

Public Meeting held on Tuesday, 24th October, 2017 at 6:30pm at Mochdre Old School with representatives from Alun Griffiths (Contractors) Ltd, to inform residents of what access restrictions will be put in place during the Mochdre Bridge installation.

Present:

Alun Griffiths (Contractors) Ltd Representatives:

Nick Cleary (Project Manager)
Ed John (Structures Sub Agent)
Gareth Howells (Clients Representative)
Gail Jones (PRO)

Mochdre with Penstrowed Community Councillors:

Cllr Jean Williams
Cllr Ian Williams
Cllr Philip Williams
Cllr Martin Turley
Cllr Gordon Jones
County Councillor Karl Lewis
Kath Wigley (Clerk/RFO to the Council)
Residents – approximately 100

Cllr Gordon Jones opened the meeting by thanking the representatives from Alun Griffiths (Contractors) Ltd for coming and asking them to introduce themselves and explain the detail of the proposed bridge installation.

Nick Cleary explained that a window (blanket period) has been booked for the closure of the Mochdre Lane from early December to the end of March. This is because the work is very much weather dependent – rain prevents back filling for the crane standing and wind can hamper lifting operations – and this time period allows freedom in which to close the road completely for one very short period i.e. the 3 days required for lifting the bridge into position and for a second short period afterwards for a Stop Go traffic system for 5 days for initial overhead work to be done, all once weather permits. At the moment it is envisaged that actual road closure within this blanket period will be from 4th to 6th December and the Stop Go traffic control will be from 7th to 12th December inclusive. However, as previously stated, this is all very much weather dependent and is subject to change (as it has several times already). This bridge is not regarded as a critical bridge in the large scale of things so the project time has slipped a bit. There will be no closure over Christmas should these dates change and work will resume on 2nd January.

During the three day road closure (whenever it is), the road will close from 9:00am (as preparation work can be done beforehand) to 5:00pm at the latest, and there is no intention to close overnight at the moment. There will be signage by Stepside informing of the closure times (to avoid a line of traffic being stuck and not able to turn round further down!). The bridge lift has to take place in daylight as they need a visual of each end to ensure accuracy (the bridge comprises three lots of two short and one long steel span bolted together making a length of 49 metres in total each, and each weighing 60 tons!).

The bridge steels which are above the Mochdre Lane will be infilled with formwork, these are lifted in batches and spread out once they are up there, thus requiring the Stop Go traffic control. This could mean a wait of approximately 15 minutes at a time for traffic whilst this work is being completed because the safety of the public and the workforce is paramount. Pedestrian access will be maintained at all times unless it is considered unsafe during the lifting procedure and then pedestrians will be escorted.

A special 800 ton crane has been booked for the lifting operation, which requires 300 tons back weight before the jib can be extended. Because it is a special crane it has had to be booked in advance for a set period. It will come in via the new bridge by the caravan park and sit on the west side of the bridge. It is anticipated that the bridge beams will be on site the weekend after next and sit to the west of the proposed bridge, where they will be bolted together and formwork put on their outer side for the concrete overhangs. Installing these before the beams are lifted into place will mean less work having to be done when the beams are overhead.

The unclassified lane which has just recently reopened will close once again in mid-November up to the end of April.

Gail's role is to co-ordinate information to residents about the road closure, so circulated the meeting with forms asking for e-mail addresses and mobile phone numbers, so that she can e-mail and text to let people know what is happening and when. This is the system that she operated when the Dolfor Road had its closures and it worked very well.

Residents voiced their concerns both during, and after, the above information was given:

- 1) Will residents each receive a copy of the alternative route to be used during road closure via Caersws?
- 2) PCC needs to be informed that gritting the alternative route must be a priority if the weather requires it (Alun Griffiths' are already in talks with Powys County Council) because of the increased volume of traffic.
- 3) Passing places are essential on the alternative route as it is a very narrow road and has none! Raise this with PCC also.
- 4) If any damage is done to gates, etc along the alternative route during its time as such, who will rectify and pay for repairs?
- 5) Effect on emergency services when the road is closed; school transport would be returning before the road reopens at 5:00pm so will be affected.
- 6) There was a request from residents that another meeting be organised in 2 weeks with representatives from PCC to answer their queries (possibly emergency services also in attendance, although they all receive 28 days notice of closure from Alun Griffiths'). Gareth was collating points from tonight's meeting to be submitted for answers from PCC and Nick will arrange for a PCC representative to attend. Clerk to book the Old School for a mutually convenient date.

Meeting closed at 7:30pm.