

High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Bill

Against the Bill – 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 Wendy Gray

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 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 Secretary Patrick 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, 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 compulsory acquisition, the extinction and exclusion of rights over land, the temporary possession and use of land, planning permission and deregulation in connection with, inter alia, heritage and environmental matters. Clauses 37 to 52 deal with railway matters, nominated and statutory undertakers, regeneration and reinstatement and further high speed rail works. Clauses 53 to 65 contain miscellaneous and general provisions.
4. The nominated undertaker (defined in the Bill and hereinafter referred to as “the nominated undertaker”) is authorised by the Bill to construct and maintain the works specified in Schedule 1 to the Bill being works for the construction of Phase One of High Speed 2 and works consequent on or incidental to such works. These works are called “the scheduled works”.
5. Your Petitioner and her brother and sister are the owners of Road Farm on the opposite side of the valley to the proposed HS2 route, within the zone of visibility, adjacent to the main A413 required for construction traffic and opposite Leather Lane which will be cut off during works. Your Petitioner has an honours degree in Science and the Environment, has considerable nature conservation consultation experience within Buckinghamshire and consequently has grave concerns regarding the ecological impact of the current HS2 scheme on the Chilterns AONB, notwithstanding the Biodiversity of the British Countryside as a whole.
6. Your Petitioner also runs a self-catering cottage on the farm which attracts international visitors and is aware that anyone living, working and visiting Road Farm will be directly and injuriously affected by HS2.

7. Your Petitioner and their rights, interests and property are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitioners object for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.

8. Your Petitioner is concerned that the construction and operation of the high speed railway and associated development at Leather Lane/ Potter row cutting and on the wider area will impact significantly upon the quiet enjoyment of the Property and the neighbourhood by way of noise, disturbance, visual intrusion and traffic increases. Your Petitioner believes that a fully bored tunnel through the AONB would be the solution to all these issues and would protect the immeasurable heritage value of the entire AONB including the historic town of Wendover.

9. Your Petitioner is concerned that substantial increase in lorry and other vehicular movements caused by construction traffic will cause considerable disruption and substantial delays along all local roads including the A413 which your Petitioner is required to use daily for all access outside the farm. Your petitioner requests that the Nominated Undertaker has full regard for peak traffic flow times and prohibits lorry movements during those morning and evening rush times.

10. Your Petitioner is gravely concerned for the safety of children and their parents attending schools along the Ridge, particularly at Lee Common. The narrow lanes are wholly unsuited to meeting heavy vehicles, rendering any journey as perilous. Your Petitioner requests that the Nominated Undertaker adopts a plan agreed by schools within the area to reduce traffic on the road at school collection times and in addition to conduct pedestrian and country-lane awareness programmes for their lorry drivers.

11. Your Petitioner requests that large vehicles as well as other construction traffic must be strictly controlled, having regard to the particular sensitivities of the area. Your Petitioner therefore requests that the nominated undertaker should be subject to binding mitigation measures in relation to the control of all construction traffic, assessment of suitability of roads for construction traffic, routing of lorries and other vehicles in accordance with a list of routes to be agreed with the nominated undertaker and the relevant local authority.

12. Your Petitioner is concerned about the wear and tear, and degradation to the highways as a result of construction traffic. Your Petitioner requests that appropriate funding should be provided by the nominated undertaker to the highway authority for the maintenance, repair and reinstatement of highways required for use by construction traffic.

13. Your Petitioner is concerned about the closure of Leather Lane, cutting off the main route of school access and for the level of work required up this lane. Additional access vehicles and lorries could cause congestion at a fast point along the A413. Your Petitioner suggests that localised, slight road widening undertaken opposite the bottom of Leather Lane would facilitate safe traffic movements along the A413 and ease access to Road Farm without disrupting traffic flow on this busy road. The alignment and design of such alteration must be discussed with the local highways authority in order to minimise land-take and ensure it is appropriate for the rural location. Your Petitioner draws attention to the fact that all the aforementioned concerns would be removed if the scheme were to adopt a fully bored tunnel to north of Wendover.

14. Your Petitioner notes that the proposed deposition of spoil on top of the existing, clearly defined stretch of ridge at Hunt's Green will cause a permanent and negative change to the AONB. Consequent wind and water borne soil erosion of this mound would seriously effect a wide area in terms of both ecology, personal and business nuisance and potentially affect road safety. The

Petitioner prefers that an alternative solution be sought in agreement with the Chilterns Conservation Forum. Your Petitioner requests that clearer limits are made by the nominated undertaker as to the scale of any spoil deposition and that a private body is appointed to oversee the assignment of soils to different areas.

15. Your Petitioner is concerned that the projected night time noise from HS2 operations, transmitted both across and along the Misbourne Valley, will be substantially above the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines for night time noise (30 dB between 23.00 and 07.00). Your Petitioner considers that day time noise will also be intrusive and requests again that the route alignment is altered to either a deeper cutting or more preferably, adopting a fully bored tunnel through the Chilterns.

16. Your Petitioner is concerned that there is potential for disruption of utilities and services to Road Farm which could cause considerable problems to those living here, including visitors here on holiday. Your petitioner requests that the nominated undertaker should be subject to binding mitigation measures in respect to disruption of services and have in place a contingency plan in anticipation of such potential disruption. The binding proposals should include implementing alternative arrangements prior to any relocation of utilities and indemnify your petitioner from any loss or damage arising from such work.

17. Your Petitioner is concerned that increased congestion on the roads due to construction traffic may so hinder the arrival of emergency vehicles as to cause both loss of life and loss of buildings, let alone contents. This is a matter of extreme gravity and your Petitioner requests that the Nominated Undertaker draws up a full Emergency Services Access plan prior to commencement of any work, that this plan is agreed by relevant Parish Councils and approved by the County Council. Your Petitioner also wishes to be given an indemnity from any damage or loss caused by delay in Emergency Service arrival due to effects of the construction of HS2.

