

News story: Work underway at Kilbowie Road, Clydebank

From:

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Extensive works to fill a 62 metre deep unrecorded mine shaft that caused a collapse under Kilbowie Road in Clydebank are underway.

The Coal Authority has taken responsibility for the site and the repair works will take between 6 to 8 weeks to complete.

Only a 6 metre deep hole is visible at the road surface, but this leads to the shaft which goes down a further 56 metres to a total depth of 62 metres.

Work began last week with stone, pressurised grouting and a concrete plug being needed to stabilise the ground. Once the shaft is filled, work will begin on reconstructing the road.

Tim Marples, Head of Public Safety and Subsidence for the Coal Authority, said that work to repair the collapse in Kilbowie Road has already begun.

He added: "The unrecorded shaft at Kilbowie Road is one of our top operational priorities and our prime concern is the safety of the public.

"Our engineers have designed a solution to safely fill the shaft and repair the road and we're working with West Dunbartonshire Council and the utility companies on our proposals.

"This particular repair is complicated by the exposed utility services within the 62 metre deep void, which we're working to protect.

"From our experience, the work will take between 6 to 8 weeks to complete and cost in the region of £250,000.

"Our aim is get the road re-opened as soon as possible to minimise the impact on local residents and traffic. We apologise for the inconvenience and disruption caused presently and during the forthcoming works."

[For more details please read the full press release](#)

[For further updates please visit West Dunbartonshire Council's website](#)

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News story: Britain and Cyprus Step Up Defence Co-Operation

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon and Cypriot Defence Minister Christoforos Fokaides signed a Defence Co-operation Programme in the capital Nicosia today, agreeing to closer working.

Building on the agreement signed last year, the Ministers agreed that the key regional partners would now work closely across Special Forces, counter terrorism, Crisis Response, intelligence, Air Defence, hybrid warfare and cyber.

Improved Maritime Search and Rescue co-operation will be a particular focus, and during his visit Sir Michael offered Cyprus the chance to display alongside the international community at Royal International Air Tattoo 2017 and reviewed opportunities for naval personnel exchanges.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Britain is stepping up its global role and Cyprus is a key partner in promoting European security and stability.

We have now committed to strengthen our defence partnership with greater co-operation in areas such as counter terrorism, maritime security, and crisis response.

The Defence Secretary also announced the continuing commitment to train senior Cypriot Officers at the Royal College of Defence Studies together with other training being opened up on the Advanced Command and Staff Course.

While in Cyprus, Sir Michael visited the Zenon Joint Rescue Coordination Centre, on the island's south coast. Extending the Republic of Cyprus' crisis response capability, the centre incorporates modern maritime surveillance and warning systems and is central to Cyprus's efforts to tackle illegal human trafficking.

Sir Michael's visit comes at an important time for Cyprus, following the UN-facilitated talks held in Geneva in January, and as negotiations continue towards a solution to the long-standing Cyprus issue. The Defence Secretary confirmed that as a Guarantor Power, the UK will do whatever necessary to secure a settlement and our priority is for both sides to find an agreement allowing each community to feel secure.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon met UK Armed Forces personnel at RAF Akrotiri during the visit. Crown Copyright.

The Defence Secretary also took the opportunity to thank the Cypriot Minister for their support to Op Shader, with British aircraft operating from RAF Akrotiri, and Cyprus' own contribution including to the foreign fighters part of the campaign. Sir Michael visited RAF Akrotiri, meeting with 903 Expeditionary Airwing later in the day. Since Sir Michael's last visit in September last year, the RAF has attacked 330 further terrorist targets in and around Mosul, working in the closest possible cooperation with the brave Iraqi troops.

Press release: Safety improvement scheme announced for A35 in Dorset

The 10-week road improvement scheme is scheduled to start in early April and will not only improve safety for road users, but will also improve crossing facilities for pedestrians.

Included in the work will be reconfigured lane markings, a signalised pedestrian crossing, the installation of speed activated signs in both directions, a new, high-friction road surface and signage.

Highways England operations and maintenance team leader Nick Reed said:

We have been liaising with our local authority partners and listening to communities to make sure we have the right junction layout in place for this scheme.

We have looked at all of the available safety measures for this junction and we are now in a position to start the safety improvement scheme.

Traffic management will be in place during the work, we will be working to keep disruption to a minimum and further details will be available in due course.

The safety improvement scheme is expected to cost around £560,000 and is due to be completed in mid-June, in time for the summer holidays.

During any roadworks, Highways England advises drivers to plan their journeys and allow extra time while they are being delivered.

Drivers can get up-to-the-minute travel information by phoning the Highways England Information Line on 0300 123 5000 or by [accessing the website](#).

Further information regarding current and planned roadworks in the South West region plus neighbouring regions, including the programme, can be found on the [Highways England website](#).

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.

Press release: Prime Minister's Official Spokesperson appointed: James Slack

From:

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James Slack will be the new Prime Minister's Official Spokesperson.

James Slack has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Official Spokesperson.

He will replace Helen Bower, who is taking up a new role as Director of Communications in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.