

Highways England steps in to help pedestrians in Dorset

The village is bisected by the A35 and for years residents, including schoolchildren, have had to wait for breaks in the traffic before crossing the road close to two bus stops at the western end of the village near the Ship Knapp junction.

Thanks to £300,000 of designated funding, the company responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the country's motorways and major A roads, has now helped to improve safety for villagers by completing a project to install a signal-controlled pedestrian crossing.

The work has been completed during the pandemic lockdown, and, as part of the scheme, technology has been integrated into the crossing to detect fast-moving vehicles on the approach to the junction, along with high-friction surfacing and additional warning signs along the A35.

The crossing, funded by Highways England's Users and communities fund and constructed by the company's contractors, has been welcomed by both Morcombelake residents and the Char Valley Parish Council.

Steven Wright, Highways England's Users and communities fund lead, said:

We're committed to significantly improving safety across our road network, and the newly completed pedestrian crossing is a glowing example of how this funding can make life better for communities living and working near our roads.

At Highways England, our work goes beyond operating, maintaining and improving roads. We're investing in the environment and communities surrounding our network, as well as the people travelling and working on it, and we're delighted to be partnering with the Morcombelake community towards improving safety on the A35.

For the past seven years, residents in Morcombelake have called for safety improvements, including a second crossing at the western end of the village. Following a petition led by Norma Groombridge and Sue Warren, and numerous meetings with Highways England and the parish council, a study was commissioned and now, after design and construction of the signalled crossing, the residents' wishes have been granted.

In recent years Highways England has also carried out A35 safety improvements at Charmouth roundabout and Hunters Lodge, near Lyme Regis, and is currently undertaking a study of the A35 to identify further safety measures for all road users along the route between Honiton and the Tolpuddle Bypass.

Pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders will see more benefits nationally over the next five years, with £169 million set aside in Highways England's new Users and communities fund.

Highways England manages four designated funds, allocated by the Government, to deliver benefits above and beyond building, maintaining and operating England's strategic roads.

From protecting the environment and enhancing the landscape around roads, to improving safety, reducing congestion, and supporting communities, the aim is to make a positive difference to people's lives.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Government invests in UK-developed antibody tests from UK Rapid Test Consortium

- Government has purchased 1 million antibody tests from the UK-RTC
- The British-made antibody testing kits will support nationwide surveillance studies to track the spread of COVID-19 in the population

The government has signed a deal with the UK-RTC for 1 million antibody tests, Health Minister Lord Bethell has announced today.

The home antibody tests will be rolled out as part of the government's COVID-19 surveillance studies to help build a picture of how the virus has spread across the country and further develop our understanding of how antibodies work.

The test uses a finger-prick device and provides a result within 20 minutes, without the need to be sent to a lab for analysis and therefore has no impact on testing lab capacity.

The tests have been produced and manufactured by British diagnostics companies including Abingdon Health, BBI Group Holding Limited, CIGA Healthcare Limited, and Omega Diagnostics Limited in the UK Rapid Test

Consortium set up at the start of the pandemic – and demonstrate how, supported by government investment, the UK diagnostics industry is leading on the global stage in our efforts to tackle COVID-19.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

Home testing is a powerful tool in understanding the disease and fighting its spread. So we are thrilled by the RTC product, both for Britain and export markets around the world.

Chris Yates, CEO of Abingdon Health, who led the UK-RTC, said:

The UK government order of the first one million tests is an endorsement of this UK-designed, developed and manufactured high-quality rapid diagnostic test. It is a triumph of British business and a breakthrough for UK life sciences.

We have ramped up production since the start of August and will be ready to deliver the first tests to the government by early October. I would like to express my thanks to all my Abingdon Health colleagues for their tremendous support and hard work in achieving this milestone.

Testing positive for antibodies does not mean you are immune to COVID-19. Currently, there is no firm evidence that the presence of antibodies means someone cannot be re-infected with the virus and it is vital individuals continue to follow national guidelines including social distancing measures, getting a swab test if they have symptoms and wearing face coverings where required.

The antibody test has been evaluated by Public Health England (PHE) and this evaluation will be published in due course.

The UK-RTC was set up by Abingdon Health to bring together scientists and medical technology manufacturers to be able to deliver millions of test kits as quickly as possible.

By working together, some of the UK's leading medical technology companies will deliver more volume more quickly to help fight COVID-19.

[UN Human Rights Council 45: statement](#)

for resolution L.45, The Human Rights Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic

Madame President,

The UK is proud to present resolution L.45 on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic on the behalf of the core group of France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, the Netherlands, Qatar, Turkey and the UK.

Madame President,

The Commission of Inquiry's most recent report, indeed all their reporting this year, shows us that there continues to be absolutely no improvement to the human rights situation across Syria. This is a tragedy. The people of Syria need and deserve better.

Next March will see the tenth anniversary of the beginning of this conflict and it is beyond reproach that the regime, supported by their allies, continue to routinely – and in some cases as a matter of state policy – violate the rights of their own citizens. Whether it is through arbitrary detention, unlawful disappearances, sexual and gender based violence or any of the plethora of human rights violations the Commission of Inquiry has documented, the Syrian regime continues to act with almost total impunity. We must remember that these are not just abstract findings in a UN report, but evidence and testimony of the lives of real men, women, girls and boys across Syria. It is beyond unacceptable.

