

Witness: J F Reed  
Made: 15 August 2020

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

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**Witness Statement of J F Reed**

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1. I, John F Reed, am retired, formerly a partner in accountants Ernst & Young.
2. I have lived in Whitstable for 60 years. For the last 51 years in the vicinity of the Glebe Way crossing: 3 years 1969-72 in Glebe Way; 10 years 1972-1982 in Hillview Road (approximately half a mile east of the crossing); and 38 years since 1982 at our current address ■■■ Blackstable Court, Canterbury Road, a 3 minute walk from the crossing.
3. I make this statement because I object to the proposed extinguishment of the Glebe Way Level Crossing.
4. From 1969 to 1972 I used the crossing daily to/from the railway station and weekends to access the sea front, town centre and harbour. My use of the crossing was reduced 1972-1982, it being an indirect route to the station and town centre plus incompatible with a buggy. A buggy initially limited our use of the crossing from 1982 but for the last 27 years I have used the crossing on a daily basis for recreation, access to the beach and town centre.

Adopting simple personal safety measures, in particular "stop, look and listen", means the crossing is perfectly safe for users. The route via Glebe Way, onto Portway and West Cliff, thence right along West Cliff to the town centre is a far more pleasant walk than on the narrow broken pavements of Canterbury Road/Oxford Street alongside frequently heavy and polluting traffic.

The alternative route via Alexandra Road, linked footpaths and the existing bridge to the west can be a pleasant walk to the beach. The bridge will be inaccessible for some and carries its own safety risks (as with the proposed new bridge diversion). It is a detour and, depending on start point, can be very much longer than using CW80. Parts of this route are on a private un-paved road via footpaths in a poorly lit isolated area which is unattractive after dark. There are complaints from residents of anti-social behaviour in the area to the south of the bridge and on the path to the north leading to West Cliff.

My late mother lived in Glebe Way from 1986 to 1999. A major reason for her move was the easy access to north of the railway line via CW80. A particular favourite was the shelter/bench at the west end of West Cliff where she could sit and enjoy views of

the golf course and sea beyond. She would not have been able to afford any property in this area north of the railway line.

5. I did not object to Network Rail's bridge diversion application; it meant that RoW CW80 would continue one way or another. Extinguishing the crossing will further limit our options in accessing the beach and town centre with the railway line dividing Whitstable in two. The crossing makes communities and amenities on both sides of the track more accessible and pedestrian friendly; extinguishment would destroy this.

From where we live, the Alexandra Road/linked paths/existing bridge is not an unreasonable option in daylight but very unattractive after dark for the reasons given above. We do sometimes use Canterbury Road/Oxford Street to access the town centre but being forced to use this heavily trafficked and highly polluted route on narrow broken pavements is very unappealing and carries its own risks. In particular, the northwest side of the road at the Canterbury Road/Oxford Street junction is dangerous with many vehicles driving over the kerb at the bend in the junction. Despite the traffic light phasing permitting 2 way flow on Canterbury Road/Oxford Street under the bridge, the sharp angle means that larger vehicles cannot pass in opposite directions, often resulting in north bound traffic mounting the pavement.

Extinguishing the right of way will have a detrimental effect on our lives. Any use of Alexandra Road/linked paths/existing bridge being limited and being forced to use the heavily trafficked and polluted Canterbury Road will be undesirable and unhealthy. The main option would seem to be side streets east of Canterbury Road, thence to Belmont Road/Old Bridge Road and along Stream Walk and the bridge underpass approximately half a mile to the east. This would be a very significant diversion to the town centre.

Extinguishment will result in increased journey times and inconvenience, discouraging walking and encouraging car use, for example to the beaches at Seasalter.

6. 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 F Reed

Date: 15 August 2020