



Est. 1966

THE WIVENHOE SOCIETY

Inquiry into the Proposed Network Rail (Essex and Others Level Crossing Reduction) Order

ADDENDUM to my PROOF OF EVIDENCE previously submitted on behalf of The Wivenhoe Society in September 2017 concerning the Paget Road railway crossing [E41] presented on their behalf by PETER HILL [OBJ 046]

Date: 21 October 2018

1. My name is Peter Hill. I have been a member of The Wivenhoe Society for a considerable time and on its Executive Committee for several years. The Wivenhoe Society is a local civic society founded in 1966 to protect the interests of all the residents of Wivenhoe. The Society has about 400 members.
2. I am representing the interests of our members as well as those of the wider community of Wivenhoe with its approximately 7,500 residents.
3. I served as a Councillor on Wivenhoe Town Council for 25 years (1983 – 2008) and was elected Town Mayor on three separate occasions.
4. This Addendum seeks to add new points to my original submission made in September 2017 and does not change anything that I previously submitted.
5. I have not seen anything new in Network Rail's case for closing Paget Road Crossing. I accept that it may be that this crossing is rated more highly in risk terms than other crossings but then the same could be more easily argued that anybody crossing many of our roads is at high risk. Society does not argue we should stop people crossing the road because of the potential danger of being hit by a motor vehicle. Likewise, I cannot see any justification for Network Rail to close this crossing and especially does not justify the removing of one risk and increasing the risk level to people by its alternative.
6. Officers of Network Rail clearly do not appreciate the health risks to people from having to use the alternative routes across Anglesea Road bridge or the High Street bridge.
7. Both routes are unsatisfactory for pedestrians; not just from the potential motor vehicles which use these roads and where not all of them have pavements but the risk of injury from falling, stumbling on loose surfaces, tripping, pot-holes, and loss of balance.
8. I don't believe that any scheme which Network Rail can dream up will reduce the level of risk to that which crossing the railway line at Paget Road presently represents.
9. I find it disturbing that Network Rail continue with their mantra about wanting to eliminate risk to them and not be willing to recognise the importance to the people who use this crossing point on a daily basis and the not inconsiderable negative impact it will have on their lives. This crossing is within the heart of our community of Wivenhoe. It is not somewhere just used by a few ramblers but is a necessary crossing at the bottom of quite a steep valley that anybody will testify who has to use either of the bridges as a means of crossing the railway line.
10. The lack of imagination of Network Rail in this region to reduce the risk to people crossing the railway line by means other than a loud train hooter is quite surprising in this modern age. I was very recently in Bathampton, a village near Bath in the west country and I was pleasantly surprised to see an alternative means of warning people wanting to cross the railway line

without the need to warn everyone living in a half-mile radius of an approaching train. This is by means of a light which is illuminated when safe to cross the lines. Very simple I suggest and far less anti-social that the train-hooter.



Caption: The level crossing at Tynning Road, Bathampton with its simple light to warn people when it is safe or not safe to cross. People are still warned by traditional means of course.

Conclusion. I cannot believe it is right for a state-owned body to be putting its own interest before the interests of ordinary people except where there is proven evidence that there is a risk to human life or safety which cannot possibly be mitigated in any other way. I have not seen any evidence which leads me to believe that Network Rail has seriously considered alternatives other than to encourage the train operator to rely on a very loud horn to alert people apart from the Covtec system which they don't seem to have much confidence in its ability to alert people standing a few yards away. It is tempting to believe the cynics who suggest that the reason for this is to browbeat everybody into submitting to their demands to let them close the crossing.

Peter Hill

The Wivenhoe Society

21st October 2018