

Summary of Joint Statement from Charles Wyndham, Summertree Stud, and Nigel Leigh, The Abbey, Redlands Lane, Robertsbridge.

We have both registered other Objections to the RVR Development but this intervention focuses on the Flood risk to our properties.

As the Inquiry will be aware, the Rother floods several times each year along Redlands Lane from some 300m eastwards from Redlands Farm up to the start of the Abbey and Summertree stud properties. As the Environment Agency flood maps show, the most severe flooding (high risk) extends across our sole means of vehicular access to our properties. Indeed, we believe that this map seriously underestimates the extent and severity of flooding. Whenever the lane is flooded, the fields along the lane owned by Charles Wyndham are inundated, and so are the Abbey fishponds, and the floods extend around the back (south aspect) of Summertree stud and converge to the south and east of Greyfriars, the last building along the lane. The Abbey undercroft, over which the Abbey Guest House is built, dates from around 1220, and is regularly flooded such that the water has to be pumped out.

The depth of the flooding can be up to 1 metre and the speed and force of the water makes wading very dangerous at times.

In a letter to Charles Wyndham from RVR representatives, it was stated that: '...it has been possible to demonstrate that the reinstatement of RVR would have no significant effect on the flooding of Robertsbridge and the surrounding areas'

In the light of climate change and extreme weather events which can now be relied on to occur, this complacency is not justified, and we doubt will be mitigated by any of the proposed structures of the rebuilt railway.

There are other related considerations we hope that the Inquiry will take into account in coming to a decision:

- First, as we understand it, the RVR development contravenes current policy regarding developments on flood plains. However, we do not pretend to legal expertise in this area and others who do have that expertise will no doubt comment.
- Second, it is now generally accepted that all modelling of complex systems is highly fallible, and often misleading. This especially applies to 'modelling' of future extreme weather events (including flooding). Prediction is now even more unreliable than hitherto due to climate change, as we have seen in the tragic and devastating flooding events in the last month across Europe, China and elsewhere.

- Climate change almost certainly invalidates any current 'models' of local flooding. Sadly, the people of Robertsbridge and especially those living along Redlands Lane must expect more extreme flooding events, with threats not only to our access, but to personal safety related to the depth and force of the flood waters that flow along our only direct route of access to the outside world. Even 4-wheel drive vehicles cannot safely get through the floods at their worst. Thus floods are not simply inconvenient. In addition, my wife and I have clinical commitments to acutely sick patients in our respective hospitals.
- Finally, there must also be a real risk to the integrity of the Abbey and its grounds, which are protected by statute, and under the supervision of Historic England. The grounds include almost uniquely preserved Abbatical fishponds and un-investigated archaeology of the mediaeval iron industry developed at the Abbey from 1538 by Sir William Sydney.

In summary, we ask the Inquiry to consider the serious risks that might result from the proposed RVR development to our properties, our land, even to our personal safety, and to the integrity of the Abbey and Abbey grounds.