

Angela Foster

OBS/ ZGS
GL16

From: Sarah Liesching
Sent: 29 May 2018 13:15
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT
Subject: Objection to RVR's Compulsory Purchase of Land between Bodiam and Robertsbridge

25th May 2018

Objection to the Compulsory Purchase of land by the private company

Rother Valley Railway

Dear Mr Grayling

I write to raise my objections to the extension of the Rother Valley Railway line from Bodiam to Robertsbridge.

There are so many reasons not to build the extension that it beggars belief that the project has proceeded to this precipice point.

The existing line from Tenterden to Bodiam is perfectly adequate to bring tourism to the area and connects a pretty market town with good services, to the historical castle at Bodiam. As much as I love Robertsbridge, it's hardly a destination village in its own rights and certainly not in the (inflated) numbers quoted.

As a customer of Rother Valley Railway on three occasions in the past, I would say as a mother of small children at the time, that half an hour on a train, however historical, is twenty minutes too long. On one occasion we got the promised steam train and on the other two occasions we got the much less impressive diesel trains - not an easy explanation to disappoint children.

My main area of concern though is how the whim of a small number of very deep pocketed and well connected people can push through what is basically a vanity project to extend their hobby railway. I'm not against the railway in principle but there seem to be no principles connected to this project at all.

I believe this is the first time a private company has applied for, and may well get, a compulsory purchase order against private land owners. I am horrified about what precedent this sets for the future and the threat to private property ownership. It is a salutary lesson to our children that the democracy we vote for, support and nurture only applies until someone with a passion, connections and limitless funds decides to override it.

I know this stretch of land pretty well and what a truly criminal act it would be to grub up pristine meadowlands and floodplains and lay a great barrier of earth and concrete down the middle of a uniquely untouched piece of land. The pre-existing track bed is as good as gone, unlike other obsolete lines that have been maintained as walk ways and cycle

routes. How can this be considered anything else other than a tragedy to most of those who live in the area.

This doesn't even touch on the problems of increased risk of flooding to Robertsbridge and the surrounding area that the project will likely lead to. Who would be liable for the flood damage to property if it was due to the huge embankment cutting across the existing flood plain? RVR? Will building insurance increase for those properties likely to be affected? Are house prices likely to decrease due to the threat of flooding, lack of parking for the expected influx of visitors and strain on services?

As for building a crossing across the A21 - what planet are they on? Maybe those supporting this project only travel by steam or helicopter, but for those of us who have to actually use this stretch of road on a regular basis, the thought of an added obstruction is too grim to think about.

As nothing in this proposal makes any sense at all, I would assume that the pockets are so sufficiently deep and the influence reaches so high, that good sense, local opinion and the advice of independent bodies count for nothing

What a crying shame this whole sorry debacle is. Regards
Sarah Liesching

Sarah Liesching

This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.
For more information please visit <http://www.symanteccloud.com>
