



BEAR
SCOTLAND

north east
ConneXions

STAKEHOLDER NEWSLETTER
SUMMER 2021

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Welcome

Welcome to our summer newsletter highlighting news from across Scotland's North East trunk road network. In this edition, we've provided an overview of what we have been working since early spring.

Recently we worked alongside Transport Scotland and Amey in a Roadworker Threats and Abuse campaign which aimed to raise awareness of the abuse our teams face on an often daily basis from road users. We shared a series of videos on social media that highlighted first hand experiences from our teams and underlined statistics generated from a survey of Scotland's roadworkers on the trunk road network. We have a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of any kind against our teams - you can read more about the campaign on page three.

Road safety remains a top priority at BEAR Scotland and we were delighted to see the completion of a major road safety project on the A92 at Balfarg Junction. The project began earlier this year and took place in phases to help minimise disruption to road users. The completed project involved installing new traffic signals in the area as well as a variety of improvements made to make the junctions safer for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists. Find out more on page five.

The summer months are a busy time for our Planned Maintenance teams as favourable weather conditions allow more schemes to be carried out. Transport Scotland has so far invested £6.4M into planned maintenance projects which has helped address defects and strengthen routes across the network. You can read more about the routes that have benefitted from an improved road surface on page six

BEAR Scotland continued to support local and national charities by making donations to the Scottish Charity Air Ambulance, Perth Autism Support and as a silver sponsor to a team participating in the Coast to Coast 24 hour challenge, raising funds for the My Name's 5 Doddie Foundation and the fight against motor neurone disease. Find out more on page eight.

I hope you find the newsletter an interesting read and if you have any feedback or questions about it I would be delighted to hear from you.



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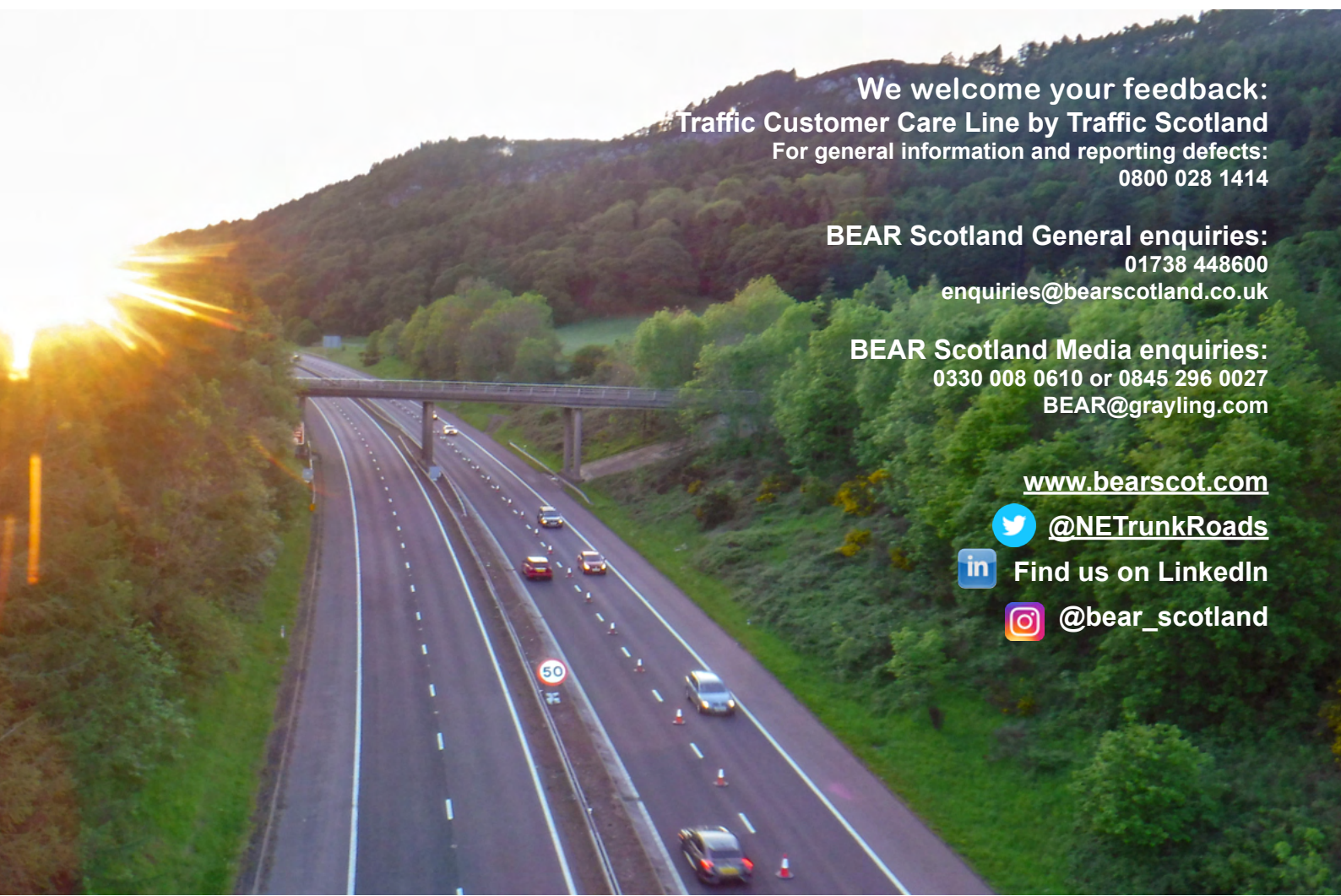
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New campaign reveals scale of Roadworker Threats and Abuse

