

## ADEPT ENGINEERING BOARD NATIONAL BRIDGES GROUP

### MEETING NOTES

**Venue:** Online

**Date and Time:** 10:00 on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Name	Present	Init.	Representing
Helen Rowe	✓	HR	Chair
Joanne Saunders	✓	JS	Secretary
Rob Causton	✓	RC	Vice Chair, South West, Chair
Osian Richards	✓	OR	CSS Wales, Chair
Bob Humphreys		BH	CSS Wales
Colin Ferris	✓	CF	Infrastructure NI
Claire McGeown		CM	Infrastructure NI
Maria Lucey		ML	SCOTS
Caroline Haycock	✓	CH	East Midlands, Chair
Ian Booth	✓	IB	East Midlands, Secretary
Clive Woodruff	✓	CWo	East, Chair
TBC			East, Secretary
Patrick Smith	✓	PS	North, Chair
Stuart Molyneux	✓	SM	North West, Chair
Colin Jenkins		CJ	North West, Sec
Paul Tucker	✓	PT	South West, Vice Chair
Emma Cockburn		EC	South West, Secretary
Alan Mclean	✓	AM	South East, Chair
Scott Gregory	✓	SG	South East, Secretary
Maureen Robson	✓	MR	TfL
Sharan Gill		SGi	TfL
Chris Wright	✓	CW	West Midlands, Chair
Chris Plant	✓	CP	West Midlands, Secretary
Andrew Pierce	✓	AP	Yorks/Humber, Chair
Claire Richardson		CR	Yorks/Humber, Sec
<b>Guests</b>			
Alan Daines		ADa	Canal & Rivers Trust
Alistair Dore	✓ Item 8	AD	National Highways - HRE
Chris Rook		CRo	Bridge Strike Prevention Group
Kieran Dodds	✓ Item 8	KD	National Highways
Keith Harwood	✓	KH	Independent, Ex Chair
Edward Wilkson	✓ Item 1 & 2	EW	Presenter, GScan
Rufus Foster	✓ Item 1 & 2	RF	Presenter, GScan
Charles Oldham	✓ Item 1 & 2	CO	Presenter, Amey

Also on circulation: [Hannah.Bartram@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Hannah.Bartram@eastsussex.gov.uk), [secretariat@adeptnet.org.uk](mailto:secretariat@adeptnet.org.uk)

ITEM		ACTION
<b>1.</b>	<b>Introductions &amp; Apologies</b>	
1.1	HR & JS discussed meeting apologies, retirements, and new joiners and others clarifying participant identities and technical arrangements for note-taking and presentations. JS asked, following Callum Gillet departure, for a volunteer to co-secretary.	ALL
<b>2</b>	<b>PRESENTATION: Introduction to GScan and NDT</b> <b>Presenter: Edward Wilkinson</b>	
	<p>Presentation summary – Slides appended for further information. <i>Note the following is an AI-generated summary:</i></p> <p>Edward's Presentation Summary: GScan and Muon Tomography</p> <p>Company Background &amp; Origins: Edward introduced GScan, founded in Estonia in 2018, initially working in the security domain with projects like imaging Soviet-era nuclear submarines using muon tomography. The company has since developed commercial products and expanded into the UK, collaborating with organizations such as the Manufacturing Technology Centre, Network Rail, and National Highways.</p> <p>Technology Overview: Scan specializes in non-destructive testing using muon tomography, which uses naturally occurring muons to create 3D images of dense structures. The technology is particularly suited for inspecting bridges - post-tensioned, hinge and half-joint structures, and has also been applied in nuclear, mining, and oil &amp; gas sectors.</p> <p>Project Highlights: GScan participated in the National Highways Structures Moonshot Programme, progressing from initial trials (with mixed results) to more advanced deployments, including recent scans on a bridge in Wales and upcoming projects in northern England.</p> <p>Technical Details &amp; Limitations: The process involves placing scanners on structures for up to two weeks to collect sufficient muon data, with scan points typically covering 1.2–2.5 square metres. The technology is non-invasive and safe, but the finite muon flux means results take time to acquire.</p> <p>Team &amp; Partnerships: Edward highlighted the growing UK team, including recent hires with civil engineering expertise, and ongoing collaborations with industry partners and councils.</p> <p>Asset Management &amp; Value Proposition: The presentation emphasized the value of high-quality, data-driven asset management for aging infrastructure, noting that GScan's technology provides deeper insights than traditional methods (like GPR or acoustic monitoring), though it is intended to complement—not replace—existing techniques.</p> <p>Cost &amp; Practical Considerations: Edward shared indicative pricing (£21,000 per scan point) and recommended four scan points per bridge for comprehensive assessment, acknowledging funding constraints and the need for efficient resource allocation.</p> <p>Future Directions: GScan aims to further reduce scanning time, enhance results with machine learning and AI, and expand practical deployments, especially as part of ongoing infrastructure assessment initiatives.</p>	

