

Conservative Councillors

Saddleworth North & South

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Thursday 27th November 2025

Secretary of State for Transport
c/o Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Re: Network Rail Stalybridge to Diggle Transport and Works Act Order

Dear The Rt. Hon. Heidi Alexander MP,

In support of the Moorgate Footbridge Campaign, we write to object to the Network Rail proposal to close Footpath 209 where it crosses the railway line at the former Moorgate Halt in Uppermill. This length of footpath is known as Dark Lane.

The reasons for our objection to this proposed footpath closure are threefold, and we summarise below:

1) Public safety

Footpath 244 between Oldham Road and Ladcastle Road, which Network Rail recommends as replacement to Footpath 209, is not suitable or safe for displaced walking traffic. The steps down from Ladcastle Road are steep, uneven and slippery in adverse weather. Furthermore, at the foot of Footpath 244 is Oldham Road, with only limited pavement and visibility of vehicular traffic. At this location, a pedestrian barrier is not viable.

2) Avoidance of significant disruption to local residents

Put simply, Footpath 209 leads directly to Uppermill village centre, via Moorgate Street, and Footpath 244 does not. Its junction with Oldham Road is approximately 300 metres south of the junction between Moorgate and High Streets. High Street hosts the village centre and its thriving retail and hospitality sector. Footpath 209 also provides direct, safe access to Moorgate Quarry, whereas Footpath 244 does not. Alternative routes along Footpath 244 would be highly disruptive to local residents.

3) Heritage conservation

Footpath 209, i.e., Dark Lane, has great heritage value. It is defined as an Ancient Highway and Green Lane, with the lower section being in the Uppermill Conservation Area. Furthermore, the Lane forms part of a historic network of routes across the Pennines, possibly dating to Anglo-Saxon England. It was part of a formerly major route from

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Manchester to other West Riding settlements, and another route from western Saddleworth villages to Saint Chad Church.

In addition to the above reasons given for our objection, we note that Network Rail, having previously been awarded planning permission for the erection of a footbridge over the railway, once accepted that it would be inappropriate to close Footpath 209. Their present proposal for closure is clearly not consistent with the public interest.

Many thanks in advance for your consideration of our correspondence.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Max Woodvine – Saddleworth South; Leader of the Oldham Conservative Group

Councillor Pam Byrne – Saddleworth North

Councillor Luke Lancaster – Saddleworth North