



**Anna Sabine MP**  
Member of Parliament for Frome & East Somerset  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
Tel: 020 7219 3000

Sean Walsh, Route Manager, West of England  
National Highways  
Brunel House, 930 Hempton Court  
Almondsbury, BS32 4SR

**BY EMAIL**

30<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Dear Sean

**Planned closure of A36 at Limpley Stoke**

Thank you for your email of 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024 letting me know about the planned closure of the A36 from this August until spring 2025, and for your subsequent time meeting with various local parish councils.

I understand the technical need for the road closure and the importance of the works being undertaken. But I have very serious concerns about (a) the lack of notification or consultation before the start date and (b) an apparent lack of understanding by National Highways about the potential impacts of this closure.

Most people commuting by car from Frome to Bath will not be using the 21 miles proposed diversion via Chippenham, it is far too long. They will either divert through local towns like Midsomer Norton or Bradford on Avon, or through local villages such as Wellow, Freshford, Hinton Charterhouse and Norton St Philip. The impact on these villages, many of which are already effectively single lane thanks to parked cars, and many of which have poor quality road surfaces, will be enormous.

In addition, there are enormous impacts arising to local bus routes such as the D2X bus service which normally uses the A36, will be diverted via Radstock and will not serve Beckington or the Fromefield/Stonebridge areas of Frome during the closure.

Could I please meet with you at the earliest opportunity to understand what more National Highways can do at this late stage to mitigate some of the issues, and to understand what options are available to us if, as we fear, these roadworks cause unacceptable impacts to local communities once they have commenced.

Yours sincerely

Anna Sabine MP, By email

cc. Brian Mathew, MP for Melksham and Devizes  
Nick Harris, Chief Exec, National Highways

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# NORTON ST PHILIP PARISH COUNCIL

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MENDIP DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET

[www.nortonstphilipparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.nortonstphilipparishcouncil.co.uk)

**Chair** Ian Hasell, 7 Monmouth Paddock, Norton St Philip, Somerset, BA2 7LA, [ianhasell1@gmail.com](mailto:ianhasell1@gmail.com)

**Clerk** Nicola Duke, 81 Studland Park, Westbury, Wiltshire, BA13 3HN, [nortonstphilippc@aol.co.uk](mailto:nortonstphilippc@aol.co.uk)

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Anna Sabine, MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

*By email*

1<sup>st</sup> August 2024

Dear Ms Sabine

## **Planned closure of A36 at Limpley Stoke**

Thank you for copying Cllr Val Fox in on your email to National Highways. Your efforts are much appreciated by all those who live in our community.

I write on behalf of Norton St Philip Parish Council; which would like to take you up on your offer to include its requests in your discussions with Sean Walsh.

Firstly, the Parish Council agrees entirely with your view that Highways have failed in their duty to consult in a timely manner with those communities who will be directly affected by this imminent closure of the A36 for many months. Highways appear to have no proper understanding of the wider and very damaging implications of their actions.

The Parish Council has three points it would like you to raise:

### **1) Postponement**

Mr Walsh has given the reason for this failure to consult to be the limitations of 'purdah' before the general election. Setting aside the fact that this must surely have taken many months in the technical planning, the Parish Council fails to understand why important decisions that would normally be subject to public consultation are exempt due to purdah. Members ask that you investigate whether some form of dereliction of duty should be levelled at the National Highways managers – and they request that the closure is postponed until proper consultation can take place in the early Autumn.

If this is impossible because of safety concerns then the following applies:

### **2) HGVs**

In addition to the chaos which the Parish Council agrees will be caused by commuting car traffic not bothering to use the much longer 'official' diversion through Chippenham, all the villages along the B3110 will see an increase in HGVs ignoring the 'advisory' signs. They choose to use the most cost effective routes and the Chippenham diversion is much longer in both time and fuel.

Mr Walsh claims that Highways has no regulatory powers to stop HGVs coming illegally through our villages but the Parish Council would urge you to suggest that some form of stewarding, police cameras or

physical barriers must be put in place at the junctions before the B3110 to help lorry drivers choose wisely.

### **3) Buses**

The D2X bus is unlikely to be ready to be diverted through Radstock for some weeks because of the need to prune back trees on the new route. This will inevitably mean that those Frome to Bath passengers who might continue to use the service will instead jump in their cars and drive through Norton St Philip. The tree work therefore has to be a top priority.

The D2 will apparently continue to run from Frome to Bath on a new timetable but FirstBus is struggling to get the information out to passengers. Many commuters in Norton St Philip are completely unaware of these changes to the service and cannot plan ahead. This will affect working people all over our area. FirstBus must be given assistance to provide the parishes with these new timetables well before the work starts. The Parish Council will help in any way it can.

Once the schools start back again, of course, the problem will be doubled.

Finally, it is worth noting that, if one of these buses meets an HGV or an ambulance in the High Street this will cause an obstruction which will have far reaching impact across the region and could even have fatal results.

In order to monitor the disruption over the coming months, our village Community Speedwatch teams will be counting traffic to make a comparison between the numbers of vehicles passing through Norton St Philip now and once the diversion is in place. This could form the basis of a claim for compensation for inconvenience and loss of income to those on the routes. The Parish Council is also well aware that our village is one of several with no safe crossing place in its centre. A proposal to suspend parking in our High Street will only encourage faster speeds on an already dangerous stretch of road for pedestrians and will cause huge inconvenience to all those living there since there is no nearby alternative car parking place.

