

**STATEMENT BY THE WHITCHURCH BRIDGE COMPANY**  
**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

**Delay to the Re-opening of Whitchurch Bridge**

The exceptionally high river levels since the start of the year have prevented any works being undertaken at Whitchurch Bridge, seriously disrupting the programme for completion of the reconstruction project. As the river needs to open for boat traffic from 31<sup>st</sup> March, we have had to undertake a detailed review of how the works can be safely recommenced in these changed circumstances which add complexity to the project.

We have developed a plan with our main contractor which will enable the works to be completed as soon as possible whilst addressing the river navigation regulations and local planning authority requirements relating to the environmental impact of some weekend and night working.

We expect that the improving river conditions will enable us to restart work by the end of March. Subject to this being so, and there being no further delays due to river conditions or other unforeseen events, we expect the Bridge to re-open for road traffic in September 2014. A more precise date will be announced later.

Mike Beckley, Chairman of the Whitchurch Bridge Company, says "The Company acknowledges the work put in by Balfour Beatty, in collaboration with the Company's own project management team, the Environment Agency, local environmental health officers and others, to devise a plan of action which can be implemented as soon as river conditions allow. All the parties involved have demonstrated their commitment to getting the Bridge re-opened as soon as possible.

"The Company again expresses its regret for the disruption caused by the reconstruction of the Bridge and looks forward to reopening this vital community asset as soon as possible."

**Background Notes**

- 1 The Whitchurch Bridge Company is the commonly-used name for The Company of Proprietors of Whitchurch Bridge, which was established by the Whitchurch Bridge Acts of 1792 and 1988.
- 2 The Bridge now being reconstructed was originally built in 1902.
- 3 The Bridge is normally used by about 1.8 million vehicles per year, or about 5,800 vehicles per weekday.
- 4 The main contractor for the Bridge reconstruction project is Balfour Beatty Ltd.
- 5 The navigation channel will open for river traffic on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 as originally planned. However, there will be some temporary closures which will be agreed in advance with the Environment Agency.
- 6 There are more details about the Whitchurch Bridge Company on its website at [www.whitchurchbridge.com](http://www.whitchurchbridge.com).
- 7 For further information please contact the Company Secretary.

Geoff Weir  
Company Secretary  
[secretary@whitchurchbridge.com](mailto:secretary@whitchurchbridge.com)