

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 The Dunsmore Village Hall Association

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 The Dunsmore Village Hall Association, Charity no. 1046369 was formed in 1993. It has a formal constitution stating the purpose of the Association. At the October 2013 AGM it was unanimously formally agreed that the Association would Petition against the High Speed Rail (London-West Midlands Bill) on behalf of its members. Vanessa Havard of Springfield Dunsmore as Chair of the Association was authorized to petition on its behalf. It was agreed that Andy Stancombe of Clematis, Dunsmore , Buckinghamshire HP22 6QH as a Trustee of The Dunsmore Village Hall Association would act as Roll B Agent.

The purpose of the Association being to maintain the land and building known as Dunsmore Village Hall for the use of the residents of Dunsmore and its environs in the Parishes of Wendover and Ellesborough. With the object of providing recreational, social and educational activities.

Dunsmore is the highest settlement in The Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AoNB) located some 800ft above sea level. Dunsmore experiences high levels of tranquility and exceptionally low levels of light pollution. The Rural White Paper 2000 stated, "Protecting the countryside from further intrusion of noise is not a luxury it is about preserving and promoting a feature that is valued by residents and visitors alike". EW directive 2002/30 also requires Authorities to protect low noise environments. The settlement has fortunately no street lighting.

A steep single-track roads running from the A413 to the East and the Rignall Road to the West approach it. Dunsmore has a large number of ProW running through it and attracts walkers, horse riders and cyclists, as it is located on The Chiltern Cycle Way. The Ridgeway long distance footpath runs just to the West of the settlement attracting many walkers. Many of the paths and tracks run along the ridge on which Dunsmore is situated, giving far reaching views across and along the Misbourne Valley through which it is proposed to run the HS2 line on two viaducts and an embankment. Dunsmore features in ZTV published with the ES.

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

9 Your Petitioner (Dunsmore Village Hall Association - DVHA) is concerned that it will be seriously and adversely affected during both the construction phase and then during operation.

In Summary The DVHA will be affected because

1. Reduction in monetary value of its only asset i.e. The Village Hall. We understand there has been a property value reduction of 20% in Dunsmore over the last year attributed to HS2. Whereas has been a universal rise in

property value in the South East. This is uncompensated loss of value of the only Asset.

2. Loss of income in the long term i.e. during construction and operation as there would be a significant decline in amenity value. Caused by severe environmental degradation. In financial year 2012-2013 over 50% of income received came from monies received for external use. This will be seriously affected and as a consequence the Village Hall may not be a viable entity.

3. Loss of quality of life for members of the Association in terms of the quality of recreational facilities available within the village due to Environmental degradation i.e. noise, visual, light dust, and separately income loss.

4. Emergency access to the Village Hall will be severely impaired during construction. Insurance risks may well increase as a result of the construction thus having implications with regard for the health and well being of members and the fabric of the building building. Buckinghamshire already has long response times for Ambulance response due to the rural nature and distances travelled on small lanes, with the predicted congestion announced by Hs2 Ltd in the Environmental Statement the response times will increase further possibly with very serious consequences.

5) Nearly 50% of the main settlement is occupied by families with children of school age. The disruption during construction will adversely affect the journey time and increase stress levels resulting in a risk to academic achievement. This conflicts with the stated aims to increase the educational standards in this Country by the Government.

6) The increase in construction traffic will inevitably carry chalk slurry and debris from the construction sites onto the road network. Whilst cleaning lorries will presumably be employed to address this, both the slurry and plant will present an additional risk of accident possibly fatal and the risk of serious further delays.

7) Dunsmore is a unique tranquil settlement that provides a respite from the pressures of modern life. People report that once across the Chiltern Line railway bridge they feel that they are truly home and insulated from the day to day stress. The construction process of HS2 will erode this barrier which will inevitably increase stress levels within families, impacting on family harmony which will affect the harmony of the whole community which is highly interlinked with a high level of community spirit.

8) Dunsmore has an Ecumenical Church which attracts many visitors and worshippers from surrounding villages . The prime source of funding for this Church is from cream teas throughout the summer months. These teas attract walkers and bicycle riders and has become the main source of revenue for the

Church. Clearly any decrease in visitor numbers will adversely impact on the financial benefits for the Church and could affect the viability of the Church itself, jeopardising yet another local amenity.

