

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 RAY WATKIN and KRISTIN WATKIN

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 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 Petitioners, with a combined working total of 77 years as secondary school teachers, felt we deserved the best in our retirement. After much careful research we bought 2’The Hollies’, a 19th. Century (1858) cottage in January 2010 (some months before the announcement of the construction of HS2) because it provided just what we were looking for – a rural sanctuary, near Warwick Arts Centre, offering opportunities to be part of the rich village community centred on Burton Green village hall and where we could enjoy our favourite pastimes of walking, cycling, gardening and bird watching with our grandchildren along the Greenway. We have invested a significant portion of our savings in restoring the cottage to make a unique flexible living space whilst preserving its character and charm and developing the gardens and outbuildings to enhance its setting because this was to be our retirement home. However, since the announcement of the construction of HS2 and our growing understanding of what will be involved in relation to Burton Green and in particular the impact the planned construction site adjacent to our property (which lies at the junction of Red Lane with Hob Lane and Cromwell Lane) and the associated construction traffic, our dream of an active and healthy retirement has been shattered. When construction starts our property will be about 15 metres from the proposed construction site which will have a devastating effect on the present tranquillity of our gardens through noise, vibration, dust and in winter intrusive lighting. Our ability to walk footpaths directly from our property will not be possible and our off-road and on-road cycling very difficult because of the road use of heavy earth moving lorries which will be passing our front door every 20 minutes or so as they turn into Hob Lane, the severe traffic control systems which will be in place along Cromwell Lane and Hodgetts Lane for the duration of the construction phase and the loss of direct access to the Greenway. The proposed construction of HS2 through the village is also destroying community life with the demolition of the village hall and the level of blight ourselves and our neighbours are experiencing
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 petitioners assert that we are unreasonably and unnecessarily affected by the HS2 railway current design, as described in the Bill and in supporting documents including the Environmental Statement. Unreasonably in that the proposed design is insufficiently effective at mitigating the effects of the scheme at completion and more significantly in that little or no account seems to be taken at the proposed construction method – a cut-and-cover tunnel

which bisects the village. We are unnecessarily affected as effective and technically feasible solutions are known to exist in the form of bored tunnels.

10. Your petitioners' property is described in the documentation as being subject to significant impacts during the lengthy construction phase which will include noise, dust, traffic and during winter months intrusive site lighting.
11. Your petitioners note that while we do not wish to leave our property at this time our circumstances may change over the next few years (for example our health may deteriorate or the disturbance and disruption of the construction phase may become intolerable) and we would have to consider selling. However we are outside the Voluntary Purchase Scheme and the value of our property will be badly affected by the construction of HS2 and its completion. It is not possible to sell houses in this part of the village – one property 4 houses down has been on the market for over 3 years, and despite significantly reducing the asking price there has been no interest.
12. Your petitioners specifically request that full consideration is given to extending the Voluntary Purchase Scheme to include properties which are **especially blighted** by the construction phase as set out above. We are some 40 metres outside the 120 metre Voluntary Purchase Scheme zone but will be within 15 metres of the proposed construction site with all its attendant disruption and disturbance until 2024, by which time one of your petitioners will be 80 years old.
13. Your petitioners also specifically request that full consideration is given to one of the bored tunnel proposals, for which that described as 'Option F' within HS2 documents would solve all our individual concerns and of course those of many others in both this village and the wider area.
14. 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.
15. 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 Petitioners in the premises as your Honourable House shall deem meet.

AND your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

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