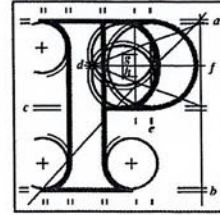


Our Case Number: ABP-310286-21



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Gabriel Clery
Bawntard
Kilmallock
Co. Limerick

Date: 08 July 2021

Re: Railway works and all works necessary to eliminate and, where necessary, upgrade seven numbered level crossings and carry out all associated and ancillary works along a 24-kilometre section of the Dublin to Cork Railway Line.
Fantstown, Thomastown, Ballyhay, Newtown, Ballycoskery (Ballyhea Village), Shinanagh and Buttevant, Co. Cork and Co. Limerick.

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above mentioned proposed railway order and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter. A receipt for the fee lodged is enclosed.

The Board will revert to you in due course with regard to the matter.

Please be advised that copies of all submissions / observations received in relation to the application will be made available for public inspection at the offices of Limerick County Council and at the offices of An Bord Pleanála when they have been processed by the Board.

More detailed information in relation to strategic infrastructure development can be viewed on the Board's website: www.pleanala.ie.

If you have any queries in the meantime please contact the undersigned officer of the Board. Please quote the above mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

Kieran Somers
Executive Officer
Direct Line:

RA05

Tel	Tel	(01) 858 8100
Glaó Áitiúil	LoCall	1890 275 175
Facs	Fax	(01) 872 2684
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64 Sráid Maoilbhríde	64 Marlborough Street
Baile Átha Cliath 1	Dublin 1
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AN BORD PLEANALA	
LDG-	<u>0414 22-21</u>
ABP-	_____
06 JUL 2021	
Fee: €	<u>50</u> Type: <u>cheque</u>
Time:	By: <u>Regpost</u>

Bawntard,
Kilmallock,
Co. Limerick



Observation on Planning reference no. 310286

I wish to express my opposition to the request from Coras Iompair Éireann (Irish Rail) for a Railway Order.

I am enclosing the following documents for your consideration.

- A. My own Observation on the request to close Fantstown crossing.
- B. My letter to Irish Rail, sent to them in January 2020.
- C. My Response to comments from Irish Rail in their application to close Fantstown crossing.
- D. Copy of letter from Cllr. Michael Donegan, on behalf of Cappamore/Kilmallock Municipal District to Irish Rail.
- E. Letter from Luke Lillingston, Mountcoote Stud, Kilmallock.
- F. Letter from Tabitha Lillingston, Mountcoote Stud, Kilmallock.
- G. Letter from William Bagnell, Agricultural Contractor.
- H. Letter from John Walshe, Agricultural Contractor.
- I. Letter from Brendan and Valeria Hanley, Gibbonstown, Kilmallock.
- J. Letter from Tom O'Donnell, Abbeyfarm, Kilmallock.
- K. Letter signed by Tom O'Donnell and John McCarthy.
- L. Letter from Siobhan Reidy Leahy, Ballinascaula, Kilmallock.
- M. A copy of a Letter from Pat Leahy, Fantstown, Kilmallock, from whom I rent land.
- N. Letter from Peter and Eamon O'Mahoney, Glenfield, Kilmallock. Glenfield Agricultural Contractors.
- O. I am enclosing a cheque for €50.

Thank you for considering our views and should you decide to hold an Oral Hearing, we would look forward to having the opportunity of showing the need for a link between our community.

Gabriel Clery

Gabriel Clery.

Bawntard,
Kilmallock,
Co. Limerick
[REDACTED]

Observation on Planning reference no. 310286

I wish to express my opposition to the request from Coras Iompair Éireann (Irish Rail) for a Railway Order.

My opposition is to the attempted closure of Fantstown Railway Crossing XC187. I have no view or opposition to the other 6 Railway crossings in the application. My reasons for objection are as follows.

- 1) The negative effect the closure will have on my farm business.
- 2) The lack of "Thorough and meaningful engagement" with locals as requested by An Bord Pleanála at a Preliminary meeting with Irish Rail.
- 3) The fact that Irish Rail admit that "No Other Option but Straight Closure was considered for Fantstown Crossing XC187" despite their consultants Roughan and O Donovan Consulting Engineers in 2011 recommending that an overhead bridge be built over XC187.
- 4) The misuse of traffic volume figures from surveys carried out by Irish Rail.
- 5) Splitting our Community.
- 6) Fantstown Crossing is included in this application for a Railway Order, yet the remedial work needed to facilitate this, at Ballinscaula Crossing is deemed not part of the Railway Order.
- 7) This application directly to An Bord Pleanála is a deliberate attempt to circumvent the wishes of the locally elected Councillors in the Kilmallock / Cappamore Electoral Area and the local community.
- 8) The flawed "Options Appraisal" carried out by Irish Rail own staff, for the Preliminary Design Report. Irish Rail admit that their staff already knew that **"No other option but straight closure would be considered for Fantstown XC187"**.

I will expand on these points as follows.