9) The view has been expressed by our members that if hypothetically a planning application were to be submitted for building thousands of houses on the proposed footprint of the HS2 development the application would be rejected outright on the grounds of it was within the AONB, Green -Belt and historical sites (Grimms Ditch), ironically dwellings would have a positive impact on both the local economy and Nationally by way of revenue generation. By contrast HS2 will actually destroy the local economy along with local incomes. This is evidence of a flawed business case, we are unsure as to which business case is currently being postulated for this we apologise.

10) Members of our community along with our "Current" Prime Minister enjoy regular walks in the historic woodlands around Dunsmore. To quote Time Out Country Breaks in conjunction with Visit England " It's close proximity to the Capital has ensured Buckinghamshire has long been a Country retreat of choice for many indeed Prime Ministers have savoured a bit of R&R at their country address, Chequers, since 1921.

Chequers is located 1 mile West of Dunsmore.

It seems bizarre that whilst the political elite are invited to the calm relaxing atmosphere of Chequers the powers that be are content to desecrate the adjoining valley 1 mile to the East.

11) Your Petitioner opines that The Select Committee should note that the points raised in this Petition are commensurate with the unanimous sense of outrage and disbelief and incomprehension that this desecration of a legally protected landscape is proceeding, as witnessed by the proportion of Petitions submitted to The House from this community in relation to the number of dwellings that are so grievously affected.

Issues of concern arising from Operation.

1) This project once completed, cannot be reversed, this may well be a statement of the obvious, however, the desecration caused will never be one that can ever be recovered. The damage is irreversible and it shows that the legal protection provided to other protected landscapes throughout the Country are deluded if they think that they have a truly protected status. Therefore unless a proven business can be established then the operation cannot be allowed to destroy protected landscapes.

2) Unlike other infrastructure projects such as motorways, this railway has no benefit to those most affected by its construction and operation as there is no access. As such we have" no gain only pain ". The project is City connection

based and the rural environment is left to suffer the ill effects with no compensation or minimal mitigation.

3) Once in operation the visual, aural impact will still be starkly evident to everyone in this valley and especially those living on the ridges along the crests. The environment of Dunsmore will have been destroyed for the residents and most importantly for future generations, this was the reason for the legal protection offered to specialist landscapes. This disregard for local sensitivities is best evidenced by the proposed "sustainable placement site" at Hunt's Green, this is in effect a waste dump, 1.3 km by 450 mts by 9 mts high. This shows a complete disregard for the concept of a protected unique landscape. For the benefit of the Committee this equates to at least 100 football pitches in length by 10 pitches wide and the height of over 2 double decker buses high!!!! (At least Double Decker buses might be of use to the local community) !

This will change the appearance of the Misbourne Valley completely in perpetuity.

4) The Dunsmore Village Hall Association is extremely concerned about the issue of noise affecting the Village environs. With the village being located above the line, HS2 Ltd have already admitted that we cannot be mitigated and protected from the visual and aural disturbance. HS2 Ltd have failed to produce any satisfactory plans to protect Dunsmore from this disturbance, therefore the operational phase with 36 trains per hour will cause extreme disturbance to the village and its residents.

5) Dunsmore experiences extensive views across the rolling Chiltern Hills and the protected open spaces afford valuable amenities to both residents and tourists alike. Buckinghamshire boasts over 2500 miles of public footpaths, many of the noted tracks being located in The Chilterns. Plans to close, re-route and radically alter the nature of, these paths will dramatically alter the views of the Misbourne Valley to both residents and visitors alike.

Remedies:

If the business case is so concrete then there can be no justification for not affording the Northern part of the AONB the protection of a fully bored tunnel.

This is a project with a minimum 60 year life, with the ongoing subsidy required for this period and the current estimate of £50 billion construction cost, then the expenditure on a fully bored tunnel throughout the whole Chiltern AONB and Green Belt land would be a small amount compared to overall budget. There should be full protection for this legally protected landscape and we ask the Committee to support our Petition and requests for mitigation

- 10 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.



Signature of Petitioner.

Role IS AGENT



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(LONDON-WEST MIDLANDS)
BILL

PETITION OF Dunsmore Village Hall
Association

AGAINST, By Counsel, &c.

Roll B Agent