

Mrs E. Williamson

■ Tudor Crescent

Otford

Kent

TN14 5QT

Rights of Way Section

3A Eagle Wing

The Planning Inspectorate

Temple Quay House

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Temple Quay

BRISTOL

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PINS Ref: ROW/3201659

1 March 2021

Dear Mrs Oddy,

**PROPOSED CLOSURE OF OTFORD'S PILGRIMS WAY PEDESTRIAN LEVEL CROSSING AND DIVERSION OF FOOTPATH SR49 OVER NEW FOOTBRIDGE**

I wish to object to Network Rail's proposal and speak at the Public Inquiry, which I hope will be held in person and not in virtual form.

I object because Otford's pedestrian level crossing is safe, and has become safer in recent years following works to improve access to the crossing and the crossing itself.

I also object because I am concerned by the personal security risks the proposed new footbridge would create. Pre-pandemic, Otford had a vibrant social life, with many clubs and societies meeting in the village centre both day and night. Doubtless this will resume once the pandemic has passed. The pedestrian level crossing provides us and our neighbours with access to these events, as well as to Otford's pubs and restaurant. The level crossing is close to Otford's railway station; the proposed new footbridge would be constructed in approximately the same location, although access to it would be less straightforward than that to the level crossing.

One can see clearly across the pedestrian level crossing, but the same cannot be said for the proposed footbridge and the access to it. There have been attacks on women in the vicinity of Otford's railway station in recent years, including one woman raped and another seriously sexually assaulted. There have been violent attacks at or close to the railway station. And drugs dealers and users have begun to frequent the station area. Personal security has become more of an issue. I would rather walk to and from the village centre using the level crossing where I have a clear view, than risk using the proposed bridge and its convoluted access routes where I will not have a clear view as to who might be lurking there. We should keep our crossing and avoid creating new risks by replacing it with a footbridge.

I am copying this letter to Mr Richards.

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Elizabeth Williamson