Station Terrace Level Crossing: Monday 10th August Peterson-super-Ely Community Meeting – Network Rail Q+ A Responses

1. Why was the Public Rights of Way team not in attendance at the town hall meeting?

The purpose of the town hall meeting was to provide an opportunity for Network Rail to explain the current position, outline the safety concerns that have led to the temporary closure of the crossing, and listen to feedback and questions from the community.

Whilst the Public Rights of Way team from Vale of Glamorgan Council were aware of the event and although they were not in attendance on this occasion, we recognise the important role they play in relation to the wider rights of way network. We are continuing to engage with the relevant local authority teams as part of the ongoing process, and any matters relating to public rights of way will be discussed with them as appropriate.

2. What specific safety incident has led to the temporary closure of the crossing?

The temporary closure was not triggered by a single accident or injury event. Instead, it followed a detailed risk assessment which identified ongoing concerns about how the crossing was being used and whether the existing safety controls were effective. Recent monitoring showed instances of users crossing without following the established safety instructions, including users not using the phones to request permission to cross from the signaller.

The review also considered the crossing's limited sighting conditions and the reliance on user compliance with telephone procedures. Taken together, these factors meant that we could no longer be confident that the risk to crossing users was being reduced to an acceptable level, and a temporary closure was implemented while longer-term options are reviewed and progressed.

3. Why have some pedestrians reportedly been questioned by signallers asking, “why are you calling to request permission to cross”?

During the engagement session, it was brought to our attention that some people have reported being questioned when contacting the signaller before using the crossing. However, without specific examples, including the date and approximate time of the call, we are unable to investigate or comment on individual interactions.

The correct process is for all crossing users to contact the signaller before crossing. The signaller may ask questions, such as how many people are crossing or how long they are likely to need to cross, so that they can assess whether it is safe to grant permission. Once it is safe to do so, the signaller will provide authority for the user to cross.

If any crossing user has been told that they do not need to use the telephone or do not need to contact the signaller before crossing, this would not be consistent with the required operating arrangements for the crossing. We would welcome details of any such occurrence so that it can be reviewed and investigated appropriately.

Anyone wishing to raise a specific concern is encouraged to provide the date, time and details of the conversation, as this will enable us to carry out a thorough investigation and respond accordingly.

4. Were signallers aware that a camera had been installed at the crossing?

Cameras were installed as part of monitoring activities to help us understand how the crossing was being used and to inform the ongoing safety assessment. Signallers do not need to be made aware that a camera is installed at the crossing, as this does not affect the operation of the crossing or the way in which it is controlled.

The requirement for crossing users to contact the signaller and obtain permission before crossing remains unchanged, regardless of whether cameras are present. Similarly, the signaller's role in authorising users to cross safely is not affected by the installation of monitoring equipment. The cameras were used to observe crossing usage and user behaviour and were not part of the operational control of the crossing.

Therefore, whether or not individual signallers were aware of the camera installation would not have altered alter the operating arrangements at the crossing or the requirement for users to telephone and request permission before crossing.

5. Was signage installed advising users that failure to use the telephones could result in Network Rail closing the crossing?

No. The signage at the crossing clearly instructs pedestrians that they must use the telephone and obtain permission from the signaller before crossing. The purpose of the signage is to provide users with clear instructions on how to use the crossing safely.

We do not install cameras with the expectation that misuse will be identified, nor did we anticipate that the monitoring would identify the extent of unsafe behaviours that were observed. The cameras were installed to better understand how the crossing was being used and to inform the risk assessment.

There is no standard sign, either within relevant legislation or Network Rail's internal standards, that advises users that failure to follow crossing instructions could result in a crossing being closed. Introducing bespoke signs of this nature is not something we routinely do, and there is a need to avoid excessive signage which can create clutter and reduce the effectiveness of important safety messages.

