

### **3 minute speech by John Walton**

My name is John Walton and have been the Footpath Secretary of Oldham Ramblers for 42 years.

This path is an ancient highway as chronicled by Saddleworth Historical Society.

Last year the Department of Transport had raised concerns over The Alliance consortium to deliver value for money and have now withdrawn the financial package of £1.6bn for the rail line between Stalybridge to Huddersfield.

This consortium appears to have been using a gravy train to generate bigger profits than was penciled in a few years before. This could explain the increase of the 209 bridge cost from 1.2 to 3.5 million.

All the work has now been halted and it now gives us a chance to push for a more simple design. The initial cost in 2021 was based on a Rolls Royce bridge which in my opinion was way over the top compared to the 107 footbridge in Saddleworth and 116 in Mossley, plus other footbridges which I have researched.

A new consortium will not be in place for a few years and no doubt the electrification costs will be examined more closely.

I have redesigned the bridge using GRP pultrusion material which should bring the overall cost to around £75K, if day working was carried out. I would like to hand over my drawings and suggested design to Victoria after the meeting.

I propose that this S118A closure of the level crossing be refused and the Panel choose **Option 2 – Not to approve the recommendations.**

If the panel agree, in AOB, I would like to give an update of the next phase of the electrification work in Saddleworth.

John Walton 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024