1) The negative effect the closure will have on my farm business.

I farm at Bawntard, Kilmallock, milking 90 cows and rearing replacements for my herd. My owned land and lands I rent from Kathleen Noonan for 25 years, are on the northern side of the crossing. The lands I rent from Pat Leahy for 25 years, are on the Southern side of the crossing. The loss of the lands of the south of the crossing belonging to Pat Leahy, would be considerable and result in the necessity to reduce cow numbers to 60. This would be a loss of 33% of my income and render the farm unviable for me and my 17 year old son Sean, who is hoping to go farming next year after his leaving cert. It is very rare for extra grazing to become available in this area and Pat Leahy's lands would be 5 miles by road from the land I farm on the other side of the railway gates.

Despite statements to the contrary by Irish Rail, I walk livestock across the crossing at least on a monthly basis (except December to mid March). I have done for 25 years.

2) The lack of "Thorough and meaningful engagement" with locals as requested by An Bord Pleanála at a Preliminary meeting with Irish Rail.

In 2009 the local community attended a meeting of Limerick County Council. I attended this meeting as did representatives of Irish Rail. I expressed my concerns about the closure of Fantstown crossing as did other locals. Irish Rail knew as far back as 2009 of the serious concerns raised. They made no follow up on those concerns after that meeting. No one from Irish Rail contacted me before the latest attempt at closing the crossing, despite knowing for years the damage to my farming business.

In December 2019 Irish Rail held a Public Information Meeting in Kilmallock about the closure. I attended this meeting and made my views known, as did other locals. I was informed that a decision to close Fantstown crossing was already made, and it was final. I was asked to submit these views in writing. I did and I attach a copy of that letter to Irish Rail sent in January 2020. I wish to have this letter now form part of my observation. I can confirm that no follow up of any kind was received by me or any other member of the local community. Irish Rail made no effort to discuss this with any local either before or after that meeting. I feel the Public Information Meeting was a sham to tick the box for An Bord Pleanála.

3) The fact that Irish Rail admit that "No Other Option but Straight Closure was considered for Fantstown Crossing XC187" despite their consultants Roughan and O Donovan Consulting Engineers recommending that an overhead bridge be built over XC187.

The only independent appraisal sought by Irish Rail of the best options for XC187, recommended an overhead bridge. Why was XC187 the only crossing where other options were not even considered? Why was the Roughan and O Donovan report not made available at the Public Information Meeting? Why was the Roughan and O Donovan report not made available to the local councillors in the Kilmallock / Cappamore Electoral Area?

Why was the Roughan and O Donovan report not made available to An Bord Pleanála?

I am asking An Bord Pleanála to request a copy of this report from Irish Rail.

4) **The misuse of traffic volume figures from surveys carried out by Irish Rail.**

The pedestrian gates which are located beside the main gates at XC187, were closed over 2 years ago. This means that pedestrians and cyclists have to wait for up to 25 minutes for the main gates to be opened. This practice was not introduced at the other 6 crossings which are included in the Irish Rail application. I believe this was a deliberate attempt to reduce the use of the gates before applying for "Straight Closure".

The locking of the pedestrian gates constitutes a Permanent Restriction on the use of a Public Road. No permission of any kind was sought from Limerick City and County Council. This is illegal.

Over the last number of years, the gates were regularly left unmanned on full days. A year ago, I arrived at the gates with a tractor and trailer full of cattle. The gates were unmanned. When I rang Mallow station, I was told that nobody was on that day. As I could not reverse with a full load of cattle, I had to wait for an hour and a half for Irish Rail to get someone to open the gates for me. There is no telephone to ring to see if the gates are manned.

Accurate Railway crossing usage figures could only be produced, if the gates were open to oncoming traffic and closed when a train was coming.

If a pedestrian or cyclist comes from the south side, there is no bell or any other means to alert the Irish Rail employee in the Cabin that you need to cross. They simply cannot hear you with the door closed. When driving we can blow the horn. I have seen pedestrians turn around and go back. Last month I saw two 16-year-old boys throw their bikes over the gates and then jump the gates themselves. They were so frustrated. They could not be heard in the cabin.

For the last number of years, locals have noticed that the time left waiting for the gates to open has significantly increased. This has also led to frustration and resulted in people turning around and taking the alternative routes.

The accumulation of these actions by Irish Rail, were an abuse of power, to ensure a reduction of traffic, before an application for closure.

Irish Rail mention 6 houses within 300 meters of XC187. They do not mention the following.

There are 17 houses within 500 meters of XC187.

There are 25 houses on the Bawntard Road leading up to XC187.

There are 19 houses on the Fantstown Road leading up to XC187.

There are 24 houses on the Gibbonstown Road leading up to XC187.

There are 35 houses on the Mountcoote / Fairyfield Road leading up to XC187.

The direct corridor from Bulgaden to Ballingaddy/ Ardpatrik passes through XC187.

The Kilmallock Cycle hub route passes through XC187.