<b>3</b>	<b>PRESENTATION: Development of Smart Infrastructure Monitoring Systems</b> <b>Presenter: Charles Oldham</b>	
	<p>Presentation summary – Slides appended for further information. IMPORTANT: CO requested that information is not shared widely <i>Note the following is an AI-generated summary:</i></p> <p>Summary:</p> <p>Charles outlined the vision for smart infrastructure monitors inspired by the evolution of medical devices (e.g., smartwatches), aiming to provide continuous, real-time data on structural health (strain, acceleration, temperature) for bridges and other assets.</p> <p>The proposed system would use robust, low-cost sensors with long battery life (targeting 6–10 years), wireless communication (preferably mobile networks, but alternatives like LoRaWAN considered), and cloud-based data analysis.</p> <p>A key challenge is managing power consumption, especially for remote sites, by optimizing what data is transmitted and when.</p> <p>The approach emphasizes actionable information, not just raw data—using AI and statistical analysis to highlight unexpected events or trends, and delivering digestible insights (e.g., weekly summary emails) to asset managers.</p> <p>Benefits discussed include reduced inspection costs, improved safety (fewer physical inspections), better prioritization of maintenance, and the potential to extend inspection intervals for low-risk structures.</p> <p>Charles invited collaboration with local authorities for pilot deployments and feedback on data needs, user interface, and integration into existing workflows.</p> <p>The project is at the pilot stage, with sensors trialled on the Severn Bridges and plans to scale up to 100+ sensors by the end of 2026, seeking both investment and early adopter partners.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Liaison with Network Rail, Access Planning Group (with additional discussions regarding the Environment Agency)</b>	
4.1	CP update provided an overview of the Access Planning Group, part of the UK Bridges Board. The group includes representatives from National Highways (NH), ADEPT, CRT, Network Rail (NR), and Transport for London (TfL), working collaboratively to support each other in accessing each other's networks. Chris mentioned that he represents the group on behalf of ADEPT. The last meeting was held on April 28 <sup>th</sup> (no change from last meeting), and he highlighted the importance of collaboration among these organisations to facilitate network access.	
4.2	CP has been trying to close down actions from previous meetings and noted the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer Guidance booklet with printers</li> <li>• Technical Authority Approval sign off consultation and fee recovery</li> </ul>	
4.3	CP confirmed that assessments will not be made available via the NEST system, but that these can be requested through local teams.	
4.4	CP picked up the enquiry about ASPRO Contractor insurance tables and has been told that guidance has been offered and passed on as available. Summary document requested.	

