

IN PARLIAMENT  
HOUSE OF COMMONS  
SESSION 2013–14

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

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 ARTHUR TAYLOR

SHEWETH as follows:-

1 A Bill (hereinafter referred to as “the Bill”) has been introduced and is now pending in your honourable House intituled “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 Old Oak Common in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham to a junction with the Channel Tunnel Rail Link at York Way in the London Borough of Islington and 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 ("the Authorised Works") are specified in clauses 1 and 2 of and Schedule 1 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 the Bill.

7 Your Petitioner is Arthur Taylor of 310 Cromwell Lane Burton Green.

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 Your petitioner is affected in a number of ways by the HS2 Proposal. I am a resident of Cromwell Lane, about 600 yards from the route so I am not directly impacted by the inevitable dust and noise of construction.

However your petitioner is most affected by the chosen route. I regularly walk the Greenway and the adjoining footpaths and these amenities will be devastated by the Proposal. Hedgerows and trees will be uprooted and it is doubtful if anyone will want to do these walks during construction. Even when the line is operational, your petitioner will be saddened by the transformation of the landscape and the loss of tranquillity, and the previous sense of wellbeing will be lost forever.

Your petitioner is even more concerned by the impact of the Proposal on the community sustainability of Burton Green. I have been a member of the Residents' Association and the Parish Council for many years and I care deeply about the future of our community. Though in some ways, the village looks unremarkable: it is a ribbon development without the focal point of a church or village green, it harbours a true community spirit. It is welcoming and unpretentious and even HS2 Ltd complemented us on the respect we showed their representatives when they visited our village. Sadly that respect was not reciprocated from the very day, March 11<sup>th</sup> 2010, when the line was announced.

Your petitioner notes that news of this proposal did not come from HS2 but from TV crews who informed, and shocked, residents that the line was going through their gardens. This lack of respect has continued through tick box exercises, masquerading as consultations, and bogus community forums. It is no surprise that the residents are completely alienated by the political process, believing perhaps naively that Britain was the cradle of democracy which honoured and respected its democratic traditions.

Your petitioner is especially anxious, as I have already mentioned, by the threat to its community sustainability. In the draft Environmental Statement, much emphasis seemed to be placed on this concept but this vital element seemed to disappear in the final environmental statement.

Your petitioner is very worried about the future of our school. My wife and I are both retired teachers and we recognise that a village school is critical to its community and its loss would

be a serious blow. My three children attended this school and my wife was a governor. Yet our school is threatened. It is likely that the construction of the 'cut-and-cover' tunnel right through the heart of our village and the consequent traffic dislocation which it will bring, will deter parents from sending children to the school. The majority of parents live outside Burton Green and it is probable that some potential parents will choose schools which are more peaceful and less dangerous. Your petitioner is also concerned about the two nursery schools in Burton Green who will experience similar problems to the school.

But perhaps your petitioner's greatest concern is the impact on people's lives and the community in general. For over four years people (many of whom are elderly and in poor health) have endured considerable anxiety. There are few communities outside of London who have had to bear more of the brunt of HS2 with over 20% of the village living within 120 metres of the line. In some ways, the recent compensation proposals afford some relief as some are now in a position to move. However there are still a number who don't want to leave but are frightened by the effects of construction on their lives. Your petitioner would like to point out that one of the features of life in Burton Green, and this is evident in the recently published Parish Plan, is that people tend to stay in Burton Green for a lifetime. This is not only because of its environment and rural setting but especially because it has a tangible community spirit. Your petitioner is most concerned about the threat to its spirit which has been built up over many years. Since so many people may leave the village, even though the majority would almost certainly have stayed without HS2, Burton Green would be losing key figures in the community who have played key roles in shaping our character.

Your petitioner is also worried that a number of houses will lie empty which, again, will further undermine our community.

Your petitioner believes that people matter and so do communities. Your petitioner also believes that Parliament has a duty to make sure that people and communities are not discriminated against in the pursuit of a 'supposed' national interest.

Consequently your petitioner urges that a deep bored tunnel is built, option F, which would pass under Crackley Lane and Cromwell Lane before moving into Berkswell and ending up in a location which is in accordance with residents' wishes. Burton Green is on a hill and HS2 Ltd engineers have shown that the tunnel is technically viable.

Your petitioner recognises that the tunnel is expensive but what price do you put on ancient woods, a superb recreation amenity, the Greenway, and, above all, what price do you put on people's lives?

Your petitioner demands fairness and justice.

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

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

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 Petitioner in the premises as your Honourable House shall deem meet.

AND your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

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AGAINST, By Counsel, &c.