XC187 is a vital local walking route.

XC187 connects a community.

XC187 is used by farmers and other business users.

XC187 is used by 3 different hunts during the winter months. The fox will not always read the signs and go around by Ballinscaula.

XC187 is used by the local beagle club based in Fairyfield, only 700 meters away from the gates.

XC187 is used by individual hunters on foot and members of the local gun club in Ballingaddy.

5) Splitting our Community.

My wife Monica uses the crossing to take our 15-year-old autistic son for walks. The road up by Mountcoote/ Riversfield (L1571) is known locally as "The Golden Mile". It won the Limerick "Golden Mile" award in 2015 for being the "Best and most pleasant roadscapes" of any rural road in the county. On their walks they could meet Mary Leahy or Theresa Riordan coming down or Leonie Passmore going up. This is a local community which should not be divided. I remember Betty Raleigh telling me how she and her sister as children used to go up to Pat and Mary Leahy to play. It was only 100 yards. With the railway crossing closed it will be 5 miles.

6) Fantstown Crossing is included in this application for a Railway Order, yet the remedial work needed to facilitate this, at Ballinscaula Crossing is deemed not part of the Railway Order.

Irish Rail have acknowledged as far back as 2009, that Ballinscaula Railway crossing needs serious improvement. They have upgraded the crossing to the west at Ballinvana and to the East at Fairyfield. They refuse to make Ballinscaula safe, until they are approved for "Straight Closure" of Fantstown XC187. Ballinscaula is approached by 90-degree bends, immediately to the north and the south. These are very dangerous and yet Irish Rail are using upgrades at Ballinscaula as a bargaining tool, to achieve closure of Fantstown.

The other 6 railway crossings are part of this application for a Railway Order. That includes all works for the closure of each crossing, and all works for the upgrade /construction of an alternative crossing. Irish Rail have no justification for including a "Straight Closure" of Fantstown XC187 in the Railway Order application and not including the upgrade of the alternative Ballinscaula Crossing. They have given no details of the upgrades planned for Ballinscaula. They have given the locals at Ballinscaula no opportunity to express their view on any upgrades in their area.

7) This application directly to An Bord Pleanala is a deliberate attempt to circumvent the wishes of the locally elected Councillors in the Kilmallock / Cappamore Electoral Area and the local community.

The decision by Irish Rail to seek Senior Council advice to lump all 7 railway crossings together and apply directly to An Bord Pleanala is a direct attempt to deny Limerick City & County Council a say in the closure of their road. It also denies the 7 councillors in the Kilmallock / Cappamore Electoral Area the right to represent this local community. They made their views known in 2009 and January 2020 and now Irish Rail decides to ignore them and bypass them. Irish Rail say they will consider all views, but admit - **No other option but straight closure would be considered for Fantstown XC187.**

- 8). The flawed "Options Appraisal" carried out by Irish Rail own staff, for the Preliminary Design Report. Irish Rail admit that their staff already knew that **"No other option but straight closure would be considered for Fantstown XC187"**.

The priorities for Irish Rail in an "Options Appraisal" include,
Safety.
Capitol Cost.
Whole Life Cost.

The priorities for Locals in an "Options Appraisal" include,
Safety.
Integration .
Accessibility and Social Inclusion.
Physical Activity.
Environment.

I can see why the priorities of Irish Rail, led to the "Options Appraisal" that was produced by their staff. This very much ignores the priorities of the local community. I feel an overhead bridge is required for the needs of the local community, but not for the needs of Irish Rail.

I would like to raise some questions that need to be asked of Irish Rail.

Why is Fantstown the only crossing with pedestrian gates locked?

Why was Fantstown the only gates not even considered for an overhead bridge?

Why were Fantstown gates always left in the closed position and only opened for a crossing?

Most other gates were open for traffic and closed when a train was coming. They are all on the same Dublin to Cork line.

Why did Irish Rail decide that splitting a community at Fantstown was not an issue?

Why did Irish Rail decide to ignore the advice of their own consultants Roughan and O Donovan to build an overhead bridge?

Why did Irish Rail use Senior Council to circumvent the wishes of the local Councillors in the Kilmallock / Cappamore Electoral Area?

I wish to be clear in what I am asking for. I as a local want an overhead Bridge at Fantstown XC187. I am asking An Bord Pleanala to reject the proposed closure of Fantstown Crossing. I want An Bord Pleanala to recommend to Irish Rail that they enter into "Thorough and Meaningful Engagement" with the local community.

I understand that An Bord Pleanala has to decide on SID cases in the public interest. Sometimes there is no option but to override the wishes of the local people. Here there is an option, an overhead bridge.

Gabriel Clery



To. Irish Rail

Re . Fantstown Crossing XC187.

Bawntard ,

Kilmallock,

Co. Limerick.

I Gabriel Clery wish to make the following observation on the proposed closing of the Railway Crossing at Fantstown, XC187.

