

Notes taken at the
2nd Chalfonts & Amersham Community Forum
held at 7.30pm- 9.30pm on 12 July 2012
at Chalfont St Peter Community Centre

Independent Chair: Becci Vidal

Community Representatives

Linda Smith	Chalfont St Peter Parish Council
Ed Rowley	Assistant to Cheryl Gillan MP
Isobel Darby	Chalfonts No to HS2
Des Bray	Chalfont St Giles Parish Council
Jeremy Ryman	Chilterns Conservation Board
Marian Miller	Bucks Archaeological Society
Keith Hoffmeister	The Chiltern Society
Anne Cutcliffe	Shardeloes House
Peter Cutcliffe	Shardeloes House
Mark Ladd	Little Missenden HS2 Action Group
Susan Howkins	Observer, Chalfont St Giles Resident
Rachel Prance	51M Press Officer
Chris Wilson	HS2 Amersham Action Group & Amersham Resident
George Allison	The Amersham Society
David Allen	Amersham Town Council
Penny Wilson	Whielden Street Resident, Amersham

Apologies: Chiltern District Council
Chalfont St Giles Residents Association

HS2 Ltd Representatives

Martin Wells	Area Stakeholder Manager, Country South (90km stretch from Colne Valley to Lower Boddington)
Simon Mace	Engineering, Country South
Simon White	Environment Manager, Country South
Terry Stafford	Country South Team Member

1. Welcome & Introductions

Becci Vidal, Independent Chair took a few minutes to introduce herself. She is a Chesham resident, her early career has been in the military and in management. She now works as a professional chairperson and facilitator. She is willing to act as independent Chair at the forthcoming Forum meetings but her baby is due soon and therefore she will be out of the picture for the next two meetings, but expects to return for the November Forum. She has a colleague, Caroline Gowring, who will take her place.

Becci set out a timetable for the Agenda we needed to cover, in light of the revised Agenda presented by Isobel Darby on behalf of the Community Forum groups.

i) The original Agenda provided by HS2 Ltd was rejected in favour of the Chalfonts & Amersham's Agenda.

2. Meeting Note and Actions

i) After the last Forum which met on 19 March Ltd, Mark Ladd of Little Missenden HS2AG sent an email to Martin Wells on 3 points requiring actions. He requested HS2 Ltd to amend the formal Minutes to record these action points. He did not elaborate on the specific action points but had emailed Martin Wells with these. To date two had been included but not the third. Mark emphasised the critical need to have a full and accurate record of what had been decided at that meeting. Martin Wells apologised for the omission and will build in the relevant points and then recirculate the Minutes. **Action: HS2 Ltd**

- ii) Davida Allen emphasised it is vital that HS2 Ltd do not load the draft Minutes on to their website. At this and future meetings, HS2 Ltd will not publish the Minutes on their website until the draft Minutes have been circulated and approved. Draft Minutes will be circulated by HS2 Ltd by email. Martin Wells agreed that HS2 Ltd would take full Minutes but emphasised these would not be verbatim but would be comprehensive and include the main points covered in meetings. HS2 Ltd will issue Minutes as soon as possible but definitely not more 2 weeks after meetings. **Action: HS2 Ltd**
- iii) Isobel Darby advised that there were inaccuracies by HS2 Ltd in the “labelling” of delegates who attended the first Engagement Forum. One delegate had been listed under the incorrect organisation. Isobel pointed out that community groups will find it difficult to believe that HS2 Ltd have integrity if they do not accurately record details of participants. Martin Wells apologised and said that HS2 Ltd were aiming to improve their accuracy in recording Minutes. He pointed out that Terry Stafford would be taking notes of action points, and was creating a list for delegates at this evening’s meeting to add their names and email addresses, or make corrections if there were inaccuracies. Isobel had supplied Terry Stafford with amendments to the list of attendees who came to the previous Forum meeting and HS2 Ltd would add the names to the minutes for the last Forum. **Action: HS2 Ltd**

3. Terms of Reference and Membership of Community Forum

- i) Mark Ladd presented the Chalfonts & Amersham Community Forum’s own Terms of Reference, which he stated was fundamentally the same as that presented by the Missenden Community Forum to HS2 Ltd, with one or two minor alterations. Mark Ladd agreed to present our Terms of Reference with the amendments and HS2 Ltd will formally acknowledge acceptance of these. **Action: Mark Ladd/Martin Wells**
- ii) With regard to membership, Isobel Darby pointed out that the Section entitled “Constitution of Forum and Operating Arrangements” on Page 1 of the Community Forum’s Terms of Reference outlined the scope of membership. Martin Wells emphasised that he had no objections to other delegates being invited to join the Forum at a later date if we identified organisations who had been omitted. He reminded us that the “boundaries” between Forums are purely for ease of managing numbers attending, but delegates could cross over boundaries, as with Colne Valley, for example, who could just as easily attend a Chalfonts & Amersham Forum. Martin Wells would welcome suggestions of other community organisations, and invited us to send contact details to him, as we have more local knowledge. **Action: All**

