

THE NETWORK RAIL  
(ESSEX AND OTHERS LEVEL  
CROSSING REDUCTION ORDER)

ROBERT HUTLEY  
  
REBUTTAL OF PROOF OF EVIDENCE  
  
OF

ANDREW KENNING

E48 WHEATSHEAF

Andrew Kenning states

41.2

‘Wheatsheaf footpath level crossing provides a north west-south east link between Lower Farm and Cook’s Corner (footpath19) There are no onward public footpaths at either end of the existing footpath although the northern end is close to a dead end road which leads to the coastal path’.

The footpath is close to the Foxes Farm footpath to the south.

The dead end road to the north (Wall Lane) is not suitable for recreational walking. It is narrow, has overhanging hedges and no verges, furthermore it is used by traffic to access 52 beach chalets, the Environment Agency to access sluice gates and livestock owners to access grazing marshes.

41.3

‘Our proposal is to close the level crossing and divert the footpath along the northern boundary of the railway (in field boundary) so that it runs in an east west direction. This is intended to provide a link to the railway station for those accessing the countryside by rail. The section of footpath over the railway and to the south of the railway would be extinguished.’

The proposal to close a north – south route and replace it with an east – west route is not needed. There are already 3 east –west routes to the railway station. A 4<sup>th</sup> is not required. Footpath 5 (Black Boy Lane) is close to the station. This provides access to all amenities and the wider footpath network. Here is also a cross country footpath linking the station to Butlers Lane.

41.6

‘We understand that the highway authority, Essex County Council, objects to this proposal on the grounds of the additional length for users to travel. Network Rail considers that the proposed diversion would in fact be of benefit to the community. The census undertaken in June/July 2016 showed low use of the existing crossing, with an average use of 3 people per day. The proposed diversion and creation of new route, would allow residents from the north western section of the parish to access the community hall and other facilities, including the railway station. The proposed alternative footpath still allows circular and recreational walking in and around Wrabness and offers good connectivity to the wider footpath network. In developing our proposal for providing a suitable and convenient diversionary route, Network Rail has sought to provide as much off-road walking as possible to meet the requirements of the highway authority, and it is hoped that the diversionary step-free route will encourage walking for people with reduced mobility.’

Residents from the north western section of the village already have convenient, safe and suitable access to the community hall and station, The route is also suitable for people with reduced mobility.

The diversion takes walkers away from the wider footpath network and does not in any way replace the north south route. It is of no benefit to the community.

Wrabness has a comprehensive and diverse network of footpaths and amenities, including at least 8 circular walks many of which are suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs. People choose to walk on Wheatsheaf Lane/Church Road because it is lovely, safe and convenient.

Horse riders have very few facilities for safe off road riding.

If the proposed diversion is imposed, equestrian users will not be permitted to use the field.

Horses will then be forced to use Wheatsheaf Lane/ Church road making it less safe and less enjoyable for all users. Allowing horses to use the field has been a huge benefit to the public.

This will be lost.