

Deerness Bridge reopens

Mark Readman, Highway Services Manager:

It's a great day for us, the works on Deerness Bridge are now complete. We reopened this week, back to two way traffic and that's really positive. Deerness Bridge was originally built one hundred and six years ago and that was the transport link between Brancepeth and Ushaw Moor, so that particular structure has served us well.

The bridge has been replaced like for like. It's a really successful project after one and a half million pounds of investment, so I would like to think that we get another one hundred years from the new construction.

The bridge closed in 2016 following a principal inspection and it was found structurally unsafe. It has been a complex project, there was a number of public utilities crossing the river at the same point as the bridge so we had to divert those and re-route them.

We've worked very closely with the Environment Agency and also other interested parties to replace the bridge deck. Fortunately we were able to use the abutments so that's really made the project a lot easier than it could have been. But also, we were hampered by severe weather earlier in the year. February and March we had severe storms, rain and heavy snow, so that did delay the project a little bit.

During the construction works year there has been some disruption to local businesses, local residents and also the travelling public. So we'd really like to thank all those for the patience whilst we constructed the job.

We do have the clean-up operation; remove the stone that was used on the temporary Baily Bridge, remove the temporary abutments and also clean up the site and remove the compound.

It will take a few weeks or months yet to complete the rest of the works, but as I say, the bridge is now open for both vehicle and pedestrian traffic.