

MINUTES OF ORAL EVIDENCE

taken before

HIGH SPEED RAIL COMMITTEE

on the

HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON – WEST MIDLANDS) BILL

Wednesday 23 September 2015 (Morning)

In Committee Room 5

PRESENT:

Mr Robert Syms (Chair)
Mr Henry Bellingham
Sir Peter Bottomley
Geoffrey Clifton-Brown
Mr David Crausby
Mr Mark Hendrick

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr James Strachan, QC, Counsel, Department for Transport
Mr James Burton, Counsel, Chesham Town Council

Witnesses:

Dr James Conboy
Cllr Tony Franks
Ms Amanda Polden
Cllr Nigel Shepherd
Mr Mike Johnstone
Ms Ann Pummell
Mrs Emma Jones
Mr Paul Burke
Mr John Baker
Mr Peter Boulton and Mrs Elizabeth Boulton
Mr James Rodda

IN PUBLIC SESSION

INDEX

Subject	Page
<u>Chesham Town Council</u>	
Introduction from Mr Burton	3
Submissions by Mr Franks	4
Submissions by Dr Conboy	6
Further submissions by Mr Franks	17
Response from Mr Strachan	24
Closing submissions by Mr Burton	25
<u>Andrea Polden</u>	
Submissions by Dr Conboy	27
Statement of Ms Polden	31
Further submissions by Dr Conboy	34
Response from Mr Strachan	36
<u>Amersham Town Council</u>	
Submissions by Mr Burton	38
Statement of Mr Shepherd	39
Response from Mr Strachan	62
Closing submissions by Mr Burton	67
<u>The Lappetts Lane (South Heath) Neighbourhood Watch Scheme</u>	
Submissions by Mr Johnstone	69
Statement by Ms Pummell	76
Statement by Mrs Jones	79
Statement by Mr Burke	81
Statement by Mr Baker	83
Further submissions by Mr Johnstone	84
Response from Mr Strachan	86
Closing submissions from Mr Johnstone	88
<u>Elizabeth and Peter Boulton</u>	
Submissions by Mr Boulton	89
<u>James Rodda</u>	
Submissions by Mr Rodda	92

(At 9.30 a.m.)

1. CHAIR: Order, order. Welcome. Good morning to the HS2 Select Committee. We start off with petition 870, Chesham Town Council. Mr Burton, are you on parade again?

Chesham Town Council

2. MR BURTON: Yes, me again. Many thanks. Sir, gentlemen, I appear on behalf of Chesham Town Council. My first slide is up showing you the high street. Chesham, as you may know, is the largest town in the Chilterns, a place of around 21,000. It's surrounded by the Chiltern Hills and is a fairly easy walk from the AONB. You will have seen, in the course of these proceedings, very little and heard very little about Chesham, I'm sure.

3. If we have our slide 4 up, it doesn't lie directly on the route. As the crow flies, it's about three miles from the north portal of the Chilterns tunnel with C6, and the nearest part of the line, which is at this point, is in a tunnel, which is down. Obviously if one takes a perpendicular from the route itself up to Chesham, it's about 3.3 kilometres away.

4. You will find no acknowledgement of any impact upon the town of Chesham in the promoter's environmental statement. The most significant reference or consideration to Chesham town is found in volume 2, CFA9, of the environmental statement, paragraph 4.3.5. It's a fairly dismissive one. It says this, an air quality management area, 'has been declared by Chiltern District Council for nitrogen dioxide in the town of Chesham. This area is too far from the route to be affected by traffic associated with construction of the proposed scheme.' Well, we're here because we know that Chesham will be affected and adversely affected. The promoter will tell you there won't be any affect at all on Chesham. It'll be affected across its businesses, its traffic, its highly prized civic amenities and its people, and we're here to explain that.

