

From: John Ball
Sent: 21 May 2018 16:04
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT
Subject: Rother Valley Railway (Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction Order)

Dear Secretary of State

We both wish to object in the strongest possible terms to the proposal to extend the Rother Valley Railway from Bodiam to Robertsbridge.

This particular corner of the South East has long been the subject of slow economic strangulation due to the very poor access to the area which is afforded by the A21 road. Over the last few years significant upgrades of this road have taken place but there remains a stretch of this road which still offers very poor access. From Flimwell to Hastings the road regularly offers nothing less than a car park of stationary vehicles due to the narrowness of the road and the traffic obstacles. These blockages are apparent particularly at weekends and holiday times. Business suffers due to poor communication with London.

We take the view that the construction of three level crossings on the A21 at Robertsbridge, at Northbridge Street Robertsbridge and on the B2244 will only add to the congestion. Robertsbridge has enjoyed the benefit of a bypass for some years which has taken traffic from the village and has restored some tranquility to it. All this benefit to the village will be set aside by the construction of two of the three level crossings which will probably be operated manually by volunteers. No speedy opening and shutting of gates on what is already a very busy road. Within the village the obstruction will be repeated so that there will be no quick way around the crossing on the A21. The crossing on the B2244 is proposed to be sited between two bridges which already narrow the road and which leads to road traffic accidents taking place. When the road is slowed further to accommodate a crossing the knock on effect could be catastrophic.

There seems to us to be no economic or business reason for the line to be extended. No doubt for a few the chance to travel by train from Tenterden to Robertsbridge will be welcomed but this will not be a line for commuters who will depend upon speed to make a connection at Robertsbridge with the London main line. Thus all the disruption caused by the construction works will be disproportionate to the value (if any) obtained.

To seek to appropriate land from unwilling sellers to achieve the construction of a series of traffic hazards for no sensible purpose is wholly unrealistic. What is truly required is an uninterrupted road to Hastings to assist that town to achieve economic growth and to provide worth while jobs for young people who have to travel to London to find work. Are these ambitions to be frustrated by the wishes of a handful of railway enthusiasts who are seeking to restore a line shut down long ago probably for economic reasons by Dr. Beeching.

We both oppose the application.

Yours sincerely

John and Sonia Ball