

IN PARLIAMENT

HOUSE OF COMMONS

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 THE STONELEIGH HISTORY SOCIETY

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 Petitioner is the Stoneleigh History Society, an unincorporated society formed to research into, study and record the history of Stoneleigh Village and the Parish of Stoneleigh in the County of Warwick and its environs, the origins and development of Stoneleigh, its heritage, its communities and inhabitants, their activities and occupations, its land and land uses, buildings and architecture, sites or places of archaeological and historical interest, its topography, geology and environment. It is a large and active group concerned to promote interest in and to give future generations knowledge of the historic landscape, buildings and environment as well as studying the lives of those who have inhabited the area and contributed to its story. Your Petitioners regard the medieval Stare Bridge as an integral feature in this story.
8. Your Petitioner and its interests are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitioner objects for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.

Under Schedule 17 in Volume 2 The Bill includes powers for the Secretary of State and the Nominated Undertaker to demolish, alter or extend Stare Bridge, Stoneleigh Road, Grade II* Listed. Described as "a fair bridge of stone" by Dugdale in his Antiquities of Warwickshire and Scheduled as Warwickshire Monument No 11 it is contemporary in style and architecture to, and constructed of the same red sandstone material as the Gatehouse of Stoneleigh Abbey, a fourteenth century building. It may well have been built by the Cistercian monks of Stoneleigh Abbey, is 76.2m long and has eight segmental arches. Its unusual feature is the inclusion of seventeen buttresses on the downstream side. The proposals in the Bill will inevitably have a serious impact upon the

structure, leading to the loss of a significant historic feature of our village, effectively severing a connection between the ancient lands of the Abbey and its surrounding estates.

9. 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 their proposals by considering the impact upon historic landscape and architecture. All steps should be taken not to compromise the protection offered under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The effect of destroying or altering such important historic features will be to lose a key marker in the story of this part of ancient Warwickshire. Your Petitioners respectfully ask that necessary changes are made before works designs and construction strategies are finalised or construction contractors employed.

10. For the foregoing and connected reasons your Petitioner respectfully submits that, unless the Bill is amended as proposed above, so far affecting your Petitioner, 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 Petitioner and their rights, interests and property and for which no adequate provision is made to protect your Petitioner.

YOUR PETITIONER therefore humbly prays 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 Petitioner 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 Petitioner will ever pray, &c.

Signed

Sheila Woolf,

On behalf of the Stoneleigh History Society

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SESSION 2013-14

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