

566. CHAIR: Okay. Thank you very much gentlemen. We now move on to AP58 Wendover Parish Council and Halton Parish Council with Robert Duggan and Brian Thompson.

Wendover Parish Council and Halton Parish Council

567. MR DUGGAN: Good evening.

568. CHAIR: Well, it's not evening yet. It just feels like it. We're getting pretty familiar with Wendover, so, carry on.

569. MR DUGGAN: Okay. We aim to be about 10 to 15 minutes' maximum. We're not trying to warm you up, that's the truth. I'm chair of Wendover Parish Council and Brian's chair of Halton.

570. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Halton is to the north of Wendover, in effect, geographically?

571. MR THOMPSON: Yes.

572. MR DUGGAN: It's on Northern Road. We're both elected representatives and we are here today to talk about the AP5. And the first slide – which you're very familiar with – you've heard from a number of Wendover groups today about different aspects and where they've been covered already, we'll skip over them.

573. MR THOMPSON: Next slide please? This is just the summary of what the AP5 proposal is for Wendover. I guess you've probably heard most of it already, so I won't spend any more time. And I'll move on to the issues. If I could have the next slide, please? One of the major issues is around visual blight. 6m high barriers on top of an embankment. They're going to be very visible. It will, for a length of 780m, that adds about 1500 square metres of barrier, visible, from the Motorway. Obviously, we believe they will be uglier and depending on what the landscaping is, there will be a high risk. And our major concerns. Obviously, it's a big impact on the town in terms of looking as if you're living in Colditz. And, equally, in terms of people coming to Wendover for tourism it could have a very negative effect. Next slide, please?

574. The other thing that's going on is that there are two pylons being moved to allow

the barriers to go up. And we're told they're 63m high. The barriers are moving from 4m to 6m, which is a 2m increase. And we believe the current pylons are between 47 and 50m high. So, we understand 2m of the growth in the pylons but not the other 11m. You know, why have they got to be so high? The issues. These will be a permanent blight in the AONB and around Wendover and they'll be visible for miles. Obviously, it would make sense, if we could, is to bury them rather than make it worse in the AONB by increasing, by 40 or 50 feet, is actually to bury the line so you don't have to have these high pylons. Next slide, please?

575. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: What sort of stretch are we talking about? How long?

576. MR THOMPSON: Is it just the two pylons either side of the line so we're talking about probably 300m max.

577. MR DUGGAN: This slide which you will have seen before but relates to the fact that Wendover depends very much on the business of tourism. And the elements of AP5 which have been added, we feel are going to add to the negative aspects to business and tourism in Wendover. There'll be less tourists as a result; less business. Businesses potentially leaving the village and so on.

578. MR THOMPSON: Okay. If we can have the next slide, please? You've probably heard enough about noise so I'll quickly run through this. This is a slide I picked up from a contractor who install slides. And the basic from it was, the higher the barrier, the more the danger of it acting as a transmitter going through. Now, clearly, there are engineering solutions to that in terms of adding mass to the barrier to stop that happening but what we don't know, and it just adds to the uncertainty around all this, as to what are the plans and what we will do. If I have the next slide which you've probably seen so I'm not really going to talk about it. What I'm merely making a point is, we are already worried about whether the noise is a plus or minus 5 dB. This just adds a bit more uncertainty into the mix.

579. I will just leave one idea on the table at the moment here, which is, we've been assured by HS2 that we have nothing to worry about from noise, that the numbers we see in the documentation for AP5 would be the maximum numbers we would see. In that case, why don't they give us a legal undertaking that that is what will be delivered?

It would cost them nothing if they're right. Moving on. Next slide, please.

580. MR DUGGAN: When we appeared in September, there was a discussion about barriers and we had a visit from Mr Hargreaves. That, I have to say, is the one communication that we've had officially from HS2 as a parish council. There have been other –obviously they've opened the phones – but specifically with Wendover Parish Council, we've had one meeting. That was it. So we're concerned about the lack of engagement. We've had a number of visits, as you know, as the Select Committee has seen Wendover and we've welcomed you with open arms, and I'd also like to say at this stage that a lot of people in Wendover have been very concerned about HS2. I know, it's stating the obvious. There are 9000 people in Wendover. The railway goes very close and we do feel that everything is being pinched.

581. I would like at this stage to thank everybody in the community for all their hard work. We've heard thanks to the Select Committee earlier from John Bercow, but I think certainly the Wendover community need a lot of thanks for all the effort and time and voluntary effort they have taken in presenting their case to you.

582. MR THOMPSON: Next slide, please. Okay. Not to rattle on the first point, but clearly a tunnel would alleviate both the AP5 issues and some of the base issues we believe we have. We would like a balanced and effective solution for Wendover, and we understand the need for a value for money criteria to be used. What we would suggest though, that it should be the total project cost of the various alternatives, rather than construction costs to take into account, for example, if you have to do other things and when you compare the two various options. Equally, we believe that actually proper mitigation shouldn't be an optional extra, but ought to be built into the baseline, and, well, I'm sure – HS2 tell me we do have proper mitigation. The impression we get is, we haven't.

