

# Community Newsletter

Eryri Visual Impact Provision (VIP) project



## Project update



**Steve Ellison**  
Senior Project Manager,  
National Grid

**Hello and welcome to our latest newsletter. Over the last few months, the Eryri Visual Impact Provision (EVIP) project has seen some exciting developments both on and off site.**

Since our last update, we have moved from planning and preparation and into the first stages of construction.

On site in Minffordd, we have completed the lagoons which will process the water used in tunnelling and have started building workshops and treatment plant structures. These will support the Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) on its underground journey.

At Llandecwyn we're establishing the site for the deeper eastern shaft where the TBM will emerge at the end of its journey.

It's not just construction work; we've also been busy in the community with educational workshops, charity bike rides and more.

I hope you find the information here of interest. Get in touch to let us know if there is something you'd like us to feature more in future.

## Make way for the TBM

Preparations are in full swing for the arrival of our remanufactured Tunnel Boring Machine, scheduled to arrive on site in Spring / Summer 2024.

The TBM is a highly specialised piece of equipment which has been purpose built to create the tunnel under the Dwyrdd Estuary that will replace the pylons and overhead line. Once built, this will be one of the longest tunnels in Wales!

See more about our TBM on page 2...



Members of the Eryri VIP team with the TBM in Germany



## Get in touch

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## Its 'boring' at school – and we love it

**In the Autumn of 2023, enthusiastic Key Stage 2 pupils at the seven schools most local to the project each took part in fun, educational STEM workshops in celebration of the science behind tunnelling.**

National Grid's team worked closely with local educational specialist Sbarduno, who designed workshops that were engaging, informative and linked wider scientific knowledge with the workings of the TBM. Pupils were kitted out in lab coats and safety glasses, bringing the classroom to life as a laboratory and the children as scientists.

Interactive activities helped pupils to identify solids, liquids and gases and explore the properties of different materials which provided a stepping stone to understanding the role of the TBM.

Awen Ashworth from Sbarduno said: "It was fantastic to deliver these workshops to bright young pupils who were eager to learn and ready to get involved with every task."

Steve Ellison added: "It was humbling to hear how much the children already knew about energy and the need for a clean, green future. In North Wales at least, the future is in great hands."



STEM workshops delivered by Sbarduno

## Bravo for Buddug

**In line with tunnelling tradition, the Eryri TBM needed a name – traditionally a female name.**

As part of the educational workshops, pupils were invited to submit entries inspired by a figure of significance in Welsh STEM, culture or folklore. The winner was chosen by a panel of project team members from National Grid and Hochtief UK, as well as the four county councillors most local to the Eryri VIP project.



Scarlett Katie Lebeau Harvey – TBM naming competition winner

The triumphant name was **Buddug**, submitted by Scarlett Katie Lebeau Harvey, age 11, from Ysgol Eifion Wyn, Porthmadog. Scarlett wowed the judges with her entry, which included her explanation, "I have chosen this name because Buddug means buddugoliaeth / victory and deallus / intelligent."



Buddug the TBM in Germany

The TBM requires specialist engineering skills to maintain and operate it and we want our next generation of budding engineers and scientists to be part of this journey with us.

Steve Ellison said: "We received a fantastic response to our interactive STEM workshops and the TBM naming competition. We were impressed with the level of research and originality displayed by the pupils and we congratulate Scarlett on her winning suggestion."

As part of her prize, Scarlett and her parents will be invited to see the TBM as it arrives on site with Buddug painted in large letters on the machine itself, and have their photo taken alongside it.



## Saddling up for a worthy cause

**An intrepid team of nine National Grid engineers completed a gruelling 200-mile bike ride, travelling the length of Wales and covering a total elevation of 14,000 feet, over three days in September last year.**

On each leg of their journey, the team stopped off at local food banks, including those managed by the Trussell Trust, to deliver contributions from food donation hubs that were set up by National Grid at several of their sites in Wales.

In Penrhyndeudraeth, the team donated a wide range of groceries purchased from Siop Dewi, generously topped up with extra supplies by owner Dewi Lewis, which was then distributed by Reverend Barnes of Holy Trinity Church (alongside other donations) to the local food bank run by Y Dref Werdd.