4.5	CP advised that next meeting is on the 15 <sup>th</sup> October. One agenda item is the summary of customer feedback post-track possessions. Connect Plus have also been invited re: access to the M25 Environment Agency have also been invited to discuss extended permitting response timescales.	
4.6	CP requested feedback on the NEST system. CP noted that there is potential for collaboration including NR undertaking inspections on behalf of LAs	ALL
4.7	Feedback from group to take forward to access planning group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Invoicing:</b> HR noted that invoicing for NR annual maintenance agreements is sporadic which presents budget issues and asked for this to be reviewed so that invoices per annum are issued in-year.</li> <li>• <b>Environment Agency Engagement:</b> HR commended work of the group to date and strongly endorsed the idea of engaging the EA and attempting the same as the network rail access group that CP has had such success with EA. The group discussed challenges in obtaining permits from the Environment Agency, including long delays and inconsistent definitions of emergencies, and agreed to seek direct EA participation in the access planning group to address these issues. HR gave an example of a parapet collision and the EA/Highway interpretation of 'emergency' as this isn't aligned. Aligned to this, PS noted that we need more EA exemptions, exclusions and standard permits as bespoke permits are expensive and lengthy to process. HR noted that we can gather a fuller list of points to raise with the EA, once an appropriate representative is in position.</li> <li>• <b>Signs Agreement</b> HR noted that NR have agreed to fit signs to bridges in KCC to avoid BAPA costs so asked CP to raise this and see if it can be rolled out as a nationwide agreement.</li> <li>• <b>Collaboration</b> PS suggested that ONE.Network may be a good example of where to advertise NR works</li> </ul>	CP
4.8	HR noted that she has offered the opportunity for Regions to invite their local EA contacts and noted that these will not be the central regional teams (previous action)	Regional Chairs
4.9	PS and others shared experiences with cost recovery for technical approvals, and the group discussed the need for more exemptions and standard permits for routine works over watercourses to reduce costs and administrative burden.	
4.10	SM enquired about NR representatives on the group. CP confirmed that David Costello represents ASPRO. SM clarified that he volunteered to be the NR Liaison, on behalf of ADEPT, and therefore has regular (although less frequent) meetings with Network Rail. The main NR representative is Julian Staden (UKBB representative). CP and SM agreed to catch up regularly to see where the cross-over is with their meetings with NR, in advance of Access Planning Meetings. KH clarified that the '5c agenda item' for CSS/Railtrack noted that Fred Hartley has now retired and so Jim Hall (CSS Wales) and KH are therefore the only links on this group. SM, CP and HR noted that collaboration is key for not just cost savings, but minimising disruptions. Efficiency is key for all.	CP/SM
4.11	RC noted that Alan Frost from Swindon received a response from the EA that they are increasing resources and applications made before 06/09/25 will be receiving a response by 30/11/2025. Future applications will not be prioritised, just reviewed in date received order.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Feedback and Liaison with other groups</b>	
5.1	CSS Wales – OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a website for Structural Health Failures reporting which should go live soon</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSS Wales are reviewing bridge inspector qualifications i.e. LANTRA or other</li> <li>OR offered to send an update on GScan trial once results are received</li> <li>OR said he would send a link to the upcoming CSS Wales Bridge Group meeting, specifically for the presentation by Steve Davy on the MCHW update, so it could be forwarded around the ADEPT group for anyone interested in joining.</li> </ul> <p>HR mentioned a previous presentation at BOF (Bridge Owners Forum) by Jason Hibbert (JH) about how Welsh Government is risk assessing and prioritizing their asset base using a value-based calculation. She asked OR if JH would consider giving a similar presentation to their group, as she found the approach useful for understanding asset management and prioritisation.</p>	<p>OR/JS</p> <p>OR/JS</p> <p>OR/HR</p>
5.2	SCOTS – No representative present	
5.3	<p>BOF and UKBB - HR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UKBB met last week and featured general updates on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There will be a letter going out to Heads of Services on the frequency of inspections, both principal and general (letter from UKBB)</li> <li>Suicide Prevention Guidance has been published and circulated</li> <li>There has been an FOI (believed to have come from RACF) around employment of CEng in LAs.</li> <li>HR asked CP if he would be willing to get legal advice on behalf of all local authorities regarding the Canal and River Trust's legal advice on cost sharing and load capacity, since Chris had been leading on this issue in Stafford after receiving letters from CRT. She suggested that Chris could share the legal view or its context with the group. This prompted OR to note that he is considering with CSS Wales also.</li> <li>HR is on the steering group for Well Managed Highways but noted that previous feedback has not been passed to new consultants. HR requested that any comments/updates are to be sent to JS/HR. The first meeting is next week but will be ongoing.</li> <li>The Chair of UKRLG David Buttery has left – updates pending.</li> <li>BICS discussion seems to have settled down</li> <li>Presentation from DfT on Electric/Hydrogen HGVs. Consultation to come out soon with a date of 2040 to remove fossil fuel HGVs, so need to consider vehicle weights for assessment/loading of bridges etc. There is an action with UKBB to find out more, including if these are covered by C&amp;U regulations.</li> <li>There are 5 working groups for Net Zero Bridges Group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carbon data and benchmarking</li> <li>Steel bridges</li> <li>Concrete bridges</li> <li>Timber bridges</li> <li>Existing bridges – volunteers being sought – please refer to HR/RC/JS</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Note: HR questioned why there isn't a working group for masonry bridges</p> <li>BOF met in July and featured general updates on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentations on HS2 parapet testing, CSS Wales Asset management, MCHW update and a technical modelling presentation from Queen's University Belfast.</li> <li>There were discussions about the RACF questionnaire and the devolved nature of the UK traffic network.</li> <li>Minutes are yet to be published.</li> </ul> </li> </li></ul>	<p>HR/CP/OR</p> <p>ALL</p>

