

Mr B J Allen
H M Assistant Coroner for Dorset
The Coroner's Office for the County of Dorset
Town Hall
Bournemouth
BH2 6DY

Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd.
Basingstoke Campus
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RG21 4FS

13th September 2018

Dear Sir

Regulation 28 Report – Bartholomew Patrick Coleman

I refer to your report dated 25 July 2018 sent in accordance with paragraph 7, Schedule 5, of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and Regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013 in relation to the inquest into the very sad death of Bartholomew Patrick Coleman, who died on 22 January 2018.

Background

The bridge that you have identified in your report is a masonry arch bridge that supports a highway (Sandecotes Road) over a two track railway that runs from London Waterloo to Weymouth, with steep wooded embankments on both the Down and Up-sides. The bridge is in an urban area, on the northern edge of Parkstone town.

There is also a well-used public footpath that runs from just north of Parkstone Station, parallel to the Up road along the top of the embankment that then joins Sandecotes Road at the bridge at the northern parapet (low wall). This footpath is currently closed due to retaining wall works on an adjoining property. A bungalow and a house both join the Network Rail boundary on the Up-side.

Site assessment

Following your report, three members of our route staff (Infrastructure Maintenance Delivery Manager, Head of Maintenance and an Asset Engineer (Structures)) attended the site for an inspection and to make an assessment. There is evidence of access being achieved by members of the public by scaling the wall on the northern parapet on the north side of the bridge, and walking down a very steep embankment to the track side. There is evidence of litter, sign of footfall and graffiti. It is likely that Mr Coleman, as assessed in your report, may have used this path to access the track, due to the evidence of access by members of the public.

An additional access point has also been identified on the southern parapet on the same side of the line, although there is less evidence of its use by members of the public. It is also possible that this path was used by Mr Coleman to access the track.

On the opposite side of the bridge (the south side where the track runs to Poole and Weymouth), both parapet walls have a chain-link fence topped with barbed-wire, and there is no obvious or visible evidence of access down that side of the embankment.

Addressing your concerns

Noting your concerns identified in your report, and following the Network Rail staff site assessment, Network Rail is planning to apply mitigation measures (wire mesh panels with base plated fence posts fixed to the top of the parapet walls) to the parapet walls to further deter access to the track below. An order has now been placed with Network Rail's framework contractors in respect of these works, with an anticipated completion date of the end of September 2018. Network Rail will also erect a warning sign of the dangers presented and that the land belongs to Network Rail and therefore access beyond is trespass.

Safety is of paramount importance at Network Rail. It is a core value of our organisation and we strive to continuously reduce risk to passengers or members of the public. We want to learn any lessons we can from this very sad death to prevent similar circumstances arising in the future.

I hope this response provides you with adequate information and assurance that the issues you identified have been considered and addressed. If I can be of further assistance, or you would like further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



Route Managing Director, Wessex Route