1. My home farm is on the Bawntard road. I rent land from Kathleen Noonan adjoining the northern side of the railway crossing, and I rent land adjoining the southern side of the Railway Crossing from Patrick Leahy. I am renting both of these lands for 25 years. I also own 13 acres of land adjoining Kathleen Noonan's holding. This land is 150 metres from my main holding. Patrick Leahy's grazing is used for rearing young stock and providing silage for my dairy farm. The loss of this grazing would have a devastating impact on my farm business, as the land on the southern side of the railway crossing would be 5 miles by road from the land on the northern side of the crossing, once the gates are closed permanently.
2. My wife Monica uses the crossing to take our 14-year-old autistic son for walks. The road up by Mountcoote/ Riversfield (L1571) is known locally as "The Golden Mile". It won the Limerick "Golden Mile" award in 2015 for being the "Best and most pleasant roadscapes" of any rural road in the county. On their walks they could meet Mary Leahy or Theresa Riordan coming down or Leonie Passmore going up. This is a local community which should not be divided. I remember Betty Raleigh telling me how she and her sister as children used to go up to Pat and Mary Leahy to play. It was only 100 yards. With the railway crossing closed it will be 5 miles.
3. The residents made clear their objection to the closure when it was attempted in 2009. All the County Councillors in the Kilmallock Electoral area voted against the closure forcing Irish Rail to withdraw the 2009 closure attempt. In 2011, Irish Rail commissioned Roughan & O Donovan Consulting Engineers to consider all the options for Fantstown railway crossing. They did. **They recommended that a bridge be built over the crossing at XC187.** In 2018 Irish Rail decided to ignore this advice. They decided to close the crossing permanently. Irish Rail admits in the Preliminary report on its website that **"Straight closure was the only option considered"**.
4. Fantstown railway crossing is the direct traffic route from Bulgaden to Ballingaddy / Ardpark and surrounding areas. Irish Rail have measured the traffic at the crossing in 2009, 2011 and 2019. These figures are rubbish. How can you get a guide to the traffic that would use the crossing when we have to wait for up to 20 minutes for the gates to open? A bridge would mean 24/7 crossing for motors, bikes and pedestrians. Expensive maybe: but can we put a cost on dividing a community.

5. Closing the gates would create a Cul de Sac at both sides of the track.
This would increase isolation for residents.
It would increase the dumping of rubbish on these roads.
It would increase the risk of crime as the houses would be more isolated.
It would also devalue the houses on a Cul de Sac.
6. A meeting of Irish Rail staff was held at Limerick Junction to decide the best option for 7 railway crossings. This could never produce an independent view. Irish Rail had already decided that **"No other option but straight closure would be considered for Fantstown XC187"**. They then scored the chart shown on their website in the Preliminary Design Report –Table 3.1 Options Appraisal. They scored 5 being the most advantages over other options and 1 the most disadvantages over other options.

–Table 3.1 Options Appraisal

Appraisal Criteria	Appraisal Sub Criteria	Weighting (Total 100 marks)	Do Nothing	Straight Closure	Alternative Access/Overbridge	Upgrade to 4 Barrier CCTV
Economy						
Capitol Cost	Construction Costs	50	5	5	3	3
Whole Life Cost	Operating & Maintenance Costs	50	1	5	5	4
			3	5	4	4
Safety			3	5	5	4
Physical Activity						
Environment			3	3	1	3
Accessibility & Social Inclusion						
Integration			2	1	3	2
TOTAL SCORE			11	14	13	13

I note "Physical Activity" was not given any score. I would give a bridge 5 and straight closure 1. *(Walkers and cyclists would have free access over a bridge).*

I note "Accessibility & Social Inclusion" was not given any score. I would give a bridge 5 and straight closure 1. *(A bridge does not split the community).*

I note "Integration". A bridge scores 3. I would give a bridge 5 and a straight closure 1 (which it got). *(The only way for integration is a bridge to connect people).*

Their final scores were Straight Closure 14 points.

Alternative Bridge 13 points.

But that was with Irish Rail staff knowing that **"No other option but straight closure would be considered for Fantstown XC187"**.

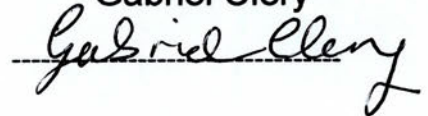
7 Irish Rail state that the bridge crossing at Ballinscaula will need to be upgraded for safety reasons if Fans town crossing is closed. They stated this as far back as 2009 and costed this an excess of €250,000. Since 2009, they have done nothing for safety at Ballinscaula and are only prepared to provide this money on the condition that they get Fantstown closed. Limerick County Council should not tolerate this.

8 The decision by Irish Rail to seek Senior Council advice to lump all 7 railway crossings together and apply directly to An Bord Pleanala is a direct attempt to deny Limerick City & County Council a say in the closure of their road. It also denies the 7 councillors in the Kilmallock / Cappamore Electoral Area the right to represent this local community. They made their views known in 2009 and now Irish Rail decides to ignore them and bypass them. Irish Rail say they will consider all views, but admit - No other option but straight closure would be considered for Fantstown XC187.

