

Our Ref: MPD 22809636  
Your Case Ref: MG29856

Michael Gove MP  
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6 October 2023

Dear Michael Gove

### **M3 Footbridge**

Thank you for your email of 3 October 2023 on behalf of your constituents about the emergency closure of the footbridge over the M3 from Lightwater Country Park.

I'm sorry your constituents are being affected by this closure and I appreciate how important this footbridge is to local residents.

We concluded a detailed structural assessment of this bridge on Thursday 28 September and where defects were identified relating to the structure's capacity to withstand collision loading from overheight vehicles on the M3. We discussed these findings with Surrey County Council (SCC) on Monday 2 October as they manage the footpath. It was agreed that due to these concerns the footbridge should be closed with immediate effect, and it was closed the same day.

I apologise for not informing you of this closure in advance but in this instance we had to react quickly once we knew the safety of the footbridge was of concern. The speed of this decision meant that not everyone who would be impacted received communication of this action in advance.

We are looking at how we can better manage communication in these exceptional circumstances going forward and appreciate this was an oversight on our part. We are currently contacting local schools and communities, advising pedestrians to use alternative crossings in the area.

Whilst the recent structural assessment highlighted these issues, the overall structure remains safe for compliant vehicles less than 5030mm in height to pass underneath.

The bridge will remain closed while we and SCC put together a plan for demolition and the construction of a replacement pedestrian / cycle bridge

with improved access, which will ultimately be of benefit to the local community. We expect the demolition work to begin before the end of 2023.

We will do all we can to expedite the construction of this new pedestrian / cycle bridge. We will be posting updates on our webpage with progress on the scheme at <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/south-east/south-east-maintenance-schemes/>.

I hope this explains the sequence of events and why this difficult decision was made without proactive communication but that we will work with the community to explain this and engage on future plans. I agree a meeting would be beneficial. I would be grateful if your team could contact my PA, Tania Whittern at [tania.whittern@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:tania.whittern@nationalhighways.co.uk) to arrange a meeting at your earliest convenience.

If your office would like any further information, please contact our Structures Engineering Manager, Scott Munro who will be pleased to respond. Scott can be contacted by email at [scott.munro@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:scott.munro@nationalhighways.co.uk). Alternatively, our correspondence address is Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4LZ.

Yours sincerely



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