

Outcome of the visit of Network Rail's Managing Director

Thanks to everyone who supported the May 21st meeting with Network Rail's Managing Director, Dave Ward, at Foxton Village Hall. This was devoted entirely to questions and answers, with a frank and constructive discussion. Mr Ward outlined short term improvements to the pedestrian crossings currently underway, and explained the bureaucratic processes which have held up the upgrade of the self-locking systems.

- Repair of the self-locking pedestrian gates to be completed July 30th
- CCTV cameras covering the two pedestrian crossings to be installed; if safety concerns arise, then evidence will be available to review what went wrong – at the moment only some movement is captured, because existing cameras are focused only on the vehicle crossing
- Electronic equipment inside the signal box will be relocated to improve the field of vision out the window for the crossing keeper
- Lighting will be installed so both pedestrian crossings are illuminated

Mr Ward then raised the matter of longer term safety improvements, in line with Network Rail's aspiration to close the level crossing. It was agreed by the meeting (which included the relevant county council officer) that the best outcome will depend on an approach that takes road and rail as an integrated system and involves a joint approach with the county council. Mr Ward and I are meeting with senior county council officers on June 14 to scope out next steps, and the outcome will be reported to the next meeting of Foxton Parish Council. No doubt this will be an ongoing discussion (as it has been for decades, and I remember it well when I lived in Foxton twenty-four years ago!). But the problem is not getting better and it seems to me that we should take advantage of the interest of the current managing director.

The meeting was filmed by Melbourn Village College students as part of their BBC School Report programme and can be seen at www.mvc.org.uk (under 'Quick Links,' go to 'BBC School Report'). In the question and answer session, the MVC students asked Mr Ward about level crossing education in schools. This will be arranged for our local schools.

I think it is fair to say that Mr Ward was detailed, direct and did not try and make excuses. People I've spoken to found him an open and credible person who is trying to get things done, and who is listening to what we have to say.

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