

PE1540/K

Hugh Thomson Email of 7 February 2016

I would wish to submit the following comments to you, regarding the ongoing debate on the problems at the Rest & Be Thankful.

My wife and I are retired and live in South Knapdale; we travel into Glasgow on the A83 quite often for business, health, and pleasure reasons.

The last 18 months have been particularly wet; the number of land slips has increased; and we have lost confidence in the road. We now always check that the road is open before setting off, and if the weather is bad we will cancel appointments for fear of being on the wrong side of a sudden road closure.

We used to check by viewing the two cameras at the Rest, but these now seem to be permanently switched off. Why?

Instead we now use the internet to access the Government's Traffic Scotland - Current Incidents web site. This shows no incident when there is a single lane in operation. Even, last December when there was 800 tons of rock held in a wire net 50 feet above one's head, no incident was mentioned because the road was technically open. When the military road is in use, and the main road is closed, nowadays the website shows no incident. I think we should be told. Why not?

Photographs showing the whole hillside above the Rest, reveal that the A83 itself is an insignificant feature by comparison and that recent landslides are tiny in relation to the amount that could slip. 5000 tons of debris would look small but it would carry away the nets and any vehicles in its path.

The road remains unsafe and is a risk to life. The addition of more nets will only reduce risks by a small amount, if they happen to be in the right place for small slips of up to 1000 tons.

The larger boulders released by smaller land slips are a major menace. If they slide down slowly with smaller debris they may be held by the catch nets, but if they begin to roll and gain kinetic energy they will arrive at the military road with devastating force.

Last week we motored from Glasgow, passed the flashing lights warning of an increased risk. and then were held at a red light, in pouring rain, beneath the catch netting on the approach to the summit - thereby increasing the risk for us in the queue. One of the drivers was clearly upset. In the present circumstances, tourists

will think twice about visiting Argyll and investors in new business will walk away from Argyll.

The time has come for a new road to be built. I favour a sweeping concrete viaduct over the Old Military Road in the style of our European colleagues in Spain, Italy or France, i.e build a road Scotland can be proud of, and will attract visitors.

Or is Scotland's economy so weak it cannot afford to do the right thing?

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