

Road workers team up with school to clean up the neighbourhood

Staff from County Bridge Primary School in Walsall invited workers to join their litter pick after members of the Junction 10 project team, who are carrying out a £78 million scheme to replace the busy junction, gave an assembly for pupils.

The new junction will widen the roundabout from two lanes to four and replace the existing bridges over the motorway.

The work is a joint venture between Highways England and Walsall Council, supported by the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership.

Staff from Highways England, Walsall Council and contractor John Sisk & Son volunteered their own time to work with pupils and staff from the school in Anson Road, Bentley, and members of the local community to clean up the area.

Concentrating on the Anson Road play area and adjacent woodland, the litter-pickers collected a total of 42 bags of rubbish.

Highways England Project Manager David Reed said:

We fully appreciate that road works, though necessary, can be disruptive for local people. We appreciate their patience and are keen to give something back to the community whenever possible.

This team effort was a great way to work with local people to enhance their local environment. Litter is an important issue and we are delighted to have helped clear 42 bags of rubbish from this community play area.

Deputy Leader of Walsall Council, Councillor Adrian Andrew added:

This is a great example of people coming together to make a difference in our communities. I'd like to thank the pupils of my old school, County Bridge Primary and our partners for their time and enthusiasm.

Headteacher Mrs Rabia Patel said:

It was great to bring the whole school community together to tackle the local issues with the litter and to get the serious message across that it is everyone's responsibility to keep our local environment litter-free.

The pupils and staff worked closely with parents, the local community, fire service, police and Walsall Council. They also invited Highways England and John Sisk, the contractors for the improvement work on the M6 at Junction 10, to come along and support the school in their litter-picking effort.

Hopefully, the messages shared by the children will continue to impact on the local environment and as a result, there will be an increased responsibility in keeping the local area tidier in the future.

Around 200,000 bags of litter are collected from Highways England roads every year. Litter presents a serious safety risk besides being unsightly and a risk to wildlife and the environment.

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 to grant permission for pubs and restaurants to operate as takeaways as part of coronavirus response](#)



- Communities Secretary confirms the government will set out measures so that pubs and restaurants can operate as hot food takeaways to serve people having to stay at home

- Relaxation of planning measures will be introduced as soon as possible and will apply for a limited period
- Currently planning permission is required for businesses to carry out this change

Planning rules will be relaxed so pubs and restaurants can operate as hot food takeaways during the coronavirus outbreak, the Communities Secretary has confirmed.

Currently, planning permission is required for businesses to carry out a change of use to a hot food takeaway. The government has confirmed regulations will be relaxed to enable businesses to deliver this service without a planning application.

The measures are the latest in a series of practical steps the government is taking to support businesses and help people who need to self-isolate, as well as vulnerable groups and older people who have been strongly advised to avoid social contact outside their homes to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

We are committed to doing everything we can to tackle the pandemic and support people, businesses and communities through this difficult time.

These changes will provide vital flexibility to pubs and restaurants and will ensure people are able to safely stay at home while still supporting some of the great local businesses across this country.

The government has confirmed the relaxations to planning rules will be put in place as soon as possible to provide reassurance to businesses and enable them to start providing takeaways to people quickly.

The measures will apply to hot food and drinks. Serving of alcoholic drinks will continue to be subject to existing licensing laws.

Permitted development rights allow movement between one use class and another for example from a restaurant (A3) to a shop (A1) without planning permission.

The government will introduce a time limited permitted development right through secondary legislation (negative SI) to allow the temporary change of use of a pub (A4 – drinking establishment) and a restaurant (A3 – restaurants and cafes) to a hot-food take away for a period of up to 12 months only.

Businesses will be required to tell the local planning authority when the new use begins and ends.

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[Senior Traffic Commissioner issues a Statutory Document in response to the COVID-19 outbreak](#)

The Senior Traffic Commissioner has today (17 March 2020) issued a [Statutory Document](#) setting out the approach that traffic commissioners will adopt in response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Great Britain.

The document includes:

- temporary steps to assist operators who cannot meet the required financial standing levels;
- advice on what an operator must consider if a transport manager is unable to attend work;
- clear guidance on the period of grace process if the requirements to hold an operator's licence cannot be met;
- information around how the traffic commissioners may approach applications for temporary exemptions to the requirement to hold an operator's licence;
- guidance on the approach to be adopted for short notice requests around changes to local bus services and reducing the administrative burden on operators;
- guidance on hearings attendance and the postponement of hearings

You are also advised to sign up to [our news alert service](#) where further advice will be issued to operators and regular updates will be available as the position changes.

[Advice for moving around France](#)

Original Q&A [here](#) (in French)

Q. Can I move around in France?

A. From 12pm on 17 March, and for a minimum of 15 days, even if you have no symptoms, you cannot go out without a valid reason, which may be checked by the police. If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection or a temperature above 37.5 degrees, stay at home, contact your doctor and limit contact with other people as much as possible. Don't call 15 unless you have a very high temperature or difficulty breathing.

Q. What are the valid reasons for leaving your home?

A. You can leave your house:

- To go to work and come back, and for unavoidable professional trips.
- For health reasons
- To do essential shopping
- For urgent family reasons, to support vulnerable people.
- For short trips, close to your home, linked to individual physical activity (not including any collective sports), and for the needs of domestic animals.

You must fill out an individual declaration for each trip.

Q. If you are away from your home or residence, can you return?

A. Yes

Q. If I live in one area and work in another, can I go to and from work?

A. Yes, if you cannot work remotely, this is a trip justified by a professional need.

Q. Can I use public transport?

A. Yes. All private and public transport are functioning regularly.

Q. Can I leave to buy food items?

A. Yes. There is no need and there is no reason to stock up because shops will remain regularly supplied. There are no restrictions on the movement of goods, whether these goods cover basic needs or not.

Q. Can I leave to buy items other than food?

A. Yes, but only if necessary. So you can only go to authorised shops to buy basic necessities.

Q. Can I go to my parents' or friends' house for a meal?

A. No, because this is not an unavoidable trip and so is not included in the exemptions.

Q. Can I visit dependant parents or loved ones?

A. Only to support vulnerable people. You are reminded that older people are the most vulnerable and we must protect them as much as possible from all contact.

Q. Are physical activity outside allowed?

A. Unavoidable outings in open spaces to the wellbeing of children and individual sport and physical activity are permitted close to home. You should respect distance and avoid all gatherings.

Q. Can I leave with my dog?

A. Yes, so he can satisfy his needs or for a vet appointment.

Q. What will happen if these restrictions are not respected?

A. These restrictions will be controlled by the police and you will receive a fine of 135 euros.

PM call with Chancellor Merkel, President Macron and President Erdogan

The Prime Minister joined Chancellor Merkel, President Macron and President Erdogan on a call this afternoon to discuss coronavirus and the situation in Syria.

The leaders agreed that concerted multilateral action was essential to support the global health response and mitigate the economic impact of coronavirus. This follows the Prime Minister's call yesterday with G7 leaders to coordinate the international response to the pandemic.

The leaders welcomed the recent ceasefire in Idlib. They also condemned the regime and its backers for causing the ongoing humanitarian crisis and the mass displacement of people from and within Syria. The UK remains a leading donor to the humanitarian response in Syria and the region – providing £3.1 billion in lifesaving aid.