Our approach is therefore to make sure that the essential safety instruction is clear and prominent. At Station Terrace, the signage clearly states that pedestrians must use the telephone before crossing. All users are expected to follow those instructions when using the crossing. When we assess the ongoing safety of a crossing, a range of factors are considered, including how effectively the existing controls are working in practice.

6. Does Network Rail need to extinguish the full public footpath route from point A to point B, as suggested in the notes provided, or could the closure apply only to the right of way over the railway crossing itself?

We are not required to extinguish the entire route. The current proposal to extinguish the full 720-metre length of footpath P5/8/1 reflects DEFRA guidance and discussions held with the local authority and affected landowners.

We will review the extent of the footpath proposed for extinguishment and will consider whether it would be more appropriate to seek the extinguishment of public rights only between the two railway boundaries, including the level crossing itself, rather than along the full length of the route.

Since the engagement event, we have informed the Vale of Glamorgan of our intention to review the proposed extinguishment and that as a result we may update our proposal to reflect extinguishment between the two railway boundaries only.

7. It was suggested that none of Network Rail's systems are effective. Can Network Rail explain what systems have been considered and why they have been discounted?

Network Rail has considered a range of alternative solutions as part of its risk assessment for the crossing, which include:

Installation of Whistle Boards

This option was considered as a means of providing users with an audible warning of approaching trains. However, the effectiveness of whistle boards is reliant on train drivers observing and sounding the whistle board as required. As a result, there remains the potential for the warning not to be provided if a whistle board is missed or not sounded.

In addition, whistle boards are not a fully reliable warning system for crossing users. The audibility of a train horn can be affected by a range of factors, including background noise, weather conditions, wind direction, whether users have hearing impairments, and whether they are distracted or wearing headphones for example. As such, there can be no assurance that all users would hear or respond appropriately to the warning.

Furthermore, the position of whistle boards would be located in close proximity to residential properties and the routine sounding of train horns (200+ times per day) would likely result in significant noise disturbance for nearby residents.

Installation of Overlay Miniature Stop Lights (OMSLs)

This option would provide users with both visual and audible warnings of approaching trains and would deliver a degree of risk reduction at the crossing. However, the crossing is located very close to several residential properties, and the installation of OMSLs would introduce bright red and green warning lights together with audible alarms each time a train approached (over 200 times a day), and for a period of around 20 seconds each time. This would have a significant

impact on nearby residents and could result in objections or complaints relating to noise and visual disturbance.

In addition, if the OMSLs were unavailable or entered dark mode as a result of a fault, users would be required to revert to the existing telephone crossing procedure. Evidence gathered through the census, together with feedback from local residents, indicates that users do not consistently comply with the requirement to use the telephones, which reduces confidence in the effectiveness of this fallback arrangement.

A cost-benefit assessment has also been carried out and does not support the progression of this option. Taking these factors into account, including the potential impact on neighbouring properties, concerns regarding user compliance with the fallback controls, and the unfavourable cost-benefit outcome, this option has been discounted at this stage.

Closure via diversion of the public footpath

Several alternative diversion routes have been explored. However, all potential diversionary routes requiring third-party land were discounted, as the affected landowners objected to the proposals, preventing progression of those options at the present time. We also considered a diversion route utilising the existing railway underbridge. However, due to the narrow carriageway, lack of a footway and restricted visibility caused by the bend at the bridge location, this option was assessed as presenting unacceptable safety risks for pedestrians and was therefore not progressed.

In addition, we explored the potential for a diversion route within Network Rail land to the north of the crossing. While there appears to be some land available within our boundary, there are significant constraints, including the presence of existing railway infrastructure, operational and maintenance requirements, and how any new path could safely and practically connect into Station Road. These factors mean that a viable diversion route within the railway boundary has not been identified. However, following the community engagement event, we have committed to taking this suggestion away for further internal review to understand whether a viable diversion route could be developed.

