

**From:** Susan van de Ven  
**Sent:** 13 April 2017 11:11  
**To:** TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Network Rail Anglia Level Crossing Reductions TWA Order

Dear Secretary of State for Transport,

In my role as County Councillor for Meldreth, I am writing to express the grounds on which I object to Network Rail's proposal to close the **Cambridgeshire CO4 level crossing at Meldreth**.

Network Rail say:

*Closing level crossings and diverting to alternatives will make the railway safer by removing the point where people can come into contact with trains. The closures will also help improve efficiency and reliability. Their closure will facilitate potential future developments for faster and more frequent services.*

The notion that 'closures will also help improve efficiency and reliability' does not constitute a meaningful argument. On the CO4 crossing, there are no signalling controls, indications or inter-lockings to be unreliable. Efficiency savings due to the removal of the crossing would be minimal. The only costs to the railway of retaining the crossing is the periodical maintenance of the crossing surface and stile/fencing. Periodical checks by the Level Crossing Managers are also made to check for defects, compliant signage etc. These checks will still have to be carried out at the other crossings in the area, which will result in a Level Crossing Manager having to be present in Meldreth at various times anyway.

Similarly, it is difficult to see that closing the CO4 crossing would allow faster and more frequent services. This is due to the close proximity of Woodlands Drive and Flambards footpath (FP) crossings which are being retained. On the same section of line, there are also College Farm and Cam Farm User Worked Crossings (UWC) which dictate that no increase in line speed can be made on the current 90mph for both the Up and Down lines. If they were going to raise the line speed above 90mph, all the crossings on this section of line would have to close. Without an increase in line speed or some additional signals, the closure of this crossing will not assist in the delivery of any faster or more frequent services.

Network Rail say:

*The crossings identified for potential closure include those where:*

- *there are private rights only*
- *people can easily be diverted to where a nearby alternative exists*
- *a new public route to a nearby alternative can be provided*

I've considered Network Rail's proposed alternative route for pedestrians, should the CO4 crossing be closed. The alternative route depends on two key components, both of which would put the pedestrian at greater risk than over the level crossing, which has no record of safety problems.

1. Pedestrians would be required to walk through the entrance of the industrial estate at the foot of Meldreth Station Bridge near the Whitcroft Road junction, which is continuously busy with heavy lorry and agricultural traffic and which has no dedicated safe pedestrian access. The industrial estate includes vehicle servicing businesses and large-scale agriculture business, hence by definition taking regular lorry and agricultural traffic. This is not a safe environment for pedestrians. Furthermore, and by putting pedestrians in this environment, vehicle drivers face new potential conflict, making the road less safe for all users.

2. The footway over the bridge is very narrow – xx metres wide. This is well below the minimum standard width for a footway.

The overall inadequacy of the Station Road bridge for pedestrians is well documented:

- In 2014 Sustrans proposed a signal-controlled one-way traffic system over the bridge, in order to create acceptable space for Non-Motorized Users.
- The Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership has campaigned since 2010 for a safe walking route between Meldreth and Melbourn, and has documented the inadequate pedestrian conditions over Station Road bridge.
- In 2014, planning conditions for the construction of the Sun Edison solar farm, which necessitated lorry traffic through this same access route at the southwestern end of the bridge, imposed strict time limits due to concerns about already pressured traffic conditions on the bridge.
- As Meldreth County Councillor I have received numerous representations over the years from a variety of parishioners about safety conditions on the pedestrian route over the bridge. Parents have been unwilling to let their children walk to school over this bridge.
- As Meldreth County Councillor I have made formal approaches to Cambridgeshire County Council for remedial measures to Station Road bridge, specifically to protect pedestrians. The remedial measure suggested by Highways was a signal-controlled one-way traffic system. This was never progressed due to the scale and expense of such a project.
- I have formally reported to Highways my own concern about people in mobility scooters trying to navigate over the bridge – understanding that sometimes people have no choice in getting over the bridge.

Network Rail have proposed a small section of footway at the base of Station Road bridge on the east side, which is welcome, but does not address the safety concerns outlined here. In any case, there is little detail about such a footway extension, including its intended surface, maintenance responsibility, or funding source.

In summary, Network Rail's proposed alternative route for C04 places pedestrians in unsafe conditions; in doing so, conditions for vehicle drivers are made less safe.

Therefore I object to Network Rail's proposal and would argue that the current C04 crossing, which has no history of safety concerns for pedestrians or trains, be left open.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,  
Susan  
van de Ven

Susan van de Ven

County Councillor for Foxton, Great and Little Chishill, Heydon, Melbourn, Meldreth and Shepreth

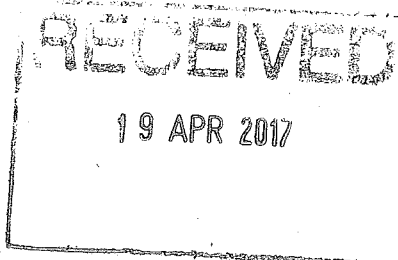
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14 April 2017

Secretary of State for Transport  
c/o Transport and Works Act Orders Unit  
General Counsel's Office, Department for Transport, Zone 1/18, Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London SW1P 4DR

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I am writing to express the grounds on which I object to Network Rail's proposal to close Cambridgeshire's CO4 level crossing at Meldreth.

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The notion that 'closures will also help improve efficiency and reliability' does not constitute a meaningful argument. On the CO4 crossing, there are no signalling controls, indications or inter-lockings to be unreliable. Efficiency savings due to the removal of the crossing would be minimal. The only costs to the railway of retaining the crossing is the periodical maintenance of the crossing surface and stile/fencing. Periodical checks by the Level Crossing Managers are also made to check for defects, compliant signage etc. These checks will still have to be carried out at the other crossings in the area, which will result in a Level Crossing Manager having to be present in Meldreth at various times anyway.

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Susan van de Ven  
Meldreth County Councillor

