

**IN PARLIAMENT**

**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

**SESSION 2013–14**

**HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON - WEST MIDLANDS) BILL**

**PETITION**

Against – on merits – Praying to be heard by Counsel, &c.

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled.

THE HUMBLE PETITION of DR NIALl GORDON RAMSDEN AND MRS RONA MARY RAMSDEN.

SHEWETH as follows:-

1. A Bill (hereinafter referred to as “the Bill”) has been introduced and is now pending in your honourable House entitled “A Bill to make provision for a railway between Euston in London and a junction with the West Coast Main Line at Handsacre in Staffordshire, with a spur from Water Orton in Warwickshire to Curzon Street in Birmingham; and for connected purposes”
2. The Bill is presented by Mr Secretary McLoughlin, supported by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary Theresa May, Secretary Vince Cable, Secretary Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary Eric Pickles, Secretary Owen Paterson, Secretary Edward Davey, and Mr Robert Goodwill.
3. Clauses 1 to 36 set out the Bill's objectives in relation to the construction and operation of the railway mentioned in paragraph 1 above. They include provision for the construction of works, highways and road traffic matters, the compulsory acquisition of land and other provisions relating to the use of land, planning

permission, heritage issues, trees and noise. They include clauses which would disapply and modify various enactments relating to special categories of land including burial grounds, consecrated land, commons and open spaces, and other matters, including overhead lines, water, building regulations and party walls, street works and the use of lorries.

4. Clauses 37 to 42 of the Bill deal with the regulatory regime for the railway.
5. Clauses 43 to 65 of the Bill set out a number of miscellaneous and general provisions, including provision for the appointment of a nominated undertaker ("the Nominated Undertaker") to exercise the powers under the Bill, transfer schemes, provisions relating to statutory undertakers and the Crown, provision about the compulsory acquisition of land for regeneration, reinstatement works and provision about further high speed railway works. Provision is also made about the application of Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.
6. The works proposed to be authorised by the Bill are specified in clauses 1 and 2 of and Schedules 1 and 2 to the Bill. They consist of scheduled works, which are described in Schedule 1 to the Bill and other works, which are described in clause 2 of and Schedules 2 and 3 to the Bill.
7. Your Petitioners own and live in The Chilterns, Old Risborough Road, Stoke Mandeville, Bucks, HP22 5XJ and have done so for more than 10 years. Your petitioners have lived in Stoke Mandeville village for more than 30 years, initially in Marsh Lane, about 500m from their current home, but moving to Old Risborough Road in 2000 having purchased the house in 1999 and carried out extensive renovation and extension prior to moving in. Your petitioners have served on various community related organisations including School Governors, the Parent Teacher Association, Playschool Association and the Parish Council. (Dr Ramsden acting as Chairman of this council for 11 years.) Both Your Petitioners regularly assist, as volunteers, at Stoke Mandeville Village Community Association events. Dr Ramsden is now 62 and working towards retirement after a job that has involved a large amount of travelling overseas. Your petitioners purchased their current home as it included a large garden and is located in a semi-rural area on the outskirts of Stoke Mandeville. It is therefore ideal for an active retirement while maintaining close links with the community where they have lived for so long. The location was specifically selected to provide a balance between rural and village life. It is an ideal location and property for a family. One of your petitioners' daughters has moved to the area from London specifically to be close to Stoke Mandeville so that your petitioners can play an active role in the bringing up of their grandchildren. For example, your petitioners played a very active role in assisting and supporting their daughter while

their younger grandchild was in Stoke Mandeville hospital for three weeks. Stoke Mandeville hospital is approximately 3000m from the property so this allowed relatively easy access to their daughter and grandchild.

Your Petitioners belong to a local Stoke Mandeville Theatre Group formed from friends most of whom, including Your Petitioners, met when their children attended the local primary school nearly 30 years ago.

Your petitioners care very much about nature and handing over a good environment to the next generations. Consequently, as well as spending considerable sums of money upgrading and extending the house they have planted hedges and trees, all again at considerable expense, to ensure a natural habitat for wildlife.

Your Petitioners consider that their house is not just a house, it is a home that they have built as part of the local community.

The property is situated within 120m of the proposed train route. There are no buildings or structures between the house and the line and so Your Petitioners' home will be severely affected by the line – not only through excessive noise but also destruction of semi-rural environment.

To make matters worse it is understood that Risborough Road, the main road close to Old Risborough Road will be closed to through traffic to the nearby town of Princes Risborough. Old Risborough Road feeds into Risborough Road.

Approximately 7 years ago Your Petitioners moved Mrs Ramsden's mother (who is now in her 80s) to Princes Risborough when she was widowed so that they could give easy support to her. If Risborough Road is closed it will mean that the journey time to Princes Risborough will be considerably lengthened meaning that Your Petitioners will not have such fast access to Mrs Ramsden's mother in the event of an emergency or general support trips. It also means that journey times to High Wycombe hospital will be lengthened considerably. Both of Your Petitioners have had appointments and treatment at High Wycombe hospital within the last 12 months as Stoke Mandeville hospital was unable to offer suitable appointments.

