

**From:** Richard Adam  
**Sent:** 27 May 2018 23:32  
**To:** TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT  
**Subject:** Proposed Rother Valley Railway (Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction) Order  
**Attachments:** No RVR Entry - End of the Line.pdf

Dear TWAU Unit,

With reference to the proposed Rother Valley Railway (Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction) Order, to be made under the Transport and Works Act 1992, I wish to make the following representation in support of the proposal.

Specifically, I would wish to rebut a number of highly tendentious and inaccurate claims made in the flyer entitled 'No RVR Entry – End of the Line' that is circulating in the locality (see attached copy).

- 1) The flyer claims that the promoters wish "to plough a railway line through from Robertsbridge to Bodiam." The Secretary of State will of course be aware that the proposal is to reinstate a length of the former Rother Valley Railway opened in March 1900 and closed in June 1961. Therefore, if a railway was ever 'ploughed' through this district, that occurred over 118 years ago and is not relevant to the proposed order.
- 2) It claims that the A21 will be "blocked just south of Robertsbridge roundabout on weekends and holidays." Notwithstanding the highly regrettable actions of the Department for Transport to properly account for the planned reopening of this length of railway line when constructing the A21 Robertsbridge Bypass in the late 1980s, the claim of blockage is a clear exaggeration. All of the single carriageway lengths of the A21 between the south end of Pembury Bypass and Hastings are subject to delays on the busiest summer days (especially at Kippings Cross roundabout and the Flimwell traffic signals), and there is no reason to believe that the intermittent operation of a level crossing at this location would significantly add to the delays that already occur at the Robertsbridge roundabout and elsewhere. Furthermore, Highways England will inevitably have to further improve the single carriageway stretches of the A21 in due course and this can then remove the need for the A21 level crossing by providing grade separation.
- 3) It claims that the "rail embankment across flood plains accepted to increase flood levels at Robertsbridge through to Bodiam", ignoring the facts that: a) much of the original railway formation remains in situ, including most of those lengths on low embankment; and b) the latest flood risk assessment generally disproves this assertion (except in a location where a non-significant increase in flood level would be anticipated).
- 4) A headline claims that "no car parking provided for", ignoring the facts that: a) a high proportion of the potential customers will be arriving at Robertsbridge by train using the Tonbridge to Hastings main line; b) the Rother Valley Railway station at Robertsbridge already has a car park; and c) the matter is already conditioned by the 2017 planning permission.
- 5) Under 'Economic benefit' it is claimed that "most visitors are expected to alight at Bodiam or Tenterden" (which may be true for those travelling eastwards), but there is a big opportunity for the pubs, restaurants and shops in Station Road and the High Street, Robertsbridge for those originating at the town, changing to / from National Rail services or undertaking a round-trip initially heading westwards from Tenterden or Bodiam. This will provide welcome relief for these businesses from the long-standing loss of trade resulting from construction of the bypass.
- 6) Under the same heading, it is claimed that "RVR use volunteers for their staff, no new jobs created", but this seems to be contradicted by the report on the KentOnline website dated 16 February 2018 (<http://www.kentonline.co.uk/tenterden/news/rail-fast-track-to-jobs-160230/>) which records that "75 jobs would be created, 22 of which would be on the railways."

- 7) It claims that environmental damage will result from the “use of steam and diesel trains through a registered AONB” causing “excessive noise and pollution.” Whilst it is true that the proposed scheme lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, this ignores the facts that: a) it follows the line of the original Rother Valley Railway so is thus not a new feature in the landscape; b) the onward Kent & East Sussex Railway line is similarly located (and in the flyer’s own words “is established and works”); c) both steam and diesel trains have previously been used on this length of line; and d) heritage railways not only operate successfully in AONBs and national parks elsewhere in the country but also provide a highly valued and sustainable means of transport wholly in keeping with these sensitive locations.
- 8) It is claimed that farmers “will be forced to sell land and livelihood held for generations” which ignores the fact that the vast majority of the land required (other than that already held by the applicant and associated parties) has only been owned by such landowners since closure of the original Rother Valley Railway in 1961.
- 9) It claims that there is “no business case”, ignoring the fact that the funding statement submitted with the application confirms that the proposed extension is fully funded by the Rother Valley Heritage Trust. It should also be noted that the considerable investment by the Rother Valley Railway at its Robertsbridge premises demonstrates that this is no fanciful or aspirational scheme but instead a sound commercial proposition.
- 10) Finally, the claim that “Robertsbridge is to be sacrificed for the sake of a few steam fanatics” is so clearly hyperbole that it renders the whole flyer unsubstantiated propaganda.