5. If we go to the next slide, please, the slides themselves the Town Council would like to acknowledge. It's just the next slide, slide 2. I do apologise. The Town Council would like to acknowledge the considerable help that they have had and support from

the Chesham Society, in preparing the slides themselves. The slides are a joint work, but obviously the presentation is just the town council's. You'll see our electorate there, 16,000-odd, and obviously supported by the Chesham Society.

6. Our asks, if we go to the next slide, please, are fairly straightforward. We, like many others, do seek an extension of the Chiltern Tunnel to the full extent of the AONB. If not, then a package of traffic-related measures – we refer to petition 750, which is Dr Jim Conboy's petition. As one of my two witnesses, I'll be calling Dr Conboy, who will actually explain the traffic-related mitigation. In any event, we do seek financial assistance to deal with the effects upon the town during and after the construction period.

7. I have two witnesses today: Mr Tony Franks, town councillor, who will be speaking to a range of the impacts upon the town of Chesham; and Dr Jim Conboy, who I know you've already heard from in relation to traffic generally. He'll be dealing with some specific traffic issues concerning Chesham itself during the construction phase.

8. If we turn to slide 4, please, which we just looked at a minute ago, I'll introduce Mr Franks, who is currently the town councillor for the ward of Waterside in Chesham and a retired investment manager. Perhaps Mr Franks would like to introduce himself more fully and then proceed.

9. MR FRANKS: Thank you. Chairman, Members of the Committee, a very good morning to you. You've already introduced me. I am indeed a retired investment manager and, these days, a town councillor for Waterside. I came to Chesham a very long time ago, in June 1939, with my parents. That actually proved to be a most lucky move, because the house we vacated in London received a direct hit during the Blitz and was turned into a pile of rubble. But for that move, I doubt that I'd be here today. I was rather fortunate.

10. Chesham in fact is a very old town. We know that the Romans were here. It's mentioned several times in the Domesday Book, which was commissioned in 1085. While William the Conqueror had us checked out, Chesham, the largest town in the Chilterns, as you've already heard, was the town that HS2 forgot, and yet we are convinced that building a new railway will have serious consequences for Chesham. Our town is very heavily dependent on the local road system, and traffic congestion,

already a major problem for us, is just bound to get worse.

11. We're a market town. We have been for more than 750 years. I wouldn't like to describe us as a dormitory town, but it is a fact that about 12% of our people travel to work by train, primarily to London, and many others travel to neighbouring towns. More importantly, more than 70% of us either use cars, motorbikes or buses to go to work.

12. Can I have slide 5, please? Here are some pictures of Chesham. On the top left corner is a photo of the River Chess. This is a chalk stream, with a very rich habitat for wildlife. Water voles, one of the UK's rarest mammals and really an endangered species, are found here. Historically, Chesham was used to power watermills, four of which are listed in the Domesday Book.

13. The next picture down you can see the railway and, below that on the left, the Queens Head, which serves some of the best real ales in Buckinghamshire and attracts lots of thirsty hikers. At the bottom is Lowndes Park, with the town lying behind it. At times, you will find jazz bands and classical guitarists playing there, as you can indeed on the high street. On the right, are three more pictures that illustrate the fact that Chesham is a centre for recreation, religion and commerce.

14. Slide 6, please. Chesham has a diverse economic base, really a highly skilled workforce. They are mainly involved in small and medium-sized companies, fabrication of technology-based goods, and graphic design. On the bottom left, you'll see a photo of Prestige. Prestige is a firm that printed that rather fine map that is on the wall, between the windows. Bottom right is a photo of a company called IMF. They're a company of metal fabricators. They have severe access problems when HGVs call to deliver materials or indeed collect a finished product.

15. Slide 7, please. Chesham has excellent schools. Pictured on the top right is Chiltern Hills Academy, which has very fine views and a growing academic reputation. On the left is our mosque, which is large, but it serves not only our devout Muslims but a wider community from neighbouring towns. Our next nearest mosque is at High Wycombe. That means that many of these worshipers arrive by car, adding to congestion in the town. Is the high street on the right? No, that's the high street.

