

# Summer/Autumn 2020 Dorset VIP Project Update



## Welcome and thank you

A lot has happened since our last newsletter in February. Work to put a 9km section of our electricity network underground and remove 22 pylons from the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has carried on and much has been achieved.

Our people working on the Visual Impact Provision (VIP) project have been doing so under stringent health and safety measures to protect not just themselves but also the wider community.

We are very grateful to our teams who are continuing to go out to work every day. But I would also like to thank you for your support in enabling us to continue with the project.

I'm pleased to say that we are making excellent progress on site. The temporary haul road that provides access to the construction areas has been completed and is in use, and our specialist machinery is now installing the ducts which will house the new high-voltage cables.

We will soon enter a key phase of construction as we start to install the new electricity cables. Once connected, this will allow us to remove the 9km of pylons and overhead line during 2022.

You can find out what else we've been up to in this latest issue of our newsletter, including some more fascinating finds from our expert archaeology team.

As ever, if you have any feedback or comments about the project please get in touch using the contact details overleaf.



*Sam Lamburne,  
Dorset VIP Project Manager*

## Traffic update

To ensure the safety of residents, road users and our construction team, we've had to temporarily close and divert some roads while we lay the ducts that will hold the cables. We know this is a pain and we're sorry for the disruption. We're getting through the work as quickly and safely as possible.

Friar Waddon Lane is currently closed but should re-open by the end of September. Roman Road will be closed for a single day on 1<sup>st</sup> October between 9.30am-3.30pm, and from 12<sup>th</sup> October we will have to close Coombe Road for a short three-week window. This will allow us to complete resurfacing work which had to be stopped at the beginning of lockdown.

Further information about all future planned closures and diversions will be shared on our project website. Thank you for your patience during these essential works.

## Just the ticket for local cricket

Dorset cricketers have been enjoying the improvements made to Martinstown Cricket Club since the lockdown was eased in July. This follows the installation of brand new practice nets and a state-of-the-art artificial surface.

The cricket club, celebrating its twentieth year, has been given a new lease of life with the help of funding from National Grid's Community Grant Fund. The Club's aims to encourage wider participation in the sport have also benefitted from the improvements which include a new surface that is particularly beneficial for disabled cricketers.

Club chairman David Gargrave said "We are delighted with the support from National Grid and the benefits that will be gained not just for the club and cricketers in Dorset but the wider community.

"Over the last few years, we have broadened the usage of the ground to include Dorset Disability, local schools and the developing Dorset Women's League. Our aim is to establish the club and its resources as a widely available community asset."



Photocredit: Martinstown Cricket Club

- £9,286 National Grid Funding
- 11 Teams of all ages
- 20 Years of Martinstown Cricket Club being on their current site



## Community Grant Fund

Our commitment to local communities runs to the core of what we do. That is why each year we make a significant charitable investment in the UK. The Community Grant Programme is aimed at community organisations and charities in areas where our work is impacting local people.

We fund projects run by charities and community groups that meet local community needs by providing a range of social, economic and environmental benefits.

If you have a project that meets our criteria, then you could apply for a grant of up to £20,000. If you'd like to learn more about the Community Grant Programme, then please visit: [betl.nationalgrid.co.uk](http://betl.nationalgrid.co.uk). If you have any questions about the Community Grant Fund, then please call the number on the website.

## Fledgling birds on the Dorset VIP site

The team working onsite for our Dorset Visual Impact Provision project have been blessed with the presence of some feathered friends.

As our team got back to (socially distant) working patterns on site, they realised they had some unexpected guests who had taken advantage of the temporary pause in work and were making use of some seemingly secluded spots to raise a family.

First, there was the discovery of a family of robins nesting underneath the cab of an excavator. The onsite team made sure the new family were undisturbed and left in safety by clearing an area around the birds in the excavator which was cordoned off from site activity.

The red-breasted family was then joined by a pair of pied wagtails who also set themselves up on site. To make sure the adult birds and their chicks were protected, the team regularly monitored the nests. A few weeks after spotting the original nests, the birds (adults and young alike) took flight.

Our Dorset team got the full spring experience this year, watching (and hearing) the baby birds grow and learn to fly.



## Dorset in the Bronze Age

Dorset is blessed with rich archaeological heritage, as we have discovered on the VIP site. Our archaeology experts, Oxford Archaeology, have made even more discoveries since our last newsletter.

In April, we completed the excavation of a rectangular enclosure measuring 64m by 33m. Artefacts discovered in the series of ditches that define the enclosure have enabled us to date it to the Bronze Age and suggest it was associated with farming rather than human settlement.