Abuse and negative driver behaviour is something roadworkers are faced with on an often daily basis across Scotland's trunk road network – and it will not be tolerated. This summer BEAR joined with Transport Scotland and Amey to highlight the impact and scale of this abuse and how we're working together to stamp it out.

A new survey carried out across Scotland's trunk road companies, including BEAR, Amey, Connect and Autolink, outlined some of the main challenges faced by staff while doing their jobs.

The findings revealed that:

- One in four of staff surveyed said that the abuse they have experienced at work has affected their mental health.
- Almost one in ten staff said they've been subject to physical abuse in the past year.
- One in five reported having missiles thrown at them in the past year.
- Nearly two out of three roadworkers have been verbally abused by passing motorists.

The campaign sought to highlight these issues and share experiences from those on the ground who had suffered abuse. A series of videos was released on social media featuring BEAR Scotland roadworkers who explained how the abuse affects them when they are only trying to do their job.

John Willox, a BEAR Scotland operative, explains the impact of a recent incident:

"I was operating a Stop/Go board at a work site. A car pulled up, the driver got out and verbally abused me aggressively. Eventually he got back into his car and then tried to drive around me. He mounted the verge, knocked over the Stop/Go board and actually clipped the side of my body to get past.

"He continued to shout abuse at other members of the team and drove dangerously through the live works area, speeding off before the police arrived. It was lucky no-one was seriously injured. Why do people think they can act like that and put others at risk?"

Throughout the pandemic roadworkers were classified as key workers helping to maintain the transport network allowing other key workers, such as NHS and supermarket staff, to get to and from work. BEAR Scotland has a zero-tolerance approach when it comes to abuse aimed at roadworkers who are out working on the network keeping the roads safe.

**"Sometimes it just ruins
your whole day."**

Any form of abuse against
roadworkers is unacceptable.
It's time to **#StampItOut**



Minister for Transport, Graeme Dey said:

"The abuse of our roadworkers is completely unacceptable and the results of the survey show just how big a problem it is. No one deserves to face this kind of behaviour while doing their job.

