

Opening statement

Reiterating what we said in our Statement of Case, Tackley Parish Council are legally bound to how we spend public money. Formal legal representation is out of the question for us. Parish Councillors are volunteers and most still work full time. Network Rail can afford to this, Parish Councils can't. We have also had a pre-election period of one month where no decisions could be made. We therefore request that you go easy on us in your questioning.

Communication with NR has been erratic during consultation periods, with varied personnel who were not aware of the history. We do not believe that various alternatives put forward by the community have been properly considered and that NR have failed to consult properly on options to solve the problem. A group in the village (TRAC) have been in constant communication with NR but only received communication from NR on 06/06/24 that the bridge was going ahead and would not be included in the Public Inquiry.

Safety is the key issue for NR as it is for us. One option previously discussed and dismissed was the installation of traffic lights, similar to a recommendation made by the RAIB (Rail Accident Incident Branch) after the fatality in 2008. A second option dismissed by NR was the installation of automatically locking gates. Neither of these options, separately or in conjunction, have been considered in any detail.

Our community in Tackley have to live with whatever decision is made at the end of this inquiry, and well into the future. We would like to stress that a safe bridleway is what is needed, not only for horse riders but for those sharing the bridleway e.g. walking groups, young families, dog walkers.

Sue Lygo
Parish Councillor
Tackley Parish Council