

**From:** Sarah White  
**Sent:** 28 May 2018 12:04  
**To:** TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT  
**Cc:** chairman@salehurst-pc.org.uk; jane.mccullough@rother.gov.uk;  
cllr.keith.glazier@eastsussex.gov.uk; huw.merriman.mp@parliament.uk;  
amber.rudd.mp@parliament.uk  
**Subject:** Rother Valley Railway Extension - OBJECTION



Dear Mr Grayling,

**Re: Rother Valley Railway (Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction) Order**

I am writing to express my strongest objections to the granting of permission to the extension of the Rother Valley Railway from Bodiam to Robertsbridge and would ask you to reject the application which is currently on your desk.

My objections include:

- **The disruption to traffic flow** caused by 3 railway crossings, including one across the A21 at Robertsbridge. This is likely to harm my business both by my own travel to customers and customers travelling to me. On weekends, it will cause huge tailbacks of existing travellers coming to visit the coast and 1066 country. This already deprived area will suffer further from frustrated visitors who will arrive fed up from all the delays. And what of the environmental impact of the car fumes whilst the traffic is at a stand still? We don't need any further delays on this already dangerous road, in fact we need dual carriageway from Pembury to Hastings to bring prosperity to the areas along the route. How will putting a railway crossing south of Robertsbridge be managed if and when it is dualled?
- **The environmental impact** – the land the proposed line is to go across is sensitively farmed fields which are a haven to wildlife. I am very concerned about the increased pollution both from the trains and from traffic delayed at level crossings. There is also significant potential for a raised flooding risk in an already flood prone area. It is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and my understanding is that permission can only be granted in cases where there is no other choice and the case has been proven to benefit the wider population. Rother Valley Railway is a charity run by and for private individuals and I cannot see the benefit to more than a few train enthusiasts and some tourists – NOT for the wider good I think!
- **Parking in Robertsbridge** As I understand it, there is no contingency for parking for visitors wishing to use the proposed train line, so where are they going to park? Robertsbridge is a small country village with a narrow high street and small lanes where parking is already at a premium. Having finally been freed from the A21 running through the middle of the village (with the installation of the Robertsbridge Bypass), are the local population now going to have their village turned into a massive car park?
- **No economic benefit to Robertsbridge or surrounding area** Apart from the parking issue, I cannot see that the businesses in Robertsbridge are going to benefit from people wishing to catch the train. Robertsbridge is not going to be a destination visitors are going to walk around or visit – they will be simply using it as a car park when taking the train to Bodiam or Tenterden. I don't believe it will bring jobs to the area – certainly not from the railway as it is run by volunteers and as I say, I don't believe local businesses will benefit from visitor numbers taking the train.
- **Compulsory Purchase Order** On a personal level, I wish it to be known that I truly object to this project and the people behind it taking out a compulsory purchase order to force the landowners to giving up their land. The farming families have consistently said no, they don't want to sell as it will cause them hardship in cutting their land into unworkable pieces and it seems completely wrong to me that the leadership of the railway can employ bully boy tactics to try and force this through. As I said earlier – if it was for the greater good, then maybe (for example the farmer closest to the A21 agreed to sell the land

when the bypass was built) but this project is not. This is a vanity project by a few railway enthusiasts and I will be incredibly disappointed in local and national government if the CPO goes ahead.

So on this basis, I ask you to reject the application from Rother Valley Railway.

Best wishes

Sarah

Cc: Nick Greenfield, Chairman of Salehurst and Robertsbridge Local Council; Mrs Mary Barnes, Chair of Rother District Council; Councillor Keith Glazier, Leader of East Sussex County Council; Huw Merriman MP; Amber Rudd MP

Sarah White | Director

135a Hastings Rd      **t** 01424 775191  
Battle                    **e** [info@telhamtrainingltd.co.uk](mailto:info@telhamtrainingltd.co.uk)  
East Sussex            **w** [www.telhamtrainingltd.co.uk](http://www.telhamtrainingltd.co.uk)  
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