

05/121



Secretary of State for Transport
c/o Transport and Works Acts and Orders Unit
Department of Transport. Zone 1/18
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

Ref ROTHER VALLEY RAILWAY (Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction) ORDER

13 May 2018

Dear Sir,

I am writing to oppose the proposed development of the extension of Rother Valley Railway on a number of grounds.

- 1 The proposal requires the erection of a number of new level crossings. Of these the crossing required across the A 21 is potentially the most hazardous. Traffic on this road is continually increasing, so that crossing the road at Northbridge Street roundabout is already slow. Cars leaving the village of Hurst Green travel South down a steep hill to the roundabout and those who know the road anticipate the upcoming rising speed limit from the roundabout on the South-bound carriage way. Although speed limits are in place down the hill, they are commonly ignored, making this a dangerous crossing point so close to the roundabout. Delaying traffic by a level crossing, only a few metres from the roundabout, can only add to the continually increasing hazard.
- 2 The Hoad farm is a long established, large, well run, mixed farm and livestock are commonly in the fields which are to be crossed by the new line. It is probable that infrequent recreational train noise and smoke would cause more animal distress than regular more frequent services cause near main line workings.

- 3 In terms of arable farming, the affected fields would become divided into smaller plots making for more difficult machinery movements viz more and sharper turning being required. In modern agriculture, larger fields are easier to work, and agricultural machine design reflects this, as evidenced by the investments in the newer Hoad machines.
- 4 There are periods in the year when crops are at risk of fire damage and sparks and embers, which cannot be entirely controlled, even by well trained operatives, may issue from steam locomotives.
- 5 The encouragement of tourists to the village may be welcome, but facilities in the village are limited. It is likely that most will come to Robertsbridge by car and NOT as suggested by the scheme proponents, by train to Robertsbridge Main Rail station. Tourists often travel at week ends and this is the time when repairs often take place on main lines. This then increases the number of cars and in order to travel on the steam line one must first park the car. Car park spaces are very limited in the village – a small car park close to the main street – often full, and the station car park. The latter is commonly full or near full in the working week and cars park on the main road. The large influx of visitors will cause considerable congestion.
- 6 It is more likely that visitors will sightsee off the train at Bodiam to visit the castle, or Tenterden for shopping. There are no comparable significant visitor attractions in Robertsbridge.
- 7 Public toilet provision in the village is limited to a single small building in the village car park and insufficient for any volume tourism.

Yours faithfully

Dr D G Clayton Jones BVetMed, DVR, DSAO, Hon FRCVS, DHMSA.