

Our ref: CRS 758,846  
Your ref:

Highways England  
Second Floor  
Woodlands  
Manton Lane  
Bedford MK41 7LW

Direct Line:

9 February 2018

Dear

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST  
A14 ORWELL BRIDGE - CLOSURES DUE TO HIGH WINDS**

Thank you for your email of 24 January requesting information about closures of the Orwell Bridge due to high winds from it's opening in 1981 to the current day.

Closure of the Orwell Bridge is not a decision we ever take lightly. Over the last 12 months, the bridge has been subject to unplanned closures due to high winds and other unplanned incidents such as the serious incident last October near Nacton.

We are aware of the impact any closure of the bridge has on the local community and road users. However, safety is and must remain our priority. During closures caused by high winds, we work with local authorities and the chamber of commerce to issue press statements to the media and advice notices to all our partner agencies and stakeholders. This enables as many people as possible to prepare, and if necessary, avoid travelling. We re-open the bridge as soon as wind speeds drop to a safe level.

As advised in our acknowledgement, the bridge opened on 17 December 1982. We have therefore confined our search parameters to the period between 17 December 1982 and 24 January 2018.

We do not hold data for the entire period. We hold data from 2005. This data tells us that there have been no closures due to high winds between 2005 and 27 October 2013.

Orwell Bridge was closed due to high winds on the following dates:

27 October 2013  
23 December 2013  
26 December 2013  
14 February 2014  
27 March 2016

22/23 November 2016  
23 February 2017  
22/23 November 2017  
2/3 January 2018  
24 January 2018

I appreciate the level of disruption in and around Ipswich when the bridge has to close regardless of the cause. Therefore, for the longer term, we are investigating a number of measures to reduce the impact of bridge closures. These include:

- an automated closure system
- HGV parking options during closures
- alternative diversion routes to those currently used
- speed limits during high winds
- traffic segregation

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request you may ask for an internal review. Our internal review process is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england/about/complaints-procedure>

If you require a print copy, please phone the Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or email [info@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:info@highwaysengland.co.uk). You should contact me if you wish to complain.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote reference number 758,846 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Business Management Team Leader  
Operations (East)  
Email: