

IN PARLIAMENT

HOUSE OF COMMONS

SESSION 2013–14

HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON – WEST MIDLANDS) BILL

Against – on Merits – 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 English Folk Dance and Song Society

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 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, 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 are the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) which is a registered charity and is the primary folk arts organization for England. It is a multifaceted organization working locally, nationally and internationally. This petition has been prepared by Katy Spicer, Chief Executive [or whatever you are] of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. The petition has been approved by the board of the English Folk Dance and Song Society which has authorised Katy Spicer to present the petition on their behalf.

8. EFDSS was formed from the merger in 1932 of the Folk Song Society (founded in 1898) and the English Folk Dance Society (founded 1911). One of the founder members at the formation of EFDSS was the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams. For many years HRH Princess Margaret was the President of EFDSS.

9. EFDSS is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. In addition to Arts Council England its work is currently supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Folk Music Fund, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the City of London Corporation Charity – the City Bridge Trust and other charitable trusts and individual donors.

10. Your petitioners are the owners of Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London NW1 very close to which the railway proposed in the bill will pass in tunnel.

11. Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London NW1 has been the headquarters of EFDSS since 1930. The Building stands in its own grounds at the fork of Regent's Park Road and Gloucester Avenue and has a flank wall to both roads. It is a Grade II listed building. Cecil Sharp House houses the administrative offices of EFDSS and the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (VWML), the designated library of the folk arts and five spaces for performance and educational use. Two of the performance spaces are at basement level, in which the café, bar and archive rooms of the VWML are also situated. The main hall contains a large mural (20 m by 10 m) created by the renowned artist Ivon Hitchens in the post-World War II rebuilding of Cecil Sharp House.

12. Cecil Sharp House is a world-class dedicated folk arts centre and is at the heart of English folk. With a unique history stretching back to 1930, the venue is a memorial to the folk music and dance collector Cecil Sharp. It is vibrant and diverse and exists to serve its wide and diverse audiences - engaging with art lovers through unique and inspiring artistic events, and creative learning.

13. One of the most legendary and historic music and dance venues in London, Cecil Sharp House has also served as a location for films, television programmes and fashion shoots. Cecil Sharp House regularly hosts barn dances, ceilidhs, and performances by traditional and more modern folk luminaries. Cecil Sharp House also plays host to some of the biggest names in folk and popular music. In 2011 Cecil Sharp House and its programme of events was awarded the "Unsung Musical Hero's Award" by the Mayor of Camden; it was voted the second best music venue in London by readers of *Time Out Magazine* in 2012 and one of its creative projects, *The Full English*, has just won two awards at the recent BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards 2014 together with Cecil Sharp being the first person (posthumously) to be inaugurated into the new BBC Radio 2 Folk Hall of Fame.

14. The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library is England's national folk music and dance archive, an essential resource for anybody interested in the folk arts. Founded in 1930 as the Cecil Sharp Library and housing Cecil Sharp's personal book collection (which helped lay the foundations of the modern folk revival), it is now a multi-media library of distinction,

containing books, pamphlets, periodicals, press cuttings, broadsides, paintings, photographs, slides, artefacts, records, reel-to-reel tapes, phonograph cylinders, videos, cine films, compact discs, audio cassettes and more. It is a comprehensive collection, containing the largest number of folk manuscripts in England and providing an insight into history and regional variations. EFDSS is the library's custodian. The Library was given an excellence award by the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres in 2010 and has been "designated" by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in 2011.

15. We believe that because of these uses Cecil Sharp House is a highly sensitive non-residential building which should receive proper protection from the effects of the railway. Cecil Sharp House is currently undergoing a substantial modernization and refurbishment to meet twenty-first century needs.

16. 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.

17. Your petitioners aver that there will be substantial interference from noise and vibration from trains passing through the tunnel which will cause serious interference with performances of the Folk Arts in Cecil Sharp House and with the use of the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. Because of the defence provided to the Nominated Undertaker under Schedule 25 your petitioners' remedies will be seriously and unreasonably limited.

18. The railway will pass near to Cecil Sharp House at a closest horizontal distance of about 60 m, going underneath the houses on the opposite side of Gloucester Avenue. It is not clear from the drawings annexed to the Environmental Statement exactly how deep the tunnel will be, but because of its proximity to the Euston Portal it is evident that it will be relatively shallow. Cecil Sharp House lies not only within the ground-borne sound and vibration study area for highly sensitive non-residential buildings but also within the ground-borne sound and vibration study area for residential and non-residential buildings. EFDSS is concerned that, unless proper mitigation measures are used in the design and construction of the HS2 tunnels and the operation of the railway, noise from the passage of trains will have a serious adverse effect on the use of Cecil Sharp House.

19. Your petitioners ask your Honourable House to amend the Bill in order to ensure that the railway is designed, constructed and operated in such a way that they and their rights, interests and property are not affected by noise and vibration from the railway.

20. For the foregoing and connected reasons your Petitioners respectfully submit that, unless the Bill is amended as proposed above, clauses 1 to 36 so far affecting your Petitioners, should not be allowed to pass into law.

21. 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.