

Cllr. Marcia D'Alton

Mobile: 085-7333852 • Email: info@marciadalton.net

Website: www.marciadalton.net

Facebook: www.facebook.com/cllrmarciadalton • Twitter: [@marciadalton](https://twitter.com/marciadalton)



22 Hillcrest,
Pembroke Wood,
Passage West,
Co. Cork.

Director of Services,
Roads & Transportation,
Cork County Council,
The Courthouse,
Skibbereen,
Co. Cork.

20th June, 2018.

RE: Objection to the application made to Cork County Council for the temporary closing of the R610, Glenbrook Wharf/Bath Terrace for construction of a foul sewer pipe from 06.00 h Monday 2nd Jul 2018 to 06.00 h Friday 31st Aug 2018 (24 hour closure).

Dear Sir/Madam,

The business and residential community of Passage West, Glenbrook and Monkstown are collectively appalled at the above road closure application to facilitate the installation of a gravity sewer along the R610 as part of the ongoing Lower Harbour Drainage Project.

This project has been ongoing for over a year now. During that time we have worked around traffic lights, waited out delays, endured gruelling temporary road surfaces, watched the green spaces we enjoy dug up and lived with heavy construction work. Because there is appreciation of the necessity to end raw sewerage discharge into Cork Harbour, the community has rarely complained. But as a resident of Passage West, I too reject this latest proposal to close the R610 at Glenbrook in entirety for a full two months.

- Passage West and Monkstown are sister towns in a combined community. The people of Monkstown use the shopping, medical, banking, post office and other daily services available in Passage West. The people of Passage West enjoy the restaurant, pub and waterside facilities in Monkstown. Closing the road between the two towns is severing a community.
- Because the communities are interdependent, the facilities currently available in both towns could not survive without custom from the other. The succession of single lane closures between the two towns has already impacted adversely on many local businesses. The proposed road closure would present an threat beyond that which is tolerable.
- There has been no consultation with local businesses and residents on this proposed total closure at all. For many residents, the only notification was the advertising of the proposed road closure in last Friday's newspaper. That exhibits total disrespect for the everyday lives of the people in our towns.
- Local roads provide a longer albeit alternative route. They are narrow, sometimes winding with a surface quite unable to take the volume of traffic generally carried by the R610. In many places they are

not insufficiently wide to allow two lanes of traffic to pass. They are certainly not able to carry heavy vehicles. To permit this total closure would likely lead to accidents and would almost certainly condemn Cork County Council to years of seeking funding to remediate damaged road surfaces. It would incur significant fuel costs for residents and even greater costs for heavy vehicles who, unable to use local roads, would have no option but to make the advertised 18km round trip.

- The R610 through Passage West is a commuter route, heavily trafficked by those working in Ringaskiddy. Should this total road closure be permitted, the knock-on effects on the Shannonpark roundabout/Carr's Hill/Fingerpost roundabout would be significant. It has the potential to affect communities beyond those of Passage West and Monkstown.
- Total closure of the road at Glenbrook would render the 223 bus unable to deliver a service. There are many who depend on it for getting to work, for meeting medical appointments and for regular shopping. It would have consequences for bin collections, oil and shopping deliveries and other routine services. No attempt has been made to explain to people how these and more regular residential and business dependencies would be accommodated. The Passage West garda station is in the middle of the length proposed to be closed. The consequences of an emergency vehicle having to take a circuitous route could potentially be too grave to contemplate.
- The Cross River Ferry is already severely impacted by the ongoing installation of the pumping station at Glenbrook. At rush hour, vehicles using the ferry are unable to unload onto the R610 because of the location of the temporary traffic lights. When several months ago I asked on behalf of local residents whether there would be traffic lights at Glenbrook in the course of these works, I was reassured that the road width was adequate and they would not be necessary. Within 48 hours, traffic lights were in place.
- Public information sessions have now been arranged to brief residents and businesses on the proposed road closure. But these sessions are to be held next week, after the consultation period on the road closure application has expired. Again, that is an entirely derogatory approach to working with the community.
- It is simply not credible that this level of disruption would be foisted on the community whilst the contractors work 9 am – 5pm, Monday – Friday. When public representatives asked about the potential for 24 hour works, we were told that it would be too much for nearby residents to bear. But speaking to those residents subsequently, it became all too clear that their opinions were never asked!
- No provision has been made for parking for residents who would be unable to access their homes. Between them, residents in Granary Wharf have some 70 cars. Where would they leave them? What about those residents who are less able, who have to leave their cars somewhere distant and who are unable to walk through the works to get home? Not merely has no provision been made for residential parking, but when I asked the contractors directly about this, I was assured that “this had all been arranged with the residents”. Again, the residents were totally unaware of the proposed road closure.

