

November 2025

Welcome to my monthly newsletter

MELTON AND UFFORD RAIL CROSSING CLOSED - NETWORK RAIL

I have spent much of the month chasing up network rail, our MP and calling round local business to discuss the Oct crossing closures. I am of the opinion Network rail, run by the Dept of Transport, is a Westminster problem, and the correspondence I have received and seen received by others the usual platitudes are given but no interest to understand the issues or for that matter to change plans. Therefore I did focus my attention on our MP and not only articulated our local issue but also emphasized any further closures require better engagement locally and an understanding on the problems this causes. Unruly Pig and other hospitality venues, PGL, Woodhall Manor, Suffolk Punch and National Trust, plus our horse riding venues and camping sites will all suffer a loss of earnings that weekend esp as this is half term.

Rail crossing closures will have 'huge impact' on residents

A councillor has said plans to close Suffolk rail crossings for a Sizewell C upgrade will have a "huge impact" on residents and businesses.

Infrastructure manager Network Rail is set to close the East Suffolk line between Westerfield and Halesworth from Saturday, October 25 to Sunday, November 2 for essential track renewal work.

During these works, level crossings at Melton station and at Jetty Lane, Haywards and Ferry Lane in Woodbridge will



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be closed.

But East Suffolk councillor James Mallinder, who represents Deben ward, warned traffic would have to detour to use another level crossing at Ufford, while this crossing was also set to be out of action at times, meaning vehicles would have to travel to Campsea Ashe instead. He said the village's country lanes were unsuited to the increased

amounts of traffic and feared ambulances and fire engines would struggle to attend emergencies, while taxi drivers would need to travel much further for jobs.

He has now written to Network Rail calling for the planned works to be revisited and for a "mechanism" to be created to allow emergency services to cross without having to detour.

Old, jointed rail is set to be replaced with continuously welded rail to reduce the amount of noise from trains, with the renewals helping to support Sizewell C's transport strategy to transport construction materials by rail.

Mr Mallinder said: "How can authorities allow not one but two of the local rail crossings to be closed at the same time, this is not acceptable

and frankly could have a serious impact on life if emergency services were not able to attend on the peninsula.

"The resulting detour adds a substantial amount of time on the journey, plus a huge amount of congestion across the smaller country roads and I ask for Network Rail to look at the format of closures."

A spokesperson for Network Rail said: "We recognise that our works can cause disruption, and we work closely with the local authorities to minimise this as much as we can."

"Any level crossing and associated road closure requires agreement by the local council, which has been secured for both Melton station and Ufford crossings following several months of meetings and discussion to find the best solution all round."

It is shambolic situation and I even pushed hard through the media - with a radio Suffolk interview and article in the EADT

Maybe due to me highlighting emergency services should be given access this is now going to happen ?

Melton level crossing is set to close from October 24 to October 29

Image: GOOGLE MAPS

Emergency services 'will be able to cross level crossings'

Emergency services will be able to cross closed Suffolk level crossings to attend calls when a major track upgrade takes place for Sizewell C.

Access was one of a number of concerns raised by East Suffolk councillor James Mallinder, who represents Deben ward, about infrastructure manager Network Rail's plans to shut level crossings at Melton, Woodbridge and Ufford. The Melton crossing is set to be closed from 10pm on October 24 until 6am on October 29, while Ufford will shut from 12.01am on October 25 to 6.10am on November 3.

The work will support new nuclear power station Sizewell C's transport strategy to carry

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construction materials by rail and will involve replacing old, jointed rail with continuously welded rail.

Some of the tracks were laid 100 years ago and the new infrastructure is set to be quieter.

But in a statement from Melton and Ufford Parish Councils and Woodbridge Town Council, the authorities cited Network Rail information stating emergency vehicles would be able to cross, but there would be no access for other vehicles and pedestrians.

The councils said: "Work will be carried out 24/7, to ensure it is completed as swiftly as possible."

"All traffic on the Deben

peninsula and from villages such as Bromeswell, Eyke, Rendlesham and Tunstall, will be diverted via the A1152 through Tunstall and the B1078 via Campsea Ashe and onto the A12, to reach Woodbridge and beyond, for the weekend of October 24 and into the following week.

