
Chislehurst Road Bridge



Many delays have been occurring on the railway bridge on Chislehurst Road (the road between Chislehurst and Petts Wood). A weight limit had to be imposed after an assessment indicated it could not support more than 7.5 Tonnes. This meant that one-way working was put in place temporarily but that has now been replaced by the width restrictions shown in the above photo.

This has eased traffic congestion although it has meant that buses and HGVs have to be diverted via Lesson's Hill and Poverest Road – a very long detour. Some additional parking restrictions on those roads are also being introduced to assist larger vehicles.

These restrictions may be in place for over 2 years while the bridge is rebuilt.

Bickley Station Width Restriction



We mentioned the new width restrictions on the Chislehurst Road railway bridge in our last newsletter.

Similar restrictions have had to be imposed on the bridge near Bickley station for the same reason – photos above and below. The bridge has been found to be too weak for heavy vehicles and will need to be strengthened. Unlike the Chislehurst Road width restrictions however, these ones seem to be causing great difficulty for drivers of many quite ordinary cars.



The signs indicate the width restrictions are 6'6" wide but when constructed they were apparently about 6'8". They have since been widened to about 6'11". But many cars still cannot get through them without damage.

For example, my Jaguar XJ (current model) has a technical specification which clearly would make it impossible to get through a 6'11" gap without folding the wing mirrors. Before I actually drove up to this width restriction I was sceptical about people's concerns, but I took one look at it and turned around.

It took me about 5 minutes to take the above photographs and during that time two vehicles (quite small cars) clipped their wing mirrors and other vehicles had to stop and turn around.

Numerous people have complained about damage to their vehicles, including one particularly irate driver who has an older model Jaguar XJ vehicle. This is wider than mine and I know that because I used to have one. He scraped the side of his car when trying to get through which is not surprising because his car is probably wider than the width imposed.

Why is the Bickley width restriction that much narrower than the Chislehurst Road one? Because the latter bridge has a weight limit of 7.5 Tonnes while the former has a limit of only 3 Tonnes. A fully laden Transit van can weigh as much as 3.5 Tonnes so it is essential that even those are stopped.

However with so many cars having problems with the Bickley restriction as it stands, it is questionable whether it might not be better to close the road altogether. At least more specific warning signs that tell drivers that this is an exceptionally narrow gap and even large cars should avoid it should be put up.

Dangers of Width Restrictions

Note that width restrictions are not free of dangers either. They have not been used as a traffic calming measure in Bromley since the width restriction was put in on Watts Lane, Chislehurst many years ago. What happened soon afterwards was that a heavy lorry, not realising the restriction was there, braked sharply when it came up to it. Two young riders of a motorbike that was behind the lorry ran into it and were killed. One of them was a resident of my street. Perhaps it is time to remind everyone of this tragedy which seems to be fading from memory.

Blackbrook Lane Residents Unhappy Also

Note that the residents of Blackbrook Lane are also complaining because the volume of traffic on their road has substantially increased. Heavy vehicles are also using it more frequently as it is now one of the few routes towards the south.

Clearly everyone would like to see these two railway bridges repaired as soon as possible, and preferably sooner than the several years that are being talked about.

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