

Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group

Foxton Level Crossing: improvements to pedestrian gates

A concerted two-year campaign for safety improvements at Foxton Level Crossing, led by the Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group (MSFRUG), has now yielded tangible results.

On July 30th, Network Rail completed the upgrade of two sets of pedestrian gates, following on from a spate of incidents which saw pedestrians, many of them children, caught on the level crossing when exit gates refused to open. This will be followed by the installation of CCTV cameras to cover pedestrian movements, so that if further safety related incidents occur, lessons can be learned. Lighting is also to be installed on the pedestrian crossings, and the field of vision from within the crossing keeper's box is to be significantly improved.

Foxton Level Crossing sits on the busy A10, which sees 16,000 vehicle movements per day and has one of the highest rates of vehicle 'abuse' – barrier jumping – in East Anglia. Network Rail has taken to heart the spirit of the Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group safety campaign and has now initiated steps toward a feasibility study to close the level crossing, looking at 'all options'. The Rail User Group has advocated a pedestrian bridge or underpass as the only guaranteed safe crossing, and these options will form part of the wide scope of the feasibility study. What makes the overall prospect particularly interesting is that it could open up opportunities for enhancing Foxton Station as a transport interchange – currently the station has no parking or drop off points whatsoever.

The campaign has been strongly supported by local people. Melbourn Village College has sent student reporters to public meetings and posted their video blogs on the college website. Tina Hughes, whose daughter Olivia was killed at Elsenham Level Crossing, has given strong support. It has been good to see responsible reporting by the local press, led by BBC Radio Cambridgeshire who pulled all the relevant parties on a live radio programme back in February and extracted a promise by Network Rail to expedite the necessary works.

We've found that Network Rail Route Managing Director Dave Ward has approached safety issues at Foxton with a can-do attitude and hope that further improvements will be carried out in due course.

Susan van de Ven
Chairman, Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group
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