- In May 2026, we submitted a Town and Country Planning Act application (reference F/TH/26/0505) for the archaeological excavation works. This application was approved on Thursday 13 August 2026.
- In June 2026, we submitted a request for a Lawful Development Certificate (reference CD/TH/26/0647) to undertake the ground investigation and geoarchaeology works. This was granted on Tuesday 11 August 2026.

Both sets of work will begin from w/c 17 August 2026. During this time, you may see members of our team on site with diggers and other equipment and using temporary staff welfare facilities whilst the works are carried out.

This is not the start of construction, as the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero needs to decide on our development consent order application for Sea Link first.

Where will the works take place?

You can see the approximate location of where we will carry out works below. Definitive maps of each set of works can be found in our submissions to Thanet District Council.



Map of works

When will the works take place?

Both the ground investigation and archaeological excavation works are due to begin from w/c 17 August 2026.

The ground investigation and geoarchaeology works are expected to take approximately 5 months to complete, weather and site conditions permitting.

We expect the archaeology work to conclude in Spring 2027. This is dependent on the quantity and complexity of the archaeological remains encountered during the archaeological excavations.

Our working hours are between 7am and 7pm, Monday to Friday. To keep the work on track, we will likely be on site working weekend in September – November. No work is planned to take place on bank holidays.



Equipment for ground investigation works

What do these works involve?

The ground investigation works involve the use of specialist equipment to safely check the ground for any signs of potential unexploded ordnance within the land. The survey will be completed using a magnetometer probe which is hydraulically pushed into the ground to survey the soil for deep unexploded ordnance over a series of small boreholes. The survey will not involve any excavation or removal of potential unexploded ordnance. You can see an example of the equipment used in the ground investigation surveys on the right-hand side of this page.

The archaeological excavation works will involve using a mechanical excavator and articulated dump trucks to carefully remove the topsoil. You can see examples of this below. This topsoil stripping is under constant archaeological supervision and allows archaeologists to expose archaeological remains across large areas in a controlled manner. Drones will also be used to help identify features.

Once archaeological remains are exposed, experienced archaeologists from Stantec and Oxford Archaeology will investigate by hand excavating, recording, photographing and sampling all archaeological features present to ensure preservation by record. Any artefacts recovered from site are taken off site to be cleaned and studied further before being deposited with an appropriate museum.

All archaeological works are undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (an archaeological method statement) agreed as part of the Planning Application and through ongoing discussions with Kent County Council Principal Archaeological Officer. All works are undertaken in accordance with the standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), which is the governing professional body for archaeology in the UK. The works are also directed by CIfA members.

We are working closely with the Kent County Council Archaeologist at all stages of the excavation to ensure that all archaeological remains are properly investigated and recorded. When the excavation is completed, the area will be backfilled using the soil that was originally excavated.

For each set of works, we will also need small areas for staff welfare and machinery storage.





Images of archaeology works: August 2026

What does this mean for you?

If you live or work in the area around where these works are taking place you may notice survey equipment and machinery in use, temporary welfare facilities for our staff, as well as some low noise. You may also notice the use of drones as part of the archaeology surveys.

Most of the areas that will be archaeologically excavated are located on private land, but where Public Rights of Way pass close to our worksites we will conduct a risk assessment and implement additional safety measures, such as fencing and signage.

We are building a temporary access track between Ebbsfleet Lane North and the survey area, including three temporary bridges. This will avoid the need for vehicles travelling to and from the works to use Brooks Lane, except when building the temporary access.

We will deliver outreach activities as part of our archaeology works, working with organisations such as local schools, universities and archaeological interest groups. This could include producing educational resources for young people, visiting schools to deliver hands on archaeology sessions and giving talks on the archaeology to local communities. We will share more information about any opportunities closer to the time. We will also share updates on any exciting discoveries as the works progress.







Images of archaeology works: August 2026

Contact us

Throughout these works we will aim to keep disruption to a minimum. If you have any further questions or queries about our upcoming surveys, you can contact our Community Relations team via the details below or you can visit our project website at nationalgrid.com/sea-link.

contact@sealink.nationalgrid.com

0808 134 9569 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5:30pm)

Write to Freepost SEA LINK (no postage fees)