Notwithstanding the above, I would submit that articles 9, 11 and 12, Schedule 4 and Schedule 6 paragraph 2 should properly refer to the highway authority not the street authority, and that article 14 should refer to both street and highway authorities.

I am sure that many other people will have made similar points to the above, but if necessary I am happy to appear before any public inquiry that may be held into the proposed order.

Regards,

***Richard Adam***

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# The Great Robertsbridge Train Robbery

Rother Valley Railway have applied for a Transport and Works Act which incorporates a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to plough a railway line through from Robertsbridge to Bodiam.

This will cross three roads, including the **A21 Hastings to London Trunk Road** as well as 3.5km of flood plain. These are the facts:

## **3 LEVEL CROSSINGS; A21, NORTHBRIDGE STREET, B2244 BETWEEN NARROW BRIDGES**

A21 **blocked** just south of Robertsbridge roundabout on weekends and holidays.

Predicted delays of **between 250m and 2.9km** in **EACH** direction.

Increase accidents on A21 - identified as one of the most dangerous roads in Sussex.

## **INCREASE IN FLOOD LEVELS**

Rail embankment across flood plains accepted to increase flood levels at Robertsbridge through to Bodiam. Threats to businesses and houses.

No financial contribution from RVR to the cost of increased flood defences.

## **NO CAR PARKING PROVIDED FOR**

50,000 visitors forecast to join RVR at Robertsbridge in concentrated time period

No car parking or infrastructure provision.

Long delays and disruption to village and local roads

## **ECONOMIC BENEFIT**

RVR admitted most visitors expected to alight at Bodiam or Tenterden **with any benefits being away from Robertsbridge**

RVR use volunteers for their staff, no new jobs created

## **ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE**

Use of steam and **diesel** trains through a registered AONB, excessive noise and pollution

Damage to natural habitat of many birds, butterflies, moths and plantlife.

## **CPO (COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER)**

Farmers forced to sell land and livelihood held for generations

LAND GRAB - of farmland that is NOT FOR SALE



**Great Robertsbridge Train Robbery**



**@No2RVR**





# END OF THE LINE

**NO** A21 CROSSING

**NO** BUSINESS CASE

**NO** ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

**NO** CONGESTION

**NO** INCREASED FLOOD RISK

**NO** COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER

Robertsbridge is to be sacrificed for the sake of a few steam fanatics. The existing line between Tenterden and Bodiam is established and works. Extending it further will have a huge impact on villagers, farmers, businesses and A21 users and **THERE IS JUST NO NEED.**

We intend to fight this application and your support is much appreciated.

Find us on social media and online. [www.greatrobertsbridgetrainrobbery.co.uk](http://www.greatrobertsbridgetrainrobbery.co.uk)

## HOW TO OBJECT

Object in writing;

Give the reasons for your objection;

Give your full name and address;

Must be received **before the 31st May**

**By Email:**

[transportandworksact@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:transportandworksact@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

**By Post:**

Secretary of State for Transport,  
c/o Transports & Works Act Orders unit  
Department for Transport, Zone 1/18  
Great Minster House,  
33 Horseferry Road,  
London,  
SW1P 4DR

**IF EVERYONE WRITES AND OBJECTS THIS WILL  
FORCE A PUBLIC ENQUIRY**

[www.greatrobertsbridgetrainrobbery.co.uk](http://www.greatrobertsbridgetrainrobbery.co.uk)