I ask that before Cork County Council would consider granting this road closure:

- All options for after-hours works and 24 hour works are explored.
- All options for single lane closure only are explored.
- Consideration would be given to the ease on the community if a rising main rather than a gravity sewer were to be installed.
- If road closures are necessary, that every effort to maintain them to out-of-business hours would be made.
- The potential for using the adjacent former bus yard to allow traffic to continue to flow through Glenbrook would be investigated.
- The Passage West/Monkstown community would be given the opportunity to seek independent technical advice on the least disruptive method by which the proposed sewer might be laid.

I ask Cork County Council to be mindful that to permit this road closure to go ahead as requested, the local business community would effectively be denied a considerable percentage of their custom for a full quarter of a year. Despite this, they must still pay rates, rent, lighting, heating, insurance, fill stock, etc. without any consideration for the enforced drop in earnings that is totally outside of their control. This would seriously affect the viability of many businesses in our towns. The business community has both collectively and individually objected to this proposed road closure and I fully support their concerns.

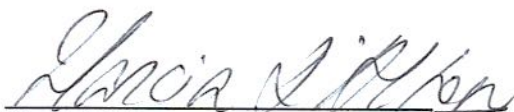
I would also ask Cork County Council to consider the implications of the proposed road closure for such services as Meals on Wheels which are run by volunteers. Taking the longer route imposed on these voluntary drivers would incur a significant and possibly unaffordable expense. Similarly, taxis regularly drive older and less able people between Monkstown, Glenbrook and Passage West for a fare which rarely exceeds €5. But to take the circuitous local roads around the back of the towns would double their fare and more. None of the taxi drivers will want to ask their regular customers to cover this additional cost. Their kindness in taking that hit would see them severely out of pocket to the detriment of the valuable service they offer.

Subsequent to the installation of the rising main between the N28 and Monkstown, a temporary road surface was installed, supposedly for a period of 6 months to permit the fill to settle. Much of this temporary surface has been in place for over a year. This aspect of the Lower Harbour Drainage project is that which I receive complaints about over and over and over again. The temporary surface is so appallingly poor that it is damaging the cars and threatening safety. Cyclists, of which there are many along the R610, are especially vulnerable. I understand from the contractors that the final road surface will not be installed until November. This is woefully unacceptable. It is critical that the final surface is laid as a matter of urgency.

Single lane closures have been implemented along virtually the entire length of this route. One lane is dug whilst all traffic is diverted into the other. It has been made clear from the outset that in a two-lane road, the project includes for reinstatement of the entire lane in which the sewer is laid. But it has become clear over the course of the project that the surface of the other lane has been so badly affected by the weight of diverted traffic that it too has deteriorated significantly. Bearing in mind the imposition of the works to date on the Passage West/Monkstown community, the expected imposition into the future and the direct and indirect financial burden borne directly and indirectly by both the local business and residential community, I ask Cork County Council to support our strong request that the contractors would not be granted this or any further road closures until there is agreement that the project would cover the cost of reinstatement of the full width of the R610 from its junction with the N28 through to the eastern side of Passage West. Whilst the wider Cork community will benefit from a cleaner harbour, only careful management will ensure that the legacy of this project is not a negative one for Passage West/Monkstown. Full width reinstatement of the R610 would be reasonable acknowledgement of the direct burden the business and residential community has borne over many, many months in the execution of the Lower Harbour drainage project.

I ask that Cork County Council would require the contractors and Ervia working on behalf of Irish Water to consult fully with the local business and residential community about how this impending element of the project is implemented. Some 1,270 residents of Passage West/Monkstown have been signatories to a collective objection to this proposed road closure. Many more have submitted individual objections. We are all asking Cork County Council to acknowledge that what is being sought in this road closure is likely a construction methodology most favourable to the Lower Harbour project team and least favourable to the community of Passage West/Monkstown. We deserve better.

Yours faithfully,



Marcia D'Alton

Independent Member, Cork County Council