

River Thames – contingency river closures

Whitchurch Toll Bridge, between Whitchurch and Mapledurham Locks

07:00 on Tuesday 3 June to 07:00 on Thursday 5 June 2014

07:00 on Tuesday 10 June to 07:00 on Thursday 12 June 2014

Whitchurch Toll Bridge refurbishment

Whitchurch Toll Bridge was built in 1902 and has come to the end of its working life. It is currently being reconstructed. Oxfordshire County Council is managing this on behalf of the Whitchurch Bridge Company and has appointed Balfour Beatty as the main contractor. The main works, which were scheduled to take place during the five month river closure from November 2013 to March 2014, have been significantly delayed by the extreme river conditions experienced this winter.

It may not be possible for the contractors to bore the 30 metre deep holes into the riverbed with the scheduled night time closures from Monday 19 to Thursday 22 May. If this is the case they will require the above closures in order to complete this work. Therefore, the river **may** be closed at Whitchurch Bridge from 07:00am on Tuesday 3 June to 07:00am on Thursday 5 June 2014 and from 07:00am on Tuesday 10 June to 07:00am on Thursday 12 June 2014. These closures **may be** required in order that the contractors can bore two holes 30 metres deep into the riverbed. These holes will in turn be filled with concrete to form the foundation piers for the bridge. In order to bore these 30 metre deep holes the piling rig must be positioned and secured in the navigation channel. Navigation through the bridge will not be possible between the above times.

We will send an update as soon as possible to confirm or cancel these closures.

We have worked with the contractors, Balfour Beatty to ensure that the bridge re-opened to river traffic as scheduled on 1 April. We are continuing to work together to ensure that the bridge can now re-open to road traffic as soon as possible, to prevent any avoidable continuation of the disruption to bridge users, and to the impact on trade that local businesses are experiencing. We have done all we can to minimise disruption to boaters, but it is not possible for all the remaining work needed on the bridge to be carried out safely without the above temporary closures.

**Andrew Graham
Harbourmaster
12 May 2014**