

Hinkley Connection Project

Project update



Welcome to the winter update

As we head into 2020, we're already 18 months into our construction programme. We're already working at several different locations along the route and all the main construction stages will have started by the end of the year. We're on track to complete construction by the end of 2025 and to finish all reinstatement and landscaping by mid-2026.

Despite the wet weather, we've made good progress over the past three months and you can read about what we've been up to and what's coming in this update.

Keep up to date with the project by checking the 'Current Activity' pages on our project website www.hinkleyconnection.co.uk.



National Grid and our contractors: proud to be part of a low carbon future

Britain hits historic clean energy milestone



Last year was the cleanest year on record for Britain. For the first time the amount of energy power from low carbon generators outstripped that from fossil fuels for a full twelve months.

This historic milestone comes as we enter the mid-point between 1990 and 2050 – the year in which the UK has committed to achieve at least a 100% reduction in emissions based on 1990 levels.

Data released by National Grid's Control Centre Team shows a combination of wind farms, solar and nuclear energy, alongside energy imported by subsea interconnectors, delivered 48.5% of Britain's electricity in 2019 compared to 43% generated by fossil fuels. The remaining 8.5% was generated by biomass.

National Grid CEO John Pettigrew said: *"As we enter a new decade, this truly is a historic moment and an opportunity to reflect on how much has been achieved."*

At National Grid, we know we have a critical role in the acceleration towards a cleaner future and we are committed to playing our part in delivering a safe and secure energy system that works for all."

The Hinkley Connection project will support the country's drive towards cleaner electricity. Project Director, James Goode adds, *"Once in operation, our connection will deliver low-carbon energy from the south west to 6 million homes and businesses in the UK. That's something that everyone working on the project is immensely proud to be part of."*

Days are numbered for Nailsea Pylons

Two lines of pylons running over and close to homes in the west end of Nailsea have been earmarked for removal and the countdown to their disappearance has begun.

The pylons, owned by Western Power Distribution (WPD), are some of the 249 that we are dismantling as part of the Hinkley Connection Project. They will be taken down at the request of residents living in the area to make way for new T-pylons needed to connect EDF Energy's Hinkley Point C and the low-carbon energy it will generate to 6 million homes and businesses, via the Hinkley Connection.

To replace one of the lines, we're laying 10.5 km of underground cables between the west end of Nailsea and Portishead substation. Work started at the beginning of January 2020. The new cables need to be operational before pylons can be removed.

Installing underground cables involves building temporary entrances and access roads, excavating trenches for cable ducts and joint bays, and installing and connecting the cables. We've appointed J. Murphy & Sons Limited as the contractor and we expect work to be completed by autumn 2021.

Read on to find out more about the work between Nailsea and Portishead.



Pylons running close to homes in Nailsea will be taken down

Going underground – locals discover what it takes to install underground cable



Residents and business owners from Nailsea and Tickenham visited public information events to find out how we are going to install the underground cables between Nailsea and Portishead.

People living and working closest to where work will take place were invited to local drop in events to meet with senior engineers working on the project. They were

able to view plans and maps showing the route of the underground cables, the two lines of existing pylons that will be removed and the location of the new T-pylon line to the west of Nailsea.

Tony Dyas, Lead Project Manager says, *"It was great to welcome so many people to the events. We've been able to talk through the plans and address questions and concerns face-to-face."*

"We recognise that the installation of underground cabling will impact local people and businesses. We're working closely with the Local Highways Authority on a traffic management plan and we're working hard to keep disruption to a minimum."

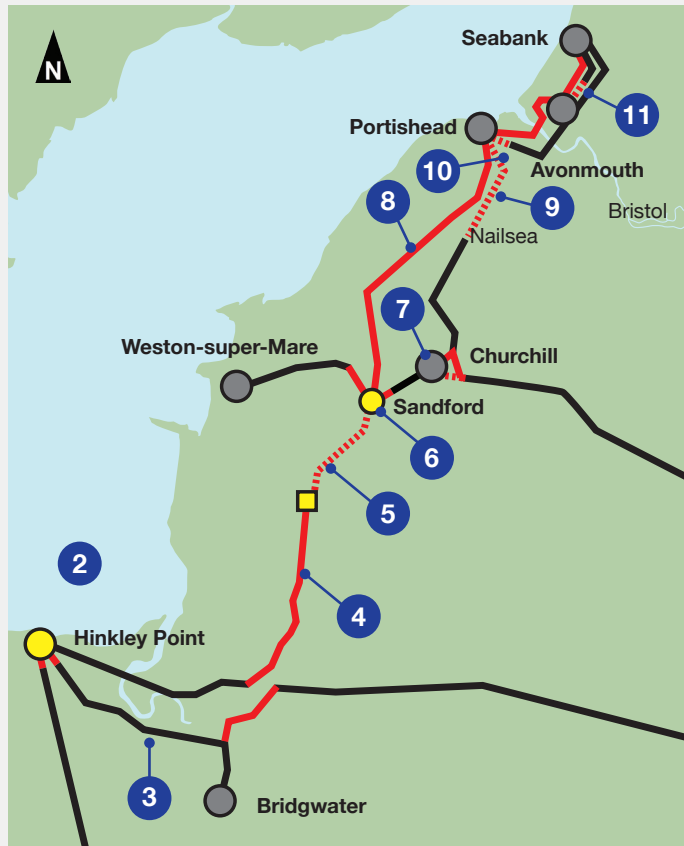
We want to let people know what to expect at each stage of the work and that they can find up to date information our project website."

We're holding more events along the cable route, as well as providing briefings to the parish and town councils. Details of these can be found on our project website: www.hinkleyconnectionproject.co.uk/talk-to-us-face-to-face.

If you live along the route of the underground cables, come and join us and find out more about our work in your area.

Live projects update

The Hinkley Connection Project is made up of several stages of work. More information on all the stages, construction timings and how they fit together can be found on our project website: www.hinkleyconnection.co.uk.



1 Shurton substation

Linxon, our contractor, is making good progress with the new substation that will be the 'plug' that connects EDF Energy's new nuclear power station to the grid.



Construction of the new substation at Shurton is progressing well

2 Modifying existing overhead lines in the Hinkley Point area

Last summer we carried out surveys and ground investigations in the Hinkley Point area. We're using the findings to plan how we're going to build 13 new pylons to connect the new substation at Shurton. We will also take down six existing pylons in the area.

We expect to start work here in early 2021.

3 Upgrading existing overhead lines between Hinkley and Bridgwater substation

We've been monitoring wildlife along the cable route so we can plan the best way to re-wire the pylons in 2022. We want to minimise any impact we may have on protected species.

4 Preparing to build T-pylons

We've put up stock fencing and started some early work to clear vegetation along the route of the new overhead lines. We will continue to carry out surveys and investigations along the route as we prepare to start construction in May 2020. These include checking the condition of local roads where we will build accesses to construction areas. We'll use temporary traffic lights while surveying the road surface.



Our first work will be to build temporary accesses from the public roads into fields where T-pylons will be constructed. We'll also build a temporary construction road along much of the route to help reduce the amount of construction traffic on local roads.

5 Trench excavation starts in the Mendips

We've set up the main site compound at Tarnock and nearly completed building the temporary haul road between the A38 and the A371. The haul road will limit our use of the local road network. We've had to stop work temporarily near Max Mill Lane as our team of archaeologists has turned up some interesting finds.

We will publish more information about what we've found and how we are protecting local archaeology on our project website and in the next update.

Our next major milestone will be completing a 40 metre crossing over the River Axe. We're using a prefabricated, modular truss designed bridge known as a Callendar-Hamilton Bridge. It will be the first full sized model used in the UK for several decades. The main part of the bridge was craned into position at the end of January and we are now completing work on the foundations. More information and pictures will be published on our project website



We're building a 40m crossing over the River Axe

We've started to excavate the first cable trenches. Over the next twelve months or so, we'll excavate two trenches on each side of the haul road and lay three cables ducts in each - 12 in total. Using ducts allows us to close each section of trench promptly. Later in the programme, we'll pull the high voltage electricity cable through the ducts.

6 Preparing to build Sandford substation

We've appointed Siemens to build the substation and they are preparing to start work at the end of March 2020.

In the meantime, we're carrying out some advance planting and landscaping around the site to help screen the substation. We will plant native trees and hedgerows to improve biodiversity in the area.