"Woodbridge level crossings will also be closed periodically, whilst these works take place."

Mr Mallinder feared the closures would have a "huge impact" on residents and businesses, with traffic having to travel to Campsea

Ashe, creating increased amounts of vehicles on narrow country lanes.

He called on Network Rail to create a "mechanism" enabling emergency vehicles to cross without having to detour.

He said: "At the moment, Wilford Bridge roundabout and leading roads from the peninsula are at capacity and the junction at Melton is the main artery on to the peninsula."

"Closing this rail crossing has a huge impact on residents and business as the diversion is substantial."



My latest update from our Mp is as follows (permission granted to share)

Good morning James,

I wanted to update you on my conversations with Network Rail re the works taking place in Melton, Ufford and across the peninsula, and to thank you for what you have done so far to engage with residents about this.

This has been a needlessly frustrating situation – which is impacting unfairly on residents and businesses – largely due to poor communications.

Over the past few weeks, I've been in direct contact with Network Rail and have had several calls with their project team, including one joined by several local councillors. I've made it clear throughout that communication has been poor and unacceptable – and that these plans have been in the works for some time, but the communications have felt haphazard and rushed.



We all accept that these works are necessary, but the planning, coordination and communications of them hasn't been acceptable.

Network Rail will not consider a partial closure, as they say this will extend the disruption over a much longer period.

Network Rail have now agreed to improve how they share information in the run-up to and during the closure. They'll be delivering additional letters and putting up more posters locally – I asked specially that they do more to communicate themselves, rather than simply rely on the parish and district councillors.

I stressed to them that the local work of Cllrs is an asset, not a communications tool for them to rely on. They are now going to be distributing the poster themselves, and they are very happy for you to share locally if you can / are able to - please see attached. If you would like printed copies, my team can print these for you from my office.

It's clear that they've underestimated the scale of disruption this will cause to the whole peninsula, and I've asked them to provide a five-year forward plan for future works so that we can prepare in good time and make sure residents and businesses aren't caught off-guard again. While my immediate focus is on getting through this closure as smoothly as possible, it's equally important that lessons are learnt so that this situation isn't repeated in the future. I'll keep pushing them on both fronts.

Emily from Network Rail has agreed to be the main point of contact throughout the closure for local councillors and is working with the project teams to improve how information is shared. I've also asked both Network Rail and Suffolk County Council for clear plans to maintain access for blue-light services during the closure, and I'm following up with them both to make sure those arrangements are in place – I know this was a concern for many.

Separately, I've written to Suffolk County Council to call for stronger leadership and better coordination around these works. As the authority responsible for the traffic management plan, they need to make sure diversion routes are properly signed, overlapping roadworks are avoided, and that local communities aren't left cut off. I've urged them to take a more active role in working with contractors like Network Rail so that residents, businesses, and essential services are always at the front and centre in planning and decision-making.

Once this phase of work is complete, I'll be bringing together Network Rail, Suffolk County Council and other local partners for an all-agency meeting to look at what went wrong, what can be learnt, and how things can be done better next time.

Thank you for what you're doing to support residents through this period. I know how frustrating this is, and I'll continue to monitor the situation closely and keep pressing both Network Rail and Suffolk County Council to make sure communication improves and that disruption is kept to an absolute minimum.

Best wishes, Jenny



I know a letter has been issued / signed by most Peninsula parish councils and meetings arranged

As always anything I can do to support you please let me know

East Suffolk council confirms continued recruitment

As its less than two years before unitary council across Suffolk so I was a little surprised to read the current cabinet member for the environment reported she wanted to triple the size of the environment dept - this is madness , first the environment should not be something external its how we live our lives – we work together . And perhaps more importantly it's a complete waste of money and makes no sense - I asked the leader of East Suffolk why they were continuing to recruit , expecting an answer that any recruitment is now emergency only - but she just confirmed they are busy and therefore recruiting

This has a legacy for East Suffolk as there will be redundancies in the mergers of councils and recruiting now is total disregard in making sure East Suffolk is economic sound

Full Council :asked Cabinet for planning to suspend house building on the peninsula

At full council I tabled a question that the peninsula is not able to cope with any additional house building and any applications for houses should be rejected until much needed infrastructure had been delivered .