16. MR BURTON: On the left.

17. MR FRANKS: Yes, sorry. On the left is a picture of our high street. We're very proud of our pedestrianised high street, with its excellent shops and markets. There is a symbiotic relationship between those two, of which I'll speak a bit more later on. If travelling to Chesham becomes more difficult, then we think shoppers will go elsewhere. Indeed, they have plenty of choice in towns such as High Wycombe and Hemel Hempstead.

18. Other attractions are Chesham's cultural and leisure facilities, the Elgiva Theatre, I refer you to the Chesham Leisure Centre and to major supermarkets, I suppose.

19. Slide 8, please. I suppose the town's largest attraction is really its situation in the midst of glorious countryside. You can see it there lying in the valley of the Chess on either side, so we have lots of tourists who come from far afield. Indeed, we are part of the most visited AONB in the country, because of our proximity to London. Chesham is a 'walkers are welcome' town and, every day, walkers pass my house where I live in Church Street, with their knapsacks and their walking sticks.

20. Now, this tourism is very important for our shops and cafes, of which there are a surprising number, and our pubs and restaurants, but we wonder, 'Will the tourists still want to come in such numbers, when parts of our beautiful but less accessible start to resemble the Western Front in 1916?' We rather doubt it. Slide 9, please.

21. MR BURTON: After that whistle-stop introduction to Chesham, Mr Franks, we'll just turn to Dr Conboy, who will deal fairly briefly with some specific traffic impacts on Chesham. Dr Conboy, over to you. I suspect the Committee does not need any introduction to you.

22. DR CONBOY: No, we met last week. Thank you.

23. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Can we ask whether you are on screen and whether it matters?

24. DR CONBOY: I'm happy to be off screen for the next half a dozen slides. I will make an appearance later for the Society itself, so that probably saves shuffling around.

25. The picture is the A416 St Mary's Way, through the middle of Chesham, on a typical wet morning. As you can see, it's looking fairly busy and we are convinced that, when HS2 construction starts, this situation is not going to improve. It will be the opposite.

26. Next slide, please. Right, I'm going to talk about the construction phase. We heard about direct impacts to construction traffic. Our concern here is displacement of traffic avoiding the construction routes and what this will do to Chesham. We find, or I found, no mention of displaced traffic in the petition response document.

27. MR BURTON: What I we looking at here, in this slide, please, Dr Conboy?

28. DR CONBOY: This is a queue on the A413 roundabout into Amersham. That's not quite relevant to this situation.

29. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: A different town.

30. DR CONBOY: Yes, but when the system jams up in the AONB, it sort of feeds on to another. The whole thing seizes up. Displacement traffic, even if this can't be controlled by HS2 Ltd, they might at least make some attempt to predict what might happen. Next slide, please.

31. MR HENDRICK: Can you just go back to that slide? I noticed some traffic cones there and what looks like grass that's been covered over. It looks to me like there's already some sort of work going on there. Is that the cause of the congestion at that point?

32. DR CONBOY: No, the cones are off the road. I think they cleared the roadworks aside.

33. MR HENDRICK: There has to have been some work going on there that can be attributed to that.

34. DR CONBOY: I don't recall now – it was some time ago I took the picture –what exactly was causing that.

35. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: We heard flooding mentioned somewhere, so it maybe a wet time.