We've nearly completed building the access to the site from the A371 near Towerhead and, in the autumn, we cleared trees and vegetation from the site. This was part of our ecological mitigation work to protect wildlife in the area.

National Grid is committed to protecting the environment and, for every tree removed as part of this project, we'll plant four new trees in the region.

Later in the programme, we will re-route a section of the popular Strawberry Line walking and cycling path. The alterations will keep more of the route off-road and users of the Strawberry Line will not have to go on the Nye Road.



7 Churchill substation upgrades continue

Work to complete the first state of work at WPD's substation is almost complete, subject to testing.

Upgrades to the substation will reinforce the security of the electricity network in the South West and enable us to remove a line of pylons running from Bridgwater to Avonmouth.

WPD has installed new electrical equipment, made modifications inside the site, and carried out work on the overhead line that passes to the east of the substation.

Over the next few weeks, WPD will test and commission a short section of underground cable which has been installed to connect the overhead line into the substation.

8 Surveys between Sandford and Avonmouth

Over the coming months, we will carry out surveys along the route of the new overhead line between Sandford and Avonmouth. The findings will inform the exact location of pylons and the haul road. For the most part, the new connection will be on T-pylons, though there will be traditional lattice pylons in Avonmouth.



We need to carry out ground investigations before we can build road accesses and pylons

9 Work starts to in Nailsea to build underground cables to Portishead

In January 2020, we started work to install underground cables between the west end of Nailsea and Portishead substation.

Our first task is to build temporary entrances and access from public roads into our construction areas. To keep everyone safe while we work on the highways, we need to put up temporary traffic lights and close some roads for a short time.

In January our activity includes:

- Traffic lights on Engine Lane, Nailsea.
- Traffic lights on Hanham Way, Nailsea.
- Diverted pedestrian access towards the lower end of Hanham Way/Watery Lane, Nailsea.



Excavating trenches in Nailsea alongside existing utility services

From February 2020, we'll be installing temporary entrances in other locations along the route. Upcoming activity includes:

- Traffic lights on Clevedon Road, Tickenham
- Road closure on Church Lane, Tickenham
- Road closure on Sheepway, Portbury
- Road closure on Washing Pound Lane, Tickenham

We are working hard to limit disruption as much as we can and we advise drivers to avoid these roads if possible. We are sorry for the inconvenience and apologise for the disruption caused during people's journeys.

10 Portbury Wharf Nature Reserve

We take our environmental responsibilities seriously and we're working closely with Natural England and local authorities to reduce the impact of our activities as best we can, both here at the nature reserve and across the project.

To prevent disturbance to wintering birds between September and April, core construction activities within

the reserve are on hold. We are carrying out some vegetation management and other work to protect and reduce disruption to local wildlife. We've put up temporary exclusion fencing and are carrying out surveys and daily checks to identify and prevent protected species from entering our construction areas.



We're installing four new Barn Owl boxes as part of our work to protect wildlife in the nature reserve

When we're working in the reserve, we'll need to close some footpaths and bridle paths temporarily to keep the area safe for the public and our staff.

We also need to manage traffic on Sheepway by temporarily closing a section of the road from 27 February until mid-March. We're also having to close the area used for car parking until all our work in this area is complete.

We are sorry for the inconvenience this will cause.

We've put up notifications in the reserve and let the Town and Parish Councils and the Friends of Portbury Wharf Nature Reserve know about our plans. We will keep our project website up to date each week with timings for the closures.

11 Avonmouth

WPD and its contractor, Balfour Beatty, are working at Avonmouth to modify the substation and replace a section of the overhead line going north out of the substation with underground cable. WPD is carrying out this work as they own and maintain the local electricity distribution network. This work is clearing the way for the construction of the new connection being built between Bridgwater and Seabank Power Station.



The installation of the underground cable is almost complete. To join the new underground cable to the network, we are building a new pylon in field next to the M49. When the new underground cable has been tested and commissioned, the next step will be to remove the existing overhead line, which runs north of Avonmouth substation to the existing pylon next to the M49.

We're preparing to build the new 400,000 volt overhead line in this area and in February our contractor, Balfour Beatty, will start to carry out ground and soil surveys in the places where we will build road accesses and pylons.