583. Obviously we're looking for you to help protect the people of Wendover from any potential health risks associated for HS2 and maybe some of the stresses and strains that are going to come from having a huge project right on their doorstep. Obviously, finally, we do expect the government, you know, to protect the environment for the future generations, not just for us. So at the moment our position is, while we welcome some elements of AP5, for example, the hundred meter extension to the green tunnel,

we believe there should be more if we cannot afford a fully bored tunnel. Finally, the last point, what were you going to talk about...?

584. MR DUGGAN: Yeah, just two very quick points. My GP, who is one of the people presented to you this, 2015, sends a message saying she hopes that you are all well and that your mental health hasn't been affected by sitting around here for two years. When speaking to her, I was talking about medical health, and I came across this quote: I am most concerned about the destruction of countryside that has taken centuries to shape and develop and also habitat, e.g. streams, that, once gone, can never be recovered, and I think with my GP's thoughts in my mind about mental health, how people can cope in stressful situations, and one thing we need not to do is to destroy the countryside irreparably. Thank you very much.

585. CHAIR: Okay. Thank you very much and thank you very much for coming together and presenting in the way you have. Mr Strachan?

586. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): I have covered quite a few of these issues in the course of today. The barrier design we spoke about a little bit earlier. That's clearly a matter for detailed design and the ways of, both in the barrier itself, reducing its visual impact. The picture you saw, which I think I had prefaced, was on the inside of a barrier with its noise absorptive properties. That's the barrier that was facing a road from the Petitioners, not the outside. That's A209A(4). The external appearance of the barrier is a matter for detailed design and planting of course is part of that. It is also common practice to provide planting, which deters people from being in proximity to the barrier, so the choice of plants or trees that actually prevent people getting close to the barrier, and of course, ultimately seeing.

587. Subject to all the caveats about photomontages, I just want to show you where the pylon is. P15594(2). This is, the top photograph, six, this is a photomontage taken from Wendover. This is looking south or east looking to the left-hand side. You can see the existing 400 kV pylons running alongside the road and the railway, the A413 and the railway, and the pylon work is just in this location here where, in order to cross – if you come down to the photomontage, in order to cross our noise barriers in line, we have to put in one pylon this side of it, and the reason for that is to get clearance over the additional noise barriers at six metres. So that's the additional pylon and that's the

extent, and then there's a pylon behind which is also replaced. So those two, that's the nature of the pylon works.

588. The London Road noise barriers, that I've already shown you an assurance that we've given to Buckinghamshire and Aylesbury Vale District Council, where the London Road noise barrier provision is dealt with in that separate assurance. I'm not going to put it back up on the screen now unless you want me to. I think that's it. I don't think we had said we had an agreement with the school. We provided an undertaking or an assurance – sorry, to assurance to Wendover School, but you've heard about that separately on other occasions. So unless there's anything further, I will refer you back to what you've heard already.

589. CHAIR: Okay. We'll have a brief comment from Halton and a brief comment from Wendover. I don't want to show favouritism.

590. MR THOMPSON: Well, my comment is very simple, which is, we understand two metres of the growth in the pylon, but tell me about the other 11 metres which it grows, and why don't they just grow from 50 metres to 52 metres, not to 63? You haven't answered the question. Thank you.

591. MR DUGGAN: Pylons used to be a sore subject, 30, 35 years ago, because they cut right across the opening to the Chilterns, so that's a sore point.

592. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Is there an answer as to the height?

593. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): I can find out the technical answer, but I understand it's to provide the necessary clearance to get over the line at that point. We're obviously not going to build them any higher than we have to. It's in order accommodate railways, which is the slightly elevated...

594. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Is there somebody who might be able to talk to the Petitioners maybe outside or on some other day to discuss?

595. CHAIR: Or put it into a letter, because I don't think it's an unreasonable question.

596. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): No, certainly. I think that's better than me attempting to get – we are providing a note to the Committee on pylon grounding

generally, and I think you have heard about it in relation to Wendover. I recall a cost of £60 million to underground the pylons in the vicinity of Wendover, but I'll check that and will incorporate it into the note we're going to provide you.

597. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: You might also be able to remind us whether any undergrounding is being planned outside presumably built up areas.

598. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): I will add that to the list.

599. CHAIR: Okay. Thank you very much, gentleman.

600. MR THOMPSON: Thank you.

601. CHAIR: Right. We now move on to the last Petitioner, which is 217 AP3:68, which is Euston Estates Ltd represented by Bircham Dyson Bell. Right, at the last hearing, we sort of sent you away to sort of have a further chat, and I presume some progress has been made.

Euston Estates Ltd

602. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Yes.

603. CHAIR: Who is going to respond and then where the disagreements are? Mr Mould?

604. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Yes, I will try and bring things up to date, if I may. The parties, as you recall, the Petitioner is the owner of long leasehold estates in four buildings at Euston Station, which we referred you to last time we were before you as buildings A, B, C and D, and negotiations have continued.

605. I'm just making sure my phone doesn't ring while you're listening to me. Yes, so of those buildings, as you've heard last time, we were in negotiation as to two scenarios, effectively. The first was one whereby the Secretary of State acquires and occupies those buildings as empowered under the Bill and envisaged in the environmental statement, and the second scenario was one whereby the Secretary of State acquires, by agreement, the entire leasehold estate vested in the Petitioner at Euston, and just to recap, the first of those scenarios in practice envisages the Secretary of State acquiring building A and B outright by way of compulsory purchase. They are required and will