4. Community Engagement Programme

It was reported that Stan Mason of Amersham Action Group had emailed Terry Stafford at HS2 Ltd to request HS2 Ltd incorporate our opening statement into the Minutes for the meeting held on 13 March:

“Any comments/responses that we make are on the understanding that we do not accept the business case, the environment case, the capacity forecasts, or the issue of the “solving” of the North/South divide contained within the DfT HS2 proposals”.

The statement had been presented to HS2 Ltd by the Missenden Community Forum on 11 July 2012.

The Chair took a copy of the Statement and handed this to Terry Stafford of HS2 Ltd. She asked for a soft copy to be emailed to HS2 Ltd. **Action: Isobel Darby**

Martin Wells response to receiving this was that he accepts that:

- (i) we are “affected communities”
- (ii) there had not as yet been a consultation on mitigation for those in affected properties, although today Justine Greening had made a statement that the consultation on compensation would start in September 2012.
- (iii) There was a requirement for local authorities to consult on cost recovery. Discussions were ongoing with Bucks County Council, and further meetings were planned. He said Bucks County Council had taken a very strong line, in comparison with some other members of 51M, who are working more closely with HS2 Ltd.
- (iv) There was the possibility of a “line-wide” Forum being considered.

5. Update from HS2 Ltd Scheme Development

(i) Bilateral Meetings

HS2 Ltd issued an invitation at the first round of Forums to communities to request bilateral meetings to address specific queries. For transparency, HS2 Ltd supplied a list of bilateral meetings that had been arranged. Martin Wells reiterated his willingness to meet with local groups about specific issues.

HS2 Ltd to supply information about bilateral meetings in advance of future Forum meetings, to enable us to liaise with the attendees. **Action: HS2 Ltd**

Des Bray mentioned that the National Society for Epilepsy have 2 MRI Scanners which are very susceptible to vibrations, and had asked HS2 Ltd for a bilateral meeting. A doctor at NSE had heard that boreholes were to be drilled near the NSE site. Simon Mace said that no geographical surveys had been carried out in Country South yet. Martin Wells had no record of a contact with anyone from NSE but he offered to meet with them in person, if Des Bray would let Terry Stafford have the contact email address. **Action: Des Bray**

(ii) Timeline

Martin Wells asked us to refer to the "Scheme Development & Next Steps" document, in conjunction with the Timeline supplied by HS2 Ltd

The first slide "*HS2 Development Support*" illustrated the type of work the Professional Services Consultants are engaged on currently.

Slide 2 – "*Current & Forward Design Development*". Simon Mace explained that for the original consultation stage, the topographical surveys were based solely on Ordnance Survey data. HS2 Ltd now require higher quality data, for example in regard to geology depths, in order to refine the design. Martin Wells said previous Forums have implied that HS2 Ltd are "hiding" information but he explained this is still a very "young" project and information was gathered for the first "consultation" stage on a "just enough" basis. Now they require more detailed data. This is for development of a "preliminary programme" and the environmental surveys provide the framework for the design.

iii) Keith Hoffmeister pointed out that HS2 Ltd are asking us to engage in consultation on a project, for which HS2 Ltd have provided no information. Simon White, Environment Manager, explained that the scheme can change up to, during and after the Hybrid Bill stage. The detailed design starts to take shape after the Royal Assent. HS2 Ltd have to demonstrate that they have acted reasonably so there will be environmental planning forums.

Martin Wells said that HS2 Ltd are not expecting Forum attendees to be experts but we can inform them on what is important to us in our community and our concerns can be passed to their Professional Services Consultants. HS2 Ltd will provide access to the Professional Services Consultants at a later stage.

Davida Allen said she feels HS2 Ltd are not dealing even handedly with the public as regards their timeline. She accepts this may not be intentional deception but feels we are being rationed as to the information coming from HS2 Ltd.

Keith Hoffmeister expressed shock that the project can get to the Hybrid Bill stage without HS2 Ltd being able to answer questions on details affecting our area, for example where will the millions of tons of spoil come out of the tunnel and where will it be taken to?