I want to be clear that I am asking Irish Rail for a bridge over XC187 crossing. I totally accept the speed of trains and the need for safety and hope Irish Rail will acknowledge our needs and step up to the mark. The train tracks are an unnatural divide imposed on our community. Please do not divide it completely.

Yours Sincerely

Gabriel Clery

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gabriel Clery', written over a horizontal line.

Response to comments from Irish Rail in their application to close Fantstown crossing.

Case No.-310286

I have read in the planning application of the negligible effect the closing of Fantstown crossing will have on the local community. It is clear that there is a huge difference between the effect seen by Irish Rail and that as interpreted by the people effected.

Irish Rail are depending on staff in an office in Dublin reading Ordnance Survey Maps and Land Registry records for information. They do not know Tim Heffernan, Frank Birane, Kathleen Noonan, Peter O'Mahony, Mary Hanley or Mary Leahy. How could they? They have researched this application remotely.

They state that the closure will have minimal impact on my farming business. How do they know? They never called out to see me or my farm. They state that I never walk cattle across the tracks at the crossing. This is completely untrue. Why did they not check this with the operators at the crossing? They state that I farm outside the 1.5kms from the crossing. This is also untrue. They must have made a mistake when they looked up Google maps.

They claim that no pedestrian, cyclist, or motor used the crossing for 7 days in February 2020. Are they not aware that the pedestrian gates were locked at the time? Livestock are indoors from mid-December to mid-March, so I use the gates less during these months. As for no use of the gates by motors, well maybe you have frustrated the locals so many times that it is easier to take the longer alternative route. The traffic flow at the gates is like a water flow. If you put a kink in a water hose, you reduce the flow. If you put a lot of kinks in the water hose, you will stop the flow completely. Water will take the shortest and easiest route and traffic will do the same. If no motors use the gates for a week, it is time for Irish Rail to ask, why?

It is annoying to hear that the closure will have negligible impact on everything in the area, I can see that so many locals have many diverse reasons for wanting a bridge. Each reason is important to that particular person.

Why do Irish Rail employ Senior Council, Jacobs, and their own staff (none of which live within 20 miles of the crossing) to draw up this application? Why not come down and speak to the locals?

Irish Rail reference 2 incidents at XC187 over the last number of years. The first involved an individual standing on the tracks as a train approached from a distance. The individual left the tracks, there was no accident. Irish Rail list this as an incident.

The second involved equipment failure at the gates. This involved the gates not being opened and a motorist having to use an alternative route. There was no accident. Irish Rail list this as an incident.

I never remember an accident at the gates in living memory. The Gibbonstown alternative route has had a number of motor accidents in the last number of years. These include a fatal motor accident in the environs of Ballinascaula Bridge.

Safety also includes peoples physical and mental health. Physical access for walking and socialising is so important.

If Irish Rail are serious about safety, they will erect a bridge that connects, not a wall that divides.

I am asking the Bord Pleanala Inspector, if you are in any doubt about the sincerity of the local community, you should hold an oral hearing. Do what Irish Rail did not do, Listen!

Gabriel O'Leary
Bawntard
Kilmallock.
4-7-21.

Cork Line Level Crossing Project Submission for Fantstown Level Crossing (XC187)

(On behalf of the Councillors of the Cappamore/Kilmallock Municipal District)

At our January Municipal District meeting, which representatives from Irish Rail and Jacobs attended, I proposed the motion outlined below which was unanimously supported by the other 6 elected members.

"That, we, the elected members of the Cappamore/Kilmallock Municipal District call on Irish Rail to reconsider its decision to close the Fantstown level crossing (XC187) permanently and replace the crossing with a bridge to link the community."

The decision by Irish Rail to apply directly to An Bord Pleanála is a direct attempt to deny Limerick City & County Council the process of considering the extinguishment of a right of way closure of a road.

It also denies the elected members of the Cappamore/Kilmallock Municipal District the right to represent the local community. The elected members made their views known in 2009 and now Irish Rail has decided to ignore us and bypass local democracy.

Signed: _____

Cllr. Mike Donegan

Cathairleach of the Cappamore/Kilmallock Municipal District

January 2020
MD Meeting



Mount Coote Stud,
Kilmallock,
County Limerick,
V35 WP03

Re Case ~~301286~~
310286

To whom it may concern.

Our family owns and farms (cattle and horses) immediately adjacent (South East) to the Fantstown railway crossing.

I am extremely concerned at the prospect of this railway gate being closed permanently.

The road (LS8514) has consistently been used as a dumping ground for refuse of all kinds including animal carcasses (immediately outside our bounds). It would seem very probable that this situation would worsen , should the road become disused and pose an even greater risk to our livestock , attracting many insects and potentially spreading disease.

