

Addressing potential Safety Hazards around Shepreth Level Crossing

Attendees

Matt Brennan	Network Rail Public Affairs Manager
John Prest	Network Rail Route Level Crossing Manager
Bode Asabi	Network Rail Project Manager for Shepreth Level Crossing
Adam Cobb	Cambridgeshire County Council
CLlr Peter Topping	County Councillor
Ruth White	Shepreth Parish Council
Brian Clarkstone	Shepreth Resident
Sarah Grove	Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership

Observations

Ruth White from Shepreth Parish Council took a record of barrier and train movements from 7.15. The barriers are down for less time with through trains and singular stopping trains, typically 2-3 minutes. Problems occur due to crossing trains, for example the 8.09 to Cambridge and the 8.10 to London, where the barriers remain down between trains, typically 4-5 minutes, and passengers cannot get across the crossing. If either of these trains is running late, this can extend the barrier down time. It was also noted that in some instances the barrier is only open for 1 minute between trains.

Ruth also brought copies of an email which had been sent by Ed Pascoe from Grants to Shepreth Parish Council, explaining the problems that his staff have had with queuing cars blocking the entrance to the site.

Matt Brennan introduced the meeting, and the following suggestions, raised by Brian Clarkstone, were discussed.

1. Painted "Keep Clear" signs on the road outside Grant Instruments and the entrance to The Sidings

It was observed that once the queue of cars gets to 6 or 7 long, the entrance to Grants is blocked, with cars not leaving space to enter and exit.

2. No overtaking (solid double lines) extended on Station Road from the crossing to south of Docwras Close.

Although overtaking was not observed today, Brian has video clips of vehicles driving around the parked cars onto the wrong side of the road.

3. Re-instatement of the Car Park on the north side of the station to reduce parked cars on Station Road.

Matt and Bode explained that this will remain under Network Rail project team control until the snagging work is complete. Once the project team have finished, responsibility will revert to the maintenance team, then Matt can request that it be reopened for local community use. Network Rail will still need to use that car park to access equipment in emergencies.

4. Either a parking restriction in the dropped kerb area outside 26 Station from 06:30-09:30 or re-instatement of that area into a pavement.

We looked at the problems that parking in this bay causes to pedestrians who are forced into the roadway when walking to and from the station.

5. Signs located so as to be visible to car drivers in the queue stating "Switch off engines".

It was observed that people waiting in the queue do not switch off their engines while waiting, and Brian commented that depending on the weather, the pollution can become intense.

Throughout our time at the crossing several rail and road users expressed their dissatisfaction with waiting times for the crossing to open.

School Buses

At 8.20 the bus from Barrington to Melbourn Village College was observed waiting in the queue to cross.

At 8.43 the bus from Shepreth to Barrington School stopped outside Grants to pick up a group of children who were waiting. It was observed how the road is blocked by the bus on one side of the road, and parked cars on the other, bringing traffic to a halt.

Suggested Actions

Network Rail and County Highways to work together on the road markings, and road signage around the station.

An information event was proposed in the village to educate the residents on:

- The safety reasons for the crossing replacement
- The reasons for implementing new road markings
- The stopping pattern of trains, and the need to be at the station earlier for certain trains.

Residents could be invited to visit the signal box in Foxton (in small numbers) to discover how the crossing is controlled, and how this differs from the half barrier crossing between Shepreth and Meldreth.

Additional suggestions include installing a ticket machine on the Cambridge Platform, meaning passengers could purchase their ticket from the platform of travel, thus avoiding being caught the wrong side of the barrier. The RUG/CRP can follow this up with GTR.

John Prest, Network Rail's level crossing manager for the Anglia region gave details of the Network Rail National Helpline. Anyone who witnesses dangerous behaviour by road users and pedestrians can use the number to report incidents. This will trigger risk assessments and bolster the case for providing a permanent safety camera. This camera not only reports infringements directly to the police for prosecution and fining, but also doubles as a deterrent, as it looks similar to a speed camera.