On a different part of the site we found a cremation cemetery with a mix of human remains – some stored in urns, others buried in the ground. We've not fully assessed these findings, but early signs indicate that these also date from the Bronze Age. We will be using radiocarbon dating to confirm or refine this belief.

The cremations are not directly associated with any of the barrows in the surrounding landscape. This variation between the burials in the barrows and the cremations indicates a social hierarchy within Bronze Age society. As we do further research, we're hoping to look into the comparative timescales between the various barrows and the cremations.

- 12 barrows
- 312 Neolithic and Bronze Age pits
- 21 Archaeologists on site
- 3623 Archaeologist days worked
- 6000 year old artefact  
Early Neolithic from 4000BC
- 902 environmental soil samples



Although we have no evidence for settlement on this site, we have now found seven complete Bronze Age pots inserted vertically into the ground. This is a phenomenon known as Pot Setting. It is known across England but is most common in the South West (particularly in Dorset, Cornwall and Somerset). The function of these pots is not fully understood, but they are often found close to Bronze Age settlements and we suspect they were used for storage. We are continuing our excavation work, and will provide a further update of our findings in the next newsletter.

We know many of you are keen to know when you will be able to see the finds from on site. Before we can share these, our team of experts together with Historic England and the County Archaeologist have to thoroughly analyse and record everything we discover.

Once we have completed all these processes, we will be able to share the findings from site. Please continue to visit our project website to hear about the latest updates.



Cremation excavation – photo credit to Oxford Archaeology

## A Day in the Life

*Liz Greenaway is the Senior Environmental Advisor on the Dorset VIP project. Originally hailing from Somerset, Liz loves the beautiful Dorset countryside with its chalk downland hills and stunning views. In her spare time, Liz is a scuba diving instructor, and she has fond memories of diving off the Dorset coast.*

I am an Environmental Advisor for Morgan Sindall projects for National Grid. One of the major perks of being an environmental advisor is the amount of variation; you never know what the day will bring. On the Dorset VIP project, the current highlight has been being able to work with protected species such as badgers, dormice, and Peregrine falcons.

My job means I also get to see amazing engineering work up close. I've been able to witness the great skill in the preparation for placing the 12 electricity cables underground and I'm looking forward seeing the view from the Hardy Monument when the 22 pylons have been removed.

- Badgers have lived on the British Isles for 250,000 years.  
- Facts from Countryfile UK
- Since 2000, the dormouse population has fallen by 51%  
- People's Trust for Endangered Species
- Peregrine falcons can reach speeds of up to 200mph  
- RSPB

If I were giving advice to someone considering becoming an environmental advisor, I would say that flexibility is essential. The nature of the work means plans will often be changed at the last minute and you have to be prepared to put your planned work on hold.

The role also requires good communication skills. A large part of what I do day-to-day is explaining the potential environmental risks on a project and how to avoid them. This often means I have to work with people to help them to change the way they are used to working.

I chose this career because I have always loved the countryside. I completed an HND in Countryside Management before studying Environmental Biology at university. I've worked as an Environmental Advisor ever since. I feel lucky that I get to do what I love at work.



## Project Progress

A picture tells a thousand words, and the photos from our construction site demonstrate the considerable progress we've made over the last few months.

Activity to date has seen the building and opening of two construction compounds at Roman Road and off the A35, haul roads built and operating, and the ducting that will house the electricity cables installed.

Laying the ducting is key to the project as it provides the alternative route for the new underground electricity cables which means we can then remove the pylons.



**105.6**  
kilometres of cable



**50-70**  
people working on site every day



**22**  
pylons to be removed permanently



## A word from Morgan Sindall Infrastructure

**MORGAN  
SINDALL**  
INFRASTRUCTURE

Our delivery partner, Morgan Sindall Infrastructure, is working hard to make the vision of an enhanced landscape in Dorset a reality.

Ian Maddison, operations director at Morgan Sindall Infrastructure, said:

“Dorset AONB is known for its rich history and rolling downs. Our work with National Grid to restore the natural beauty of the area through the VIP project has faced various challenges, including the global pandemic that has changed so much for everyone. At the onset of the pandemic, we stopped all work

on site for the health and safety of our team and the community. We are now fully up and running again – maintaining social distancing procedures – and our programme is on track.

“We are committed to this project and the benefits it will deliver to local people and the many visitors to the area. As Autumn and Winter approach, we will do our best to keep disruption to the community at a minimum while transforming the Dorset skyline.”



## Get in touch

We're always keen to hear from you. If you have any thoughts, concerns or compliments regarding the project, please get in touch by calling **0330 134 0051**, or by sending an email to [visualimpact@nationalgrid.com](mailto:visualimpact@nationalgrid.com). If you'd like to learn more about the project, please visit [dorset.nationalgrid.co.uk](http://dorset.nationalgrid.co.uk).