To keep road users and our staff safe, we will need to put up temporary traffic lights when working on the road. We will remove them as quickly as we can.

Up to date information on road and footpath closures can be found on the project website:
www.hinkleyconnection.co.uk

Hinkley Connection Project

Environmental and ecological mitigation work at Portbury Wharf Nature Reserve

As part of the Hinkley Connection Project, National Grid is installing underground cables between Nailsea and Porthead substation, with construction due to start in early 2020.

Before starting construction, several ecological surveys have been carried out and schemes implemented to reduce disruption to local wildlife along the construction corridor within the reserve.

This includes the installation of temporary exclusion fencing and carrying out daily checks of pitfall traps and tiles to prevent protected species from entering the construction areas. Any species found are safely translocated to designated sites within the reserve.

To ensure the construction corridor remains free of protected species, we need to manage the vegetation by pruning trees and cutting grasslands, scrub and hedgerows down to ground level.

This work will be completed during late September and October 2019.

After the hibernation period ends in spring 2020, the next step is to carry out another search to ensure the construction area is free of protected species and to remove any remaining vegetation, including trees and hedgerows where necessary.

Any vegetation removed will be reinstated following discussion and agreement with relevant landowners - in its original location or as close to the route as possible on completion of construction.

We're taking special care to safeguard nesting sites for species of protected birds by creating specialised buffer zones and relocating designated barn owl boxes.

During September 2019, some of the existing barn owl boxes will be relocated and replaced at a ratio of 2:1, with a total of four new barn owl boxes being installed at the reserve.

This work is monitored closely by North Somerset Council.

Contact us

For further information, please visit our project website or contact our Community Relations Team

www.hinkleyconnection.co.uk

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Community matters

Movember's efforts raise £1,260 for Nailsea's cancer café



During November more than 30 members of the Hinkley Connection Project team cultivated moustaches or beards as part of the annual Movember campaign to raise money for local charity, Your Cancer Café in Nailsea.

As they competed for the titles of bushiest beard and best whiskers, the group raised £630 through sponsorship and donations from friends, family and colleagues, which is being matched by National Grid to make the grand total of £1,260.

Jo Hopkinson, Founder of Your Cancer Cafe said, *"We are delighted with the generous donation from National Grid which will go towards having our leaflets professionally printed so that more people can hear about this wonderful resource for people living with and beyond cancer."*

"We are also hoping to arrange a day out for our visitors, once the weather improves. We continue to be amazed and full of gratitude to the local community who give time and money so generously to our cause. Thank you."

Richard Gott from National Grid, who organised the fundraising event, is pictured presenting the cheque to Jo Hopkinson and café volunteers, with famous beard-wearer Father Christmas (who didn't take part) overseeing proceedings.

Your Cancer Café can be found at 65 High Street Nailsea, for more details, follow the group on Facebook at Cancer Café Nailsea.

Education Fund sparks STEM interest in 125,000 local schoolchildren

Since 2018, around 500 schools in the six local authority areas affected by the Hinkley Connection Project have been awarded grants for STEM equipment for their schools; with £500 going to each primary school and £1250 to secondary and special schools.

237 schools were awarded grants in the 2018/19 academic year and over 250 schools are benefitting in 2019/2020. In total National Grid has awarded £340,000 which has benefitted an estimated 125,000 local school children.

The Redstart Primary School in Chard spent their grant on six advanced, programmable floor robots for children in Key Stage 2 to use.

Teacher, Roger Hunt says, *"The children have loved working with their new InO-Bots. Their programming skills have deepened dramatically and their enthusiasm has been wonderful to see. The application process was very easy and I'd encourage all schools to apply."*

The grants are awarded each year of the project and applications for the 2020/2021 fund will open in April this year.



Volunteering at Weston Hospicecare's Hub

In December staff from the Hinkley Connection project team got stuck in at Weston Hospicecare's Hub – the charity's sorting and distribution centre. The main task was to help sort and price donated items to go on sale in the Hospice's fundraising shops.

The team, made up from volunteers from National Grid and Balfour Beatty, also listed larger quality items on eBay to help generate extra revenue to support the running of the hospice, which provides palliative care for people living with a life-limiting illness in Weston-super-Mare and surrounding areas.

