



Pulborough Parish Council

for Pulborough's future

A29 Road closure due to landslip at Church Hill – Update – 17th April 2023

Following the press release last Friday from WSCC Comms regarding the temporary solution for the reopening of the A29 Church Hill from 11am tomorrow (Tuesday 18th): Noting that this involves two way operation controlled by traffic signals, which we know is not the preferred solution locally by many people, we sought background to the decision and how the re-opening will operate.

Response was received late on Friday but unfortunately today was the earliest opportunity to pass this on, see below for additional information from WSCC on the re-opening:-

- The Head of Local Highway Operations visited the site last week with WSCC's traffic management contractors to assess the protocols necessary for the safe re-opening of the road.
- The officer is fully aware of the local preference against the introduction of traffic lights at this location, which has been stressed on a number of occasions by the Parish Council, and by the County and District Councillors involved, and by others.
 - The officer and team gave careful consideration to implementing the locally preferred option of southbound, single carriageway operation and would have done so, had this been deemed safe.
 - However, the sight lines at this location, with the retaining concrete barriers in place, render this option, in their opinion, too unsafe.
 - There is a risk that a vehicle choosing to travel against the permitted flow, could encounter a vehicle travelling in the opposite direction and cause a collision between the barriers, which would be of sufficient concern on its own were it not also for the fear that such an incident could cause further damage and danger at this location. It is considered that the risk is too great and cannot be adequately mitigated.
 - On this basis, the option of southbound, single carriageway operation has been rejected, in favour of two way operation under traffic lights (the logic being that drivers held at a red traffic light without a clear sight line are much more likely to comply).
- This section of road will be subject to traffic controls at either end of the one way section delineated by the concrete barriers on Church Hill.
 - These will be manually controlled from 6am – 8pm daily initially, in order to mitigate as far as possible undue queueing on either side of the location.
 - WSCC Highways will monitor the situation and respond accordingly. It should be noted that any suspected movement of the embankments, severe weather conditions or other excessive safety risk may result in the road being closed again.
 - The County Councillor will be informed of any changes and will update us asap should anything come to attention, when we would aim to update public as quickly as possible.
- As far as possible, within the constraints imposed by the current condition of the embankments, the concrete barriers have been placed 3.5m width apart. Should access be

required to the embankments or other street furniture at this location during this period, this will be facilitated.

- Signage:
 - Digital signs at key locations (e.g. Washington roundabout, Billingshurst) are being updated to state something like “Congestion likely at A29 Pulborough; expect delays” in order to try and dissuade drivers from taking this route unnecessarily.
 - Graphical ‘no HGV’ signs recently placed on minor roads will remain in situ.
 - Diversion signs that are no longer needed will be removed.
- From the point of view of the Highways Authority, whose legal responsibility it is to ensure the safety of the public highway, the safest option would be not to open the road at all until the required works have been done to safely re-instate two way operation but the strength of feeling locally in favour of re-opening the road, albeit in a limited capacity for the time being, is so strong that the decision has been taken to re-open the road in the safest way possible under the current circumstances. It is far from ideal but it is hoped that it will provide some relief to Pulborough’s residents and businesses until a permanent solution may be implemented.
- WSCC continues to seek agreement with the landowners to enable mitigation works to the embankments and reinstate the road to two way operation, whilst also pursuing enforcement under S151 of the Highways Act 1980, as per the press release issued Thursday 30th March.