Provision of a stepped pedestrian footbridge

Whilst this option would eliminate the risk associated with crossing the railway, it would require the construction of a large structure in close proximity to neighbouring properties, resulting in overlooking and potential impacts on residential amenity. The proposed footprint would also extend into an adjacent field, and the landowner has already raised objections to alternative proposals that would affect their land. In addition, a cost-benefit assessment has been undertaken and does not support progression of this option.

Given the likely impact on neighbouring residents, objections raised by the adjacent landowner, substantial construction costs, and land/planning constraints, the benefits of the scheme do not justify the investment required. For these reasons, this option has been discounted at this stage.

Provision of a pedestrian underpass

An underpass was considered as a potential option as it would remove the need for pedestrians to cross the railway at track level and therefore eliminate the associated crossing risk. However, the construction of an underpass would require a significant engineering intervention and is constrained by the limited space available adjacent to the railway, as well as the local landscape, which would involve significant groundworks and the creation of accessible routes for users.

Similar to a stepped bridge option, the scheme would also require land outside the railway boundary and would therefore be dependent on the consent of the adjacent landowner, who has already raised objections to other proposals affecting their land. In addition, a cost-benefit assessment has been undertaken and does not support progression of this option. For these reasons, this option has been discounted at this stage.

8. Has Network Rail considered installing a remotely operated gate, or a system where gates lock automatically when an approaching train is detected?

We have considered a range of alternative solutions as part of our risk assessment for the crossing. However, the fundamental issue at this location is the limited sighting available to crossing users due to the alignment of the railway. The available sighting distances cannot be altered or improved by changing the type of gate provided at the crossing.

During the community engagement event, some attendees suggested a system whereby gates would automatically lock when a train is approaching, effectively providing users with an indication that a train is coming. While we understand the principle behind this suggestion, this technology is not currently available for use on the railway network at crossings such as Station Terrace. Network Rail does not have an approved system that automatically locks crossing gates in response to approaching trains in the manner described.

It is also important to recognise that the proposed system would not alter or improve the actual sighting available at the crossing. The underlying safety concern remains that users cannot achieve sufficient sighting of approaching trains from the crossing itself. Any solution would therefore need to provide a suitable and approved means of managing that risk.

Having reviewed the available options, Network Rail has concluded that there is no suitable, feasible or approved gate-based solution that can be installed at this location to address the identified risks. As a result, we are unable to recommend or install the type of system suggested.

9. The census results referred to an 85% figure. How was this calculated, what sample size was used, and would a longer census period provide more accurate data?

A census camera was deployed at the crossing between 2 June 2025 and 17 June 2025, a period of 16 days.

During this period, crossing activity was recorded on seven separate days, with a total of 11 user groups observed using the crossing. These can be shown in the table below.

Date	Observation	Compliance	Comments if applicable
07/06/2025	2 adults, 2 children	Did not call	Family of 4, No evidence of call
08/06/2025	1 pedestrian 1 dog walker 1 dog walker	Did not call Did not call Did not call	No evidence of calls
10/06/2025	1 pedestrian	Did not call	No evidence of call
12/06/2025	1 dog walker	Called, but did not call back	Next train was cautioned due to no call back from crossing user when requested to by the signaller
14/06/2025	2 pedestrians	Complied correctly	These users crossed together as one user group
15/06/2025	1 pedestrian 1 pedestrian 1 pedestrian	Did not call Did not call Did not call	No evidence of calls
16/06/2025	1 dog walker with child	Did not call	No evidence of call

Of the 11 user groups observed:

- 9 user groups did not contact the signaller before crossing, representing 82% non-compliance with the correct crossing procedure
- 1 user group contacted the signaller for permission to cross, but failed to follow the instruction to call back once they had safely crossed the railway, representing 9%
- 1 user group which consisted of 2 pedestrians crossing together, used the crossing correctly by contacting the signaller and obtaining permission before crossing and calling the signaller back once safely across the railway, representing 9%

Consequently, only 2 of the 11 user groups demonstrated compliance with the crossing's operating procedure, confirming an overall non-compliance rate of 82%.

