

SUPP157.

**Anne Bassam**

Secretary of State for Transport  
Transport and Works Act Unit  
General Counsel's Office  
Department for Transport  
Zone 1/18 33 Horseferry Road  
London SW1P 4DR

21 May 2018

Dear Secretary of State,

**Letter of Support from for the Proposed Reinstatement of the Rother Valley Railway from Robertsbridge to Bodiam (Transport and Works Act Order)**

I understand that comments are invited on this proposed project. I live in and would like to express my support for it. I believe that the majority of villagers feel similarly, although many do not feel able to say so publicly in view of the vociferous and angry opposition of the affected farmers and their supporters. No-one wants to fall out with their neighbours, and those of us who support the project are also mindful that its effect on us will be more indirect.

Whilst I understand why the local farmers who are objecting would prefer not to have a railway across their land, mitigating measures are possible and I feel that the railway will be very beneficial both in general and to the village, for the following reasons.

**General good**

- The railway will be a valuable practical amenity.
- It will serve an educational purpose, giving visitors access to this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and informing them about its social history and heritage, not only in terms of transport but also of farming and in particular the hop farming which was until the 1970s a major part of the local economy. (Bodiam station, for example, where many hop pickers from London disembarked, hosts a small museum and an annual hop pickers festival).

- Visitors will be able to reach the heritage railway by public transport i.e. National Rail to Robertsbridge. This will reduce its environmental impact and also enable access for less affluent visitors who do not own cars, for example schoolchildren and families from South London. The current stretch from Bodiam to Tenterden is accessible only by car: the restoration of the link to Robertsbridge will join the railway back to the national railway system.

### **Local good**

- The railway will provide a valuable local leisure amenity, particularly for local children. It will also provide a public transport connection with a local shopping and leisure town, Tenterden.
- It will bring much needed business to local shops, pubs and other concerns. Several of these have closed in the village recently, including our take-away food outlets and our iconic village centre pub, the Seven Stars. It is possible that these closures could have been averted, and the local jobs saved, had the railway already been operational.
- The educational opportunities and access to local countryside will be available to local families and will be particularly valuable for less well-off families who do not own a car. A concessionary scheme for local residents would be particularly valuable.
- The level crossings in the village and on its by-pass would be very useful in reducing the speed of local traffic, which is an issue in the village.
- Our village has flooded in the past and this is a concern for many residents. We welcome the offer of improving the village flood defences as part of the project and the enhanced protection that this would give to many village properties.

Yours sincerely

Anne Bassam

## Shenaz Choudhary

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**From:** POCorrespondence  
**Sent:** 22 May 2018 06:31  
**To:** Shenaz Choudhary  
**Subject:** FW: Letter in support of the proposed Rother Valley Railway (Transport and Works Act Order)  
**Attachments:** Dear Secretary of State.docx

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**From:** TransportSecretary  
**Sent:** Monday 21 May 2018 19:36  
**To:** POCorrespondence <POCorrespondence@dft.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** Sarah Richardson <Sarah.Richardson@dft.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** FW: Letter in support of the proposed Rother Valley Railway (Transport and Works Act Order)

Madeleine Crean | Diary Manager and Assistant Private Secretary, Secretary of State for Transport, Department for Transport  
5/13 | 020 7944 4397 | 079665 12520

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**From:** GRAYLING, Chris [<mailto:chris.grayling.mp@parliament.uk>]  
**Sent:** 21 May 2018 19:30  
**To:** TransportSecretary <[TransportSecretary@dft.gov.uk](mailto:TransportSecretary@dft.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** FW: Letter in support of the proposed Rother Valley Railway (Transport and Works Act Order)

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**From:** Anne Cooke |  
**Sent:** 21 May 2018 14:09  
**To:** GRAYLING, Chris <[chris.grayling.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:chris.grayling.mp@parliament.uk)>  
**Subject:** Letter in support of the proposed Rother Valley Railway (Transport and Works Act Order)

Dear Secretary of State,

I am attaching a letter of support for this application. I understand that people are able to comment until 31st May.

With best wishes  
Anne Bassam

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