

From: Richard Simpson
Sent: 12 May 2017 18:55
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT
Subject: Network Rail Anglia Level Crossing Reductions TWA Order

FAO Secretary of State for Transport

I have responded to previous consultations on the subject of Network Rail's plans to close level crossings in my locality. The footpaths in question are referred to as E35, E36, and E 37 and affect the parishes of White Notley and Cressing. My comments were broadly as follows.

The essence of the objections is that in each case Network Rail are making a pretence of wanting to close the crossings on safety grounds whereas the rail line in question is a single track branch line carrying one slow train an hour in each direction and with no stretch of the imagination can the crossings be considered dangerous. The motivation behind the proposed closures is clearly one of cost saving and to achieve that they are proposing to curtail the use of public rights of way used by locals and visitors to the area for centuries.

The lines of sight for people crossing the tracks at each of these crossing points are good. The speed of the trains is limited on this line and there is no high speed traffic. Crossing the railway at these crossing points is infinitely more safe than crossing any road!

Re E35 – Cranes No.1 Cressing Parish – EX/74/14#1:- If the crossing must be closed then the proposed diversion would still need to be maintained. There is in fact already a stile in place from the field to the Northeast of the crossing onto the path which leads to the narrow tunnel under the track now used by golfers to get from one side of the line to the other. The slope from the public footpath down to the tunnel is, however, very steep and currently impassable due to the overgrowth of brambles. Originally the culvert was simply a means of getting ditch water from north of the railway to the other side so you can imagine how unpleasant that gets in wet weather. It also frequently floods because the exit onto the field is at a lower level than the ground it gives onto and the drains are all too easily blocked.

A better diversion would be, coming from Mill Lane to the north, to turn left onto the track used by the golf course and shown in gray on Network Rail's map. The track is about halfway along the footpath between Mill Lane and the railway. Walkers would then avoid having to go into the field between the track and the railway which is currently grazed by horses and would not have to negotiate either the kissing gate or the stile. They would, however, still have to use the culvert.

Network Rail do not appear to have considered this option.

Re E36 – Cranes No. 2 Cressing Parish – EX/120/8:- The proposed diversion for this crossing involves a substantial detour of about half a mile and effectively takes out of use a footpath which currently affords differing scenery from that provided by the farm track onto which the proposed detour emerges. Contrary to what the maps record, I believe that this farm track is in fact the Essex Way and not the footpath referred to on the Network Rail map for E37. This is how it looks on the OS map that I have just consulted on-line! Walkers would no longer benefit from the woodland scenery to the West of the footpath as it runs down to the river from the rail line and would no longer be able to enjoy most of the views to the south and east from the footpath EX/74/11#1 which runs down to the railway from the B1018.

The red route footpath shown on the original map, which was put forward at the earlier consultations as EX/74/28, does not in reality exist as a permanent way because it is ploughed up every year and not

restored. Walkers instead walk eastwards along the side of the railway once they reach the level crossing if they need to get across to the Essex Way. This would be a better permanent diversion route for the footpath since there is already a grassy field margin along which people can walk. Once through the tunnel they could then walk back alongside the railway where there is also a grassy field margin in existence to resume the route of the footpath from the south side of the crossing.


The map which accompanies the latest documentation for the proposed closures does not in fact appear to offer any diversion or alternative route for walkers at all and this would leave at least half a mile of current footpath unusable. Our Neighbourhood Plan has identified that a high proportion of residents use the footpaths and countryside around Cressing on a regular basis and it would be sad if we were now to allow Network Rail to deprive them of this pleasure.

Re E37 – Essex Way White Notley Parish – EX/120/13:- There is a considerable length of diversion required here if Network Rail's plan is implemented and for those walkers using the footpath to go directly from White Notley to Cressing Temple it represents a bit of a slog just to get them to the tunnel under the railway. I have not walked this route for some time so do not know how well maintained the footpaths are but the proposed new red route might be more acceptable to walkers given the Solar farm which now exists to the West of the existing footpath. The main objection to this proposed closure is that, as with the crossings referred to above, this crossing does not merit closure on safety grounds.

Also, Network Rail persists in referring to this crossing as the Essex Way crossing whereas in fact the Essex Way now goes nowhere near it. The current OS map identifies the correct location for the Essex Way as it is today.

I trust that you will take these comments into account when reviewing the proposals put forward by Network Rail and prevent this blatant disregard for ancient rights of way.

Richard Simpson



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