The current proposals for a by-pass around Stoke Mandeville mean that Your Petitioners' home will effectively be on an "island" between the train and a road, thus increasing yet further noise levels and also preventing access to open country at the rear of the property as well as limiting travel from the front. Your Petitioners regularly access the footpaths to the rear of their property for recreational walks – this will no longer be possible or enjoyable because of access and increased noise issues.

A major marshalling yard is also planned in the area leading to additional noise and security concerns as well as destroying wildlife habitats.

Your Petitioners' property will not be demolished as a result of the Bill but as it is located so close to the line it will be severely affected with a complete change of the ambiance of the area as well as destruction of Your Petitioners' community and lifestyle. This applies to both construction and operational phases of the project. During construction there will be large numbers of vehicles using the adjacent roads as well as ongoing construction over extended periods leading to noise and traffic problems. During operation the noise from the line will mean that it will be impossible to sleep at the house and might mean that access is completely blocked at some times. At the very least there will be delays in getting to the property due to construction traffic.

Your Petitioners' do not wish to leave their home or community that has been built up for so long but they will have no alternative during construction and operation of the line. The age group of Your Petitioners' means that it will be very difficult if not impossible to build up such a home and community again.

Currently Your Petitioners' do not have the basic human right of having freedom to enjoy their home due to the massive stress caused by the HS2 project.

8. Your Petitioners and their rights, interests and property are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitioners object for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.
9. The bill includes powers for the Secretary of State and the Nominated Undertaker to do construction works which are estimated to take several years to complete and then to operate a high speed train line. These powers are already having a severe impact on your Petitioners. They are impacting on our plans for retirement in a community where we have lived for more than 30 years. During construction and operation there will be excessive noise levels from lorry movements, the creation of dust and noise, poor air quality, and 24 hour working. This will inevitably lead to severe sleep deprivation and considerable health concerns for one grandchild when he stays with us. He has already (within 12 weeks of his birth) spent 3 weeks in the local hospital with respiratory problems.

Our freedom of movement to/from our home will be lost during both construction and operational phases.

Our home will no longer have the semi-rural ambiance that we bought it before.

Transport links to nearby towns and relations will be severely affected.

The home will not be habitable due to noise, vibration, access problems during construction and operation.

The view from the front of the house (currently mainly to open countryside) will be ruined thus reducing even further the particular ambiance of the property.

The line will cause environmental damage in the area reducing both wildlife and vegetation.

The line will limit the possibility of selling the property and reduce its value immensely.

The house is currently in the proposed Voluntary Purchase Zone where, at the discretion of HS2, the house might be purchased at proper market value based on a price without HS2 being present. No proper compensation will be offered for losing one's home and community or for the high moving expenses that would be incurred.

10. Your Petitioners object to the powers that are proposed to be provided by the Bill to the Secretary of State and the Nominated Undertaker and respectfully submit that the Bill should be amended or undertakings should be required so that HS2 Limited, the Secretary of State and/or the Nominated Undertaker must review the construction and operation strategy for the project and its related works by considering their cumulative impacts on communities.

In particular routes that use existing transport corridors should be used. If the currently proposed route is used then additional measures to prevent disastrous effects on homes and the environment should be implemented. In particular this means that tunnelling should be used for the line in the vicinity of Stoke Mandeville, extending the currently proposed tunnel emerging near Wendover to North of Aylesbury.

The access from Old Risborough Road to Risborough Road in both directions should be maintained.

Any new by pass in the area of Old Risborough Road should be in a cutting to reduce noise in the area.

Construction hours and train operating hours should be limited normal "office hours" 0900hrs to 1700hrs.

Proper compensation should be offered immediately to those whose home, environment, freedom of movement and community will be so severely and effected. This must include for compensation for losing their home and community, all expenses related to moving and a true market evaluation price for their property based on the line not being in the vicinity. This offer should be available for take up at any time, at the discretion of the property owner, between the current time and operation of the line.

11. For the foregoing and connected reasons your Petitioners respectfully submit that, unless the Bill is amended as proposed above, so far affecting your Petitioners, should not be allowed to pass into law.

12. There are other clauses and provisions of the Bill which, if passed into law as they now stand will prejudicially affect your Petitioner(s) and their rights, interests and property and for which no adequate provision is made to protect your Petitioner(s).

YOUR PETITIONERS therefore humbly pray your Honourable House that the Bill may not be allowed to pass into law as it now stands and that they may be heard by their Counsel, Agents and witnesses in support of the allegations of this Petition against so much of the Bill as affects the property, rights and interests of your Petitioners and in support of such other clauses and provisions as may be necessary or expedient for their protection, or that such other relief may be given to your Petitioners in the premises as your Honourable House shall deem meet.

AND your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

Signed

Dr Niall Gordon Ramsden

Mrs Rona Mary Ramsden

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