

Angela Foster

085 | ~~2/1~~
647

From: Philippa Deeley
Sent: 29 May 2018 13:10
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT
Subject: Rother Valley Railway (Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction) Order
Attachments: Letter to Chris Grayling MP_RVR extension_290518.docx

To whom it may concern

Please find attached my letter to Mr Chris Grayling MP Secretary of State for Transport, in relation to the Rother Valley Railway (Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction) Order.

I would be grateful if this could be given to Mr Grayling for his consideration, prior to the 31st May which is the end of the objection period for this application.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Philippa Weddle (nee Deeley)

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

DBJ 647
J 246

Secretary of State for Transport
c/o Transport and Works Act Orders Unit
General Counsel's Office
Department for Transport Zone 1/18
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Dear Mr Grayling

RE: Rother Valley Railway (Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction) Order

I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposed extension of the Rother Valley Railway from Bodiam to Robertsbridge. I understand that there is currently an application in process by Rother Valley Railway for a Transport and Works Act Order to enable them to compulsory purchase the land they need for their extension. In your consideration of this order I would be most grateful if you were able to consider the points I have laid out below.

There are two schools and a nursery in Robertsbridge. As a mother of a child who, until recently, attended the nursery there I have witnessed firsthand the chaos and congestion in the village between 3.30pm and 4pm when the roads are filled with coaches and cars and the often narrow pavements with pedestrians, many of whom are children, when all three establishments end their day. The narrow bridge on Station Road causes significant delays, as does the parking along the roadside by commuters. I am extremely concerned that the visitors who will travel by car to experience the proposed steam railway line from Robertsbridge will add to this problem, and believe that there are significant safety issues to be considered, especially that of the local children and school goers.

The second point which I would be grateful if you were to consider is the proposed railway crossing on the A21 Robertsbridge bypass. When the bypass was completed in 1989 it was considered a success and has continued to this day to be a rare stretch of the road famous for its delays that stays free flowing and without congestion. I am therefore amazed that this proposal is being considered on such a main route and with a roundabout to contend with, which will increase the impact of the congestion a crossing will create. I understand that the initial crossing timings that were provided by Rother Valley Railway when applying for planning permission were inaccurate and that the revised timings will create much greater queues and tail backs than were initially calculated.

I live in which is where the railway currently terminates. The original plans were for the line to run from Tenterden to Bodiam as both were tourist destinations and had the infrastructure in place to accommodate large numbers of visitors. Robertsbridge however is not a tourist destination and does not have the infrastructure to accommodate large numbers of visitors, and there is no additional parking proposed in Rother Valley Railway's plans. Whilst Bodiam has a superb castle, we do not have a convenience store, Post Office, pharmacy, village hall or doctor's surgery and for many of us we rely on Robertsbridge for these things. I believe that the number of visitors arriving in cars that the proposed extension of the railway would bring to the village would make access to it and its amenities extremely

difficult, as there is limited parking and the village already suffers from congestion. Rother Valley Railway have admitted that they do not believe Robertsbridge will benefit economically from the project and I am unable to see any other benefit to the village at all.

There are several other reasons why I believe that this extension of the line should not be allowed to go ahead including issues with the flood plain and the detrimental effect on wildlife, but those I have outlined above are my main concerns. The current line that the Kent and East Sussex Railway and Rother Valley Railway operate seems quite sufficient, and if it is felt that commuters using the main line to Robertsbridge are being denied the steam experience, then a heritage bus service is surely the answer, environmentally, economically, logistically and for safety reasons.

I thank you in advance for reading this letter and considering the points I have made

Yours sincerely

Philippa Weddle (Mrs)