Martin Wells said that in transport project terms, HS2 is a very young project and it is simply HS2 Ltd's brief to deliver the Greening proposed line just to the Hybrid Bill at this stage; so they are not interested in doing any work that isn't part of that brief - therefore when discussing the scheme development and next steps as at July 2012; he said that the train was only an initial design model; which "wasn't really very important" as it was only a draft design. Chris Wilson said forgive me; but I would have thought and, indeed, would have expected that in talking about a train that was meant to travel faster than anything else in public service surely you would be starting from a position of world excellence from the outset; rather than the impression that you're giving of knocking something up on the back of a fag packet.....!

Simon Mace confirmed that issues such as movement of spoil will have to be addressed before the Hybrid Bill stage and would need to be agreed with the relevant local authority during or after the Hybrid Bill.

Isobel Darby asked about tunnel linings and track bed. Simon Mace said these types of issues would be decided before the Hybrid Bill stage.

Martin Wells said that there needed to be a decision still on land-take mitigation.

HS2 Ltd would need to concentrate on details for the Hybrid Bill, e.g. land-take for the maintenance site.

Des Bray asked whether we could have sight of the documents that HS2 Ltd will be submitting to the Secretary of State. Simon White explained that the Environmental Impact Assessment at the beginning of next year will produce information that we can share with HS2 Ltd.

Davida Allen expressed concern about the effects of the construction on Amersham old town, as there were many listed buildings with no foundations.

Davida Allen does not believe that HS2 Ltd cannot inform on the appearance of Access Shafts.

Simon White said that there would be a collection of aerial data by an external consultant. The type of changes that could result from the collection of data is, for example, planning for highway realignment.

Simon Mace confirmed that geotechnical surveys were under way and highways consultants were collecting data re siting of utilities.

Simon White said the Draft Scope & Methodology document was published in April for consultation in May. HS2 Ltd review comments for publication until the end of Summer 2012.

HS2 Ltd are doing ecology surveys where they have been given permission by landowners to go on site. They will collect background noise data, there will be rights of way surveys and assessment of the landscape.

Mark Ladd asked: "What can Community Forums do to influence the route and mitigation" as there were no specific Community Forums called together for the Environmental Impact Scope & Assessment and he had heard that HS2 Ltd had lost one of the responses to this.

Martin Wells said HS2 Ltd would welcome local knowledge and experience. For instance, on road realignment, landscaping proposals, rights of way and temporary and permanent closures, finding out how people use the local roads. E.g. Isobel pointed out that commuters use the West Hyde Lane cross-country shortcut to the M25 at Maple Cross. Another issue for roads was whether Access Shafts would necessitate building a spur road.

On noise mitigation, Martin Wells had noted that noise barriers had been an issue for other Community Forums.

Simon Mace said Access Shafts can be designed to fit into their location, i.e. the outward appearance can be to conform with the surroundings, e.g. "barn" style if in a rural setting. Isobel Darby asked if we can have details of the size of the Access Shaft and approaches. Martin Wells advised he had received a long list of questions about Access Shafts from Davida Allen. **Action: HS2 Ltd**

Mark Ladd wanted to clarify whether we can influence decision on more than the following issues:

- i) Road realignment
- ii) Noise mitigation
- iii) Access Shaft appearance?

Martin Wells said information such as that provided by Des Bray on National Society for Epilepsy, for example, was crucially important and the type of information HS2 Ltd want to find out. He said that when HS2 Ltd are in receipt of high quality topographical survey results, they will be able to see if the current route will still fit into the landscape as planned.

Davida Allen was desperately concerned about the old buildings in Old Amersham, also the approach to the Crematorium on the A404 Southbound in Amersham. Mark Ladd mentioned equally precious old buildings with no foundations in Little Missenden. She was also concerned for Shardeloes House and Gilbert Scott Court, both of which are listed buildings located close to the tunnel.

6. Design Principles, Issues and Concerns

- i) Chris Wilson presented a **“Statement of Key Design Principles”** to HS2 Ltd. These had been identified by the Community Forum members at a meeting on 9 July 2012. Chair requested Isobel Darby to provide HS2 Ltd with an electronic copy. **Action: Isobel Darby**

Ann Cutcliffe stated that HS2 Ltd need to gain the trust of the Community by providing all documentation in advance. Martin Wells had agreed to give more notice to Forums and to circulate documents in good time. He pointed out that HS2 Ltd are not obliged to engage with the community, and therefore mutual trust is a large element in these discussions.

- ii) Des Bray presented a **“Statement of Key Design Issues”** to HS2 Ltd. Chair accepted the document on behalf of HS2 Ltd and requested Isobel Darby to forward an electronic copy to HS2 Ltd. **Action: Isobel Darby**

iii) **Concerns**

Subjects for future discussion were identified at the first Forum meeting, but there had not been sufficient time available at tonight's Forum to go into depth on these. The Chair confirmed that the Community Forum will work in conjunction with HS2 Ltd to plan items for future discussion and so we took time to compile a list of issues for discussion at future Forum meetings.

