From: [redacted]
To: TRANSPORTINFRASTRUCTURE
Subject: Tackley TWAO - Objection
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Report Suspicious

The Tackley Railway Residents Action Committee (TRAC) have campaigned for a subway and not a bridge.

The proposal for a subway, which would accommodate both horses and pedestrians with the necessary finances available, was accepted by Mike Gallop, Network Rail at a meeting at Tackley Village Hall in 2019. The April 2020 Network Rail press release read *"We thank the community in Tackley for their support and look forward to working with them on the permanent subway."*

Since the subway proposal has been reneged on by Network Rail it would be fair to conclude that this option was never going to happen and Network Rail simply fobbed off the residents of Tackley and wider community with empty promises so the planned closure of the level crossing would go ahead with little objection.

A similar proposal in 2001 had planning permission to build a subway and Network Rail did not object on flooding grounds which is the current excuse, along with costs, for not proceeding with the underpass option.

The proposal to run a bridleway adjacent to the railway line with trains running at speeds potentially in excess of 90mph is criminally reckless. Concerns from the British Horse Society and the landowner of the field, Tackley Estate, along with wider community concerns continue to be ignored.

The design of the proposed bridleway is closer to the railway than the current Public Right of Way to the east of the track. To fully replicate the Public Right of Way the whole of the field to the west of the track would need to be purchased to safely accommodate horse riders. The remainder of the field would need a screening option to provide a noise buffer.

The reliance by Network Rail on a Facebook survey regarding the safety of bridleways next to railways and not on a full independent safety survey and actual site visit is not acceptable. The risk, due to close proximity to high speed trains, of a horse bolting and injuring itself, its rider and killing pedestrians using the proposed bridleway is extremely high. **Any death or injury caused to horse riders, horses, pedestrians and cyclists due to this unacceptable design and failure to heed safety concerns will be the liability of Network Rail.** The cost of compensation for those preventable deaths will outstrip the cost of the subway design. Reopening the level crossing would be a safer option rather than expecting horse riders to use this poorly designed and dangerous bridleway.

This link is to a NIH paper on the impact of noise anxiety on behaviour and welfare of horses, notably written from the perspective of the horse owner. Since Network Rail has little experience of equine care, the evidence from owners regarding noise anxiety on horses lends greater weight to the objection of this proposed bridleway on the grounds of safety: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9138043/

The paper concludes that since horses are prey species, highly evolved to react to loud noises and when exposed to noisy events are likely to show intense escape attempts, which may cause severe accidents for the horse and the rider/handler and risk to people in close proximity to the horse, shows the scant disregard Network Rail has shown to user safety on this proposed bridleway.

Closing a level crossing due to incidents and near misses then proposing a bridleway that will increase high-risk incidents and possible fatalities as a result of its design is negligence. If safety really is Network Rail's number one priority then this proposed bridleway fails on first principles.

Again, any person/s killed on the proposed bridleway will make **Network Rail liable to prosecution** since the

new bridleway will be on Network Rail acquired land. If people are to be expected to use the bridleway at their own risk then safety has been knowingly compromised.

The potential closure of the Public Right of Way to the east of the station is also totally unacceptable.

This track has been used for millennia and is part of an extremely popular circular route from Kirtlington to Tackley. The station can also be accessed by rail users from Kirtlington using this route. The aim clearly is to close access to the station from the Public Right of Way with Network Rail failing to be honest regarding its long term plans. The aim is to no doubt cause unnecessary delays to its reopening in the hope that people can be 'persuaded' to use alternative routes. An obvious example of this is the deliberate closure of Botley Road to deter car users from using the city centre. By adding a 4m wide path on each side for cyclists and pedestrians at the expense of road users Network Rail, Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council have cowardly worked together to intentionally close the road to cars without being honest about those plans from the beginning.

Any threat to implement a ticketed platform system to deny access to non-rail users is a cheap trick and sleight of hand. Tackley rail station does not warrant a ticketed platform entry system so the closure/refusal to allow pedestrians and cyclists to access the platform is also not warranted.

The proposed bridge design is ugly and totally out of keeping within the rural setting. The effect on the lives of residents on Nethercote Road cannot be underestimated. The light and noise pollution only metres from their homes and gardens is utterly disproportionate. The option to move the bridge further north, close to the Barwood Homes development is a more viable option with the ability to accommodate both horses and pedestrians within the design. The 'Barwood Bridge' option could continue with no interruption to the rail network or users of the current platform and bridge and with no need for a dangerous bridleway or closure of a popular Public Right of Way.

If nothing can be agreed upon then the level crossing should be reinstated.

The consequences of the deliberate hoax pandemic in 2020 has been intentionally used by government, local authorities and large infrastructure bodies to push through unacceptable societal change with little consultation and minimal objection. The clue to the fakery always lies in the loss and infringement of our rights and exorbitant cost to us as tax payers.

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