These findings demonstrate a significant failure to follow the crossing's principal safety control, namely the requirement for users to contact the signaller and obtain permission before crossing the railway.

Whilst a longer census period would likely generate a larger sample size and provide additional information on usage patterns, the purpose of the survey was not solely to quantify usage. It was also intended to assess how users interact with the crossing and whether the existing safety controls are being followed. The census provided clear and direct evidence that the telephone procedure is not being used consistently by the majority of users.

This conclusion was further reinforced during the town hall meeting, where local residents openly acknowledged that the telephones are frequently not used. One attendee commented that the telephones are not used "90% of the time", a view which was broadly consistent with the observations recorded during the census period.

Although an extended survey period may identify additional examples of both compliant and non-compliant use, there is already sufficient evidence to demonstrate that reliance on users contacting the signaller before crossing is not an effective safety control in practice. Given the level of non-compliance observed and the feedback received from local residents, it is reasonable to conclude that a longer monitoring period would be unlikely to materially change the overall finding that compliance with the telephone procedure is poor.

The census results were therefore considered sufficiently robust for the purposes of the risk assessment. This conclusion is supported by the recorded observations, stakeholder feedback, and clear evidence that the crossing's primary safety control is not being reliably followed by users.

10. Why has the crossing only been closed at this point, rather than earlier?

We routinely monitor all level crossings because risks can change over time. This crossing is inspected every 4 months, and is routinely risk assessed every 2.25 years, with additional reviews carried out whenever required.

The crossing was not closed earlier because the risk was considered tolerable and could be managed safely with the existing controls in place (including telephones and signage at the crossing instructing all pedestrians to use the phones to request permission to cross).

It is important to note that level crossing risk can change over time as conditions change and new hazards emerge.

Recent monitoring indicated that the existing controls were not consistently being followed as not all crossing users were using the phones as instructed before crossing the line. This means that we could no longer be satisfied that the existing arrangements were effectively managing the

risk at this location, which led to the decision to temporarily close the crossing while longer-term solutions are explored and progressed.

11. Why does another nearby crossing remain open, particularly the crossing on footpath 513/1, which residents consider to be dangerous and to include a difficult stile? A resident stated they were previously advised that this crossing would close over 10 years ago.

The crossing referred to is known by Network Rail as Ivors Footpath Level Crossing, which was previously considered for closure as part of the South Wales Main Line electrification project. During the consultation process for that proposal, Network Rail received objections from a local walking group in the Vale of Glamorgan, which delayed progress at the time. Subsequently, the electrification project did not proceed, and, due to funding constraints, the associated closure proposal was not taken forward.

It is important to note that each level crossing is assessed individually based on its specific characteristics, usage, risk profile and the controls in place. The fact that one crossing remains open does not mean that the circumstances and risks are directly comparable to those at another location.

In relation to the concerns raised regarding the condition of the crossing and the difficulty of the stile, these comments will be passed to the local Level Crossing Manager for review. Network Rail will consider whether any improvements or maintenance actions may be required as part of its ongoing management of the crossing.

12. Could the telephone system include an answerphone message advising users that, if there is no immediate response, they should wait and their call will be answered as soon as possible?

Telephones at level crossings form part of the operational railway communication system and are designed to connect users directly with the signaller responsible for controlling train movements.

The current arrangements require users to call the signaller and wait for a response before crossing. The signage at the crossing clearly instructs users to obtain permission from the signaller before crossing.

If a signaller is temporarily unavailable to answer immediately, users should continue to wait until contact has been made and permission has been granted.

13. Why can’t Network Rail carry out a wider three-month education and awareness campaign while the crossing remains closed?

We have considered a range of options to address the risks identified at this crossing, including measures aimed at improving user awareness and understanding the correct way to use the crossing. However, education and awareness campaigns rely on influencing user behaviour and

do not provide a physical or enforceable control to manage the underlying risks associated with the crossing.

