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To: [TRANSPORTINFRASTRUCTURE](#)
Subject: Network rail stalybridge to Diggle
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I am writing in connection with the plan to close the public right of way at Dark lane known as Moorgate crossing.

This ancient thoroughfare has been in use for centuries if not millennia and is still in heavy usage, mainly but not entirely for leisure. It still sees some use as access to the golf club at the top of Ladcastle road, and more importantly for the houses near the top of Dark lane on Ladcastle road.

The suggested alternative route is clearly not viable. It is much narrower and steeper, with a precarious flight of steps at the Ladcastle end and opening directly onto a busy main road at the lower, Uppermill end. There is no usable pavement at the end of the path where it meets the road, the sight lines for anyone crossing the road from the footpath are poor, and it also passes through a private garden.

Any surface remediation work (as described in the plans) would be of limited use, given the weathering effects of floodwater usual to this and many similar paths in the area. It is a familiar problem to Pennine residents generally, and has nowhere been fully resolved. For the path to remain at all viable, the resurfacing process would need to be repeated every few years at least, at very great expense, far exceeding the cost of providing a bridge at Moorgate crossing.

There is also the issue of the surfacing materials washing onto the road, and the subsequent impact on a heavily used main road.

Even with the best possible remediation, this alternative route cannot hope to offer anything close to the utility of Dark lane. It cannot be widened sufficiently to accommodate the same volume of traffic as Dark lane currently does. It cannot be made as safe, and it is not convenient as a route between Ladcastle and Uppermill. I also do not think it is right or fair to attempt to divert such a large volume of foot traffic through someone's garden, even if it is a public footpath.

I am a fit and active walker, and I have used this path once. I have no desire to repeat the experience. From either end, the difficulty of getting onto the path in the first place puts one off turning back, only to then be faced with an equally difficult exit.

In this crowded and polluted age, we are supposed to be increasing non-vehicular connectivity. Closing Dark lane does the opposite. Those living on Ladcastle road will have no option but to use the car every time they leave the house. It is a furtherance of the drift towards rural housing being the exclusive preserve of the rich and able bodied, and hence the decline of rural society.

Added to this, the car will be the only option for people using the golf club.

The subsequent increase in traffic will erode the use of Ladcastle road as a walking route.

As a regular user myself, I can attest that parts of the northern end of the road are too narrow for larger vehicles like SUVs and vans to safely pass a pedestrian without said pedestrian climbing onto the bank, which is not always possible even for the fittest.

In short, Dark lane is an ancient thoroughfare. It needs to be protected from short term thinking and retained in public use. There is no viable alternative. It would be grossly wrong and unfair to close it. Regardless of inconvenience to network rail's schemes, a bridge must be provided.

M. M. Mellett

[REDACTED]

