



Welcome to the latest newsletter for the project. Great progress is being made across the site and the project is going well.



## What is currently underway:

### Junction 65 Birtley

The work to extend Longbank underpass has been completed and it has now been reopened.

North Dene footbridge was successfully removed during a Saturday night full road closure in the autumn.

We've also completed treatment of the old coal mines beneath the road and we have started to install the foundations and construct the supports for the new North Dene footbridge.

We have continued to widen the carriageway and we

have started the installation of the new drainage systems both northbound and southbound.

Over the next 6 months, we'll continue installing drainage and will start to install the ducting for the lighting and other cables.

We will also start laying kerbs and surfacing of the carriageway, following this we will be returning to the central reservation to install the new concrete safety barrier.



## Junction 66 Eighton Lodge

We have been continuing to work at all three of the Eighton Lodge bridges using a variety of ground stabilisation techniques to allow us to dig down to the foundation level. We are now also working on a number of the concrete supports for these structures.

We are aiming to install the new beams for the new lanes later this year.

Work is also continuing north of the junction with drainage and ducting installation and continued widening.



## Junction 67 Coal House

The foundations and concrete work for the widening of Kingsway are almost complete and the bridge beams are now in place for the new lanes. Work offsite is ongoing and we will be installing the new bridge deck soon.

Work has also started on the retaining walls on the northbound entry and exit slip roads, with approximately 75% of the sheet piles installed. Retaining walls prevent earth from slipping on to the road.

The ground work is now complete for the new Allerdene embankments, with over 6500 piles installed, which will provide support for the new approaches to the new bridge we are building.

The reinforced concrete work on the bridge supports is nearly finished and the installation of the new bridge beams is also complete. We will be starting the new sections of road to join to the new bridge later in the year.



## Community and engagement

### Engaging with local students – Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy

#### Road and site safety

Back in October 2022, we were alerted to a group of people walking along the slip road northbound exit to junction 66 on the A1 Birtley to Coal House scheme. Students wearing all black uniforms had crossed over a live lane and walked into the closed lane. They continued to walk along the closed lane, down to the junction 66 roundabout. To highlight the dangers of walking on road and in the work area, Sandra Evenden, Community Relations Manager, visited the academy and hosted 6 assemblies to more than 1400 students.



#### Careers Fair

On Tuesday 22 November, the project team hosted a stall at the academy's careers fair with information on Costain schemes, careers, and apprenticeships with students of all ages. Over the course of the day the team spoke to more than 1300 year 7 to year 13 students.

#### Interview prep and support

Back in December, a group of 6th form students attended an interview preparation and support session. The session was very well received by the students, with a number of students showing interest in Costain and the construction and engineering industry; engaging with the team to find out more and taking away apprenticeship information.

#### Career assembly and workshops

To support National Careers Week the A1 Birtley to Coalhouse team visited the academy to deliver a careers presentation to the Year 10 students. Following the presentation, an interactive workshop was held with 20 students interested in construction as a future career. This workshop gave the students more detailed information on the variety of roles within construction.

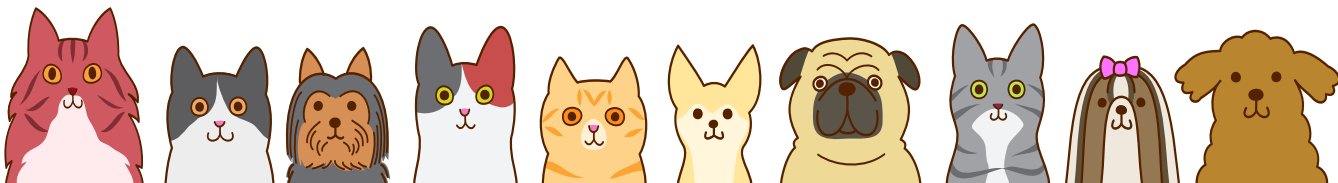
## Volunteering

### Cat and dog shelter

Newcastle Dog & Cat Shelter was established in 1896 and helps thousands of lost, unwanted, neglected, abused and abandoned animals every year. Their objective is the promotion of kindness and prevention of cruelty to animals. A group of 10 volunteers from the project visited the Benton North Farm to volunteer at the shelter. The small army of volunteers painted barns and stables as well as carrying out other essential activities to support the shelters staff during the day.



**More information on the shelter can be found on their website:**  
<https://www.dogandcatshelter.com/our-dogs/>





## Wildlife Workday

A team of eight volunteers visited Northumberlandia in Cramlington, in September to take part in the Wildlife Workday.

