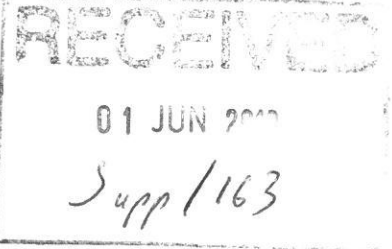


25th May 2018



Sir,

**Re: The Transport and Works Act 1992
Proposed Rother Valley Railway (Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction) Order**

I am writing to support the application by the RVR for a TWAO.

I consider that the proposed new Railway would:

1. bring considerable economic benefit to the area, not least to Rother District, East Sussex and Ashford Borough, Kent, estimated at up to £4.1m p.a. These benefits will be achieved without charge on the public purse as the project is being financed by private philanthropists;
2. provide access by rail from Hastings and London to major tourist attractions in the Rother valley, such as Bodiam Castle, Great Dixter, Tenterden Town, Sissinghurst and many others;
3. open up employment opportunities for full time, part time and volunteer staff. While the advantages of creating more paid jobs is obvious, opening up new volunteer opportunities is not. However, as a long serving volunteer on the Kent and East Sussex Railway, it is clear to me that all age groups benefit from this. In particular, it enables the younger age group to acquire many useful life skills, such as the ability to work with all age groups, and allows them to understand the concept of accepting responsibility for their actions. I have seen these skills enhance their job opportunities as they reach working age. While for the older volunteer, it allows them to continue to contribute to Society well into pensionable age;
4. create a protected wild life corridor along the section where the railway embankment was removed. RVR has already reconstructed $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of track at the Bodiam end, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile at the Robertsbridge end and created at terminus station adjacent to Network Rail main line. This has already allowed network Rail to use the RVR's station complex at Robertsbridge for training which can be done more safely in such an area.

Clearly, concerns have been raised in relation to the points below. I feel that these, while perfectly understandable, can be overcome as indicated.

1. Use of Compulsory Purchase orders to acquire the historic track bed from the two farmers who have not yet agreed to sell. It should be noted that following the Public Inquiry into the Rother District Plan, the Planning Inspector recommended the use of CP powers to acquire the land from the then 4 landowners. However, over recent years RVR has acquired two of the parcels by negotiation and made generous offers to the 2 outstanding landowners and expressed a strong wish to acquire the land if at all possible, by negotiation.
2. Impact of the A21 Level Crossing. This would not be closed to road traffic

during morning and evening rush hours. It would be a full barrier, locally monitored; closure would be around one minute, as demonstrated by a similar installation elsewhere.

3. Flood Risk to Robertsbridge. Extensive modelling, which has been validated by the Environment Agency shows no increased risk of flooding to the village.
4. Ecological translocation of protected and other species. This will be managed by specialists in accordance with plans agreed with EA and Natural England.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Carol Mitchell