

Whorlton Bridge Full Closure Transcript

[Image: Ariel shot of Whorlton Bridge]

[Text Whorlton Bridge Full Closure]

[Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Climate Change]

[Alan Patrickson] Whorlton Bridge crosses the River Tees near the village of Whorlton just east of Barnard Castle in County Durham. The bridge has served the residents and visitors to the area for over 180 years, taking vehicles and pedestrians across the River Tees.

[Image: Picture looking across Whorlton Bridge]

[Alan Patrickson] Last year we carried out an inspection of the bridge and as a result of that inspection we had to close the bridge to vehicles while we carried out further assessments.

[Image: Picture of Whorlton Bridge with the road to it blocked to prevent access.]

[Alan Patrickson] Since closing the bridge we've had a diversion in place and we've have enlisted specialist independent engineers to carry out a detailed inspection of this very old structure.

[Image: Pictures looking across Whorlton Bridge. Picture of part of the suspension of the bridge.]

[Alan Patrickson] Unfortunately having completed these assessments we've been left with no choice now but to enclose the bridge entirely to all users including pedestrians and cyclists. As always public safety is a priority and while it's regrettable we had to make this decision unfortunately there is no other choice.

[Image: Picture of the road leading to Whorlton Bridge, and the bridge itself.]

[Video Clip: Clip showing the suspension chains running across the bridge.]

[Alan Patrickson] Whorlton Bridge was built in 1831 it's a Grade 2 listed structure and a scheduled monument. It's the UK's oldest road suspension bridge with the deck being totally supported by the original cast iron chains.

[Images: Pictures of the masonry pylons at the end of the bridge.]

[Alan Patrickson] It's also the UK's earliest surviving example of an iron chain suspension bridge with twin batted masonry pylons at each end.

[Video Clips: Clip showing the suspension chains running across the bridge. Clip showing the view of the river Tees looking from the bridge.]

[Images: Mounted display board showing the tolls that were in place to cross the bridge. Mounted display board showing the history of the bridge.]

[Alan Patrickson] So there's further work we have to do to understand exactly what the issue is with the bridge and what the solution might be and clearly it has incredible historic significance we do

have to work with our own conservation team here at Durham County Council but also other relevant government agencies.

[Image: Picture looking across Whorlton Bridge]

So, this will take some time but what we will be doing will be updating as we go through the process trying to keep everyone up to date with the progress that we make. So, just like to thank residents and visitors to the area for their continued patience during the bridge closure. We appreciate this does have such an impact on the area but I can reassure you that we are doing everything we can with our colleagues in other departments and our colleagues in other agencies to secure the future of the bridge

[Text: Durham County Council logo. Like it, Comment, Share. www.durham.gov.uk/whorltonbridge
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