5.4	<p>HRESAF, BSPG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR noted that AM had volunteered to represent NBG on the HRESAF but recognised he is already doing a lot and therefore requested further volunteers. Please get in touch with HR/RC/JS.</li> <li>HR has not had any updates about Bridge Strike Prevention Group. HR noted that we need a different contact. OR also offered to enquire with the CSS Wales Rep (Julian Hakes) to request an update for the NBG and circulate minutes from 21/05/25.</li> </ul>	<p>ALL</p> <p>OR</p>
<b>6</b>	<b>Updates from Working Groups</b>	
6.1	<p>Commuted Sums – AM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thanks for everybody for completing the survey over the summer. The findings weren't particularly surprising but help justify challenges including updating the rates.</li> <li>AM noted that the SAVI toolkit is indexed linked so this could be an alternative. KH noted that the rates are at least 10 years old and treasury state that you cannot use indexation for &gt;5 years. HR noted that UKBB have requested updates to SAVI toolkit, but no funded has been granted yet. KH notes that it could be quite simple to update rates to link to SAVI, but other efforts could be difficult. OR suggested use of SPONS as it is updated every year. OR and HR to discuss the approach and see if CSS Wales can work with the commuted sums working group to update the rates.</li> <li>CP noted that developments are often convoluted, and land classification can impact on producing fair commuted sums. HR noted that KCC charge the first developer.</li> <li>AM noted that commuted sums are usually based on 120 year design life.</li> <li>AM noted that there is discussion around whether there is inclusion for all structures covered by CG 300 in the ADEPT Commuted Sums calculators but was mindful that not all LAs have these asset types. HR noted that it is not legislated that this is used, so should not be a concern.</li> <li>AM reminded all that they are welcome to join in/assist with the WG.</li> </ul>	OR
6.2	<p>PRoW – AM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Latest meeting took place on Monday</li> <li>AM said the Public Rights of Way (PROW) working group is developing guidance that mirrors the headings in the current code of practice, but noted the code is being updated, so there is an opportunity to add more items about PROW structures. HR noted that the consultants working on this are predominantly editor focused and so content suggestions need to go to HR and will likely require us to author content.</li> <li>The group has assigned lead authors for five or six sections and plans to meet at the end of November to exchange notes and review content.</li> <li>Alan mentioned that any new content could be fed back to those updating the main code of practice.</li> <li>RC added that outcomes from the previous group led by James Salmon have been forwarded to ensure continuity and prevent loss of previous discussions.</li> </ul>	
6.3	<p>CSS/Railtrack cost sharing protocol/arch assessments – KH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BridgeGuard 3 Agreement from 1999 is due an update, with more bridges failing and CRT wanting to join in. Fred Hartley offered to chair, but there have not been any meetings for a year and, although some CRT legal advice has been circulated, he has now retired. This legal advice suggests that CRT can use BE4 for assessment and will</li> </ul>	



