

# **PRESS INFORMATION** issued by Shropshire County Council

## **Clun Bridge consultation and proposals**

Improvements to Clun Bridge are on the cards following detailed consultation with local residents and businesses.

Over recent years, Clun Bridge has been damaged frequently by long vehicles which struggle to turn onto and off it.

Last November, Shropshire County Council consulted the community about a proposal to realign the north-east corner of the bridge in an attempt to reduce the frequency of these strikes. A temporary bridge would be set up at Waterloo Ford while the work was carried out.

As part of the consultation, an information leaflet, which included a questionnaire, was delivered to properties in the area. A total of 447 questionnaires were completed and returned.

Based upon the returns, and a separate petition also received at the same time, the community is split virtually half and half in support and against the proposal.

The majority (83%) of those that returned questionnaires indicated that they would support the proposal if it wasn't for concerns that it will increase HGV traffic through Clun.

Earlier consultations undertaken in the late 1990s indicated a lack of overall support for either a mandatory weight or mandatory length restriction at the bridge. On both occasions, objections were based upon the lengthy diversions that would ensue and the affect that they would have on local businesses, including farms.

Recognising that the "do nothing" option will not solve any of the current traffic problems in Clun, the county council is proposing to proceed with the proposed bridge scheme, subject to some additions that were not part of the original consultation proposal. These additions are a result of the feedback from the consultation and include:

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1. Undertaking a review to confirm whether the existing 13m advisory length restriction is set at the appropriate length for all of the pinch points in Clun.
2. Upgrading the existing advisory length restriction signing as appropriate to make it more prominent.
3. Introducing temporary weight and speed restrictions at Waterloo Ford for the duration of the proposed work.
4. Providing vehicle passing places along the Bicton to Newcastle road in advance of the bridge being closed.
5. Providing a stone facing to the edge of the proposed concrete slab widening of Clun Bridge in order to hide the concrete.

The county council appreciates that parts of Clun are not ideal for long vehicles. It also recognises the need to accommodate local HGV traffic while actively encouraging drivers of longer vehicles to follow an alternative signed route that avoids Clun. It is believed that the modified proposal is the best way of achieving this and reducing the risk of future damage to the bridge.

Due to the bridge's listed status, the proposal will now be submitted for listed building consent. Subject to this and successful land negotiations, work on the temporary bridge at Waterloo is proposed to start in late April with Clun Bridge being closed in late May for a period of up to 14 weeks.

Shropshire County Council's principal bridge engineer, John Williams, said: "It is appreciated that the proposed scheme will be disruptive and the county council will do all that it reasonably can to minimise this."

Clun County Councillor, Nigel Hartin, said: "It is quite clear from the consultation that in going forward with the work much needs to be done to address the HGV problem in and around Clun. I am pleased that the revised proposals go some way towards this. We will also be making it clear, with much improved diversionary signage, that Clun remains open for business during the bridge closure."

**-Ends-**