

Our ref: AEB/2122

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24/03/2025

Dear Mrs L Courtney,

Proposed partial infill of Painters Bridge, Saffron Walden

I am getting in touch to discuss the proposed partial infill of Painters Bridge, Saffron Walden, for which National Highways will be applying for planning permission. We are responsible for the management of the [Historical Railways Estate \(HRE\)](#), including this bridge.

For your convenience, below is information on the bridge and why the work is needed.

The bridge dates back to the third phase of the railway development, which was from the 1850s to the 1870s. However, this structure is not associated with any of the most notable railway engineers.

It is a three-span bridge, which carries a minor road over the former Audley End to Bartlow line near Saffron Walden. It has a large central arch, with smaller outer arches to the side.

The bridge is in very poor condition with numerous very large fractures, which seem to be caused by a combination of foundation movement and issues associated with large trees growing in close proximity.

There is no public right of way listed with Essex County Council, and there is little evidence to suggest that the bridge is of any significant historical interest, other than as a vestigial element of the former Saffron Walden Railway Line.

Due to its poor condition, it was brought to our Stakeholder Advisory Forum in November 2024 to discuss the options for its future, including repairing, strengthening, replacing and span reduction.

I'd like to draw your attention to some of the [discussions](#) that have already taken place at our Stakeholder Advisory Forum (SAF) meeting. Members of our forum include the Department for Transport, Active Travel England, Historic Scotland & England, Natural

England, Railway Heritage Trust, Railways Paths Limited and The HRE Group, amongst others.

Span reduction has been deemed the most viable option, as it removes the safety risk, retains elements of the historic structure, and is the most cost-effective option.

Following the meeting, and after consideration by the Secretary of State for Transport, we are intending to seek planning permission from Essex Council as the relevant Local Planning Authority.

If you would like someone to discuss our proposals at your next Parish Council meeting, please get in touch with Alistair Dore, the engineer responsible for this project:
Alistair.Dore@nationalhighways.co.uk

We kindly ask that you please get in touch before 25th April 2025, after which point we will be proceeding with the next steps in the planning process.

For more information about our work on the Historical Railways Estate, visit [here](#).

Yours sincerely,



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