The text presented highlights recent developments including the meeting of the Constitutional Committee, the findings of the Commission of Inquiry's latest report, the humanitarian situation – including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the particular situation of women and girls across Syria.

Madame President,

We held two open informal negotiations on this text, and were glad to be able to incorporate many of the requests made by member states. We thank all our colleagues for their constructive engagement, which, as ever, we value highly.

We did not choose to present this resolution again lightly. However, with no improvement in the human rights situation, we continue to believe that we owe it to the people of Syria to keep the Council's close attention on this situation.

Madame President,

This resolution should enjoy the support of all at this Council, and be adopted by consensus.

In the event we must have a vote on this text, we urge all delegations to vote in favour of the text as drafted.

Thank you Madame President.

[New coastal emergency 999 stickers could prove a real lifesaver](#)

A new partnership campaign to keep people safer along the North East coastline has been launched by the Environment Agency, HM Coastguard and Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council.

The campaign slogan reads “Don’t take risks on coastal paths, piers and promenades. No selfie is worth your life”.

These important messages can be seen on new stickers that are being placed in a variety of different locations along the Redcar and Cleveland coastline in public car parks, bus shelters and on visible notice boards positioned along the seafront.

Sarah Duffy, Environment Agency, Community Engagement Officer for Flood and Coastal Risk Management in the Cleveland area, said:

The North East coastline has some of the most beautiful and stunning seascapes, which are enjoyed by residents, ramblers and visitors to the region. But due to the ever changeable weather conditions including high winds, heavy rain and rough seas brought upon by the very nature of the coastal climate – people always need to be made aware of the dangers that come hand-in-hand with the area.

Our incident room team closely monitor the daily weather forecasts that are used to predict if we need to issue flood alerts or warnings across the region for situations like tidal surges or increased rain fall. This is coupled by Environment Agency officers working closely with individuals, organisations and partners in the region to ensure the key messages about flood awareness are relayed.

(Left to right) Nigel Hill – Principal Engineer for Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, Sarah Duffy – Environment Agency, Community Engagement Officer, and Steve Hart, Senior Coastal Operations Officer for the HM Coastguard

Know what to do in an emergency

These new stickers are a simple but effective method of letting people know about the dangers of the sea and what people need to do in an emergency.

Sarah concludes:

You often see on the news that members of the public, of differing ages, have been swept into the water either by watching the waves or having tried to rescue a loved one or family pet, after they've fallen into the sea and become distressed. We want people to stay safe and at the same time enjoy our North East coastline.

Steve Hart, Senior Coastal Operations Officer, North East & North Yorkshire for HM Coastguard said:

Stormy weather can make our seas particularly dangerous and unpredictable. Large unexpected waves and swells are a major risk and can catch people out.

People need to be aware that the coastline will be exceptionally treacherous during storms. The large swell will mean that areas normally accessible at low tide may be cut off by storm surges. Coastal paths, piers and promenades may be inundated with surface flooding and large waves. Even a small wave has the force to wash you into the sea. Remember no footage, photograph or selfie is worth risking your life for. In an emergency at sea or on the coast, or if you think someone may be in difficulty, always call the Coastguard by dialling 999.

People can sign up to flood warnings and check if their local area is in danger of flood risk by visiting the [check your flood risk pages](#)

Please download a copy of this [simple flood plan](#) so you'll know what to do when there's a flood warning in your area. It also provides a useful check list of essential actions and items that you might require if faced with a flood situation.

Photos: Jeff Pardoen Photography

Joint Statement on the human rights situation in Xinjiang and recent developments in Hong Kong

Madam President,

I have the honour of delivering this cross-regional joint statement on behalf of the following 39 countries: Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Monaco, Nauru, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States and my own country Germany.

We are gravely concerned about the human rights situation in Xinjiang and the recent developments in Hong Kong.

In June 2020, 50 UN Special Procedures mandate holders issued an exceptional letter of concern, calling on the People's Republic of China to respect human rights. We share their grave concerns. We call on China to respect human rights, particularly the rights of persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, especially in Xinjiang and Tibet.

On Xinjiang, we are gravely concerned about the existence of a large network of "political re-education" camps where credible reports indicate that over a million people have been arbitrarily detained. We have seen an increasing number of reports of gross human rights violations. There are severe restrictions on freedom of religion or belief and the freedoms of movement, association, and expression as well as on Uyghur culture. Widespread surveillance disproportionately continues to target Uyghurs and other minorities and more reports are emerging of forced labour and forced birth control including sterilization.

We also share concerns expressed separately by a group of UN experts that a number of provisions in the Hong Kong National Security Law do not conform to China's international legal obligations. We have deep concerns about elements of the National Security Law that allow for certain cases to be transferred for prosecution to the Chinese mainland. We urge the relevant authorities to guarantee the rights which are protected under the ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) and the Sino-British Joint Declaration, including freedoms of speech, the press and assembly.

Mr. Chair, we call on China to allow immediate, meaningful and unfettered access to Xinjiang for independent observers including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and her Office, and relevant special procedure mandate holders; to urgently implement CERD's eight recommendations related to Xinjiang, including by refraining from the arbitrary detention of Uyghurs

and members of other minorities. In view of our concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang, we call on all countries to respect the principle of non-refoulement. We also call on China to uphold autonomy, rights and freedoms in Hong Kong, and to respect the independence of the Hong Kong judiciary.

Thank you.