



## **Victory for Cambridgeshire Ramblers As Five Level Crossings Are Saved**

- **Secretary of State for Transport approves the closure of 16 level crossings but crucially agrees to save five vital routes the Ramblers had been campaigning to save.**
- **Objections from the Ramblers and Cambridgeshire County Council were key to preventing the five closures – with another four level crossing closure requests also refused.**
- **Public inquiry expresses concerns over impact on disabled people and walker safety.**

Cambridgeshire Ramblers are celebrating after saving five important level crossing public rights of way from closure.

In a draft order under the Transport and Works Act 1992, National Rail applied for the closure of 25 public crossings. Although the Ramblers found some of the proposals acceptable, five key routes were not. At the public inquiry – which lasted 22 days – the Ramblers argued against the closures for a number of reasons including concerns over walker safety and the negative impact the proposals would have on people walking for health reasons.

The five routes the Ramblers campaigned to save were Footpath number 4, Harston; Byway 33 Downham at Furlong Drove Crossing; Leonards Crossing, Soham; Clayway Crossing, Littleport; and Byway 30 at Willow Row, Littleport (please see notes to editors for further details).

Held in autumn 2017 and spring 2018, the public inquiry found in favour of keeping a total of nine routes open after members of the public and organisations, such as the Ramblers and Cambridgeshire County Council, objected to the closures. The Inspector was particularly concerned that closing some of these routes would impact the Public Sector Equality Duty as they are used as part of a scheme of health walks.

The Secretary of State for Transport has now taken account of the report stemming from the public inquiry and has decided that 16 routes will be closed. However, objections from several groups including Cambridgeshire Ramblers means that a total of nine routes have been saved – including the five important walking routes local Ramblers volunteers had campaigned to save.

Jill Tuffnell, Secretary of Cambridge Ramblers, was delighted with the decision and said: “Common sense has prevailed, and the Secretary of State has appreciated the value of the path network both for everyday journeys and for recreational and health use. We greatly value these routes – for example, there is a section of path north of the railway line on the Harston footpath which runs through a tree-lined track and adjacent woodland, with many informal paths leading off it. Cambridgeshire has so little woodland open to walkers that I’m very pleased that this route has been saved. Thanks must also go to Cambridgeshire County Council for their hard work in helping us to prevent these closures.”

Gemma Cantelo, Head of advocacy and engagement for the Ramblers added: “We are delighted that these five routes have been saved from closure, because they are used by local people every day for a variety of reasons. The Covid-19 pandemic means it’s more important than ever to enable people to get outside and enjoy walking, so we’re glad that the Secretary of State has decided to back the public inquiry.”

- The Ramblers’ work to help everyone enjoy the benefits of walking and protect and expand the places we love to walk is supported by players of the People’s Postcode Lottery.

**For further information, please contact Deborah Hyde on [press@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:press@ramblers.org.uk) or 07584 848 083**

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#### **Notes to editors:**

- **The Ramblers** helps everyone, everywhere, enjoy walking and protects the places we all love to walk. It is the only charity dedicated to looking after paths and green spaces, leading walks, opening up new places to explore and encouraging everyone to get outside and discover how walking boosts your health and your happiness. [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)
- Full information on the routes which were saved can be found at: [www.ramblers.org.uk/cambslevelcrossing](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/cambslevelcrossing)
- The report from the public inquiry and the Secretary of State’s response are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cambridgeshire-level-crossing-reduction-transport-and-works-act-order>