

# Lincolnshire Level Crossing Manager issues personal plea for people to use crossings safely

August 2, 2021



As the summer holidays are underway and COVID restrictions have lifted, one of Network Rail's level crossing managers is urging people in Lincolnshire to make sure they know how to stay safe when using crossings.

Val Stephenson manages around 80 level crossings across Lincolnshire, including two of the busiest in the country:

- Lincoln High Street, which is used by around 21,000 pedestrians and cyclists, as well as 100 vehicles each day
- Brayford Wharf, which is used by around 11,000 people each day

Although bridges have been installed over the railway at both level crossings to improve safety, and the roads have been reduced to one lane, people are still getting distracted, and in some cases, completely ignoring the warning signs.

There have been three reported misuse incidents involving pedestrians at Brayford Wharf so far this year. Last year, there were 11 near-miss incidents at Lincoln High Street level crossing. Near-miss incidents are reported by a train driver, often after they have had to apply the emergency brake.

Val said: “We’ve seen a massive increase in the number of people out and about in recent weeks. It’s great to see people getting back to some kind of normal life. I’d just like to ask everyone who is using a level crossing for what might be the first time in a while to take a moment to consciously think about what they are doing and make sure they’re keeping themselves and their loved ones safe.

“It’s easy to get distracted or to think it won’t matter to rush across after the lights have started just this once. But it’s also extremely dangerous and could result in tragic consequences.”

Trains cannot stop quickly or swerve out of the way, so it is vital that anyone using a level crossing concentrates, understands the lights and warnings, follows the guidance and crosses quickly and directly. Misusing a level crossing could lead to life changing, or even fatal consequences.

Network Rail’s latest level crossing campaign highlights the dangers of being distracted while using a level crossing. You can read more about it

here: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/safety-in-the-community/railway-safety-campaigns/beware-the-bubble/>

As well as carrying out essential inspections at each crossing to make sure they are working safely and reliably, Val is often out in the community speaking to people and making sure they understand how to use level crossings safely.

Network Rail joined forces with British Transport Police on Friday 30 July for a community safety event at Lincoln High Street level crossing.

PS Richard Kane, British Transport Police, said: “Level crossings should be treated with the upmost seriousness, and we work very closely with Network Rail to educate the public and make sure that the safety measures which are in place are followed.

“I ask that everyone using level crossings have a little patience and wait until it’s safe to cross – it really isn’t worth risking serious harm in order to save a few minutes.”

- Val is part of a team of nine people who look after more than 600 level crossings across the East Midlands. This includes public road and footpath crossings, as well as crossings on private land, often farms.
- Work took place in 2016 at Lincoln High Street level crossing and in 2019 at Brayford Wharf level crossing to reduce the roads to one lane and install bridges over the railway, which has helped to reduce the number of misuse incidents.

*Photo credit: Network Rail*