Item 1 on the subjects identified at the first Forum was **Rights of Way** and Keith Hoffmeister read out a presentation on behalf of The Chiltern Society setting out their concerns for the Rights of Way affected by the proposal. There were a total of 28 footpaths in the section relating to our section of the route, of which 19 could be reinstated, 7 would need a footbridge constructed and 2 could be permanently damaged. In addition, there were concerns about removal of spoil, and it was felt that HS2 Ltd had seriously underestimated the tonnage of spoil to be removed, and whether a road would need to be introduced from the A413 to and from the M25 for this purpose. He reported that the South Bucks Way would be affected, and also a footpath in Chesham Lane, Chalfont St Peter. There were grave concerns about the Misbourne and the fragile aquifer system which could affect this. Additional concerns were whether tunnels would be deep enough to eradicate vibrations and there were concerns about the lack of information on the size of the Access Shaft at Little Missenden and the extent of the associated construction site.

Simon Mace explained that construction of the tunnel would take 7 years, the first year being taken up by establishing the construction site. HS2 Ltd would be examining methods of spoil removal, whether by road or rail.

Isobel Darby pointed out that commuter traffic uses West Hyde Lane as a shortcut to get to the M25, Watford, Ruislip, etc. She also had concerns about the work camps and the effects of criminals unsuccessfully targeting the construction equipment then turning their sights on our communities.

Martin Wells reminded us that we can request bilateral meetings to discuss particular concerns. We can email or write in with specific questions, and HS2 Ltd welcome our input, because we have local knowledge. Isobel Darby offered to coordinate our questions so that we do not duplicate requests for information etc. **Action: Isobel Darby**

Martin Wells and Terry Stafford will circulate email addresses, and sought agreement from all Forum attendees to their email addresses being shared amongst the group. **(Action: Martin/Terry, HS2 Ltd)**

So far issues for future discussion include:

- Footpaths during and after construction phase
- Spoil- removal & storage

- Work camps – size, location
- Road realignments
- Vibrations
- Effects on River Misbourne

Because of time constraints, Chair suggested a very speedy “pinpointing of concerns” by one sentence from everyone in the room and questions were added to the issues already identified.

- George Allison wanted HS2 Ltd to provide their real reasons for building HS2 in light of the state of the country’s economy. Martin Wells suggested this was an item that should be included in our Terms of Reference rather than a list of issues and concerns. **Action: Mark Ladd**
- Work camps (Chris Wilson)
- Foundations of old houses in Amersham & Chalfont St Giles, and effects on Shardeloes Lake and Aquifers (Susan Howkins)
- Abatement of noise at tunnel exits and noise mitigation in general (Mark Ladd) **(NB Chair advised that HS2 Ltd have offered to bring in a noise expert to speak at a future Forum)**
- Shardeloes Lake - historic site (Anne and Peter Cutcliffe)
- Footpaths – how will they be reinstated? (Keith Hoffmeister)
- History of Rights of Way – suggest HS2 Ltd research this (Marian Miller)
- Implications of Access Shafts, vibration and noise in their vicinity (Jeremy Ryman)
- More details required on service roads to site entrance/exit/access shafts, also more details on work camps/workforce and also information on security of communities. (Isobel Darby)
- Storage of spoil (e.g. before transportation) (Linda Smith)
- Where will the power source be located, and will this require further structures and access roads? (Penny Wilson)
- Hours of working during construction, also hours of working for train after construction and how will we maintain the viability of our communities?

7. Future Work Programme

Isobel Darby wanted confirmation that the green boxes on the “Suggested Programme/Timings” chart are not finite. Martin Wells confirmed that they are only illustrative.

Simon Mace explained that HS2 Ltd would employ British Geological Surveys to create a digital representation of the land earmarked for the train and then they would superimpose the route on to this. Jeremy Ryman asked when we would hear whether the route needed to be altered as a result of the survey results. In light of the lack of consultation on the altered route for Amersham as announced in January by Justine Greening, Isobel asked HS2 Ltd to report back to the Forum if the route has to be changed as a result of the geological surveys. HS2 Ltd agreed to notify Forums of any route changes and design changes. HS2 Ltd minuted this request. **Action: HS2 Ltd**

8. Any other business and date of next meeting

The next Forum is proposed for Wednesday 26 September at Chalfont St Peter Community Centre. The following Forum date is not yet finalised but is proposed for week commencing 26 November and venue to be advised. Isobel Darby and Terry Stafford will liaise about this. **Action: Isobel Darby/Terry Stafford**

Meeting ended at 9.45pm