

Shorne Parish Council

————— Borough of Gravesham —————

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20th October 2022

Application ref 20221046

Shornemead Level Crossing Queens Farm Road Shorne Gravesend Kent DA12 3HU

Application for prior approval under Part 18 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015- Construction of a stepped footbridge

The Parish Council welcomes this application at last coming forward. We note that the authorised user vehicle crossing will be unaffected.

During the past nearly three years since the crossing and Public Right of Way NS318 was closed unilaterally by Network Rail, without any prior discussion with the Parish Council, residents and visitors have been cut off from access to the National Cycle Route (Sustrans Route 1) on the northern canal towpath, and the Thames riverbank via Fort Road. This has caused considerable community annoyance and inconvenience, as well as creating additional safety risks through the need to use alternative routes which may pose greater dangers.

The proposed location appears to be fully on Network Rail owned operational land. (The blue line boundary shown may not be fully correct as regards the actual roadway, both south and north of the railway line, but that is not material to this application).

The proposed design appears satisfactory at this time as a balance has been struck between provision of accessibility for people, including with bicycles, in line with historical use, while not providing easiest access to the marshes for unwanted motorbikes and other previous abusers of the crossing. We note that no lighting is proposed, which is correct for the landscape area.

If any changes to the design are proposed in the future, including any lighting, then a new planning application should be submitted.