

Angela Foster

080/127

From: Richard Colley
Sent: 10 May 2017 12:04
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT
Subject: Network Rail Anglia Level Crossing Reductions TWA Order - Crossing E48
Wheatsheaf, Essex
Attachments: Wrabness PC letter to DfT 10.5.2017 re E48 Crossing Closure.pdf

Good morning

In relation to the current Public Consultation please take into account the attached a letter of representation on behalf of Wrabness Parish Council concerning the proposed closure of Crossing £48 at Wrabness, Essex.

Regards

Richard Colley
for Wrabness Parish Council

Please reply to

Richard Colley, Vice Chairman Wrabness Parish Council, Stour House, Church Road, Wrabness, Manningtree, Essex,
CO11 2TG.

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Wrabness Parish Council

10 May 2017

Clerk to the Council:
Mrs Dawn Barry
The Furrows
Butlers Lane
Wrabness Essex
CO11 2UE

Tel. 01255- 880369

Dear Secretary of State

**Network Rail Anglia Level Crossing Closure
Reduction TWA Order
Level Crossing T48 – Wheatsheaf**

Wrabness Parish Council **strongly objects** to the proposed closure of E48 Wheatsheaf Crossing. We request the following representations are taken into account by the Department for Transport in considering the Network Rail application subject of the consultation

Wrabness is a small rural community in north-east Essex. The loss of the railway crossing E48 at Wrabness will mean the closure of a popular footpath which links the two ends of the village; the footpath is a popular and scenic recreational walking route and a short cut for local residents to visit friends and local businesses (such as those which supply fresh farm produce) which has been in use since the railway was built over 150 years ago. It will diminish the recreational potential of our locality and leave us with a lengthy cul-de-sac footpath which does not connect to anywhere. We anticipate that closure will mean less walking and higher car use, as well as the loss of an important community asset.

The E48 Wheatsheaf crossing was recently upgraded to meet modern safety requirements; it enjoys good visibility due to the alignment of the railway, the branch railway line at Wrabness is not a busy route and there is no record of a safety incident or loss of life at this crossing. We urge you not to close the E48 crossing.

The Network Rail proposal to create an alternative footpath route in an east -west direction to the north of the railway line will not compensate for the loss of the north - south through footpath route across the railway in terms of utility for local residents. As a recreational walking route it would parallel the existing Essex Way long distance footpath and scenic Church Road coastal routes instead of providing a through north -south feeder link and will diminish the benefit of the footpath network.

Our concern about this proposal is compounded by our certainty that it runs counter to Government policy in three areas:

1. Cycling and Walking

The Department for Transport Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy published in April 2017 states as it's overall objective '*We want to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys.*'

The proposed E48 crossing closure, and the related footpath diversion which ignores desire line local journeys on foot reduces the opportunity for residents to make walking the natural choice for journeys between homes and rural businesses on the north and south sides of Wrabness parish which are bisected by the railway line and is likely to lead to higher car use.

The 2017 DfT Strategy states on page 4: '*We want walking and cycling to be the natural choices for shorter journeys in every urban and rural community*'. The Network Rail proposal to close E48 Wheatsheaf Crossing, runs counter to this strategy aim.

2. Rural life opportunities

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs recently published new guidance on rural proofing, which states: *Rural areas face particular challenges around distance, sparsity and demography and it is important that government policies consider these properly.* (Rural proofing Practical guidance to assess impacts of policies on rural areas; Defra, March 2017 - page 1).

The 2015 Government response to the Independent Rural Proofing Implementation Review by Lord Cameron of Dillington states that impact assessments need to include the question: "*Will proposals affect provision of facilities or services that support community cohesion or in other ways that affect the quality of life in the local community?*" (Defra, December 2015 - page 6)

From what we have seen of the consultation process, and since there has been no direct contact with the Parish Council to discuss the impact of the proposed level crossing closure, we do not believe that the impact of the proposal on the rural community of Wrabness have been sufficiently considered or taken into account in the decision-making process.

3. Sport and physical activity

In December 2015 the Government published *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation* which states: *We want to ensure that in future, the whole population is encouraged and supported to engage in sport and physical activity in whatever way is best for them.* On page 27 of the report it specifically recognises recreational walking as an important activity.

The report also states: *Sport England and the Outdoor Industries Association (OIA) recently published Getting Active Outdoors, a detailed study into both the supply and demand for outdoor activities in England. The insight in Getting Active Outdoors showed that 'being outdoors' itself is important rather than the sport or activity; it is the environment which is enticing....Creating a more active society, in which it is easier and more natural for people to be active than inactive, will require action by a huge range of bodies over a significant period of time. This will mean offering people ways to be physically active that they enjoy, at times and places that suit them, and encouraging people to create opportunities to engage in activity for themselves.* (HM Government, December 2015 - page 24)

The Framework for a new Sports Strategy illustrated on page 18 of the report targets actions that meet the needs of the customer and enable them to engage in sport and physical activity.

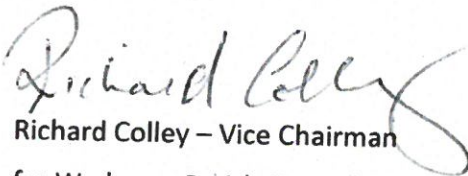
We would argue that one such action would be to keep existing rights of way open,

particularly where these have been used for decades by communities to keep physically active and to engage in active travel between two extremities of the village. Losing the popular walking route that is bisected by the railway crossing would reduce the likelihood of the local, particularly older population staying physically active, and would encourage inactivity and greater car use.

We are concerned that this proposal has not had proper consideration given to it with regard to national walking strategy, rural life opportunities or physical activity. For these reason, I am copying this objection letter to:

- cc Therese Coffey, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment and Rural Life Opportunities, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs;
- cc Lord Gardiner, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs;
- and cc Tracey Crouch, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport, Tourism and Heritage, Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Yours faithfully



Richard Colley – Vice Chairman

for Wrabness Parish Council

Please reply to Richard Colley, Vice Chairman Wrabness Parish Council, Stour House, Church Road, Wrabness, Manningtree, Essex, CO11 2TG.

Or email: richard.c.colley@btinternet.com

or telephone: 01255 880868

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