

**OBJ/036/W5/1            S25 CATTISHALL 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 S25 CATTISHALL  
CROSSING

PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF **JENNY BRADIN** of 1 Crow Street, Coney  
Weston, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 1DL

**Introduction**

1. My name is Jenny Bradin and I am the Ramblers Joint Footpath Secretary for the Bury St Edmunds Group. In this role my responsibilities cover 52 parishes covering an area from Bury St Edmunds in the south, and north to the Norfolk border, to Mildenhall and Brandon in the north west and the boundary of Eye in the north east. I have held the post for 5 years. I have attended and spoken at public inquiries on footpath issues and also at St Edmundsbury Borough Council planning meetings. I regularly lead Ramblers walks of between 20 to 50 members. I am also a member of the Norfolk and Suffolk Long Distance Walkers and a volunteer warden for Suffolk Wildlife Trust.
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 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 even the Area Council consisting of the Area Officers and delegates from each the Groups.

### **The existing route**

3. The current crossing alignment provides a direct and convenient route for users and is an important link in the local footpath network. There is significant and major housing development and also business development in the area and the crossing is part of Cycle Route 13 which is used by residents to get to work, and to access cycle routes into Bury St Edmunds town centre, and get to local supermarkets. It is also used by residents for recreational walks. This is confirmed by the camera census undertaken by Network Rail which also included children.

### **Proposed diversionary route**

4. The proposed diversionary route is very much longer and entails a significant detour for users involving crossing several roads, including a roundabout, going through a housing estate and then through a rather undesirable underpass and a long walk along the side of the railway line back to the north of the level crossing. As the NR census recorded use by adults with pushchairs and prams this is not an insignificant distance. It would also add time for cyclists travelling to and from work.

### ***The proposed bridge***

5. At the second consultation in Bury St Edmunds it was noted that Network Rail had suggested that a footbridge be built at this crossing.<sup>1</sup> It was later noted from the Suffolk County Council response that Network Rail was in consultation with developers on the Moreton Hall estate to negotiate funding. Obviously Ramblers are not privy to any other information with regard to this, but the very fact emphasises the importance that Network Rail puts on constructing a footbridge at this crossing. Under specific considerations in

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix OBJ/036/W5/2-1 for reproduced article from *East Anglian Daily Times*.

- NR's statement of case they state that as part of the northern development it is proposed to provide a pedestrian footbridge at the site of this level crossing.
6. Network Rail know that a footbridge is essential at this site and they must concede that it needs to be built without delay. The level crossing must not be closed until this footbridge is built, not only for safety reasons but also because the alternative route is neither suitable nor convenient.
  7. The new housing development south of the railway line is rapidly progressing and NR acknowledge that usage and hence risk at the level crossing would be expected to increase. There is no reason whatsoever therefore to delay building the footbridge and therefore eliminate this risk.
  8. I refer to a letter dated 22 January 2016 from Suffolk County Council to Jim Richards, Ramblers Suffolk Area Footpath Secretary attached as appendix OBJ/036/W5/2-2. Suffolk County Council had received an application from Network Rail to extinguish Great Barton bridleway no. 12 which runs across the railway line at East Barton. In this letter Network Rail describes in detail the dangers and risks of this crossing and demonstrated to SCC that there was enough evidence to close the bridleway across the railway line.
  9. In fact NR considered it so dangerous that they had already built a footbridge at this location in 2015. SCC states that a new bridge with steps and the shortest practicable ramps had been constructed a short distance to the east of the level crossing for the use by equestrians, cyclists and pedestrians rendering the level crossing unnecessary. The request to close the crossing directly across the railway line was made in 2016 after the bridge had been built in 2015.
  10. Network Rail have therefore already set a precedent which should be repeated at the Cattishall crossing. The Cattishall crossing is situated a few minutes along the same stretch of railway line, with the same risks and volume of rail traffic, a crossing which encompasses a footpath and also a cycle route, as was

the case at East Barton. It therefore follows that NR should build the bridge at Cattishall before closing the level crossing and not after.

### **Conclusion**

11. I reiterate the point made in NR's statement of case: "also as part of the northern development it is proposed to provide a pedestrian footbridge at the site of this level crossing". They have already made the case with the East Barton crossing that a bridge is essential on this particular stretch of line. Planning for the northern development may take years. I therefore contend that such a delay in construction of a footbridge is entirely unacceptable.
12. We ask the Inspector therefore to recommend that Network Rail be required to build the footbridge as soon as possible and to retain this level crossing until such time as the bridge is completed. The bridge is essential to retaining the present path network and the cycle route, and the safety of the residents and potential residents of the area. Users would no longer have to wait for trains to pass and the risk of a fatal collision or life changing injury will be eliminated.

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

J M BRADIN

8 JANUARY 2018

*Photographs follow . . .*

*The number given to each photograph corresponds with the numbers on the map at the end showing position and direction of camera.*

*1 Entrance to crossing from south—*



*2 Looking back from crossing southwards showing ground works of housing development—*





*3 Looking back from crossing southwards also showing ground works of housing development showing extent of fence right up to railway track—*



*4 Looking back from crossing southwards—more building works—*



*5 Entrance to crossing from south—*



*6 Railway track looking west towards Bury St Edmunds—excellent visibility—*





*7 Railway track looking east towards Great Barton—excellent visibility—*





*8 Crossing from south—*



*10 Road to north of crossing—*



*13 Cyclist waiting to cross track from north side—*



*Building site entrance from south—*





Ordnance Survey map (not to scale) showing location of photographs—