It was a busy and productive day for the volunteers, consisting of raking all of the cut grass in the car park and footpaths and spreading the grass in the meadows.

<https://www.northumberlandia.com/>



## Samaritans Christmas Jumper Day

The team can usually be seen out and about on site wearing hi-vis safety clothing, but Christmas Jumper Day allows them to express themselves in the office. As part of the day we were able to raise £135 for Samaritans.



## Brew Wednesday

The Community Relations Team are supporting the Samaritans Brew Monday initiative by hosting a number of Brew Wednesday's across our local offices. Our first Brew Wednesday took place at the Blaydon Hub January 2023 and we raised £125 for Samaritans, as well as raising team morale and welcoming many staff into our visitor room to join us for the event. Following the success of this event, we are looking at holding regular Brew Wednesdays. Our current fundraising total is now just under £300.



## Supporting students

The team has supported a student from UTC South Durham's sixth form, who recently experienced great personal tragedy having lost both her parents. The student was their carer and continued to support her sister, who has additional needs, whilst trying to stay at college. This resulted in financial and housing difficulties, thankfully they were supported by UTC South Durham and local charities, allowing the student to stay at college.



As part of her engineering course, the student had the opportunity to visit Ecuador for 2 weeks on the government funded Turing Scheme. However, she didn't have the money to cover the deposit and other

costs as part of the trip. So, the team set about fundraising and raising more than £740 for the student, which enabled the student to make the trip of a lifetime. The trip saw the students support the work on the renovation of a 100 year old school and house in a small village. The trip provided the students invaluable experience that will help them in the future.

## Wood recycling supporting local enterprise and communities

We have teamed up with a local wood recycling enterprise to recycle waste wood from the project. Working with Community Wood Recycling, we have been able to recycle more than 40 tonnes of waste wood from the project. This includes pallets and temporary frames even broken pieces of wood. The team at Community Wood Recycling use the wood to make furniture and other items whilst training members of the community, providing them skills they can then use to progress their careers. As it is a social enterprise you can also buy the recycled wood for your own projects.

To find out more about the scheme visit their website.  
<https://communitywoodrecycling.org.uk/>





## Great North Air Ambulance

In 2022, we trialled an initiative with the Great North Air Ambulance and Yorkshire Air Ambulance to collect clothes donations to be transferred to cash to raise money for the organisations. We collected 164 bags over the two-week period, which was a real collaborative effort across our region.

This year, we expanded this initiative to the whole of the North of England and the Midlands.

We have identified and contacted the six Air Ambulances that operate in these regions. The collection period took place between 17 March and 2 April 2023. We were delighted that we managed to smash last years collection, with more than 576 bags of clothing and accessories being donated to the Air Ambulances across the midlands and north.



*Air Ambulance team*



*290 bags of clothing and accessories donated to the Air Ambulance*

To find out about our local Air Ambulance visit their website  
***<https://www.greatnorthairambulance.co.uk/>***

## Longbank underpass

With the construction of the new lanes, we had to extend Longbank underpass from the eastern side. As part of the planning, it was agreed with Gateshead Council, that lighting would be introduced to the underpass, to improve the experience for users of the underpass. The additional section of the underpass limited the amount of natural light illuminating the full length of the underpass.

Ahead of any work being carried out we have to do a number of surveys. One of these surveys identified that bats were using the underpass. At the time of the survey we identified 241 recorded passes of common pipistrelle bat species crossing the road using the underpass. Bats are a protected species by UK law and because of this we had to adapt our lighting designs.

Our solution to support the bats using the underpass was to install a warm white LED lighting system. Studies have found that the warm white light has less impact

on the bats and should lead to less disruption for them using the underpass. The lighting is set to illuminate permanently during the day at 100% brightness.

However, at night, when commuting bats may need to use the underpass, the lighting is set to illuminate at 6% and only when larger objects e.g. pedestrians pass by passive infrared sensors. The timings are set so that after the last activation of a pedestrian exiting the tunnel, the sensors will switch off the lighting after 1 minute. A GPS activated timing system informs the lighting of the different sunset and sunrise times throughout the year for when the different lighting settings are required to be activated.

This use of technology and smart lighting adaptations allows bats to safely travel through the underpass in darkness, when not in pedestrian use, preventing any harm to them that could be caused by making them cross over the carriageway.



*Longbank underpass*



# YOU'RE NOT ALWAYS **VISIBLE** AROUND HGVs



## More information

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