

Kirkcudbright Bridge Reopens After 100-Day Closure with Speed and Traffic Restrictions

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A key bridge in Kirkcudbright, in the south of Scotland, has reopened more than 100 days after it was closed due to safety concerns, reconnecting a divided town but with ongoing restrictions in place.

The structure was shut down suddenly on 21 March after Dumfries and Galloway Council deemed it unsafe following a routine inspection. The

closure caused significant disruption, cutting off one housing estate from the main part of the town and forcing drivers to take a five-mile detour. While the reopening marks a return to accessibility, traffic is now limited to one-way flow under a 20mph speed limit, regulated by timed traffic lights at either end of the crossing.

The long-awaited reopening was met with relief from residents and local businesses, many of whom had struggled with reduced access and declining footfall. Although congestion is expected due to the one-way system, the restored connection is seen as a critical improvement for the community. Council officials have confirmed that the current traffic management system will remain in place until further safety assessments are completed.

Business owners in Kirkcudbright have spoken about the financial impact of the extended closure. Carly Vaughan, who opened a shop called The Little Art Den during the bridge shutdown, said the timing made starting a business even more difficult. She hopes the reopening will encourage more visitors and customers to return to the town centre. “It’s apparent that average drop-in business is down as much as 25% for some, and that has a knock-on effect for the rest of the community,” she said.

Throughout the closure, residents voiced frustration about the lack of alternative routes and the impact on daily routines. The bridge served as a vital connection not only for personal travel but also for emergency services and deliveries. Community members are now urging the local authority to prioritise a full restoration of two-way access as soon as it is deemed safe.

The incident has reignited broader discussions about infrastructure maintenance in rural areas and the importance of preventative investment to avoid sudden closures. While Kirkcudbright welcomes the partial return of a vital route, the community remains cautious, recognising that full normalcy will depend on longer-term structural decisions and funding.