18. Your Petitioner is concerned that existing planting schemes alongside the current cutting arrangement close to Cottage Farm are unlikely to have any effect on screening HS2 for at least 50 years, if ever. Your Petitioner requests a deepening of the cutting or rather realignment to a fully bored tunnel.

19. Your Petitioner notes that there will be considerable loss of natural habitat within the area during the long construction phase, which will have detrimental and potentially irreversible effects upon wildlife populations and consequently negatively effect the area's biodiversity.

20. The Petitioner requests that the Nominated Undertaker gives immediate consideration to the enrichment of existing habitat through funds available for specific projects such as improved hedgerow management and planting of additional native species within gaps. An immediate survey could determine the most effective locations for such works, which should be conducted under the approval of the Local Wildlife Trust, Nature Conservation Forum and Local Landowners.

21. Your Petitioner is concerned about the risk of train strike to both Bats and Barn Owls in this area and that consequently it could be impossible for these species to ever re-colonise the area following construction. Your Petitioner requests that further research is put into finding a effective measures to prevent train strike of flying wild-life, in addition to the nest boxes the Nominated Undertaker has already promised to provide in suitable habitat further from the scheme.

22. Your Petitioner notes the considerable loss of other types of valuable habitat, in particular the extent of ancient woodland which will be lost in the Chilterns as well elsewhere on the proposed

route. Whilst your Petitioner is pleased to see the Nominated Undertaker has made some attempt to mitigate woodland loss through attempted translocation of soil to new woodland, this will not recreate the intricate assemblage of fungi, higher flora and micro fauna so vital in ancient woodland wild-life assemblages. The Petitioner requests that the proposed route be re-aligned to a fully bored tunnel to prevent loss of all woodland and other habitat across the Chilterns AONB.

23. Your Petitioner is concerned about the effect on farmland bird populations, both during and after construction particularly as noise is known to effect their reproductive capacity. Your Petitioner's Farm has worked hard over many years to maintain good Farmland Bird populations and to provide an educational resource to schools. It is of grave concern that the construction and operation of HS2 could reduce the populations of bird species along the entire route, further negatively effecting the nation's biodiversity which has been attained over millennia. Your Petitioner suggests that further research is required into noise abatement, particularly with regard to design issues. is the frequency of service is reduced.

24. Your Petitioner is concerned about that no consideration has been given to the damage of ancient green lanes by haulage vehicles, either to their narrow, twisting character or to the floral assemblages along the verges. Your Petitioner requests that the Nominated Undertaker enables translocation of soil from appropriately parts of Leather Lane and other lanes which may be irreversibly affected (in this case relevant to ancient woodland indicator species Bluebell, Wood Anemone and Primrose). Such translocation should be conducted with the participation of the local Wildlife Trust and local volunteers.

25. Your Petitioner is very concerned that there are several bridleways close to the scheme at Great Missenden currently being proposed as Byways Open to All Traffic. Mapridge Green Lane and Gypsy Lane are wholly unsuitable for traffic and your Petitioner requests the Nominated Undertaker gives full assurance that at no point during the construction of HS2 will these un-metalled, narrow green lanes be recommended as alternative construction or general traffic routes.

26. Your Petitioner notes that the Nation's money invested towards improved nature conservation through Countryside Stewardship Schemes across the country could be severely jeopardised through the construction and operation of HS2. Your Petitioner does not believe that the HS2 scheme will ever be cost effective and deliver its goals, however requests that a fully bored tunnel would retain the landscape across the Chilterns and hence the value of Stewardship investment, both in financial and nature conservation terms.

27. Your Petitioner is concerned at the loss of agricultural land to unproductive area and the ultimate, irreversible negative effect this has on the productive capacity of this temperate county in the future. Your Petitioner suggests that use of a fully bored tunnel would reduce the land-take. Your Petitioner also requests that the nominated undertaker adheres to an effective plan of soil storage with re-utilised as soon as possible in appropriate productive locations.

28. Your Petitioner is aware that there are nature conservation opportunities through the potential recreation of chalk grassland habitat in potential proximity to existing species rich chalk grassland, although aware that this would be a long term process. Your Petitioner requests that such opportunities are embraced by the Nominated Undertaker with the full consultation of the Nature Conservation Forum and Wildlife Trust.

29. Your Petitioner is concerned about the potential impact of tunnel boring upon the integrity of the Chalk aquifer, which provides potable water to many thousands as well as unique biological habitat of European significance. Your Petitioner requests that the Nominated Undertaker gives full assurance that any tunnel boring will neither at the point of construction nor at any point in future

operation cause significant failure of the aquifer, so as to render negligible its water retentive capacity for surface nature conservation value as well as for potable water.

30. Your Petitioner wishes to fully endorse the Petitions submitted by the Chilterns Conservation Board, Wendover HS2, the Chiltern Society and both Wendover and Great Missenden Parish Councils. Your Petitioner humbly requests that sincere care be put into the consideration of all these Petitions, for the sake of future generations to come.

YOUR PETITIONER therefore prays your Honourable House that the Bill may not be allowed to pass into law as it now stands and that he may be heard by Counsel, Agent and witnesses in support of the allegations of this Petition against such of the clauses and provisions of the Bill as affect the rights and interests of your Petitioner and in support of such other clauses, amendments or provisions as may be necessary or expedient for his protection, or that such other relief may be given to your Petitioner as your Honourable House may deem meet.

Petitioner: WENDY GRAY

Signature of
petitioner:

