

Telephone

Secretary of State for Transport
C/o Transport and Works Act Orders Unit
Department for Transport
Zone 1/18
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR



28 April 2017

Network Rail Suffolk Level Crossing


Dear Sir

Following the request by property consultants Bruton Knowles for details of the ownership of our home at the above address and our objections to the possible alterations to level crossings in Mellis, we enclose copies of two letters we have sent to Network Rail – to Mr Mark Carne on 4 July last year and Mr Adrian Belcher on 27 September, stating our reasons for objection to proposed alterations to the Mellis crossings.

We hope our opposition to proposed changes, together with those of our neighbours, will be taken into consideration.

Yours faithfully

Mr and Mrs P B Mellor


Mr Mark Carne
Managing Director
Network Rail
1 Eversholt Street
London NW1 2DN

Copy

4 July 2016

Mellis level crossing proposed changes

Dear Mr Carne

As residents of Mellis we would like to object to the proposed changes to the railway crossings in the village being put forward by Network Rail.

Our main concern is over the suggested closure of the private vehicle crossing S20 between Mellis Common on one side of the line and Beecrofts at Manor Farm on the other. This would necessitate creating a new road access across agriculture land opposite our home and would run the length of our neighbour's house and land at Breccles.

The proposed new road would be used by HGVs, high-sided articulated lorries and bulk feed carriers at unsociable hours causing disturbance to local residents and their animals, including the horses stabled at Breccles.

Equally important is that the junction of the proposed new road and Rectory Road, a single track lane, and its junction with Earlsford Road, would be wholly unsuitable for heavy vehicles without major alterations. Earlsford Road is narrow with tight bends. Parked cars on one side restrict width and would make it impossible for large vehicles to pass.

We are not in favour of Cowpasture Lane (S18) being downgraded from a byway to bridleway and see no reason why the Abbots crossing (S21) should be closed.

We hope Network Rail will reconsider its suggested changes to the present level crossings in Mellis.

Yours sincerely

Mr and Mrs P B Mellor

Mr Adrian Belcher
Community Relations Executive
Network Rail
Suite 2
Waterloo General Offices
London SE1 8SW

Copy

27 September 2016

Anglia level crossings - proposed changes in Mellis, Suffolk

Dear Mr Belcher

We wrote to Network Rail in July expressing our opposition, objections and concerns about the original proposed changes to the railway crossings in Mellis.

Our main concern is the proposal to downgrade the S19 Rectory Road crossing from a public highway and reduce access to agricultural vehicles only.

The problem is compounded by your proposed closure of the private vehicle crossing S20 between Mellis Common on one side of the line and Beecrofts at Manor Farm on the other.

Now you suggest taking HGVs, bulk feed carriers and high-sided articulated lorries carrying live chickens associated with Manor Farm across the S19 Rectory Road crossing.

If such a suggestion is put into practise a new road would have to be constructed across agricultural land from the narrow single track Rectory Road to the farm.

The original suggested route for this new link between Rectory Road and Manor Farm was to run beside Breccles and the length of its garden, stables and paddocks. However, because of opposition to heavy lorries having to access Rectory Road via Earlsford Road, it has now been suggested that the link road is made over agricultural land parallel to the rail line.

We do not believe either suggestion is workable or desirable.

The alternative route would require a large turning area having to be constructed in Rectory Road to enable huge vehicles to turn on or off the level crossing. This would be excessive because the level crossing is considerably higher than the ground on either side of it. Without extensive road works long vehicles would be unable to make the crossing without grounding.

A suggestion has been made that the level crossing is "guarded" on either side by lockable gates to prevent other road users (such as emergency services, deliveries and refuse collections) being able to use the crossing. However, because of the size of vehicles going to and from Manor Farm the gates would need to be a considerable distance from the level crossing to accommodate waiting vehicles while the gates are unlocked and relocked. If the alternative route parallel to the railway is used this arrangement would interfere with access to Rectory Farm and its buildings on the west side of the crossing. If the original route parallel to Breccles is used access to that property and to our home on the east side would be similarly inconvenienced.

A gated crossing would be totally impractical for the farmer and horse riders. Would they, together with visiting contract lorry drivers, be able to satisfactorily unlock and relock the gates? And what happens to those lorries which mistakenly approach Manor Farm via Earlsford Road to find a locked gate in Rectory Road and insufficient space to turn? It would be a catastrophe waiting to happen.

On a personal level the changes would have a drastically detrimental effect on our property. We would have the fumes, noise and vibrations of heavy vehicles passing within yards of our sixteenth century cottage. Our present pleasant outlook over an open field will be replaced by lorries driving to and from Manor Farm. There are no passing places along Rectory Road. If any heavy vehicle drives over the narrow strip of grass outside our home it is likely to break the piped ditch, which is our responsibility. If that happens, the lane will flood.

There have been no accidents or incidents at the Rectory Road crossing. Contrary to figures quoted in the consultation document the S19 crossing is used daily by domestic, agricultural and commercial vehicles.

It has proved to be an invaluable asset to the local community linking the two halves of the village, especially when the main crossing is closed for maintenance work. It is also vital to emergency vehicles which are sent via it by satellite navigation.

We hope Network Rail will consider the potential dangers and extreme hardship that will result in changing these two crossings and agree that they should remain as they are. If heavy vehicles are directed along Rectory Road, from either direction, they will have a devastating effect on nearby properties which for centuries have enjoyed the pleasant environment of a quiet Suffolk village.

We hope Network Rail will reconsider its suggested changes to the present level crossings in Mellis.

Yours sincerely

Mr and Mrs P B Mellor