In addition this road has occasionally " hosted " a caravan whose occupants have hassled passers by. Should the road be unused I would be concerned that this might happen more frequently.

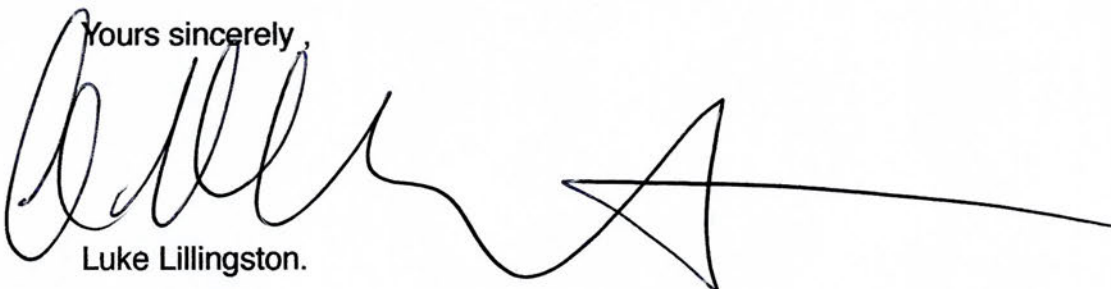
The speed of the opening of these gates has been an issue for many years leading many vehicle drivers to take a much longer route. For employees of our farm , past and current , who live in the Bulgaden area , this has meant four much longer journeys each working day than would otherwise be necessary should a bridge be in place . A bridge over the railway would considerably reduce their daily mileage.

We have a gate from the road (LS8514). This road is often in poor condition. If the road became a dead end I would be concerned that it would fall into a greater state of disrepair and make access to our gateway challenging.

I would like to object to the permanent closure of the railway crossing which I believe will not just be harmful to ourselves and our business but also to the local community which is and would permanently be divided.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Luke Lillingston', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Luke Lillingston.

Mount Coote,
Kilmallock,
Co Limerick
V35 WP03

To Whom It May Concern,

Case # 310286: Fantstown, Thomastown, Ballyhay, Newtown, Ballycoskery (Ballyhea Village), Shinanagh and Buttevant, Co. Cork and Co. Limerick.

I am writing to express my strong objection to the prospect of closing the Railway Crossing at Fantstown. I list my reasoning below;

1. I believe that with a proper crossing, ie: automatic gates or a bridge, the crossing, would be used with much more frequency and regularity by many people living and working in the area. My children attended Bulgaden N.S. for many years - the quickest route BY FAR for us would have been to cross the railway at Fantstown BUT as the attendant, understandably, takes a considerable length of time to open the gates (ringing through for permission, get permission or not, putting on high Viz jacket, come out of the hut to unlock the gates), I soon realised it was easier to go the "long route", adding distance, time and expense every time. I would have used the Crossing FOUR times a day had it been more easily accessed. I would not be alone in this matter and I believe this may have been detrimental to the school over the years.
2. We have a number of employees who would also use the crossing on a daily basis but again due to the length of time involved in opening the gates they too take the longer route. Several of them have made the same journey for many, many years, the crossing would have shortened their route in time and distance 4 times a day.
3. You can easily be waiting at the gates for a considerable length of time if you wish to use it. The attendant must ring through for permission to open the gates. If a train has left either Limerick Junction (going south) or Mallow (heading north) they are not allowed to open the gates. Both of these stations are a distance from Fantstown 10-20 mins, so the sensible option is to not bother the attendant but make a lengthier journey, otherwise if the timing is wrong you must simply wait. If approaching the railway crossing from the South (Riversfield/Mount Coote side), there is no way of attracting the attendant. If the hut is closed due to the weather no amount of shouting can be heard on the other side and there is no choice but to find another route. As an aside there is also no space to turn a vehicle around with ease. I believe one of the arguments for the closure is the lack of use, I hope the above will explain the reasons for lack of use. They would disappear overnight if access was easier.
4. I believe that the community is now sadly divided by the closed railway gates. I know of families that live on both sides and cannot see each other as frequently or easily now the gates are manned and often locked, especially those with elderly or unwell family members. Now that the pedestrian gates are also locked this is a significant physical barrier between families. Personally my children have friends the other side of the railway, they have tried to bicycle to see each other but due to the above mentioned time delays they now tend to use the longer route along the main road. This is not only much longer but comes with increased risk to their lives. Should there be an accident I'm not sure if we could bring a case against Irish Rail but they may well find they have unwittingly contributed towards it. It would be many times safer to use a crossing.

