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Subject:Proposed Rother Valley Railway(Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction)Order

Date:Wed, 31 Oct 2018 11:48:27 +0000

From:Rosemary Robins

The Head

Transport and Works Act Order Unit
1/14 Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
LONDON SW1P 4PR

Dear Sir

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

Transport and Works Act

Transport and Works (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 2004

Public Local Inquiry

Department for Transport Reference: TWA/18/APP/02/SUP/XXX

I am a small business owner in Robertsbridge and support the reinstatement of Rother Valley Railway as I consider there will be overwhelming economic benefit to this area.

In my opinion, Robertsbridge is rapidly becoming a dead commuter village with no work opportunities for anybody let alone any young people.. The reintroduction of the line would lead to an influx of visitors to the village that would be of immediate benefit to those businesses that are still here (obviously including my own) and could well lead to the introduction of others e.g. cafes. souvenir shops etc. All of this would lead to more local jobs for local folk.

Then there is, of course, the economic benefits to Rother District Council and Ashford Borough which, I am advised, will be in the region of £4.1million per annum. All Councils are desperately strapped for cash and this can only mean a boost to their income and, indirectly, a boost to services in the area.

Neither the Councils nor the inhabitants and ratepayers in the areas that will benefit are being expected to contribute as all the funding is coming from private philanthropists,

There has been a lot of panicking about a massive influx of traffic to the area, but this has been considered by the planners from Day 1. There will be access from London via the mainline railway and provision has already been made for car parking on land behind the station for those who will drive here. I think most traffic will come from London on the railway as the Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction will enable visitors to travel to Bodiam Castle (one of the most visited National Trust sites in the country) the famous gardens at Great Dixter, Tenterden town and Sissinghurst. I have personal experience of the frustrations experienced by those hoping to visit either Bodiam or Great Dixter when, upon arrival at Robertsbridge mainline station, they discover that they still have to make a journey of an additional 5 and a half miles to get to Bodiam with no taxi service or any other means of transport being available. Unfortunately, I am frequently held

responsible for their problems.

There will be full and part time jobs available in connection with the running of the railway itself. Not everything will be run by retired bank manager volunteers with a penchant for steam trains. I believe that there is probably potential for apprenticeships at some future date which will give young people the chance to remain in the village and forge a career here without having to go elsewhere as they all do now.

Rother Valley Railway has already reconstructed three quarters of a mile at the Bodiam end and half a mile here in Robertsbridge also creating a terminus station adjacent to Network Rail mainline station. Essentially this means that London passengers only have to cross from the mainline stop straight over to the new terminus station and hop on a steam train.

I have seen some of the building work that has taken place already and consider it to be of the highest quality and entirely in keeping with its Victorian heyday. It is, after all, the way the hop pickers used to journey here annually to pick the hops on the local farms. Of course, I acknowledge that this is taking place directly opposite the Ostrich Hotel and I would hope that I and those who come after me, will benefit.

It was why the establishment was built in the first place and, with a bit of luck, will ensure that The Ostrich will remain here as part of village life for many years to come.

I would wish to have an opportunity to address the proposed Public Inquiry which I understand is being planned for mid-2019. This project will bring very significant benefits and employment to the area as well as bringing huge pleasure to a very wide cross section of people who will have access by rail from London and the South Coast. The project has been thoroughly researched and developed with wide consultation. I understand the designs and study reports have been undertaken by some of the UK's leading professionals. I am aware of the fullest consideration that has been given to the ecology of the area with studies of the flora and fauna. Amongst other things I have learned, for example, that dormice can only be relocated during a period of about 6 weeks in any year. I know that the needs of this little rare animal have been respected and planned for accordingly.

I look forward to learning when the Public Inquiry will take place and would ask for the opportunity to address the Inspector.

Yours faithfully

Anthony Robins

Proprietor and Licensee of The Ostrich Hotel