"I find it particularly upsetting to hear of the impact these incidents have on the mental health of staff, many of whom were carrying out essential maintenance of our trunk road network during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The Scottish Government fully supports the efforts to raise awareness of these incidents and the call for action to tackle roadworker abuse. I would also like to thank front line staff for their continued hard work and dedication during the pandemic."

BEAR Scotland has recently introduced 360-degree camera coverage for its fleet and is extending the roll out of body cams for its front-line workers. The footage from the increased use of cameras is already providing valuable evidence to progress prosecutions.

Iain Murray, BEAR Scotland managing director, said:

"It is totally unacceptable to expect regular verbal abuse that in the past has seeped over into physical abuse in your daily working life. It is not surprising that this survey reveals the wider impact of this on the mental wellbeing of our operatives – whether through being on the receiving end of an irate driver's ire or the impact of repeated negativity from road users.

"The only way to address this is with a zero-tolerance approach. We are continuing to invest in vehicle and body cams which will ensure this behaviour is captured and footage can be used in prosecutions against offenders."

Roadworker abuse will not be tolerated. It is time to stamp it out.



2 in 3 have been verbally abused

1 in 4 say abuse affected their mental health

1 in 5 have had missiles thrown at them

1 in 10 have been subject to physical abuse

Any form of abuse against roadworkers is unacceptable.
It's time to **#StampItOut** and show some respect.



Road safety improvements on the A92 Balfarg Junction completed



A major road safety project on the A92 Balfarg Junction in Glenrothes was completed in July. The project involved teams installing new traffic signals at the junctions with Western Avenue and Star Road as well improving the approaches to the new junctions to make them safer for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. This involved the installation of new kerbing, surfacing, new dropped crossing points, safety fence improvements, traffic signing and road markings.

Gerard Kelly, Road Safety Manager for the North East said: "We're delighted to have completed this project on behalf of Transport Scotland. The significant investment will improve road safety within the area, benefitting the local community, motorists and pedestrians."



Summer surfacing improvements

Our North East Planned Maintenance team have had a busy few months making improvements to routes across the network. Since April, over 16 surfacing projects have been carried out which has seen a total of £6.4M invested in creating safer and smoother routes for motorists.

Almost 9km of the A90 received an upgraded road surface including sections on the Kingsway through Dundee and at Inchtute to Balgay Farm near Perth. A £2M scheme was also carried out on the A90 just south of Stonehaven which took place over three weeks under a contraflow system to keep road users as well as motorists safe.

Improved weather conditions in the summer months allowed teams to carry out various surfacing improvements across some of the most northern routes in the north east unit. The A96 received upgrades between Inverurie and Huntly and Mulben and Keith. Surfacing improvements were also carried out on the A95 between Cromdale and Tormore, Craigellachie and near Grantown-on-Spey.

Steven Taylor, BEAR Scotland's North East Planned Maintenance Manager, said: "The spring and summer months tend to be busy as good weather conditions allows our teams to progress with various surfacing improvements, which help to address existing defects and allow us to create a smoother and safer journey for motorists.

"The coming months look just as busy as we continue to work towards making the network as reliable, efficient and as safe as possible. We would like to thank motorists and local communities for their continued patience throughout."

A96 Fochabers Old Bridge upgrade

Major improvements worth £200,000 were completed recently on the A96 Fochabers Old Bridge, a footbridge over the River Spey. The project involved teams carrying out extensive refurbishment works to maintain the historical structure which was original built in 1806. The project included teams installing a new pedestrian barrier and segregated footway and cycle paths as well as renewing the drainage, kerbs, slabs and improving the surface of the bridge. The bridge was closed for the duration of the works with the pedestrians diverted on to the other bridge in the area, known as A96 Fochabers New Bridge.

The completed work was met with positive feedback from the local community with many pedestrians praising the aesthetics of the finished work as well as stating how they felt safer crossing the bridge due to the renewed surface and higher pedestrian guardrail. The completed project will ensure the bridge remains safe and operational for years to come.



