

Witness: Jemma Anne Brankley
Made: 23 August 2020

Witness Statement in relation to Glebe Way Level Crossing
PINS REF: 3226477

Witness Statement of Jemma Anne Brankley

1. I, Jemma Anne Brankley am a Community Nursery Nurse in Health Visiting.
2. I live at [REDACTED] Glebe Way, Whitstable (very close to the railway crossing on PROW CW80). I have lived in Whitstable all my life (51 years). Island Wall was my home for the first 25 years of my life. I then lived in Daniels Court, (off Island Wall) for the next 8 years, no. [REDACTED] Joy Lane for 13 years until I moved to my current home in Glebe Way. All the places I lived are relatively close to the Glebe Way railway crossing.
3. I make this statement because I object to the proposed extinguishment of the Glebe Way Level Crossing.
4. I have used this crossing since I was born but independently for over 40 years. Initially I used it to visit friends the other side of the railway line and to catch the bus to Canterbury and to Herne Bay. After moving to Joy Lane (the near end to Canterbury Road and to the Glebe Way crossing) I used the Public Right of Way at the Glebe Way crossing more frequently, particularly after my parents moved to Clifton Road. This route was the shortest distance from my home to theirs and one which, for the main part, avoided the busy road and its pollution. This was especially important to me when I was accompanied by my children.

When my children had become adults and left home, and my father was seriously ill, I decided to downsize to a property that was nearer to my parents and closer to town. When searching for a property it was essential that there was provision for off road parking because on-street parking in the central area is extremely difficult to find. The location of my Glebe Way home was ideal because of the close proximity to my parents in Clifton Road, the shopping centre and the train station due to the Public Right of Way via the Glebe Way crossing.

I also use the crossing daily, sometimes twice a day, to walk my dog to Prospect Field and the beaches. I also use the crossing to visit my mother at least once a week and to go to the shops.

5. If the railway crossing was closed it would have an enormously negative impact on my daily life. To take my dog to the beach or to see my mother I would have to walk the longer distance using the busy main road or alternatively take my car. I have limited

time in my working week and my dog walking is always after finishing work at the end of the day. Being able to do this is beneficial to my mental health as is proven in evidence based research and it is infinitely preferable to walk my dog across the railway crossing, over the golf course to the beach than to walk along a busy polluted main road. Since my father died, I am my mother's closest relative and now that she is getting older I need to be able to reach her easily and quickly to offer support. Currently it takes me 4 minutes to reach my mother by using the railway crossing but it would take me 10 minutes to reach her by road, or I would have to use my car which is not sensible during peak periods or the summer months because of high vehicle congestion with frequent idling and all the inherent pollution problems. It makes no sense to me to close the crossing when the Government is urging the introduction of safe walking and cycling routes to improve mental and physical health and to reduce carbon emissions.

6. Work commitments permitting I am prepared to attend the forthcoming inquiry to give oral evidence.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed: J Brankley

Date: 23 August 2020