

From: JEREMY EVANS
Sent: 25 April 2017 09:34
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT
Cc: Wivenhoe Society
Subject: re: E41 Paget Road Wivenhoe and E42 Sand Pit Alresford pedestrian crossings.

Sirs,


I wish to register my objections to the proposals by British Rail to close the above pedestrian crossings in the Wivenhoe area.

The E41 Paget Road crossing is right in town and is a direct link between the two halves of Paget Road, cut by the construction of the railway in the 1860's. It is constantly used especially by people visiting the Wivenhoe Business Park and, in the 100+ years of its existence has never even seen a near miss. The alternative routes are both lengthy and physically demanding, being uphill in either direction, and so unsuitable for those with impaired mobility.

The E42 Sand Pit crossing is on a well-used public footpath between Alresford and the Cockaynes and Villa Woods. I am unaware whether there have been any previous incidents at this crossing, though I do not believe so. There is no feasible alternative other than a lengthy detour up to the Wivenhoe-Alresford road, several hundred yards away, where the railway is crossed by a bridge with NO PEDESTRIAN FOOTPATH. Walkers are thus at risk of being struck by the frequent motorised traffic on this road, which is a far greater risk than being struck by one of the infrequent trains blowing its horn.

There have been several high-profile court cases in recent years where Network Rail has been found at fault when people have been struck by trains at crossings. This has inculcated in them a strategy of extreme risk-aversion, shown by attempting to close as many crossings as it can get away with, even if, like Paget Road, there have been no incidents in c150 years. While understandable, this does not seem to me to be the correct strategy. Where signage and impeding barriers are correctly in place to prevent unintentional access to the tracks there needs to be more acceptance of personal responsibility by the walker.

In my opinion the closure of these two crossings will result in a significant loss of amenity to the community with NO, repeat NO, commensurate increase in community safety and will merely further embolden Network Rail to close even more crossing points. Their approach is equivalent to saying that over 1000 people each year die on the roads so we will ban all vehicular traffic. Are you proposing to do that?

Yours, Jeremy B Evans. 

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