36. DR CONBOY: No, I don't think that bit floods. It's a bit farther down.
37. MR HENDRICK: The cones would indicate that that's not normal traffic.
38. DR CONBOY: I wouldn't put this forward as a detailed study of the traffic in the AONB. I just wanted a picture to go with the slide about congestion, to be honest.
39. MR BURTON: The question, Dr Conboy, is do you recall were any roadworks actually in the road causing the traffic.
40. DR CONBOY: No, there were some cones. I think they'd been doing some work on the grass banking there. They might be just reseeding it. I don't travel that way every day, so I'm not aware of the history of it. As you can see, the cones are not in the road. If they were, I would have a picture of the traffic jammed up to the top of the hill.
41. MR HENDRICK: What if there are cones in the road that are not visible?
42. DR CONBOY: I'm sorry?
43. MR HENDRICK: I'm wondering if there are cones in the road that are not visible.
44. DR CONBOY: Not to my knowledge, no. I don't have any pictures of cones in the road and, if there had been, I would have probably taken them.
45. Anyway, as I was saying, our concern in Chesham is with displaced traffic. Just to remind you from last week's presentation, we have two major worries. One is traffic turning off the A413 at Rocky Lane, coming through Swanbottom.
46. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: That's your top left picture.
47. DR CONBOY: Yes, that's that one indeed.
48. MR BURTON: It's that big arrow.
49. DR CONBOY: We have a secondary concern about traffic on the B485 coming from Great Missenden, which is the lower arrow. That's it, yes.
50. MR BURTON: Coming through Hyde End there. What's this no entry

symbolising?

51. DR CONBOY: This is the main construction area on the A413, where we expect all the traffic to come down from the embankments, from the viaduct, Leather Lane, Bowood Lane, etc.

52. MR BURTON: Right, so you're not saying it's closed. What's this symbolising?

53. DR CONBOY: It's symbolising the fact that, when you get there, you might well consider that you made a major error and you'd have done far better to go some different way.

54. MR BURTON: Right, so what's your point? When this is blocked up, you think these arrows will occur.

55. DR CONBOY: I think people will either, if they can, dive off at Rocky Lane, although it's not very suitable but, if the 416, say, was stationary then what else would you do? Or their traffic management or the traffic system in their satnav may say, 'Oh, we know the 413 is slow. This is a different road; let's go that way,' as these things do. Our other worry about the B485 is not only displaced traffic, but also such things as contractors' white vans, anything that isn't an HGV, which will, as we understand it, be permitted to use that road. We'll come back to the B485.

56. The impact on Chesham is that these two routes converge at either end of the A416 through the bypass section of the town, which is the only road going in that direction. At the northern end on the Berkhamstead Road, towards the A41, there's an air quality management area to monitor high concentrations of NO₂. The A416 as a whole is a primary congestion management corridor in the Bucks local transport plan. In fact, the congestion is so bad that they've started opposing applications to build houses, which is quite unheard of. We've been trying to get them to do that for ages.

57. Next slide, please. Okay, these are just a few more congestion pictures. The upper one is St Mary's Way, the A416, between the B485 turning and Chartridge. Bottom left is a queue coming down the A416 from Amersham. As you can see, it goes right to the top of the hill. There was one time a bus broke down on the high street and it went all the way back to Amersham, but that's exceptional. Queuing there for 20

minutes is not unusual.

58. MR BURTON: What's that, the bottom left?

59. DR CONBOY: That's bottom left, yes.

60. MR BURTON: Are you able to give the Committee an idea of how long these drivers in this queue are looking at to get through the congestion?

61. DR CONBOY: It depends to some extent how many people come down through Waterside and how congested the roundabout is at the bottom of the hill. 10 minutes, you would count yourself lucky. 15 to 20, you would begin to wish you'd gone a different way, I imagine.

62. Bottom right is the queue down from Chartridge Lane into the roundabout at the bottom there. This is the other end of Rocky Lane, and you might have seen pictures of the other end, which is rather more scenic but a lot narrower. Even so, a lot of this traffic is actually associated with the school run. At that time of day, the queue goes right to the top of the hill.

63. MR BURTON: During the school run, sorry, is what time of day.

64. DR CONBOY: Yes, this was around about quarter to nine or so. All the roads into Chesham incidentally. Even if you out down the river, it then goes up a hill at the end.

65. Next slide, please. One of the other concerns is Church Street, which you can see at the top. The houses there are Chesham old town and Church Street itself is rather wide. I think it started off as a gap between houses, rather than a road, and you can see in the picture that it's not wide enough for two cars to park.