Consultation launched ahead of A96 footway and cycleway project

Consultation was initially launched in May to gather feedback for members of the public and local communities about the proposed works, with all comments now being reviewed by design teams.

The project would see the construction of a 2m wide shared use footway and cycleway over a 750m stretch from Lhanbryde eastwards. The new facility will help create a safer link toward the popular Threaplands Garden Centre and Café, as well as connect users onto the low-trafficked Loch Oire road, which takes cyclists onto the existing cycleway toward Fochabers.

In addition to the new shared use footway and cycleway,

the proposed project will also involve providing a second crossing point and upgrading the existing crossing over the A96 to help ensure there is a safer access across the trunk road for pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised users. New signage and road markings will also be installed to help improve road safety.

Engineers are in the process of reviewing all feedback from the proposals, which will help inform the final design of the project. Construction is expected to get underway later this year – follow us on twitter [@NETrunkRoads](#) to get project updates.



International Women in Engineering Day

International Women In Engineering Day takes place every year on 23 June, and this year BEAR supported the day by sharing profiles of some of our team featuring what inspired them to get into engineering. Led by the Women in Engineering Society, the day exists to encourage more women and girls to take up careers in engineering. Find out what inspired Sarah, Surekha and Evegina into pursuing a career in the Engineering Industry by clicking the image.



BEAR takes home Gold award for Health and Safety for fifth year in a row



In July we were delighted to be presented with a Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Gold Award for our health and safety performance for the fifth year in a row. RoSPA is at the heart of accident prevention in the UK and determine industry standards for health and safety. Receiving this Gold Award for the fifth year demonstrates our continued commitment to working safely in all that we do. The safety of our employees as well as all road users remains our number one priority and we'll continue to develop the health and safety management systems in place to ensure all our people remain safe.

BEAR Scotland charity donations



Scottish Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA)

Teams at BEAR helped raise over £4,300 for the Scottish Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA) by taking on Scotland's Virtual Kiltwalk for the first time. The 21-strong team set themselves a three-week challenge of reaching 1,578 miles between them which is the total length of the trunk road network that BEAR manage and maintain on behalf of Transport Scotland. After three weeks, the team clocked up an impressive 1,793 miles between them – with some kiltwalkers even completing the event in full kilt-attire! Graduate Engineer Matthew Ross, one of BEAR's Kiltwalkers, visited the SCAA Headquarters at Perth Airport to meet the team after helping raise funds for the brilliant charity and hear more about some of the incredible work that they do. Keep an eye out for more ways in which BEAR will be supporting SCAA throughout the year.

Perth Autism Support

BEAR Scotland donated £1,000 to Perth Autism Support, a brilliant charity which helps support autistic children and young people up to the age of 18 and their families in Perthshire. The charity was nominated as part of a new internal charity focus where all staff were invited to put forward local causes which are important to them for BEAR to reach out to and support. Perth Autism Support was nominated by two members of BEAR, Network Officer Bill Park and Incident Liaison Officer Gareth White, who both put forward the local charity earlier this year. They recently both met with Elaine Finnie from the charity at their head office in the city centre after it was announced the charity would be first to receive a £1,000 donation from the firm. We're proud to continue to support causes which are important to our teams and look forward to supporting further charitable organisations throughout the year.



Coast to Coast Challenge

BEAR Scotland were a silver sponsor of a team taking part in the Coast to Coast 24 hours challenge (C2C24) in June. The team of eight walked, ran, cycled and kayaked their way from Portpatrick on Scotland's west coast to Cockburnspath on the east coast within 24 hours. The 174-mile trip was to help raise funds for the My Name's Doddie Foundation and the fight against motor neurone disease. The team managed to raise over £25,000! BEAR Scotland has supported MND Scotland and My Name's Doddie Foundation for some years in memory of a colleague who also had the condition, and they are organisations which are very important to us.

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