5. If the crossing was closed I believe there would be an increase in illegal dumping and littering along the road to the South (Riversfield/Mount Coote side), the road would become a cul-de-sac. Dumping of large and often unpleasant items (inc quantities of large animal bones) is already, sadly, a common occurrence but I feel if the road was well used there would be fewer opportunities for those responsible.
6. With less use of the approach road I fear there would be a more frequent problem with members of the Travelling community staying in the road, they have often stopped there, used and blocked the road for periods of time resulting in uncomfortable confrontations with local people, often those trying to access the railway crossing. Several farmers including ourselves have encountered problems trying to reach fields along the road to tend to our stock there, there is also the issue of trying to have them moved on.
7. Many of us in the locality are aware of Emergency Services and Delivery Vans being sent to the railway crossing by their SatNavs only to be unable to cross. There have been numerous incidents with ambulances at night when the crossing is unmanned, the Ambulance then has to find an alternative route, cannot turn around so must reverse all the way back to the main road. I am not sure if this has resulted in any loss of life to those needing the ambulance but it may do in the future. Again - would Irish Rail be unwittingly culpable?

In conclusion - I strongly object to the closing of the Fantstown Railway Crossing, it is bad now and would become worse if permanently closed. A bridge or automated crossing would be of huge benefit to the local community immediately and far more well used than is the case at the moment.

I thank you for your time in reading this submission.

Yours faithfully,



Tabitha Lillingston

Planning Ref.....310286

I wish to make an observation on the application by CIE to close Fantstown crossing.

To facilitate this closure, it will require that agricultural machinery use the alternative routes. I have issue with this from an economic , safety and environmental point of view.

Economic.

The necessity to carry every load of silage, slurry, sprays, fertilizer, cattle, and all other equipment used by agricultural contractors and farmers along the alternative routes is very costly. The cost to agricultural contractors comes in the form of extra diesel ,labour, wear and tear on machinery and the loss of income as silage harvesting in particular is charged by acre cut rather than by the hour.

This crossing is in the heart of "The Golden Vale". This is some of the finest and most productive land in Ireland. The concentration of active farmers in this area is extremely high. This crossing is used by over 20 agricultural contractors servicing farmers within 2 kilometres of the crossing. Apart from added machinery costs there is "lost opportunity cost" to farmers in the area. It will be no longer practical or viable to buy or rent land at the opposite side of the crossing to expand a farming business.

Safety.

I am asking An Bord Pleanala to drive the alternative routes when they visit Fantstown crossing XC187. The alternative road by Gibbonstown is narrow and has dangerous bends and is not suitable to an increased traffic burden. The crossing at Ballinascaula is already accepted as dangerous and no plans have been shown for upgrading this. In particular children and the elderly will not be safe using these roads. They will also not be safe on the main Tipperary to Kilmallock road as cars travel very fast on this stretch of the journey. Footpaths are non-existent. It is my view that a bridge over XC187 would be much safer than cars, agricultural machinery, pedestrians, and cyclists all using the Gibbonstown route. There will also be a high safety risk of people crossing the railway line illegally at any opening they can find. This will happen as the distance from Ballinascaula crossing to Kilmallock will be 4 to 5 miles without a legal crossing.

Environment.

I notice in the "Options Appraisal" of options for XC187 carried out by CIE, that Alternative Access/ Overhead bridge scores the lowest on 1 point compared to 3 points for all the other options. If large agricultural machinery is forced to make many , many alternative trips to harvest silage for each farmer, then the extra diesel emitted is significant. This also applies to extra car journeys. The round trip for each load in a tractor will take 20 to 30 minutes. The larger tractors travel faster but burn more diesel and are more dangerous on the

narrow road. This was clearly not taken into account in the "Options Appraisal".

We are living in a world where climate change has taken centre stage. Farmers have been set very strict targets for climate reduction. The protection of waterways and all air emissions is seen as critical. The failure of CIE to take this into account is disappointing.

As an agricultural contractor, we face severe limits on the use of Fantstown crossing. No operator is available to open the gates after 8pm. The gates have regularly been left without an operator over the last number of years. There is no phone number to ring the Fantstown crossing cabin to check if an operator is present. The length of time waiting for a crossing can range from 3 minutes if you are lucky, but up to 25 minutes if you are unlucky. A silage outfit consists of a silage harvester, 4 tractors with trailers attached, 2 tractors and mowers, a tractor and rake and an industrial loader. An overhead bridge would provide unlimited access. Who would not use the shortest route if unlimited access were provided?

I am asking An Bord Pleanála to refuse a Railway Order to close Fantstown crossing. We need to open up opportunities for farmers and agricultural contractors. Closing the gates permanently would be a negative step.



William Bagnell
Agricultural Contracting Ltd
Bottomstown, Hospital, Co. Limerick
Mobile: [REDACTED]
VAT Reg No. 64345380

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John Walshe

Steeles

Kilmallock

Agricultural Contractor

Gibbonstown,

Kilmallock,

Co. Limerick

02/07/2021

To whom it may concern,

We would like to submit an objection to the proposed elimination of Fanstown Level Crossing XC-187. The proposed closure will raise a number of major issues within our community that are not acceptable and should be seriously considered before any final decision is made.