	<p>use MEXE for their liability assessment (although actual assessment will use modern methods of assessment). Some members of ADEPT are challenging that modern methods of assessment should be used in both instances and HR noted that the existing agreement does not already cover CRT so we need to address these, else LAs are at detriment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KH/OR discussed about what the law states and KH understands the statutory instrument is how NR implement guidance.</li> <li>• CW noted that the Transport Act is outdated, when we were designing bridges to 24 tonnes, and we are now being consulted on overweight electric/hydrogen HGVs. Why should the financial burden be pushed to LAs? All parties should be working to the same. Suggest ADEPT to be lobbying DfT to review the Transport Act to upgrade assets accordingly.</li> <li>• OR questioned if this should be something that LGA should be working on to get legislation updated.</li> <li>• KH to invite OR to BG3 Cost Sharing Protocol Update Working Group once established.</li> </ul>	KH
6.3 (a)	<p>HR noted that ADEPT NBG were recently asked to attend a meeting with DfT alongside NR and CRT to discuss challenges around managing bridges with more updates to come on this. The recommendations include reviewing conflict in loading requirements and asset owners. DfT took this away (Chief Engineer). Attendees were Helen Rowe, Patrick Smith and Alan Mclean. HR thanked Alan and Patrick for their time and support.</p>	
6.4	<p>CIRIA Bridge Detailing Guide – AM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No update from last NBG meeting as last meeting was March and next meeting is Jan 2026.</li> </ul> <p>OR to send over AIP for Green Bridge to AM and HR</p>	OR
<b>7.</b>	<b>Knowledge Sharing and Discussion</b>	
7.1	<p>Moonshot Conference - HR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR has a link to presentations and slides to be shared. JS to circulate.</li> </ul>	JS
7.2	<p>Future Meeting Themes - RC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RC notes that we have been considering themes for future meetings and asked what we should cover?</li> <li>• OR suggested inspections. RC suggested he could present on findings from the Southwest.</li> <li>• CH suggested ecology, in terms of better understanding survey requirements – possible link to EA. RC suggested this could be broadened to consents.</li> <li>• CR suggested getting representatives from the EA to talk through their thinking process – need to think about the topic.</li> <li>• PS suggested regulation of construction activities in general and discussion around drivers for cost inflation and programme. HR challenged what do we want to know i.e. efficient route through this, new guidance etc?</li> </ul>	JS/HR/RC
7.3	<p>RACF Survey – HR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR noted the additional question about CEng was discussed already.</li> <li>• HR and Callum previously spent a day with RACF and essentially came to a bit of a roadblock.</li> <li>• HR/Callum suggested they ask about all highway structures assets as it is easier to extract from databases and should ensure data is provided.</li> <li>• RACF view was that they understood the reasoning, however their charitable purpose is to protect motor vehicle needs and therefore they couldn't cover all the database by amending their questions.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As such it is difficult to see how we can robustly move forward, however, HR/RC have been using historic (RACF) data and imminent access to PowerBI dashboards are proposed so that we can all view the data sets (score card for each LA). This is likely a topic for a future meeting.</li> <li>HR noted that DfT are asking for this data, so it is in our interest to respond with accurate data.</li> </ul>	
7.4	<p>NEST – CP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If anyone needs access to NEST or wants to provide feedback, please see this to CP (previous action see 4.6)</li> </ul>	ALL
7.5	<p>Inspection Frequency – HR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Already covered with mention of letter from UKBB</li> </ul> <p>If anyone has information on assessing changes to inspection frequency, please see reasons and methodology to HR/RC/JS</p>	ALL
<b>8.</b>	<b>Updates from National Highways and Historic Rail Estate</b>	
8.1	<p>Kieran Dodds – National Highways MCHW Rewrite</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new Manual of Contract Documents for Highway Works (MCHW) has now been published. Any observations should be shared with KD for passing on.</li> <li>Webinars are available for booking on the Standards for Highways website (see Help article).</li> <li>JS to circulate email introducing the updates.</li> </ul> <p>Bridge Expansion Joint Working Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New WG formed which includes supply chain following failures. Early findings suggest it is not SC's fault. Once data has been consolidated, this will be shared.</li> </ul>	<p>JS</p> <p>KD</p>
8.2	<p>Alistair Dore – HRE Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Still a challenge with budget promised under RIS 3</li> <li>Reduced budget this year and likely reduced in next year also.</li> </ul> <p>Major Works</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No updates</li> </ul> <p>SAF (Stakeholders Advisory Forum) process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various infills, demolitions planned and in discussion with LAs.</li> </ul> <p>HRE Asset Details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spreadsheet of structures, locations, construction form etc send to JS for circulation. Note to exercise caution over exact OS references.</li> <li>For any queries email HRE Enquiries</li> <li>AD still needs contact details for all LAs including Scotland and Wales. Generic emails appreciated.</li> </ul> <p>Developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developer in NW is piping highway water into cuttings (HRE own bridge at the end of the cutting) and this is causing issues with inspections and use e.g. scour issues. DfT are looking into this, along with contact with ADEPT planning group to try to prevent this in the future.</li> </ul>	JS
<b>9.</b>	<b>Upcoming conferences and events</b>	
9.1	<p>See BOF website for latest details</p> <p>Concrete Bridge Development Group – Conference planned for June 2026</p> <p>Bridges Scotland 2025 27<sup>th</sup> -28<sup>th</sup> November 2025</p> <p>Bridges Conference 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> March 2026</p>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Minutes of last meeting – 09.07.2025</b>	
10.1	Minutes agreed, noting that V3 has been circulated (attached to today's meeting invite)	
10.2	JS presented actions tracker and ALL run through and agreed updates	
<b>11.</b>	<b>AOB</b>	



11.1	RC noted that Dr Ben Miller's IStructE presentation on Masonry Arches last month was very good and worth a watch.																																	
11.2	HR requested if anyone could consider venue suggestions for the March 2026 meeting to put them forward to JS.	ALL																																
12.	Future Meetings/ Date of Next Meeting																																	
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