

## New Dyfi Bridge – interview with media brief

<b>Date and time</b>	Friday 2 February 2024 11:30-12:30 (Media interviews will take place at the end of the event)
<b>Interviewer and organisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BBC Wales – Redacted – Section 40</li> <li>• ITV Wales – Redacted – Section 40</li> </ul> <p>Cambrian News – Redacted – Section 40</p> <p>You have also agreed to do a short clip in Welsh for the BBC and an English clip for WG social media.</p>
<b>Length</b>	5 mins per interview.
<b>Format</b>	Face to Face
<b>Location</b>	Redacted – Section 40
<b>Press officer</b>	Redacted – Section 40
<b>Brief summary</b>	This is a briefing for your interviews following the official opening of the new Dyfi Bridge
<b>Key messages</b>	<p><b>New Dyfi Bridge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Dyfi bridge is one of the first projects to be completed after our response to the independent roads review that took place in February last year.</li> <li>• The new bridge is a very visible symbol of the changes we are making, and the way roads will be built from now.</li> <li>• Primarily a climate resilience scheme, the new bridge provides excellent active travel paths, and links north and south Wales providing connections to healthcare, education, employment and leisure.</li> <li>• It also has improved flood prevention measures, protecting the bridge and surrounding areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Roads Review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's been almost a year since the independent report of the Roads Review panel was published.</li> <li>• The roads review recommendations along with the Welsh Government's response went on to form the National Transport Delivery Plan in which the new Dyfi bridge is named as a key project.</li> <li>• We are continuing to invest in new roads providing that they meet the four tests set out in the report.</li> <li>• We are also committed to maintaining the roads we already have before building new ones.</li> </ul>

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### **What are the benefits of the new bridge?**

- The A487 Fishguard to Bangor Trunk Road is the principal strategic south to north route along the west coast of Wales.
- The trunk road north of Machynlleth, which crosses the Afon Dyfi on the Grade 2 listed Pont ar Ddyfi, has been subject to repeated flooding despite improved drainage measures severing communities on either side of the river. Since 2006, the bridge has been closed for an average of four days per year, the most recent being last Christmas Eve.
- When the bridge is closed, traffic must follow a 10-to-20-mile diversion to re-join the A487 affecting the community's access to key services including education and healthcare as well as costs to the economy.
- The narrow sub-standard nature of the bridge had poor alignment and visibility, no provision for pedestrian or cyclists and a poor junction on the north end all of which results in traffic collisions and bridge strikes.
- The New Dyfi Bridge (Scheme) consists of a new 1.2km long single carriageway road starting at the northern edge of Machynlleth, crossing the Afon Dyfi flood plain, and re-joins the A487 to the south.
- The Scheme provides a new 2.5m wide shared use active travel link over the New Dyfi Bridge and Pont ar Ddyfi will be re-purposed for active travel.
- Construction started spring 2021 and undertaken by Welsh contractor, Griffiths.

### **Why has it taken such a long time to build the new bridge?**

- This was a complex/time consuming project.
- Construction started spring 2021 and was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic which had a significant impact on construction activity that led to delayed deliveries, materials no longer being available and the resilience of the supply chain.

**Why is there a need to carry out further work, and close the bridge weeks after it's been opened? Couldn't this work have been done at the same time?**

- The timing of the work (partly over February half-term) is to minimise disruption to motorists. This work could not have been undertaken during the construction of the New Dyfi Bridge because it would have meant the closure of Pont ar Ddyfi and would have meant more disruption to motorists.
- The A493 needs to be closed to all vehicle traffic over a length of about 50 metres along the front of the Dyfi Cottages at Pont ar Ddyfi for 30 days for drainage improvement work to be carried out safely.
- The reason for the full closure to vehicle traffic is because the A493 in front of the Dyfi cottages is narrow and congested with several underground public utility services including a high-pressure water main, electricity and communication cables.
- This limits the available route for the drainage works to the centre of the road. A deep excavation is also needed to carry out the drainage improvement work and the safety measures to protect the workforce and public during excavation means that almost the full width of the carriageway is required for the work.

#### **How have you communicated these closures with the public?**

- Four public information events were held by the contractors at the Dyfi Eco Park during October and November. Contractors were on hand to explain and provide information relating to the work and reasons for the closure in more detail.
- The emergency services, local schools, social services, and health centres were also consulted to gather their views. The feedback received has been used to ensure appropriate mitigation which includes replacement bus service/ discounted rail travel pass/ parking provisions are in place during the road closures.

#### **Were measures taken to protect wildlife and the environment whilst work was taking place?**

- The contractor employed a team of ecologists to ensure wildlife habitats were carefully managed during construction.
- Wildlife in the area continued to thrive during construction with otters, bats and badgers frequently captured by wildlife cameras that were set up to monitor activity during construction. A siting of a beaver was also recorded along the river Dyfi.

- Fourteen noctule bat pups were observed to have been born in one of the maternity tree roosts. The endangered 5 Spot ladybird compared with the more common 7 spot ladybird were also recorded on site.
- An unlikely visitor at the end of last year was a seal believed to have travelled upstream during the last flood event in September.
- Areas have been seeded and planted as and when available moving away from the historic practice of planting and seeding only on completion of works.
- This has provided cover to prevent washout and siltation and provided essential habitat for a range of invertebrates found in the area

## **Roads Review**

**It's now a year since your Roads Review. Do you feel that this was the right decision to implement such narrow criteria for building new roads?**

- Transport generates around 17% of all our emissions, so must play its part if we are to reach our target of net zero emissions by 2050.
- We can't keep doing what we've been doing for the past 70 years – building new roads to meet demand – if we're going to reach NetZero by 2050.
- This does not mean the end of road building in Wales, but it does mean a greater emphasis on looking after the roads we already have and shifting our investment towards more sustainable transport.
- We need to invest in the Road Network for the right reasons.
- To move away from spending money on projects that encourage more people to drive and redirect this money on maintaining our existing roads and investing in real alternatives.
- Money saved by not building new roads will be used to improve existing infrastructure, helping to create new bus and cycle lanes that give people a meaningful alternative choice for travel.

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## **Social Media bullets**

**Redacted – not in scope for relating to misinformation, public messaging strategy, or reputational risk**