

**ASHBURY PARISH
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP**

Mark Child Esq.
Dentons
One Fleet Place
London
EC4M 7WS

23 September, 2019

Dear Mr Child,

Re: MZZC/SJA/099161.01732 Ruffinwick Farm

The Neighbourhood Plan Group is a distinct entity within Ashbury Parish Council established in order to carry out a dual mandate: to assess and make necessary representations about all planning applications in the Parish; and to ensure that planning decisions adhere strictly to the guidelines set out in the Ashbury Neighbourhood Development Plan ('ANP'). In a referendum held in July 2019, the parish residents voted overwhelmingly in favour of adopting the ANP, and the Plan was duly made by the Vale of White Horse District Council on 17 July. Accordingly, as you are no doubt aware, the Localism Act 2011 requires that due consideration is given to the development priorities as expressed in the ANP when deciding planning applications.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Network Rail's proposals concerning the level crossing at Ruffinwick Farm. As you correctly point out, the public right of way that existed in this location appears to have lapsed many years ago. The private right holder has confirmed to us that the footpath across the railway has been blocked by a locked gate for some time. And in any event, your client intends to close the level crossing by way of a Transport and Works Act order even if agreement is not reached with the right holder.

As a statutory consultee, we would like to draw your attention to Policy 5 of the ANP which specifically states as an objective "securing improvements to the public rights of way... in the plan area". The closure of rights of way contravenes this objective so while we raise no objection to your client's current proposals in view of the historic opacity of the rights in question, we will continue to protect robustly all existing footpaths and rights of way in the parish.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Yoshi Nishio
Chairman
Neighbourhood Plan Group
Ashbury Parish Council