The Parish Council hopes you can discuss these points with Mr Walsh. Time is running out to resolve this major issue.

Many thanks,

Yours faithfully,



Nicola Duke B.A (Hons), FSLCC  
Parish Clerk  
For and on behalf of  
Norton St Philip Parish Council

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From: Fiona Gourley (CLLR)

Sent: 01 August 2024 12:08

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**Subject:** A36 Closure August 2024-Spring 2025 FAQs

Dear All

As Parish Councillors and residents in Bathavon South are concerned about the A36 closures, I have drafted this FAQs to hopefully answer some of your questions. Please do pass this on to your Councillors, residents, village communications, what's apps, newsletters, emails etc.

### **Why Is the A36 Closing between 12 August 2024 and Spring 2025?**

National Highways are responsible for the A36 and they have announced that it needs to be closed between Midford Lane/Church Road, Freshford, and the Viaduct in Monkton Combe for urgent repairs. They explain that the road is slipping down the hill and the dangerous erosion means that both lanes need to be closed so heavy machinery can be used to stabilise the road. More details here:

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/south-west/a36-limpley-stoke-carriageway-repairs-and-stabilisation/>

[info@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:info@nationalhighways.co.uk)

T: 0300 123 5000

### **What Are National Highways Doing about Diversions and Signage**

- HGV traffic will be diverted via A350 through Wiltshire to the M4 and back into Bath along the A4. Signage with increasing severity will be in place for several miles along the A36, the A350, the A4 & M4 before the roadworks. Marshalls will re-direct north-bound HGVs via the A36 roundabouts and south-bound on the A4 to the diversions.
- Lighter traffic will be diverted via the A350 through Wiltshire onto the A4 into Bath.
- These diversions will add considerable distance to drivers' routes so we anticipate that local drivers will find alternative routes along the B3110 and other local roads.
- Temporary signage ("unsuitable for diverted traffic") will be erected along the narrow lanes from the A36 into Freshford, Limpley Stoke, Norton St Philip, Hinton Charterhouse, Monkton Combe and Claverton Down, to try to deter rat-running.
- Temporary parking restrictions may be put in place in Norton St Philip and Hinton Charterhouse to keep the B3110 open for traffic, including buses. We have asked for temporary signals to enable residents to exit side roads and cross safely.
- Branch Road in Hinton Charterhouse will be resurfaced in early August as it is anticipated that this will take much of the traffic from the A36 onto the B3110.
- Houses within the road work area will have special access arrangements organised by National Highways.

## **What Will Happen About the Buses?**

●The 94 from Trowbridge to Bath via Limpley Stoke, Freshford and Monkton Combe will not be affected as the B3108 from Winsley and across the viaduct to Brassknocker Hill will remain open. <https://www.libratravel.co.uk/current-timetables>

●The D1 from Warminster via Bradford on Avon to Bath will have slight changes to its timetable from September and will continue to serve Claverton. It is hoped that with the reduction of traffic on the A36, this may speed up the journey.

●The D2 from Frome to Bath will take in Beckington but keep its normal route via Norton St Philip, Hinton Charterhouse, Midford into Bath. It is anticipated that it will run more frequently from September (roughly hourly) but running times may vary with the increased traffic. Off peak journeys will terminate at Frome Station rather than Sainsbury's and some trips will not serve Rode.

●Service D2x will operate between Bath & Frome Sainsbury's on every trip. Buses will leave Bath via the Wellsway before serving Orchard Way in Peasedown, providing a bus service to the Hospital. Buses will then operate via the bypass down into Radstock. From here they will operate through Writhlington & Buckham Dinham before coming into Frome. The D2x will pass along Whatcombe Road & Welshmill Road before rejoining the current route at the Market Place and heading up through Critchill. It is hoped that the most Frome passengers travelling to Bath will take this service as it will be quicker and will drop pupils off at the schools in Bear Flat.

For more information about these buses: [www.firstbus.co.uk/bristol-bath-and-west](http://www.firstbus.co.uk/bristol-bath-and-west), <https://travelwest.info/>

## **Cycling and Walking**

The Two Tunnels Route remains unaffected and residents who can use it, are encouraged to do so, as the B3110 and other surrounding roads get busier.

## **What Happens Next?**

B&NES Council, Ward and Parish Councillors will meet National Highways in early October to review the situation and the impact on residents, to see whether the measures are sufficient, or if National Highways have any other mitigations to allow traffic to flow into and out of Bath and the surrounding areas. If you would like to comment, please contact National Highways or your Parish or Ward Councillors.

[info@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:info@nationalhighways.co.uk)

Thank you for your patience and this may be difficult until traffic settles down. I think people find ways to travel to work at different times, on different days or use the buses more, to reduce the inevitable traffic on the roads and through our villages. The diversion, signage and any mitigations are the responsibility of National Highways, not B&NES, but we recognise the safety imperative. I will continue to keep a close eye on the situation and lobby them on behalf of my residents. None of us like having such a disruptive road closure, but the alternative is unthinkable.

Please do pass this email onto friends and neighbours.

Best wishes

Fiona

**Fiona Gourley**

Councillor for Bathavon South

Member Advocate for Rural Communities