

Going Underground in the Peak District: project update

Winter 2021

Welcome to our first Peak District VIP newsletter



As it is today



After removal



Muhammed Ali
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Hello and thank you for taking the time to read the first of our community newsletters, which will keep you updated as we start Going Underground in the Peak District.

Having worked closely with the local community over the past few years and listened to your feedback, it's great to now be making significant progress.

When work is finished next year, it will transform the skyline in and around Dunford Bridge by replacing 1.5km of overhead line and seven pylons running eastwards from the Woodhead Tunnel along the Upper Don Valley with underground cables.

We're working with our specialist contractor Morgan Sindall to install the underground cables and enhance this classic Dark Peak landscape. It's a significant engineering challenge,

but we're minimising disruption wherever we can.

In this update we'll remind you of the background to the project, the great progress we've already made and what's coming next. We want to keep in touch and to hear your views. To contact us, please use the details on the back page. On behalf of the project team, we wish you all the best for the festive period and a very happy new year.

Environmental and broadcaster Chris Baines, Chair of National Grid's independent VIP Stakeholder Advisory Group, told us why he's excited about the project:

"I grew up in Sheffield and the landscapes of the Peak District mean a lot to me. This project will be transformational for Dunford Bridge and this beautiful part of the Dark Peak. It will bring huge long term environmental, recreational and landscape benefits, and will provide an extremely attractive and accessible eastern gateway to the Peak District National Park."



Going Underground – key facts

- Seven pylons and overhead electricity line to be removed
- 1.5km of underground cables to replace them
- Temporary 1.5km diversion of Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) north of River Don
- Significant (over 12%) biodiversity net gain along the route and beyond
- Dunford Bridge car park set for major enhancement



Positive progress in Dunford Bridge

Andrew Neilly, National Grid Project Supervisor, provides a summary of the key activity that has been taking place since work got underway on site in May

It's been an exciting first few months on site as we gear up towards removing the pylons next year. Our initial work has involved putting in place the foundations that will make our landscape improvement work possible. Here's a quick update on what we've been doing so far:

Building a temporary haul road to the north of the River Don

This will provide access to the area while we construct the TPT diversion. Once the project is completed, we will take away all the materials and fully restore the landscape to how it looked before.



Creating a temporary diversion to the TPT

The new temporary route will provide spectacular new views for local people and Trail users while we bury the new cables under the current TPT route. See over the page for more details.



Working sensitively in Wogden Foot

We've been preparing an area in Wogden Foot to install our new equipment. Although this has required us to cut back and clear some of the vegetation, we've been able to remove 40% less than was originally planned.



Improving Dunford Bridge car park

We've had to temporarily reduce the number of parking spaces to ensure emergency service vehicles and local buses have unrestricted access, as well as for construction traffic to safely enter the main site compound.



Engaging with our stakeholders has been really important to us and we will continue to work with the community as we move forward – please get in touch via **our website** or **phone us** on:

0330 134 0051

We'd like to thank everyone who is helping to accommodate our project and shape the future of this part of the National Park.

Thanks for bearing with us – once our work has been completed the picnic area and car park will be significantly enhanced. You can see the designs at peakdistricteast.nationalgrid.co.uk/news-events/dunford-bridge-car-park-update



A new look for the Trans Pennine Trail

A spectacular temporary trail

To replace the pylons and overhead lines we worked closely with stakeholders to find the best place for us to bury the new cables. After many discussions and the consideration of numerous options, everyone agreed that the best location was under the existing TPT.

To keep this popular route open for everyone throughout, we've been building a temporary trail diversion which includes two new bridges (one permanent, the other temporary) in the open countryside running alongside the northern bank of the River Don.

This is being built in a way that will make it accessible for all of the different types of users of the TPT. There may be one or two points where the slopes are a little steeper, but we're putting resting points here so that people can stop to catch their breath if they need to.

The TPT diversion will be opening shortly. For a period of four weeks, it will provide a unique opportunity to

experience the 4km circular walk from Dunford Bridge, before the existing trail is temporarily closed to allow work to start on undergrounding of the electricity line. **For more information and updates on the diverted trail, please visit our website.**

We'd love as many of you as possible to come and visit the diverted trail and are keen for local people and regular trail users to be among the first to try the new route with its wonderful views.



Building a shelter for lounging lizards

As well as enhancing the landscape, the environment will also benefit from ecological improvements as part of our long-term commitments on the VIP project in Dunford Bridge.

The team has been creating safe spaces for local wildlife to shelter near where we're working in Wogden Foot. Known as 'refugia', these are made by carefully piling up some of the vegetation cleared from the site as well as branches, logs and materials already present from previous clearance works.

The natural crevices and holes are ideal for some of the most common reptile species we find in the area including the common lizard. We've had an ecological expert on site with us while we've been creating these spaces to make sure we avoid disturbing any other nearby wildlife.



Working with you, supporting the community

As we've developed the project we've listened to advice from local technical stakeholders to ensure we make the most of this opportunity to enhance the Peak District National Park landscape.

The project's Community Liaison Group will meet throughout construction to hear the latest developments from the project team, report any problems the community is facing and provide local insights. Its membership includes community representatives from local schools, parish councils, TPT user groups and wildlife organisations as well as Barnsley Council and the Peak Park.

National Grid's Community Grant Programme enables us to support local causes where we're working. Projects run by charities or community groups that provide social, economic and environmental benefits can apply for grants of up to £20,000.

If you know of a project that meets our criteria we'd love to hear from you. To learn more about the Community Grant Programme, please visit: www.nationalgrid.com/responsibility/community/community-grant-programme

A lasting legacy

Supporting landscape improvements in the Longdendale Valley

As part of the national VIP project the Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) supports smaller projects, with grants of up to £200,000 for projects in AONBs or National Parks that help reduce the visual impact of National Grid's existing overhead lines.

At Torside, a heartfelt bequest to the Friends of the Trans Pennine Trail from a family long connected with the Peak District National Park provided the match funding for an LEI grant. This has enabled fantastic improvements to the accessibility of this section of the

Longdendale Valley along this long-distance route.

The Longdendale Access Project (LAP) includes information boards and a leaflet, sound boxes kindly voiced by the actor Brian Blessed, activity posts, new seating, wheelchair access to a dipping pond, as well as the UK's first mechanical Changing Place facility.



Saplings on the move

As part of building work we have needed to remove a number of trees which will be replaced as part of the environmental restoration at the end of the project. Under the supervision of our on-site ecologist, Lewis Wright, earlier this year our team identified a number of saplings which were young enough to survive being lifted and moved to a new location either temporarily or permanently.

After Dunford Parish Council confirmed their interest in adopting the trees, our project team carefully lifted, transported and re-planted the saplings at the Crow Edge community centre. Once our works are complete, we will plant six new trees in their place while the three relocated trees will stay and enhance the area around the community centre.



Animal welfare

We know working along the Trans Pennine Trail can be thirsty work – but it's not just our own team we're looking after on site.

Since the summer we've been providing water and treats for dogs and horses at the car park in Dunford Bridge – please feel free to stop by next time you're nearby.



Get in touch

We're always keen to hear from you.

Please get in touch by calling **0330 134 0051**, 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: **peakdistricteast.nationalgrid.co.uk**