
From: GR Grimmatt on behalf of Geoffrey Grimmatt
Sent: 14 April 2017 18:11
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT
Cc: GR Grimmatt
Subject: National Rail Anglia level crossing reductions TWA order
Attachments: nat-rail2017.pdf; Melbourn-Meldreth-FOI.pdf

Dear Sir or Madam,

I attach my letter of objection to the proposed closure of level crossing
CO4 No 20.

Yours faithfully,
Geoffrey Grimmatt

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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

(also by email to transportandworksact@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

13 April 2017

Dear Secretary of State,

**Network Rail Anglia Level Crossing Reductions TWA Order
Proposed closure of Meldreth level crossing CO4 No 20**

I write to object to the proposed closure of this crossing, and to communicate my reasons.

The reasons given for this closure are as follows (quoted from <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/anglia/anglia-level-crossings/>):

We believe it's possible to close level crossings:

1. *with private rights only*
2. *by diverting people to where a nearby alternative exists*
3. *by providing a new public route to a nearby alternative...*

Closing or modifying level crossings provide the following benefits:

- A. *improve the safety of level crossing users*
- B. *deliver a more efficient and reliable railway, which is vital in supporting the regional and UK economy*
- C. *reduce the ongoing operating and maintenance cost of the railway*
- D. *reduce delays to trains, pedestrians and other highway users*
- E. *improve journey time reliability for all railway, highway and other rights of way users*

Before I comment on those targets, I remark that we live in a so-called evidence-based society. Decisions and actions should be justifiable on the basis of **evidence** that is before us, not upon dreams or political targets.

Comments on 1-3 above.

1. The closure of this crossing implies the abolition of a public right of way that is recorded on the definitive map held by Cambridgeshire County Council. The statement to the contrary on the attached FOI response is false. The inclusion of disinformation in a public forum discredits the consultation and the reliability of Network Rail. This being the case, and reversing the logic of the Network Rail statement above, **it is not possible to close this crossing.**
2. See A below.

Comments on A-E above.

- A. According to data provided (attached) by Network Rail under an FOI request, there have been no safety-related incidents at this crossing in the last ten years. The risk that ensues as a result of this crossing is indistinguishable from zero. This risk cannot be reduced further.

Indeed the proposal **decreases the safety** of level crossing users. It moves them to a busy two-lane road, requires them to make two crossings of this road, to traverse the steep railway bridge on a narrow footpath (one metre wide), and to enter an industrial area with regular heavy and light traffic. During a random minute at 1645 on 6 April 2017, there were 13 vehicle movements on the road. Since crossing the road takes about 5 seconds, this implies an average of two evasive actions per pedestrian.

Note: At the crossing there has appeared a revised map that shows a new path which would obviate the double road-crossing. I have not found this map on the Network Rail website (where the latest consultation document is dated 8 September 2016) and I am uncertain of its status. This would be an improvement in one regard, but note that the bridge walkway at its narrowest point would then be around 70cm unless two pylons (one being electrical) are moved.

- B. This reason is confused. How does closing a crossing that manifests no risk, has relatively limited usage, and with minimal maintenance, help to achieve this target? I do not know, and it is not explained. I propose this closure will have zero impact on this target.
- C. There is inevitably some cost involved in maintaining any crossing. Having watched this crossing over 23 years, I estimate that cost to be very tiny indeed. The stiles and the crossing are basic and elementary, and they receive very little if any maintenance.
- D. I have never seen a train slow down at this crossing (remember that Meldreth station is just a few hundred yards away, where the risk of an incident is unavoidable). The proposal will increase delay to pedestrians, not decrease it, and there are no other users.
- E. "Journey time reliability". A strident message, but how will that work? I simply do not believe that this proposed closure will have the slightest impact, and Network Rail has provided no evidence. The journey time reliability for some pedestrians can only decrease since their route is 480m further.

Now some further counterpoints.

- a) The incline of the bridge will pose physical difficulty for some pedestrians and children.
- b) The distance from one side of the crossing to the other will, via the road route, be notably longer (namely by 480m according to a Network Rail document).
- c) The closure of this crossing would be a loss of amenity to the users of pathways around the beautiful environs of the local villages.

Conclusions:

- i. There are demonstrable losses to pedestrian users of this crossing were it to be closed.
- ii. Closure **increases** the risk to pedestrians.
- iii. The gain through closure to the railway network is imaginary only.
- iv. On balance, therefore, the closure should not go ahead.

Yours faithfully,

Geoffrey Grimmatt



Mr Grimmett
By Email:

Network Rail
Freedom of Information
The Quadrant
Elder Gate
Milton Keynes
MK9 1EN

T 01908 782405
E FOI@networkrail.co.uk

9th September 2016

Dear Mr Grimmett

Information request

Reference number: FOI2016/00891

Thank you for your email of 11th August 2016. You requested the following information:

'Please give me details of all incidents or accidents over the last 10 years involving a train at the level crossing between Melbourn and Meldreth in Cambridgeshire. This crossing is labelled CO4 No 20 on the list published by Network Rail entitled "Anglia Level Crossing Proposals - Cambridgeshire" and available at <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/anglialevelcrossings/>

The 6 digit grid reference of the crossing is TL3745 according to the above document.

Please give dates of incidents, and details of each, including severity, and numbers of people and/or animals involved.'

I have processed your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

I can inform you that we have searched our records and we do not hold the information you requested since there were no accidents or incidents of any type at the level crossing in question.

Advice and assistance

I note that the crossing in question is due for closure and thought it possible that concern over the issue might have prompted your request. We understand that these changes are significant and recognise the right of local communities to be properly

informed and to engage in the decision making process. With this in mind I thought that it might be useful to explain the closure programme in a little greater depth.

Safety is always a vital concern to us and closing the level crossings and diverting people to alternatives will make the railway safer by removing points where people can come into contact with trains. That said, it is important to be clear that these crossings are not the highest risk crossings, they have been chosen for closure because:

- None of them is a public right of way.
- We are confident that we can minimise the effect of the closures by diverting people to nearby alternatives, or by providing a new public route to a nearby alternative.
- In some instances there is an opportunity to change the use of the crossings so that they might only be used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.
- Doing so will help improve reliability and enable separate, potential future developments for faster and more frequent services.

We are about to begin the second phase of consultation on the closures (see <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/anglialevelcrossings/> for full details). Whilst we hope that everyone who is interested in the matter will be able to attend one of our consultation events, we know that this might not be possible. If you are unable to attend, but have any queries I would encourage you to contact us via email at anglialevelcrossings@networkrail.co.uk, or through our 24/7 helpline on 03457 11 41 41.

If you have any enquiries about this response, please contact me in the first instance at FOI@networkrail.co.uk or on 01908 782405. Details of your appeal rights are below.

Please remember to quote the reference number at the top of this letter in all future communications.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Mantle
Information Officer

Appeal Rights

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, please write to the FOI Compliance and Appeals Manager at Network Rail, Freedom of Information, The Quadrant, Elder Gate, Milton Keynes, MK9 1EN, or by email at foi@networkrail.co.uk. Your request must be submitted within 40 working days of receipt of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

03J/10



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,
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13 April 2017

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Yours faithfully,

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Geoffrey Grimmett



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By Email:

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Information Officer