National Grid's Dana Bruce (pictured second left below) was so inspired by her visit that she now volunteers at the hub for one afternoon every month.



Volunteers from Hinkley Connection Project team helping out at the hub

Supporting local unemployed back into jobs

Over 140 local unemployed people have completed a two-week, construction skills training course – aimed at providing skills to find jobs within the construction industry.

We've teamed up with specialist training provider, Ixion, and the local councils along the Hinkley Connection route, and we've identified local skills gaps in the construction industry. Together, we developed training courses to equip people with the skills and certificates needed to fill those skills gaps.

We've been delighted with the take up so far. Over 140 local unemployed people have been on the two-week course, with 66 so far having gone on to find new jobs.

We want to develop opportunities for local people. To find out more about how you can access this programme, please see our project website.



Recent graduates celebrate completing the construction skills course

Latest Community Grant News...

We've recently announced two community grants. These bring the total amount of grants awarded to over £212,000 since 2018 - to 12 different community projects.

We want to support projects and organisations that really matter locally and our Community Grant Programme is aimed at communities and local people most impacted by our operations and site activities.

Last month, we donated nearly £6000 towards a new mechanical roller for **Windscombe Cricket Club (WCC)**.

The land where the club plays is shared with the general public and local football clubs who play their matches during winter. It becomes rutted and uneven and must be rolled flat prior to the start of the cricket season. The new roller will help them maintain the field to provide a safe, high quality playing surface.

Hewish and Puxton Community Hall also asked for our support to refurbish their building.

The hall is a busy community hub, providing activities to bring local people together and improve their wellbeing and we are pleased to grant £20,000 towards the costs of cladding the exterior walls.

More details on how WCC and Hewish and Puxton Community Hall Trust are putting our grants to good use will follow on our project website and in the spring update.

If your community group or charity would like to apply, please visit: <http://betl.nationalgrid.co.uk/>

If your project meets our criteria you could be awarded a grant of up to £20,000.

Looking after our wildlife

Local partnership helps tilt the balance for birdlife in Site of Special Scientific Interest near Tickenham

National Grid has partnered with a local landowner and Natural England to install a specially-designed tilting weir on Tickenham Moor Site of Special Scientific Interest near the Causeway, between Nailsea and Tickenham.

The weir was built by National Grid's contractor, J Murphy and Sons to a Dutch design, with a specific design for this location by Dan Alsop. It will retain and raise water levels in this area of marshy wetland, encouraging wading birds to stay by creating a more reliable feeding and breeding ground.

The idea was proposed during consultation on the Hinkley Connection Project by local resident and North Somerset Conservation Advisor for Natural England, Mary Trump with support from local landowner, Stewart Plant and the North Somerset Drainage board.



The tilting weir will help create a reliable feeding and breeding ground for birdlife

Following feasibility studies, National Grid and J Murphy and Sons responded by including construction of the weir as part of the project programme. It was operational ahead of the start of work on underground cables between the west end of Nailsea and Portishead substation in January this year.

Natural England's North Somerset Conservation Advisor Mary Trump said:

"The wetlands are a precious resource and Natural England was very pleased at how National Grid and J Murphy and Sons worked together to install the tilting weir."

"The tilting weir is an impressive feature. Unlike traditional sluices it can be safely and accurately adjusted so we get just the right amount of water to support flora and fauna in this Site of Special Scientific Interest year-round, creating stability for existing wildlife and attracting wintering wildfowl and wading birds. Peat moors like this also assist with carbon capture and flood mitigation."



Landowner, Stewart Plant said:

"Seeing the weir being installed has been a fascinating process. It's a great engineering design which makes the best use of the marshland during the wetter months and it's satisfying to know it will have a positive impact for wildlife on my land."

Tony Dyas, Lead Project Manager for National Grid said: *"We are working closely with landowners, listening and acting on their feedback all along the 57km route of the Hinkley Connection Project. We are delighted to be able to install this tilting weir to enhance the natural environment for wildlife and for visitors and local residents."*

Read more about the Hinkley Connection Project and National Grid's work to protect and enhance the environment in areas affected by its construction activity at: www.hinkleyconnection.co.uk.

Contact us

For further information please contact our Community Relations Team

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