

Press Release

Date: 14 December 2011

A83 Rest and Be Thankful Fully Reopens – Update 9

The A83 at the Rest and be Thankful will fully reopen to traffic today.

The road, which has been subject to closures during the hours of darkness to all vehicles except emergency vehicles since a landslip earlier this month, will open to all traffic around the clock from today. This remains subject to weather conditions.

Minister for Housing and Transport, Keith Brown said:

"Since the landslip at the Rest and be Thankful on 1 December and the clean up operation which followed, our road engineers have been working hard to find a solution to allow a full reopening of the road on a 24 hour basis to general traffic.

We are very grateful to the local community who have shown a great deal of patience as we worked to find a solution. The safety of road users is always our first concern and must rightly remain so, and the closures during darkness were necessary in ensuring this.

Now that the gale force winds and heavy rain has subsided, floodlighting has been installed and tested along the section of road we know to be susceptible to landslip. This will allow conditions on the road to be monitored through the night, adding an extra layer of safety for drivers.

We must caution though that we are at the mercy of the weather which in recent days has been extreme. Concerns remain about slope stability particularly during periods of heavy rain, and severe winds may de-stabilise the floodlights which have been installed. Should we find ourselves in a position where monitoring during the hours of darkness cannot be undertaken, or that we find evidence of landslip - then full or partial closures of the road may be forced on us again.

In the meantime we have procured additional instrumentation which we expect to have in place before Christmas which will provide an early visual indication of movement of the hillside, and increase the ability to monitor the hillside during the hours of darkness.”

Geotechnical experts continue to monitor the hillside for any further evidence of movement which will allow a quick response to events as they happen. Traffic management is also in place to provide additional protection to road users.

Since the last incident of a landslip in 2009 an early warning system has been installed, advising motorists of a higher risk of landslips occurring. Flexible flow netting and a new culvert has been installed and around £700,000 has been invested in prevention measures. Work is also continuing on delivering the landslide mitigation programme, investing £500,000 per year across the network.

Motorists should allow extra time for their journeys and pay attention to any advisory signs which will be in place throughout the works. For real time journey planning information visit www.trafficscotland.org