

Rochford railway crossing closed amid concerns about plane noise



Grahame Oldbury at the Rochford railway crossing

[Dominic Bareham](#) / Tuesday 26 January 2016 / [News](#)

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A RAILWAY crossing has been closed amid concerns walkers can not hear approaching trains because of noise from aircraft at [Southend Airport](#).

The gate in front of the path at the end of [Rochford](#) Hall Road, Rochford has been closed and a sign put up by Network Rail warning walkers the rail crossing had been shut because planes taxiing on the airport runway were drowning out the sound of the horn signal given by train drivers.

But Rochford resident Grahame Oldbury, 78, who regularly uses the crossing on walks, slammed the decision as an example of the ‘nanny state’ and lacking in common sense.

He was hoping to include the crossing on a circular walk around the town he was organising for the Rochford Historical Society Rambler Group to link up with the golf course and Hall Road, but said pedestrians would now have to walk down to St Andrew’s Church and under the rail bridge to get to Hall Road.

He said he could not understand the rationale behind the closure because aircraft engines were quieter now than they used to be, while walkers could see approaching trains.

He added if a plane was roaring up the nearby runway then walkers could wait until it had gone before crossing the track.

He said: “It is a bit nanny state. People can use their common sense. When you cross the road, you have to pay attention.”

The former insurance underwriter, who used to work at the airport, said the crossing had existed for as long as the railway track had been there and therefore the timing of the closure did not make sense.

A Network Rail spokesman confirmed the closure for a period of six months, which began on December 18, while engineers looked at 'alternative options.' She added: "While we understand that residents want to use the crossing, we have had to close it temporarily for safety reasons.

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"The airport is now busier with planes taxiing alongside the railway, and the noise is drowning out the warning signals from approaching trains.

"Safety is a priority in this situation, and we have put the temporary closure in place while we look at alternatives going forward."