66. MR BURTON: Sorry, did you say Church Street is rather wide?

67. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: He said it wasn't intending to be a road. It was the space between houses, which has now turned into a road, but only one vehicle can go through at a time.

68. DR CONBOY: Exactly, that's what I intended to say.

69. MR HENDRICK: It's close to the cars.

70. DR CONBOY: Yes, indeed. All the houses are 14th and 15th century. They've survived okay, even though they don't have very much in the way of foundations. Our worry here is how we can prevent the displaced commuter traffic and HS2 contractors from using this road. I've mentioned this to Bucks and, whenever we proposed traffic-calming measures, they say first of all that HS2 would be able to circumvent these and ignore them if they wished. We would really want Transport for Bucks and HS2 to cooperate and see what they can do about this. Next slide, please.

71. MR BURTON: Just so we're clear, Dr Conboy, you're talking again about the HS2 contractors, not about the HGVs.

72. DR CONBOY: No, we understand that HGVs will not be routed on the B485 and through the old town. Of course, whether this is actually the way things work out in practice remains to be seen and that's something else I will return to.

73. MR BURTON: Yes, but it's displaced traffic and, I suppose, the non-monitored smaller vehicles.

74. DR CONBOY: Yes. I believe people driving to work are entitled to drive on the same roads as everyone else.

75. This next slide you saw last week. It's just to remind you that the nearest A&E at Stoke Mandeville is at the other end of the A413, and we have two other hospitals without an A&E.

76. The next slide, please. Although some people to go to hospital by ambulance with blue lights, there are a great many more who make their own way there throughout patient appointments, visiting relatives and that type of thing. This is what you would need to do to get to an appointment at nine o'clock at the Stoke Mandeville. In fact, for the sort of person who's going to need an outpatient appointment at Stoke Mandeville, there's one direct bus. At the moment, it's scheduled to take 55 minutes to get there. That's the Arriva 55.

77. MR BURTON: Is that the one in grey, there?

78. DR CONBOY: It is indeed, yes. There are four departures in the morning, so there's one every couple of hours, which is not that convenient. The alternative is to go by bus to Amersham and by rail to Stoke Mandeville station, which is actually a mile and a half away from Stoke Mandeville hospital, so you then have to walk and get another bus or walk beside the road on cycle paths. Obviously, if you need to get there for medical reasons, you wouldn't want to be doing that.

79. As an alternative, there's the Chesham voluntary hospital car service. Could I see A1400, please? Thank you. If you look at the bottom of that page in the highlighted area, this is a letter from the –

80. MR BURTON: Do you want to tell the Committee what the voluntary car service is?

81. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Every single person here is a Member of Parliament. Every Member of Parliament has something like this. In fact, every Member of Parliament probably has homes built in the 14th or 15th century, and virtually every Member of Parliament has traffic jams, so take for granted a lot of what you're thinking of saying.

82. DR CONBOY: Okay, but not every Member of Parliament has HS2 about to be built through their constituency.

83. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: If you're going to say that, just remind us again how far HS2 is from Chesham.

84. DR CONBOY: It's 3 miles, which is not far if you're commuting to work and choose to drive through it.

85. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: I suppose you ought to go by train, shouldn't you?

86. DR CONBOY: I think you'll find the trains are also full.

87. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: In that case you need more capacity, don't you?

88. DR CONBOY: Yes, indeed, we do need more capacity from places like Berkhamstead and Hemel, not from Birmingham.

89. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: If you built a train line across from Berkhamstead to Chesham, you'd be happy with that. Would you like a local train to be built across the AONB?

90. DR CONBOY: No, what I'm saying is the main overloading on the rail system is commuter services into Euston, from places like Berkhamstead, Hemel and Tring. Constructing HS2, since you've come to mention it, would do nothing for these people and, in fact, you're going to take away some of the current lines from Euston for about 16 years.

91. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: We've established you don't want more houses and you don't want a railway that's a local advantage across from Berkhamstead. I think you'd better get back to your presentation.

