

Mr Robert Needham BA

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I am a resident of Wivenhoe who has trained as a Diesel Engineer, has been a Police Officer for thirty years and latterly was the Community Operations Manager for Colchester Borough Council. I was responsible for Emergency Planning at the Borough and my management role included ensuring the effective operation of the town CCTV system, Older peoples activity centres, Community Street Wardens and the 24 hour emergency response centre. I was educated locally and have a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Science together with mechanical and production Engineering qualifications. I am a former Town Mayor of Wivenhoe and a standing Town Councillor.

I was born in Wivenhoe on [REDACTED]. I am therefore familiar with the Paget Road Railway Crossing.

In my younger days, my other friends and myself would hold occasional football matches on an area known to us as Paget Green. This being an area of open land (now developed for residential use) close to the railway foot crossing. The matches were upstreeters against the downstreeters. Upstreeters were those generally living North of the railway line. During my lifetime, I have lived both North and South of the railway line. Access to the playing area was via the Paget Road Crossing. As children, we would use the crossing several times a day.

During this period of time, there was a thriving shipyard, (James W Cook and Company Limited) just beyond Paget Road. Workers from the yard used the rail crossing facility as a direct route to their employment. Most of these workers taking advantage of the locality and popping home for their lunch break.

I remember too, a Public House in Brook Street which was called The Brewery Tavern. The pub sat at the junction with Brook Street and Paget Road. It was a popular destination for myself and colleagues. We would always reach the Pub via the crossing that leads to Queens Road and beyond.

In latter years and as a keen walker, I continue to use the crossing on my ventures. I find that the crossing is convenient, has a safe walking surface, is protected by adequate fencing and gates. More importantly, it has unobstructed views in each direction sufficient for me to see and prepare for any arriving trains.

During my lifetime, and to my knowledge, I have never heard of any incident that can be attributed to the crossing at Paget Road. There certainly has not been any incident where a person using the crossing has been struck by a train.

I understand that there are moves to withdraw the crossing facility. I say 'facility' because that is exactly what it is. It's a useful connection for pedestrians to cross from upper to lower Wivenhoe in that location. I have heard that a proposed alternative route intends to take walkers via Anglesea Road, across the railway bridge and return via Queens Road. This may be regarded as a relatively short diversion by the proposer. However, in my view, this is a considerable, uncomfortable and arduous trek. The incline on both sides of the bridge is challenging. The unadopted and unmade road has a perilous surface.

I was to register my objection to the proposed closure.

Robert A Needham.

26th May 2017.