

Your Ref:  
Our Ref: 325/271/SB  
Date: 22 January 2016  
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BY EMAIL ATTACHMENT ONLY

Mr J Richards  
Ramblers' Association  
Suffolk Area Footpaths Secretary  
41 Fawcett Road  
Aldeburgh  
Suffolk  
IP15 5HQ

Dear Mr Richards

**Proposed Extinguishment of Bridleway No 12, Great Barton – Highways Act 1980 Section 118A**

Suffolk County Council (SCC), in its capacity as highway authority, has received an application from Network Rail to extinguish Great Barton Bridleway No 12 which runs across the railway line at Great Barton as shown on the attached 1:1250 scale plan.

Section 118A of the Highways Act 1980 allows for the extinguishment of a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway:

'...where it appears to a council expedient in the interests of the safety of members of the public using it or likely to use it that a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway in their area which crosses a railway, other than by a tunnel or bridge, should be stopped up'.

A summary of Network Rail's case for the extinguishment is as follows:

*A camera was erected to gather census information on 25, 26 and 27 September 2014. The average daily use across these three dates (Saturday, Sunday and Monday) was 169 cyclists and 51 pedestrians. Usage would be expected to be greater at times of good weather, but the road approaching the level crossing is metalled on both sides, so is passable in all conditions.*

*The most recent risk assessment assigns the level crossing a score which is considered a high individual risk and a very high collective risk. This places the level crossing in the Top 10 riskiest public level crossings in Suffolk, out of 138.*

*The key risk factors identified are large numbers of users, frequent trains and sun glare.*

*On a weekday, up to 82 trains pass over the level crossing. The railway is double track. The maximum speed of passenger trains is 75 miles per hour, with freight trains having a maximum of 50 miles per hour. Collision with a train is likely to prove fatal.*

*The level crossing is on National Cycle Route No 51, so would be expected to attract tourists who may not be familiar with level crossings.*

Cont.

*A detailed log records incidents on the level crossing. The log records that between May 2009 and June 2012 a train had a near miss with a man and a dog, and two near misses occurred with cyclists.*


Network Rail has, in the Council's view, provided enough evidence regarding the safety risk posed to the public by the current crossing to warrant making an order to extinguish the bridleway.

A new bridge with steps and the shortest practicable ramps has been constructed a short distance to the east of the level crossing for use by equestrians, cyclists and pedestrians rendering the level crossing unnecessary. Users no longer have to wait for trains to pass and if the crossing is closed the risk of a fatal collision or life changing injury will be eliminated.

Should the extinguishment order be confirmed the railway boundary will be made secure to prevent unauthorised access.

I would be grateful if you could provide the Ramblers' Association's views on the proposal by returning the attached form by 19 February 2016.

Yours sincerely



Sharon Berry  
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Resource Management  
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