Date: Tue, 30 Jul 2024 at 18:17
Subject: Brooke Road Level Crossing

Dear Paul Browne, Raymond Payne, Diane Ellison, Penny Sharp, Adam Lowe and Chris Nix,

I am writing to you all regarding the closure of Brooke Road Level crossing, Oakham.

Brooke Road Level crossing has been closed to vehicles and pedestrians for a minimum of 3 months whilst tree felling, and road widening take place in conjunction with the allotment site housing development.

Burmor Construction inform me that Network Rail insisted on the total closure. Unfortunately, the decision to totally close the crossing is having a major and wider impact than Network Rail, Burmor or the Council will probably appreciate. Traffic is diverted through town and causing major delays especially on Cold Overton Road, Melton Road and in town. (A 5–10 minute journey by car took 40 minutes Friday 26th 4.30pm.) And pedestrians are being forced to take a longer route into town which also encompasses a footbridge - not ideal for some, or instead are now driving into town, adding to the number of cars on the road. Meanwhile, the level crossing barriers are operating as normal.

I have been informed that RCC and Burmor **should** have conducted a resident consultation and an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) before issuing a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO). We have no evidence of this happening.

Closing the road for general traffic when felling trees and widening the road is understood and makes sense. However, what are the reasons for keeping Brooke Road **closed** during the periods when there are **no** trees being felled or **no** widening of the road taking place?

Closing the road when there is **no** work being carried out on the trees or on the verge does not make sense. The only reason that comes to mind is that it would take effort to remove/cover up diversion signs then reinstate them when needed, which impacts the construction company/planners/highways.

Brooke Road residents are also feeling the impact regarding not being able to park outside their homes, especially in the evenings and at weekends.

Why can’t parking restrictions for residents be lifted during weekday evenings on the assurance that their vehicles will be moved by 8am the following morning, and also allowed to park outside their homes on Saturdays after 2pm and all-day Sunday?

A couple of residents would be very grateful of this arrangement, especially as a resident returns from shift work at 11.30pm and is having to walk from the carpark late at night. Another resident has epilepsy and requires the car to be nearby. Both households feel very disgruntled added to the fact that they have not been listened to or approached by anyone involved with the development.

Closing the level crossing to pedestrians is also having a huge impact. The detour residents are forced to make is not easy, includes a footbridge, and adds a lot of time to their journey. A lot of residents are elderly, use mobility scooters and the closure is having a negative impact.

My father is registered housebound. My elderly mother has carers to be with my father for a short period of time, allowing her to go into town. Walking would usually take her 10 minutes using the Brooke Road level crossing, now it is taking a lot longer, so much so, it is something that she cannot feasibly do in the time that the carers are with my father and as a result, adds to my mother’s stress. Now she is forced to drive into town.

From my point of view, my parents were a 4-minute walk/2-minute drive away (before the level crossing closure) which was handy especially when my elderly mother needed urgent help dealing with my father, now it will be impossible for me to get there in an emergency. Let’s hope nothing happens in the next few months requiring my speedy assistance.

As mentioned above, Dad has carers. One of whom has a patient on Brooke Road immediately after my father. It is now taking the carer longer to get from one patient to the other when driving. If pedestrian access was available, the carer could park at my parent’s house and walk to the next carer, quicker than driving and without the need to find a parking space.

At the end of August, children will be returning to school many of whom use the pedestrian access across the railway and once again, the alternative route is much longer and not as easy.

During the period of the road and level crossing closure, Brooke Road residents have pedestrian access along the full length of the pavement (located on the **opposite** side to the construction work) and up to the actual level crossing. It is appreciated that when felling trees, passing pedestrians may be at risk from falling debris, but when not tree felling, with appropriate bollards in place, what prevents pedestrians from using the pavement and ultimately the level crossing – not located near the building site entrance, when daily construction is occurring?

I cannot help but feel that the total closure of the Brooke Road level crossing demonstrates a total lack of concern and consideration for the residents both sides of the crossing and is in turn creating a lot of animosity and anger.

Residents are already upset and angry at the loss of the trees; lack of communication from all parties involved; short notice of road closures; heavy goods construction vehicles being instructed by Rutland County Council to use Cricket Lawns (that has a weight restriction in place), noise from the construction site from 7.30am (the generators can be heard from 7am onwards) and the general disregard to residents nearby. By allowing pedestrian access across the Brooke Road level crossing during the road closure, would surely go a little way to showing that the residents are valued in some small way?

In summary:

* ·      Brooke Road Level crossing barriers are operating as per normal
* ·       Please consider allowing pedestrian access over the level crossing at Brooke Road, which would have a big positive impact for residents on both sides of the crossing
* ·       Note that the pavement in question is located on the opposite side of the road to the construction site,
* ·       Note that the pavement in question is located on the opposite side of the road, which is to be widened,
* ·       Consider allowing residents to park their cars outside their homes between 6pm – 8pm weekdays and Saturdays and all-day Sunday, which would be greatly appreciated and welcome.

 This letter has also been sent to Alicia Kearns and Network Rail.

I look forward to hearing from you.

 Yours sincerely

Rebecca Falconer