As residents who live within 100m from the proposed gates our major concern is local access for emergency services, if we need emergency help from an ambulance or fire brigade they will be delayed in getting to us because all these services use Google maps to find our location and are directed through these gates from the Tipperary Rd as this is the shortest route, we have already made Niall Lynch Infrastructure Manager aware of this to be told there are other bridges and routes to gain access, if these bridges and routes are used it adds another 10 minutes to the journey in which time a loved one's life could be lost or a family's home destroyed. As a Healthcare assistant in the area I have to take the long route on every journey which could add 10/15 minutes to my travel time which could be time well spent looking after an elderly lonely and often sick client.

This road was very popular with walkers/ joggers and cyclists and when you closed the pedestrian gates illegally by putting a lock on them you denied our community an amenity for physical activity which in the current climate of the Covid pandemic is extremely important, also you are isolating people from their neighbours and friends which could be very damaging to their mental health and that also is not acceptable in the present climate where so many people are already suffering with depression and anxiety.

By eliminating the gates completely you are also dividing our local community and restricting access to local schools, churches, GAA fields and local restaurants and public houses. With the elimination of the gates you are creating 2 Cul-De-Sacs, one side with residential dwellings but with no dwellings on the opposite side you are creating an opening for illegal dumping and also anti-social behaviour to develop which is not acceptable.

I would ask C.I.E to reconsider the proposed closure for the reasons I have outlined and to look at other options that are been used on other crossing along the line such as a bridge or an automated system which would keep our community united and also open up our community for further access and maybe development in years to come.

Yours sincerely,



Valerie Hanley.

Tom O'Donnell
Abbey Farm
Kilmallock
Co Limerick
30 June 2021

To CIE

The closing of Fantstown crossing XC 187 Kilmallock
A crossing that i used six time a year and return with
tractor and machinery and on two occation i had to reverse
back to road when nobody was there to open rail gate crossing
which is my right to be able to cross, and i all so used with
my bicycle a few time a year, but was unable to cross when
the turn stile to was remove.

I will be objection to the closing of the road and the
crossing for pedestrian too.

Tom O'Donnell

An Bord Pleanála file reference number.....310286

We the undersigned wish to make the following observation and show our objection to the closing of Fantstown Railway gates.

We have been unable to walk across the track since the pedestrian gates were locked two years ago. We were not consulted about the locking of the pedestrian gates and the only consultation on the closure of the main gates was at the Public Information Meeting.

We feel that a look at the number of houses in the area, justify an overhead bridge.

The local catchment area includes a school, 2 churches and Bulgaden Castle (A restaurant /social venue).

We do not want to be cut off from our neighbours.

We are asking for an overhead bridge to eliminate, the long waiting for the gates to be opened.

Tom O'Donnell Abbey Farm Kilmellock

John Mc Carthy Kilmellock Hill Kilmellock

Ballinascaula

Bulgaden

Kilmallock

CO. Limerick

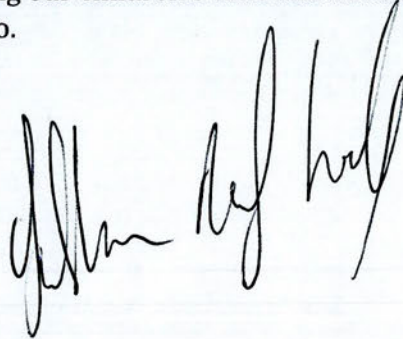
4th July 2021

To whom it may concern,

In reference to the proposed closing of Bantard/ Franstown railway crossing Kilmallock, we feel it would be a disaster for us if this crossing were closed. As producers of sport horses and thoroughbreds, this is the only safe way for us to access Mountcoote Gallops which we use for getting our racehorses fit. The only other option then is to ride them on the main Kilmallock/Tipperry Road. This is an extremely busy road and would surely lead to either/both horse and rider getting injured. A horse running loose on such a busy road could only lead to a catastrophic accident.

It is essential to have access to such facilities as it's a vital part of our life and business to be able to exercise our horses on our local country roads. In today's world with technology consuming our children's time and minds, their mental health is well served by being able to do so.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Siobhan Reidy Leahy', written in a cursive style.

Siobhan Reidy Leahy.

SUPPORT LETTER for
OBJECTION BY BELLY
Houlihan

Fantstown
Kilmallock
Co. Limerick.

Planning Ref.
310286

Re-Closure of Railway Crossing
at Fantstown XC187,

I want to show my objection to
the closure of this crossing.

I used this crossing for walking
& meeting neighbours and would
miss this. My Land is Let to

Gabriel Chery who farms at the
opposite side of the gates. I am
renting to him for many years
and losing him as a tenant
would be a big Los to me.

Pat Leahy

Planning Ref.....310286

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I am asking An Bord Pleanála to refuse a Railway Order to close Fantstown crossing. We need to open up opportunities for farmers and agricultural contractors. Closing the gates permanently would be a negative step.

I Farm Land at Bawntard Kilmallock and
at Ballingaddy. The shortest route between
my 2 farms is through Fantstown Railway
Crossing.

Samon O'Mahony Glenfield Agri.

