

The Level Crossings in South Lincolnshire and North Cambridgeshire.

1. Introduction

I represent a group of people who live in South Lincolnshire who are increasingly concerned with the situation of the level crossings in this part of the county. You may have seen or heard a news item on BBC radio 4 and TV news where I gave an all too brief summary of the situation specifically regarding the level crossing at Tallington on the main A16 road from Stamford to the Deepings.

We believe that this is a community matter where economic, social, environmental and road transport issues have to be evaluated together rather than a pure safety issue which has been the attitude so far of both Network Rail and the Department for Transport.

The local communities of the Deepings to the East and Stamford to the West combined with all the villages to the north and south of the A16 are seriously affected by the level crossings; part of the East Coast Mainline that runs through the community. There are 5 level crossings in a row on the main line bisecting the community and making road communication difficult, both east-west and north-south towards Peterborough. The South Kesteven area is one of the fastest growing rural communities in the country. However, very many of the people who live here work elsewhere and therefore good communications to south, south west and west by road are essential to the social and economic wellbeing of the people who live and work here.

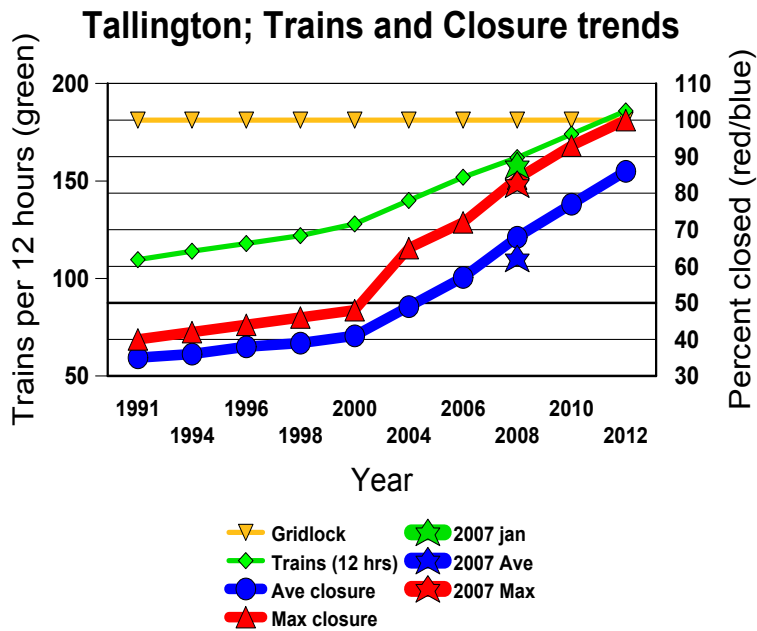
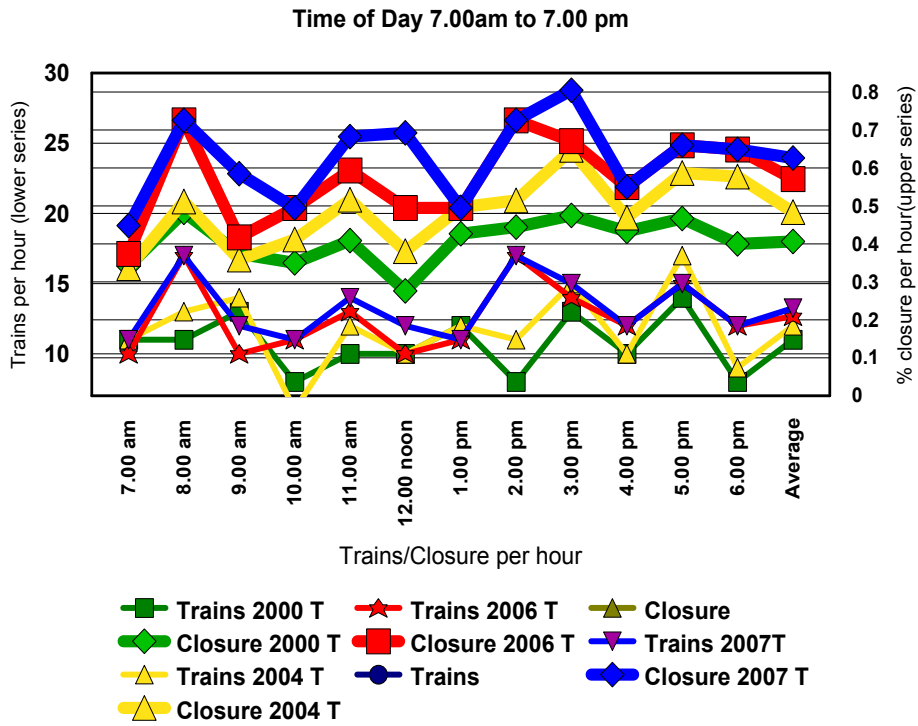
The problems have been recognised for some years and our group has made measurement of rail and road traffic growth and delays at the level crossings in 1991, 2000, 2004, 2006 . and have made predictions through to 2012 from what we know about future rail traffic growth. See charts below.

We have also tried to quantify the economic costs of the level crossing closures to the vehicle users that are held up and this is considerable. See table below

	2000	2004	2006	2010
Ave. closure %	40.1%	48.4%	57.11%	75.0%
Total closure (hrs)	4.9	5.8	6.85	9.0
Crossing closed per vehicle (mins)	3.1	4.01	5.14	7.5
Cost per annum (£millions)	0.852	1.615	2.934	4.9

Train and closure measurements

The chart below shows the growth in number of trains per 12 hour working day (lower graph) and the resulting closure percentages per hour (upper graph). Green is 2000, yellow 2004, red 2006 and blue the very latest schedule Jan 2007



Tallington; trains and closure trends.

This chart above shows our projections for traffic growth and closure up to 2012 based on published figures for increased passenger and freight services. Complete gridlock will be achieved around 2010!!

Conclusions from our studies

- There will be an untenable closure situation by 2010 for the people of South Lincs/South Kesteven.
- There is the same closure situation for all ECML level crossings as for Tallington.(Lolham, Belmesthorpe, Helpston). Lolham and Helpston action therefore also must be considered, thus involving Peterborough.
- Already very high and rising economic costs to the community as both closures and traffic levels rise on A16.
- The environmental situation in Tallington is serious
- The social situation for the whole SKDC community being cut in half is unacceptable
- Increased traffic on ECML reduces communications and economic efficiencies for this rural community. (see EMDA strategy and objectives)
- We and the authorities must start now on some action because 5 year lead time minimum would be required to construct a solution.
- Multi agency involvement in the solution is necessary and will involve, Lincs County Council, Network Rail, The Department for Transport and Peterborough City Council

A further issue of interest is that the long queues of traffic, when released from the level crossings, go on to cause traffic chaos in other towns and villages such as Stamford, Market Deeping.

We are presenting our case to all the Parish and Town Councils in the area and asking them to support us by writing to some or all of the organisations involved, giving the view from their perspective. We have already raised this issue at the local Deepings Forum and action has been taken to write to Network Rail and the Department for Transport.

In the meantime the Senior Transport Councillor for Lincs CC, William Webb has agreed to give this matter the highest priority within his organisation. He has also agreed to join us in a combined approach to Network Rail and the D for T to negotiate a multi-agency solution.

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