Would Councillor Packard agree that the successful building of homes should also incorporate improvements in infrastructure, so communities do not suffer negative impacts from any additional house building? And that due to lack of improvements for the Deben peninsula there shouldn't be new houses built there until such improvements have been agreed and authorised?



He replied saying infrastructure is being delivery through CIL allocation of funds . This relies on local parishes submitting a full project which is just not practical for most of my small parishes . That said I will be writing to the cabinet member for planning further to understand why no road improvement projects are being looked at . Along with the shock message that there is now a call out for land for house building to update the local plan

Full Council : Supported the Labour party motion to introduce reverse vending machines for plastic bottles

I was delighted to speak at length in support of this motion at Full Council . When I was cabinet member for the environment I looked at such vending machines and if I was still in power we would have investigated into how we could have them at East Suffolk public buildings . This motion called for a full investigation to take place and a look at a pilot scheme

Unfortunately the Green party voted on mass to reject the motion which left me rather speechless - it's a great idea but illustrates why we have a failure as a society to deal with environmental issues, this is a clear illustration that politics gets in the way . Such a shame .

East Suffolk Greens agree to spend £350,000 of tax payers money on replacing bin lids

Yes you read that right - Cost of living crisis , need to move away from plastic and a need to reduce our carbon footprint - and the council is wasting funds, increasing the carbon footprint and using more plastic – the old ones will not be recycled but likely burnt or into land fill . I am so disappointed in what is happening at East Suffolk , if bin colours need changing to unify the new collection services next year either replace the whole bin with the new colour -(whole bin can be reused) or provide a large sticker to put on the lid .

I spoke out on this with BBC radio Suffolk and webpage :

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cr5qjlgqjd5o>

Change of bin lid colour 'is a bad idea'

A Suffolk authority has been stammered for planning to spend £350,000 changing the colour of bin lids, described by one councillor as a "bad idea".

East Suffolk Council is introducing a new 240 litre recycling bin to homes in the district at a cost of £3.5 million, but there are concerns the new grey bin with green lid could be confused by householders with the existing all-green garden bin.

So the council is now proposing to change the garden bin lids to brown to minimise confusion.

However, member James Mallinder, who represents the Deben ward, said the plans to have different colour lids on the bins will create more confusion.

He added: "This is really a bad idea and is only looking at the short term and failing to understand we need to build a strong legacy here in east Suffolk."

"The Green Party is already forcing more household sorting and they think the best way to recycle is to give households five bins to sort at home and now they propose we have a different bin lid colour on our different colour bins - so already I am confused."

"We all want to recycle, but the system should be efficient and easy to follow, these changes being forced on to us by an out of touch Green Party



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will cause the opposite effect - I can clearly see more contamination and east Suffolk recycling rates falling after these changes are introduced."

He said at a time when expenditure - both financial and environmental - should be minimised, £350,000 was being "wasted," increasing the carbon footprint and using more plastic for the new lids.

The extra bin is being provided to encourage residents to recycle more, with figures showing that recycling rates in the district were at 40%, with the council having set a target of achieving 60% recycling by 2030. The new green wheeled bin will supplement an existing blue lidded bin as part of a "Twin-Stream" dry recycling collection system.

The bins will be supplied to more than 100,000 homes in the district. Currently, recyclables such as plastics, card and paper are collected in the one bin.

However, a spokesperson for East Suffolk Council said: "Changing the lids of our garden waste bins to brown is the most cost-effective way of bringing these bins in line with the rest of Suffolk."

"Collection streams and bin colours will be standardised across the county."

Issue also picked up in the daily mail :

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15177267/Council-ridiculed-changing-colour-wheellie-bin-lids-critics-point-using-stickers-cheaper.html>

The discussion took place at Cabinet and the entire cabinet on mass voted for the spending of £350,000 . I was also told by green Cabinet member Tim Wilson my articles should be put in the bin. Although making cabinet members and the leader laugh , such a comment is disrespectful and adds to the toxic environment at East Suffolk - I have put a formal complaint to the leader of East Suffolk .

Local Projects supported

Really pleased to support the upgrade of the Shottisham village hall kitchen and also provide some seed funding to the new Hollesley Peninsula Shed Project



James Mallinder

Deben Ward - A voice for parishes and residents of the Peninsula