

**OBJ/036/W3/1            S27 BARRELLS CROSSING**

THE PROPOSED NETWORK RAIL (SUFFOLK LEVEL CROSSING  
REDUCTION) ORDER

PUBLIC INQUIRY, 13 FEBRUARY 2018

DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT REFERENCE: TWA/17/APP/04

OBJECTION BY **THE RAMBLERS** TO CLOSURE OF S27 BARRELLS  
CROSSING

PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF **DEREK FISHER** of Church Barn, Church Lane,  
Norton, Bury St Edmunds IP31 3NB

**Introduction**

1.     My name is Derek Fisher, a volunteer joint Footpaths Secretary over the past three years for Bury St Edmunds Group Ramblers. I have responsibility for rights of way matters over 32 parishes to the east and south of Bury St Edmunds, in the part of Suffolk stretching in a southerly direction from the Cambridge–Ipswich east–west railway line, including the town of Bury but ending just north of Sudbury. As well as my responsibility on behalf of Ramblers for public rights of way in this area, I have frequently led groups of up to 45 members on planned walks in Suffolk and, previously, in the county of Kent.
  
2.     The Ramblers organizes itself through constituent parts known as “Areas”, loosely based on traditional counties. The Suffolk Area carries out the Ramblers’ objects through seven territorial Groups, together covering the whole county. Each Group has a Footpaths Secretary (in the case of one Group, two Footpaths Secretaries). These are authorised to make representations to the appropriate authorities concerning proposed changes to the rights of way network. They make these representations following decisions made by themselves with other suitably experienced members of the Group, usually as a committee. For county-wide strategic issues or

issues affecting the territories of two or more Groups, reference may be made either to the Suffolk Area Footpaths Committee which consists of an Area Footpaths Secretary, all of the Group Footpaths Secretaries, Access Officers and, *ex officio*, the Area Chair or alternatively the Area Council consisting of the Area Officers and delegates from each the Groups.

### **The present proposal**

3. The Ramblers objects to the proposal to close S27 Barrells crossing.
4. I understand that under the legislation, the alternative route has to be suitable and convenient. Where a path is used for leisure walking (or mainly for leisure walking), the alternative route needs to be enjoyable (or enjoyable for the most part) as a leisure path as well, for it to be 'suitable' as an alternative. It needs to be perceived to be safe in order to be suitable—recreational walkers as far as possible do not choose to use routes where they do not feel safe—and the alternative path needs to actually be safe (that is, safe in road safety assessment terms) in order to be suitable and convenient.
5. This pedestrian crossing forms a part of an extensive network of footpaths enabling walkers to travel between Ixworth and Pakenham villages to the north, Norton to the east, Thurston and Bury St Edmunds to the west and Beyton and Rougham to the south.
6. Some of the existing footpaths are ancient; for example the existing footpath running north–south at Barrells appears as 'Packway Lane' on the Ordnance Survey County Series map of 1884, but is believed locally to have been the drovers' route connecting Thurston with Ixworth. It passes through Great Green just to the north of this crossing.

U.S. County 7  
1884

232 3.772

230 2.984

210 4.50

209 1.728

201 6.603

200 3.772

203 3.194

207 2.206

202 4.893

204 1.981

205 6.604

206 3.112

211 5.931

212 4.417

214 5.167

215 1.91

216 4.01

217 1.831

218 1.458

219 1.033

220 2.100

221 9.179

222 8.179

223 6.349

224 1.033

225 1.033

226 1.033

227 1.033

228 1.033

229 1.033

230 2.984

231 3.772

233 3.772

234 3.772

235 3.772

236 3.772

237 3.772

238 3.772

239 3.772

240 3.772

241 3.772

242 3.772

243 3.772

244 3.772

245 3.772

246 3.772

247 3.772

248 3.772

249 3.772

250 3.772

251 3.772

252 3.772

253 3.772

254 3.772

255 3.772

256 3.772

257 3.772

258 3.772

259 3.772

260 3.772

261 3.772

262 3.772

263 3.772

264 3.772

265 3.772

266 3.772

267 3.772

268 3.772

269 3.772

270 3.772

271 3.772

272 3.772

273 3.772

274 3.772

275 3.772

276 3.772

277 3.772

278 3.772

279 3.772

280 3.772

281 3.772

282 3.772

283 3.772

284 3.772

285 3.772

286 3.772

287 3.772

288 3.772

289 3.772

290 3.772

291 3.772

292 3.772

293 3.772

294 3.772

295 3.772

296 3.772

297 3.772

298 3.772

299 3.772

300 3.772

BARRELLS + ing

GROVE FARM + ing

119 10.173

120 2.620

21 912

211 5.931

212 4.417

213 2.023

214 5.167

215 1.91

216 4.01

217 1.831

218 1.458

219 1.033

220 2.100

221 9.179

222 8.179

223 6.349

224 1.033

225 1.033

226 1.033

227 1.033

228 1.033

229 1.033

230 2.984

231 3.772

232 3.772

233 3.772

234 3.772

235 3.772

236 3.772

237 3.772

238 3.772

239 3.772

240 3.772

241 3.772

242 3.772

243 3.772

244 3.772

245 3.772

246 3.772

247 3.772

248 3.772

249 3.772

250 3.772

251 3.772

252 3.772

253 3.772

254 3.772

255 3.772

256 3.772

257 3.772

258 3.772

259 3.772

260 3.772

261 3.772

262 3.772

263 3.772

264 3.772

265 3.772

266 3.772

267 3.772

268 3.772

269 3.772

270 3.772

271 3.772

272 3.772

273 3.772

274 3.772

275 3.772

276 3.772

277 3.772

278 3.772

279 3.772

280 3.772

281 3.772

282 3.772

283 3.772

284 3.772

285 3.772

286 3.772

287 3.772

288 3.772

289 3.772

290 3.772

291 3.772

292 3.772

293 3.772

294 3.772

295 3.772

296 3.772

- OBJ/036/W3/1 DEREK FISHER S27 BARRELLS CROSSING

10. Walkers attempting to avoid the problems brought about by the NR proposal by using the Barrell's Road bridge, which crosses over the line some 0.22 miles to the west of the existing pedestrian crossing, will encounter a blind hump-back bridge (photo 6 attached) where oncoming traffic cannot be seen until a vehicle reaches the crest of the bridge, when there is no refuge for walkers as the grass verges are only 2 feet wide and are both sloping towards the roadway.
11. Overall, the walk resulting from the proposals is not suitable as an alternative to the status quo. It is not safe to use the road bridge at Barrells Road. So, concerns about the safety of using the route, coupled with the long sections which go right along the railway, would make the walk as a whole unenjoyable and less convenient.

I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

DEREK FISHER

8 JANUARY 2018

*Photographs follow . . .*

*Photo 1, looking south along the Thurston 005 footpath as it approaches Barrells crossing south of the railway, showing clearly a well-used grassy path—*



*Photo 2, the immediate southern approach to Barrell's crossing—*





*Photo 3, the south side of the line—*



*Photo 4, along the line facing West, Barrell's Road bridge in the distance. Good sighting for at least 2 miles along the perfectly straight line—*



*Photo 5, along the line facing east, the Grove Farm road bridge in the distance. Good sighting for at least 2 miles along the perfectly straight line—*



*Photo 6, the hump-back bridge on Barrell's Road showing blind approach from the South and verges—*





*Plan showing location and direction of photos—*

