

Shorne Parish Council

————— Borough of Gravesham —————

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18th November 2024

Application ref 20240922

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

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

The Parish Council welcomes this second application at last coming forward. We note that it is two years since the previous application ref 20221046 was submitted and approved, making a further two years of now five (with a little more to come) of PROW NS318 being blocked at the crossing.

Revising our previous comments:

- We note that the authorised user vehicle crossing will be unaffected.
- During the past nearly five 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 than the level crossing did itself.
- The proposed location appears to be fully on Network Rail owned operational land.
- 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.

Additional comments:

- Foundations had already been prepared for the previous bridge design but it is not clear if these can be used without/with modification or will have to be removed again and new foundations then installed.
- We note that there are no barriers to motorbike/quadbike access.