Steve Ellison and the National Grid team with food bank donations purchased from Siop Dewi

## Probed by Probus

**Members of the Porthmadog & District Probus Club, which brings together retired or semi-retired professionals, were enlightened on the latest developments of the Eryri VIP project during a talk last Autumn.**

After joining Club members for lunch, Lead Project Manager Jordan Brindle talked through all aspects of the project, from the highly technical to the more unusual.

Jordan commented: "Spreading the word about this transformational landscape project is really important to our team. It was great to meet such an interested and well informed group and we'd be happy to repeat the talk to other local organisations who might be interested."

## Lighting up for Christmas

**Kicking off the festive season, the Eryri VIP project sponsored the Christmas fair and lights switch-on in Penrhyndeudraeth at the end of November.**

The merry and bright celebration was organised by the Friends of Cefn Coch alongside Penrhyndeudraeth Town Council and was attended by EVIP Senior Project Manager Steve Ellison.

Steve accompanied Cllr Meryl Roberts in welcoming local visitors to the town square for a performance from the school choir before a countdown to the Christmas lights switch-on. Visitors then headed to the Memorial Hall for the Christmas fair which involved raffles, games, and artisan stalls.

Eager young guests visiting Santa's Grotto also received selection boxes courtesy of the Eryri VIP project.



Steve Ellison with Cllr Meryl Roberts, Leri Ann Roberts and friends in Penrhyndeudraeth



Steve Ellison visits Santa's Grotto

## It's good to talk

**Community groups including Community Councils, local schools, the North Wales Wildlife Trust and Cymdeithas Eryri were represented at our fourth Community Liaison Group meeting in November.**



The Eryri VIP project's fourth Community Liaison Group meeting

The meetings provide an opportunity for us to keep local representatives up to date with project developments and for the community to feed back to us.

The meeting was held at the Memorial Hall in Penrhyndeudraeth and covered project progress, including the work to establish our construction compounds and the preparation for the start of the tunnel drive. Members were also the first to hear the winning name for the TBM.

## Granting wildlife wishes

**North Wales Wildlife Trust (NWWT) is the latest organisation to submit a successful application for National Grid's Community Grant Programme.**

The Community Grant Programme is aimed at local organisations and charities in areas where National Grid's work is impacting on local people through our site activities – supporting projects which will benefit communities in the local area.

NWWT has been awarded a total of £19,964 that will be used to create a sculpted seating area and a classroom to be used by local schools and environmental education groups, on Gwaith Powdwr nature reserve in Penrhyndeudraeth.

The seating area will make NWWT's beautiful, natural spaces more accessible for those who are less mobile, as well as providing an unobstructed view of the beautiful estuary and a great vantage point from which to watch the pylons being removed.

## A day in the life – Rhys Davies

**Rhys Davies, a key member of the Eryri VIP team for our principal contractor, Hochtief UK, is a Blaenau Ffestiniog native and qualified civil engineer. With a passion for problem-solving and a colourful career that began at the age of 16, Rhys joins our project with a wealth of practical experience in the field.**



"From a young age, I have always enjoyed pushing myself out of my comfort zone and tackling new challenges. During my career I've worked on major construction and infrastructure projects including HS2, tunnelling works and the strategic road network, as well as leading a project that was awarded two ICE awards for innovation and use of new technology.

"Joining the Eryri VIP team on an exciting and innovative project so close to home was a dream role for me."

### Rhys's role on Eryri VIP

"At the Garth site in Minffordd, I am responsible for overseeing the safe and efficient management of our site and programme. This involves planning, programme organisation, coordinating permits

and temporary works, supervising site activity, and making sure our team morale and motivation remains high.

"Strangely, the things I enjoy most about my job are the high-intensity environment and the unpredictability because no matter how meticulously something is planned – and we pride ourselves on that – life has a habit of throwing up the unexpected.

"Every day brings a new challenge. I like to think of engineering like driving on a road: you may hit a pothole which changes your trajectory, but you find a way back to the intended route to reach your destination. That's what makes an engineer – solving problems when you hit a project pothole."

### My advice for aspiring engineers

"I would encourage anyone looking to get into a role like mine to always keep an open mind. You will never stop learning so absorb all the knowledge that you can from those around you. Take pride in what you do and show up every day with a 'can-do' attitude."

### Hobbies

"When I'm not in my hard hat, you'll usually find me at the gym, spending time with family or delving into some DIY."