

Willoughby Hedge to Mere Major maintenance

A303

Public information
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A303 Carriageway renewal and drainage work

Approximately 6km of the A303, between Willoughby Hedge and Mere, is reaching the end of its effective life.

Extensive works are essential to repair and strengthen the road, repair drainage and install new safety barriers. The road will also be widened by a metre where possible, to assist with drainage and provide additional space for breakdowns and maintenance. The scheme will greatly enhance the condition of all aspects of the existing road. Key improvements will be:

■ Contribution to road safety

The new surfacing and drainage will help to improve friction and reduce surface water. New safety barriers will better protect motorists if they leave the carriageway.

■ Improvement in ride quality

The new surface will create a smoother ride and will also reduce noise generated from traffic.

■ Reduction in need for temporary patch repairs

Resurfacing will minimise the need for overnight closures to repair potholes and will therefore reduce disruption to residents, businesses and the travelling public.

Why is it necessary?

Investigations have shown extensive cracking and wheel track rutting throughout the length of the scheme. Parts of this section of road were re-surfaced in 1998 and has now worn out. Surveys have confirmed that several different layers of surface materials are present, indicating that the road has been resurfaced many times. A CCTV survey of the drainage system conducted in December 2006 revealed that several drains required replacing, root removal and repair.

What are we doing?

The Highways Agency will carry out a carriageway renewal and major maintenance work, on the A303, between Mere and the B3089 junction, including:

- Overlay part of the existing carriageway between Willoughby Hedge and Mere with up to 30 cm of surface material.
- Install safety barrier to current standards.
- Repair and enhance surface water drainage.
- Renew signage, replace white lines and cats-eyes.
- Carry out routine maintenance work.

Construction Programme

By changing the scheme design and methods of working, the Highways Agency has reduced the period required for a full carriageway closure from 14 weeks, as previously proposed, to 5 weeks.

This enabled us to programme certain activities to take place 24 hours a day, during the full closure period towards the end of the scheme. Construction activities will be phased with a significant amount of work being undertaken using lane restrictions, traffic signals and night-time closures. This will allow the maximum level of activity to be undertaken within the minimum amount of traffic management and therefore minimise the impact on the public.

When are we doing the work?

To enable repairs to be carried out safely and efficiently, but with minimum disruption to road users, the work will be carried out in a number of stages:

- Overnight working with temporary signals, from 19:30 to 06:30 until 31 July '09
- 4 weeks overnight closures, commencing 16 November '09 from 22:00 to 06:00 - traffic to be diverted
- 4 weeks 24/7 single lane closure on existing 3 lane section (possible overnight closures from 19:30 to 06:00), commencing 18 January '10
- 5 weeks 24/7 full closure - traffic to be diverted - commencing 15 February '10

During the work:

During periods of overnight and full closures some local authority roads in the vicinity may have temporary restrictions placed upon them to control potential "rat running". At these times clearly signed diversion routes will be in operation. There will be some minor disruption to the local bus services whilst the work is being carried out. We would advise members of the public to confirm timetables with the service operator prior to travelling.

Diversion routes:

When the road is closed, through-traffic will be diverted on to the following routes:

Eastbound/HGV traffic*

Leave the A303 at Podimore roundabout to join the A37 northbound. At Shepton Mallet join the A361 and continue until reaching the A36. Take the A36 southbound until reaching Wylve and joining the A303.

Westbound/Light traffic*

Leave the A303 at Furze Hedge and take the A350 southbound. At Shaftesbury join the B3081 towards Gillingham. Continue on the B3081 through Gillingham, to rejoin the A303.

*Overnight closures only

Thank you

The planned repairs to the A303 will inevitably cause inconvenience to a large number of people. However, this project is essential to secure the long term stability and safety of the road. The Highways Agency would like to thank residents, businesses and motorists for their patience during this time.

Contact Us

For questions, comments or information on the roadworks, you can contact the Highways Agency Information Line 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on: 08457 504030 or by email to: ha_info@highways.gov.uk

Safety at roadworks



The Highways Agency is working with the industry and road users to reduce the risks of working on the roads.

For the safety of roadworkers and all road users, when you are approaching roadworks:

- Keep within the speed limit – it is there for your safety.
- Get into the correct lane in good time – don't keep switching.
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not the roadworks.
- Be alert for works' traffic leaving or entering roadworks.
- Keep a safe distance – there could be queues in front.
- Observe all signs – they are there to help you.