

Supp108

Shenaz Choudhary

From: MARTIN BATES
Sent: 08 May 2018 15:13
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT; streetert@rvr.org.uk; Karen Ripley
Subject: Rother Valley Railway

I am writing to support the application for a TWA and CPO by Rother Valley Railway to complete the missing link in the Kent & East Sussex Railway, a heritage steam line.

I am a resident in the village of _____ and have studied the submission by RVR and the comments of opponents of the proposal.

Local residents have expressed concern about several issues such as flooding, car parking, level crossings and wildlife impact.

These concerns have been encouraged and exaggerated by a campaign of misinformation by the landowners, who naturally oppose the CPO.

I am satisfied that all these concerns have been properly analysed by RVR and are shown to be largely groundless.

I therefore encourage the minister to approve the application for this order.

Martin Bates

Copy for info to RVR and Clerk to the Parish Council

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Angela Foster

Supp/08 A.

From: MARTIN BATES
Sent: 14 May 2018 16:17
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT
Subject: TWA Rother Valley Railway
Attachments: TWA ROTHER VALLEY RAILWAY.doc

Dear Shenaz

Your ref: TWA/18/APP/02/SUPP/8

Thanks for your letter re this TWA application.

I attach a more detailed submission for the consideration of the minister, and any enquiry, in support of the application for a TWA.

I do not wish to speak at any hearing, since there is little I can add to my written submission.

Regards

Martin Bates

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TWA ROTHER VALLEY RAILWAY
Ref: TWA/18/APP/02/SUPP/8
SUBMISSION IN SUPPORT OF THE APPLICATION

I am a local resident who supports the application, because of the potential economic benefits and as an enthusiast for heritage projects. I have no connection with the railway. I would like to submit anecdotal evidence based on personal and local knowledge which I believe supports the RVR proposal and will counter the exaggerated concerns raised locally by the landowners and their supporters. The RVR submission, I believe, will provide detailed impartial evidence to show that these concerns are largely unfounded.

1. LEVEL CROSSINGS

The scheme requires level crossings on 3 roads, including the A21, which is the major concern. However, the railway service will be infrequent, or not running at all, during the working week, so the crossing will be open most of the time. Some delays may occur on bank holidays when the A21 is usually busy, but I do not believe they will add significantly to existing delays at traffic lights etc on the same route.

2. FLOODING

The landowners claim there will be an increased risk of flooding. This main source of flooding is the River Rother overflowing its banks. The rebuilt railway embankment will be BETWEEN the river and most of the independently owned properties deemed at risk, which, logically will actually reduce the risk of flooding.

3. CAR PARKING

There is a large car park at Robertsbridge station which will serve the RVR. It is rarely full, even during the working week. On street parking which annoys local residents is caused by the excessive daily charge (nearly £5), which commuters understandably try to avoid. Most visitors to the railway will come at the weekend, when the parking charge is only £1. In any case, it is expected that, being rail enthusiasts, many users of RVR will arrive at Robertsbridge by mainline rail.

4. ECONOMIC BENEFIT

It is claimed that, because RVR will be largely operated by volunteers, there will be no employment or economic benefits. This ignores employment by contractors during construction and jobs supported indirectly by visitors and staff at existing local business such as shops, cafes and pubs. I believe the economic benefits to the locality of heritage railways in general are well established.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

It is claimed that infrequent steam and diesel engines will cause 'excessive' noise and pollution. This is surely an exaggeration when compared with the impact of constant motor traffic on the roads that intersect the line. Where wildlife has colonised the abandoned railway, the loss is regrettable, but most of the line has been converted to agricultural use by the landowners themselves, with no special regard to wildlife.

It is understandable that the landowners do not wish to sell the land, but they know that, since soon after the line closed, the K&ES Railway has wanted to re-open it. It was their choice to convert the line to farmland.

Martin Bates

14-5-18