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**By post and email to: [ntung@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:ntung@thurrock.gov.uk)**

Navtej Tung  
Principal Transport Planner  
Thurrock Council  
Civic Offices  
New Road  
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Essex  
RM16 7SL

Dear Mr Tung,

I am a farmer in Thurrock and have received notification from Network Rail (NR) that they wish to close the level crossing in Stanford le Hope known as Jefferies. They have proposed a new footpath along the eastern boundary of the railway line which then doubles back on itself along our field margin (bordering the A13) to bring users out to the point where the current Footpath 32 crosses the A13. They have also proposed another new stretch of footpath just south of the Manorway to link to Footpath 37. This also runs across our land and includes a proposed 3-meter-wide cycle bridge over the ditch.

I, as landowner, strongly oppose these proposals. First and foremost, there is no need to close Jefferies level crossing. I have attended the recent Network Rail Anglia Level Crossing inquiry where I heard that Jefferies meets all the NR criteria to be classified as a safe level crossing. The light system, gates and the long distances you can see in both directions mean that it is as safe as a point can be in order to cross a railway.

If, however, it is decided to close Jefferies then I propose that existing footpaths and roads are used to connect to Footpath 32 to the west of the A13 instead of any new footpath. There is an opportunity here to do away with the incredibly dangerous stretch of Footpath 32 that crosses the A13. It seems ridiculous that the focus is on the level crossing when the bigger danger is crossing the far busier dual carriageway. I have highlighted in green on the attached map a safe and practical alternative. This uses the new stretch of footpath running to the east of the railway line and up the new steps to the Manorway interchange. From here instead of then going down another set of steps to access the new footpath on our field margin,

pedestrians use the interchange to safely cross over the A13 and continue their journey onto FP 37 or FP 83, which connects to FP32. Likewise, pedestrians using the stretch of FP 37 between the railway and Stanford Road can use the wide pavement of Stanford Road to walk up to the interchange and once again access the footpath network that already leads to this point.

I walked my proposed route and NR's proposed route the other week. Using my route, I started at the eastern side of Jefferies and reached the final destination (FP32 on the west side of the A13) in 35 minutes. Even without pedestrian lights, the interchange was easy and safe to navigate using the traffic lights and with wide paved areas on both sides. Likewise, the same could be said of walking up the wide paved areas at the side of Stanford Road from FP37. I presume better provisions for pedestrians could easily be made on the interchange to make it even safer. At the inquiry, they said an average of 20 users used the level crossing a day so this frequency would not create congestion on the interchange if pedestrian lights were installed and, I presume, could be used in conjunction with the traffic lights to time crossings in the most efficient way.

Conversely, when I used the NR route, I was unable to reach the final destination as when I got to the A13 it was too dangerous to cross.

I have attended a Thurrock Local Access Forum and seen a plan of the council's desired cycle network which includes this new stretch of footpath proposed by Network Rail, and provisions look to have been made for this in the plan by the proposed 3m wide cycle bridge leading off of FP37. I do not think Thurrock Council should be using the Level Crossing enquiry to opportunistically push through any wider plans. There are already sufficient footpaths in place that I have shown can be effectively used in the event of any closure of Jefferies and will be of huge benefit to users by doing away with the biggest danger of all, crossing the A13.

Please let me know your thoughts as soon as you can so we can pass them on to the Network Rail Anglia Level Crossing inquiry before it comes to a close in late January.

Kind regards,

**Tom Benton**

**Director**

**Email: [farm@arden-hall.co.uk](mailto:farm@arden-hall.co.uk)**

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