

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [TRANSPORTINFRASTRUCTURE](#)  
**Subject:** objection to Network rail proposal for Tackley level crossing, Oxfordshire.  
**Date:** 24 January 2024 09:17:33

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Dear Sir / Madam

I write to object to Network Rail's proposal to re-route a bridleway at Tackley in Oxfordshire.

I am an experienced horse rider who has used the old bridleway frequently, and has been deprived of its use for the three years that it has now been entirely closed. I ride there from 7 miles away - not all users of bridle paths live locally.

The bridleway used to cross the railway at a right angle and there were no recorded incidents over decades of use with horses. The two reasons for the closure of the level crossing are given as a) safety and b) in order to increase the volume and speed of trains.

Network Rail produced a consultation leaflet that drew the old route incorrectly, so that the new route looked exactly comparable; readers of the leaflet may justifiably think there is no issue. This is very misleading as the two routes are very different. This may also have swayed peoples opinions if they do not know the old and new routes.

The proposed route has the bridleway right alongside the railway line for 900m (a very long way to ride a frightened horse); it is fenced in for its whole length (so no escape), with a hard surface (so your horse can fall over and the rider will hurt themselves badly if they fall). This is a high speed passenger and goods line where goods trains already may have up to 45 carriages and the intention is to increase both speed and volume in the coming years (so it will only get more dangerous in the future). The fenced in track is to be shared by parents with children in buggies, or toddlers wandering along it, and cyclists, and dogs, (so these people become extremely vulnerable if my horse bolts or leaps around). How many people want to expose their children to galloping horses? How many cyclists would be comfortable in this situation? If we wish to encourage safe cycling routes to work this will not be one of them! This long, hard, fenced in, shared use track beside a high speed and very busy railway track is one of the most dangerous things I can think of. I am an experienced rider with a well trained horse and I would not ride this route. Please also remember that children ride horses too, and even experienced horses can take fright.

A car driver can stop, slow down, and react to a nervous horse. Nevertheless the highway code has recently been updated to slow cars down to 15 mph and with a distance of at least 2m when passing a horse. A train driver cannot stop, swerve, or take account of a nervous horse and passes at greater speeds, for longer. If the writers of the Highway Code have researched how

to pass horses safely and have reduced the speed needed, why is it suddenly safe to fence a horse in beside this sort of busy railway , and also to fence in vulnerable pedestrians in the same space? This will certainly cause accidents where there were no accidents before.

If Network Rail really wants to make things safe they need to abandon this route and re-route the bridlepath away from the railway. Other routes and options are available but NR have not explored them, nor listened to stakeholders in their consultation.

When people are killed, who will be responsible?

With all good wishes and thanks for your careful consideration of my objections.

Felicity Scroggie

[Redacted signature block]

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