

A9 Berriedale Braes

Project newsletter



Members of the site construction team.



Scott Marr, Site Agent,
RJ McLeod (Contractors) Ltd

Welcome to the fourth and final edition of our A9 Berriedale Braes project newsletter.

In line with Scottish Government advice on the 24 March, work on site was temporarily suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Thereafter, we embarked on a period of planning and pre-start site preparation which included a

number of physical alterations to the site office and welfare facilities to allow strict adherence to hygiene and physical distancing rules. This enabled work to re-start on 22 June 2020 in accordance with Construction Scotland's Re-start Plan.

Once work resumed, surfacing was completed through the new alignment with tie-ins completed to the existing road network at the north and south ends of the project. We also removed the old section of A9 carriageway, south of the cemetery and landscaped this area.

Once this and the other final stages of work was completed on the road, we were delighted to be able to open both lanes of the new road to traffic.

The new section of the A9 at Berriedale Braes reverted back to the national speed limit on Friday 28 August.

The Berriedale Braes project was designed and constructed to remove the hairpin bend and improve the alignment on this stretch of road. We trust that the travelling public will now enjoy a safer and more comfortable travel experience on this stretch of the A9, thanks to the successful completion of this project.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the local community and the travelling public for their patience and co-operation throughout the construction period.

A9 Berriedale Braes opens to traffic



COMMUNITY BENEFITS

We placed great importance in ensuring that the project could benefit the local community where possible. This included providing employment for people living within the area, awarding contracts to local businesses and also a variety of educational opportunities and assistance with projects in the community.

The contractor helped with a range of community projects including:

- Helping the Berriedale Church and Cemetery Association to re-harl the church – using traditional Scottish lime harl to ensure that the building kept its natural image
- The project team helped Newton Park Nursery create an active play construction area for the children to learn and play in. The project team donated items such as junior hard hats, cones, yellow jackets, pipes and the nursery's very own construction signs
- Crushed material donated for improvements at Portland Hall car park.

Education and STEM support

- Project team attended 'Step into STEM' (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) events at various schools including North Highland College, Wick and Golspie High Schools
- Schoolchildren from Dunbeath Primary School were invited to make a time capsule. Once the time capsule was completed, the children visited the site and assisted staff in burying the capsule within a safe area of the construction site.

Environment

- During advance works, archaeological investigations identified significant post-medieval and prehistoric remains dating to the Mesolithic period, around 6,000- 5,000 BC. More than 10,000 ancient stone artefacts made of flint, quartz and chalcedony spread across disturbed soil at the top of the Braes were identified. These were displayed for the public to view at the Dunbeath Heritage Museum
- Stone was donated to Dunbeath harbour for sea defence works
- Restoration work was carried out on the John O'Groats walking trail – clearing shrubs and installing some stone steps to make it easier to walk uphill in the section.



Prior to constructing the project archaeologists unearthed truly fascinating finds which provided a rare glimpse into the Caithness areas' ancient past



Schoolchildren with time capsule



Construction play area at Newton Park Nursery



Golspie High School STEM event



Sub-Agent Craig Donn helping pupils with their challenge



Installing stone steps at John O'Groats trail

THE OPENING OF BERRIEDALE BRAES IN AUGUST 2020



i The £9.6 million Berriedale Braes Improvement Project has removed a notorious hairpin bend on the key A9 trunk road to the far north of Scotland.

The 530 metre new section of trunk road on the A9 arterial route connects central Scotland to the north, running from Perth to Thurso. The project will improve journey times and safety by removing the need for vehicles to slow down or stop to negotiate the bend.

The construction of the project presented a number of engineering challenges including the geographical landscape as well as providing employment to the local area with 22 sub-contracts awarded to local firms at a total value of £2.4 million, of which 20 were awarded to a small to medium sized enterprise.

Successful opening of new road at Berriedale Braes



Traffic on the new road at Berriedale Braes

What happens next?

Now that the road has opened and with construction work coming to an end the site compound has been removed and the ground reinstated. We will maintain a reduced presence on site for a period of time to carry out any necessary finishing work.

Landscaping works will also be carried out towards the end of the year when the planting season begins.

Responsibility for the new road will pass over to Transport Scotland and their operating company, BEAR Scotland Ltd.

For general enquiries please contact via:

Email: enquiriesbearsotland.co.uk

Phone: 01738 448 600

Further information at:

www.Bearsot.com or

@BEAR_Scotland


The road opening was a proud moment for Transport Scotland and RJ McLeod and was welcomed by the local community at Berriedale. On the day of opening, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Michael Matheson said:

“I welcome the opening of this key improvement project, which will now begin to deliver improved road safety as well as better journey times for A9 road users.

I would like to pass on my appreciation to the contractor RJ McLeod for their hard work and effort in constructing this project. They have been mindful from the outset of the strategic importance of this key route in the picturesque Scottish Highlands and the need to balance the delivery of complex engineering works with measures to mitigate impacts on the surrounding environment.”

During construction, the project provided several community benefits with 20 of the 22 subcontracts being awarded to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (SMEs) and the project also supported in excess of 50 jobs at its peak.

FURTHER PROJECT INFORMATION

 For more information on the project please visit: transport.gov.scot/projects/a9-berriedale-braes-improvement-scheme

Considerate constructors

The site is pleased to be registered

with the Considerate Constructors Scheme (www.ccscheme.org.uk)

The scheme aims to provide contractors with a Code of Considerate Practice which has been developed to encourage best practice beyond statutory construction industry requirements.