The concerns identified at Station Terrace are not in relation to a lack of information about how the crossing should be used. The crossing already has clear signage instructing users to contact the signaller and obtain permission before crossing. Recent monitoring showed that many users were not consistently following those instructions.

During the community engagement event, the Network Rail team explained the correct method of use and a number of attendees confirmed that they understood the requirements. However, some also expressed the view that they chose not to follow the process because they had used the crossing in a different way for many years and considered it to be safe. Even when the reasons for the safety concerns were explained, some continued to believe that the controls were unnecessary.

While awareness campaigns can play a valuable role in promoting railway safety, they cannot guarantee compliance and would not, on their own, address the safety concerns that led to the temporary closure. As the infrastructure manager, Network Rail has both a legal and moral responsibility to make sure that risks are reduced so far as is reasonably practicable and cannot permit the use of a level crossing where an intolerable risk to members of the public has been identified.

In addition, as this is a public crossing, it would be difficult to make sure that all existing and future users were reached by any awareness campaigns. While education may improve understanding for some users, it would not provide assurance that everyone using the crossing would consistently follow the required safety procedures. For these reasons, a wider education and awareness campaign is not considered a suitable alternative to addressing the underlying safety risk at the crossing.

14. Has Network Rail already made a final decision regarding the future of the crossing?

We have undertaken a detailed risk assessment of the crossing, and we have considered all reasonably available options for keeping the crossing open safely. This has included assessing potential engineering solutions, operational controls and alternative risk mitigation measures.

Based on the work completed to date, we have concluded that none of the available options are considered suitable, feasible, or able to demonstrate a proportionate cost-benefit outcome when compared with the level of risk being addressed. As a result, our recommended option is the permanent closure of the crossing.

In reaching this recommendation, we have also committed to reviewing whether a diversionary route can be provided through Network Rail land on the north side of the crossing. While this would still require the closure of the level crossing itself, it could provide an alternative means of maintaining connectivity for users rather than simply stopping up the route entirely. This work remains subject to further assessment of feasibility, land requirements and any necessary approvals.

While any proposal must progress through the formal legal process, including consideration by the relevant authorities such as the Vale of Glamorgan Council as the Local Highway Authority responsible for the public footpath, and potentially by Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) should the matter proceed to a hearing or public inquiry, our position remains that permanent closure of the crossing, potentially supported by an alternative route through Network Rail land, represents the most appropriate long-term solution for managing the identified safety risks at this location.

15. If the crossing remains closed, can Network Rail ensure that the Station Terrace area is left clean and tidy?

Yes. We recognise the importance of maintaining the area in a safe, tidy and presentable condition, particularly while the crossing remains closed.

We will continue to inspect the site as part of our routine asset management activities and will address any issues, such as the condition of fencing, signage and the immediate railway boundary area.

We would also encourage members of the public to report any specific concerns regarding litter or the condition of Network Rail assets so that these can be reviewed and, where appropriate, action taken.

It should be noted that responsibility for some adjoining land and public rights of way may rest with other landowners or the local authority. Where issues arise outside Network Rail's ownership, we will work with the relevant parties where appropriate to help ensure concerns are directed to the organisation responsible.

Network Rail is committed to being a responsible neighbour and will seek to ensure that the area around the crossing remains as neat and well-maintained as reasonably practicable.

16. Residents feel that Network Rail has not done enough to re-educate members of the public on safe use of the crossing. What further engagement or education has been considered?

Network Rail recognises the value of education and engagement in promoting safe crossing use and has engaged with local residents, crossing users and stakeholders to explain the reasons for the closure and gather feedback. The community engagement event forms part of that process.

However, education measures rely on voluntary compliance and do not provide a physical or enforceable control for the identified safety risks. The crossing already has clear signage instructing users to contact the signaller before crossing, and recent monitoring identified instances where those instructions were not being followed. The issue was therefore not a lack of instructions, but evidence that some users were choosing not to follow them.