

Network Rail has temporarily closed foot crossing near Petersfield, Hampshire

A footpath crossing of the railway near Petersfield in Hampshire has been temporarily closed pending a permanent application to extinguish it following a series of incidents.

Network Rail has applied to Hampshire County Council to permanently extinguish the crossing, near Buriton tunnel, on safety grounds.

Network Rail Project Manager, Camilla Bushill, said: "There is a history of incidents at this crossing, including near misses with children and trespassers, and in addition, there are plans to move a nearby children's playground closer to the railway.

"As safety is our number one priority, we had to do something and so we applied to the County Council for permission to extinguish the right of way. We did examine other options, such as a footbridge, but we felt that, given the short alternative route which is already advertised, the best solution was simply to close it."

Due to the unanimous decision to make the closure order, Hampshire County Council accepted a temporary closure order of the railway crossing on safety grounds, whilst the application is progressed.

Network Rail has closed more than 900 level crossings in the past five years and is committed to closing 500 more by 2019.

Miss Bushill added: "We recognise the importance of level crossings to the communities that our railway runs through and we try to work with our neighbours and crossing users to find the best solution for them. It's quite rare to close a crossing completely, but in this instance our safety concerns were such that we had to take action."

**Notes:**

Buriton foot crossing is just outside Buriton Tunnel on the line between Petersfield and Rowlands Castle.

Recent incidents at the crossing include:

A near miss with a child lying on the track at the crossing, youths throwing stones at trains, a near miss with three children playing chicken on the crossing and people trespassing on the tracks, some of which were arrested in Buriton Tunnel.