

5-May-24

Haroun Kahn, Chris James (EKFB)

CC: Maddelyn Sutton, Construction Commissioner (HS2)

David Griffiths-Allen (EKFB)

Peter Martin, Gavin Kingsnorth, Jonathan Clark (Bucks)

SMALLDEAN – BRIDLEWAY CLOSURE

Dear Haroun and Chris,

We wish to put on record that this Society supports the objections raised by Wendover HS2 group to the proposed closure of the Smalldean Bridleway diversion. We find this unacceptable on several grounds –

- The closure breaches Assurance 979 agreed during the passage of the hybrid bill
- A significant number of footpaths crossing the Misbourne Valley have been closed, with the understanding that certain footpaths / Rights of Way would be kept open. One of these is Smalldean Lane, part of the 280km Chiltern Cycleway.
- The proposed bridleway diversion is not even acceptable for horses; WEN/14/1 from Upper Bacombe would be difficult for off road bikes and impassable for road bikes due to the uneven surface. It was for this reason that the temporary bridleway was originally constructed
- WEN/13 is also steep, even for off-road bikes, and partially obstructed in several places following partial removal of a hedge.
- The footpath and bridleway diversions both add unacceptable extra distance and ascent – see <http://www.hs2watch.com/Works/Footpaths/SmallDiv/index.html> - despite “meeting the needs for cyclists and other vulnerable road users [being] a key consideration when plans are prepared for road closures”¹
- The A413 does not currently represent an acceptable alternative on road safety grounds, since you have removed most of the roadside verge and obstructed the remainder. Security personnel inform pedestrians that ‘the footpath is closed’
- A closure of 16 months should be announced more than two weeks in advance, and
- Interested parties should have been consulted, and alternatives explored, as specified in E5 section 5.4

¹ Phase 1 Information paper E5, para 7.1

The temporary bridleway is frequently used by our cycling group to travel between Hale Road and Dunsmore or Rocky Lanes in safety. We strongly suggest that it should remain open until some alternative route has been agreed, which is acceptable to the community.

Yours Sincerely

Simon Kearey
Chairman

