

#BuildingBeatrice

A look back at 2017

January

The 11th January saw our first significant milestone of 2017, with the Highland Council granting consent for the renovation of two historic Thomas Telford buildings on Wick's harbour front. The buildings will become our long term operational home and the base for up to 90 employees who will maintain and operate Beatrice.

We also moved in to our temporary offices in Wick ahead of work getting underway on the building renovations and the remainder of our £15m investment in the harbour.

Beatrice temporary office

Harbour redevelopment area

Beatrice building B

Beatrice building A

February

February saw the beginning of offshore construction activity with the arrival and deployment of the marker buoys which delineate the offshore construction site itself, located around 11.5km from the Caithness coast (at its nearest point).

We also completed the purchase arrangements for the two Wick harbour buildings, heralding the start of their new roles supporting marine based activities which was their purpose when built 200 years ago.

March

March saw the delivery of the Direct Pipe thruster which would help install cable pipes under the Moray coastline and we launched our new digital home at www.beatricewind.com.

Preparation for the Wick renovation work continued with the introduction of traffic management in order to keep everyone safe and disruption to a minimum.

The milestones kept on coming with the delivery of the 700t offshore Pile Installation Frame (PIF) and confirmation of the appointment of local Wick contractors GMR Henderson to complete the initial 'take down' phase of the building renovation works.

The port of Cromarty Firth secured two significant contracts and the BiFab fabrication yard at Arnish on the Isle of Lewis despatched the first of their foundation piles to the offshore construction site.

April

The first of the BiFab foundation piles were installed on Sunday 2 April by the Seaway Heavy Lifting (SHL) vessel Stanislav Yudin.

Offshore pile installation continued throughout the month alongside onshore construction activity at Wick and in Moray. Our fabricators remained focussed on the construction of the foundation piles (all 344 of them) and the 86 jacket substructures on which the turbines and two offshore transformer modules would eventually sit.

Wick welcomed the distinctive Rix Lynx crew transfer vessel which is based there to support the Seaway Heavy Lifting construction activity.

We saw April out with a hi-vis clad piper escorting the last concrete delivery on to our Blackhillock substation which marked the change of focus from civil engineering to mechanical and electrical works.

May

As well as marking our first year of construction, May saw the first complete jacket substructures and the two offshore transformer modules taking shape in Rosyth.

And we launched the first round of the Beatrice Caithness Local Fund which makes £2m available to help local groups and organisations realise their own project ambitions.

Buckie harbour played host to a specialist offshore trenching vessel ahead of deployment to the nearshore cable route works and we celebrated the safe installation of 20% of the foundation piles.

Whilst most of the effort was about construction, in Wick, the take down works continued on our future home, stripping the buildings to a safe state ahead of main renovation beginning.

June

We began the month by announcing a total of £378,000 in the first grant funding from the Beatrice Partnership Fund.

In Fife, BiFab upended the first of their 26 1,000t jackets and our contractors successfully delivered the two transformers to the Blackhillock substation.

In Newcastle, Northern PowerGrid raised the height of the network wires spanning the River Tyne so that the first of the jacket substructures could make their way on barges from the manufacturers to the site.

July

The publication of the Beatrice socio-economic report took centre stage noting that the project was expected to add £1.13bn to the UK GDP, of which around £530m would be added to the Scottish economy.

And Beatrice is expected to support more than 18,100 years of full time employment in the UK with around 5,800 of those in Scotland.

Construction and manufacturing forged ahead with our contractors passing the foundation installation halfway mark (more than 172 piles installed offshore).

August

The first of the 1,000t jacket substructures was installed by the Seaway Heavy Lifting vessel 'Oleg Strashnov' marking another significant milestone for the project. The jackets are fabricated in Scotland, England and Europe.

The Hartlepool based Inter-Array cable manufacturer completed all 140km of subsea cable ready for installation. The cables will connect the 84 turbines to the two Offshore Transformer Modules.

And we passed the 3/4 mark for safely installed foundation piles.



September

With favourable weather conditions, September continued to see rapid offshore construction progress with 72 pile clusters and 18 jackets installed by mid-month which was testament to the teamwork of all involved.

Isle of Wight based SeaCat Services were awarded the contract to provide two Crew Transfer Vessels to support the construction activities offshore. The first vessel, the 'Intrepid' arrived in Wick on the 23rd.

And we were proud to be the principle sponsors of the annual Caithness Chamber of Commerce dinner.

October

As we moved towards the winter months, the offshore installation tally reached 80 of 86 foundation pile clusters and more than a quarter of the jacket substructures.

The Nexans cable laying vessel, the 'Skagerrak' began laying the first export cable (total length of 67km) from the Moray coastline to the wind farm site.

The two Direct Pipe landfall conduits were completed ahead of the pull-in of the offshore length of export cables enabling connection to the onshore cables.

November

Whilst challenging weather conditions slowed some progress offshore, it did not delay the start of Inter-Array Cable installation by the Siem vessels 'Stingray' and 'Aimery'.

Building renovation continued in Wick and work began on the removal of the disused slipway at the corner of the harbour which will become home to our Crew Transfer Vessels.

And we were delighted to announce that the Beatrice Community Funding had already granted £650,000 to help local groups and organisations realise their own project ambitions.

December

We began the month safely installing the final pile cluster marking a very significant milestone in the offshore construction effort.

The first of the jacket substructures left the BiFab fabrication yard in Fife in readiness for installation and, at Babcock in Rosyth, the first of the Offshore Transformer Modules were loaded onto a transportation barge in preparation for installation early next year.

Looking ahead

The project will maintain its momentum and rate of progress in 2018 with some significant milestones throughout the year.

We will complete and commission the substation at Blackhillock along with completion of the installation of the export cables both on and offshore.

Jacket substructure installation will continue through 2018 until all 86 jackets are in place. After a short winter break, the Siem vessels will resume and complete the installation of the Inter-Array cables. The Offshore Transformer Modules will also be installed and commissioned.

Perhaps the biggest milestone will be the erection of the turbines themselves which is expected to commence around July 2018, followed shortly thereafter by the first generation of renewable electricity from the wind farm.

Keeping in touch

We are proud of the work we are doing and enjoy telling the #BuildingBeatrice story.

As well as our direct updates, you can find out more about the project and follow progress by visiting the project website or following our Twitter feed.

Alternatively, you can contact us directly if you have any questions about the project and we will do our best to assist.

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