92. DR CONBOY: No one has suggested a railway from Berkhamstead. I'm not sure that would be entirely an advantage, because we have our own railway line. You could do things for the schedule on the Met Line. That would do.

93. Anyway, just to return to the presentation, you saw the letter from the Chairman of the voluntary hospital car service.

94. MR BURTON: Do you want it big up again, Dr Conboy?

95. DR CONBOY: No, that's alright. It's also on the slide. He anticipates great difficulties and losing drivers, if it takes them hours to get to Stoke Mandeville, because they're sitting in traffic jams, which is not unreasonable. That is my point there. As you can imagine – well, you know about the way these things work. They support the patients. If we didn't have these voluntary drivers, then the NHS would have to pick up the tab and the service would be worse.

96. MR HENDRICK: Is it not the downside of living in a very remote, secluded and beautiful part of the country that you don't have easy access to places like hospitals?

97. DR CONBOY: We know that, when we moved there, yes, this was the situation.

98. MR HENDRICK: This is no big surprise to you then that it takes a long time to get to a major facility like a hospital. It's like you want it on your doorstep, but you

don't want anything else there.

99. MR FRANKS: We did have that many years ago at Amersham, which is only 3 miles away. That was removed from us so, once upon a time, it was to Amersham and we've got a lot farther than that.

100. MR HENDRICK: So you've suffered the cuts like every other part of the country.

101. DR CONBOY: Yes, the facilities are moving steadily away from us and the congestion is getting steadily worse, in the nature of things, so the situation is declining. What we're pointing out is that, once HS2 construction starts, then for the whole construction period, not just three months here and three months there, the A413 will be overloaded and the situation for transport will get worse.

102. MR HENDRICK: You say that, but people who are petitioners are also saying to us that there will be a reduction in tourist traffic. Will that reduction in tourist traffic not make the roads a bit easier for yourselves?

103. DR CONBOY: I somewhat doubt it. Our main worry is about peak hour commuter traffic down from Aylesbury Vale and going back there.

104. MR HENDRICK: That happens everywhere.

105. DR CONBOY: Yes, indeed, but any sensible tourist would avoid those jams, because they're travelling for recreational reasons and don't have to be there for a certain time. There's no sort of compensation of one by the other, if you see what I mean. The tourists are a separate issue. They avoid the jams as it is, because they can. It's people who have to get to places for hospital appointments who will be inconvenience, particularly given the nature of the transport service. If people move to places, they can drive; they're not too worried. I've been to A&E a couple of times; it's taken 20-30 minutes. It's just as you get older you then realise that perhaps you ought to stop driving and you then need some assistance. These people are going to suffer.

106. MR BURTON: The impression, Dr Conboy, just dealing with this part of the slide, is that at the moment the average of two to three hours it takes a voluntary car driver to take someone to hospital to back, that's alright. That's acceptable. The fear the Chair seems to be expressing is, if it gets longer, then people will start stopping

volunteering. Is that what you understand?

107. DR CONBOY: Yes, that's the thrust of the argument. It will put these people off their volunteering. I think they get an amount of petrol, but they don't get any of their time and there's a limit to how much you can expect people to do, really.

108. If there are no other questions, can we go on to the next slide, please? Okay, the mitigation measures, I'll just run through these very briefly, because most of them you've heard before. Removing the spoil by rail, we've dealt with.

109. New roads between the A413 and the trace, I notice that, in the AP4 documentation, they are actually putting in a new road, which is really a step in the right direction. That still leaves Rocky Lane and Bottom House Farm Lane as unsuitable local roads, which are being used. The HGV movements I think we've also dealt with and having an element of compulsion for the park and ride.

110. Perhaps I could just make a point about the failure to observe any agreements in the code of construction practice. Could I have A1404, paragraph 3.3?

111. MR BURTON: A1404, did you...?

112. DR CONBOY: I beg your pardon; I made a typo.

113. MR BURTON: I think you've got 1404 up now, Dr Conboy. It's up now. It went to 1403.

114. DR CONBOY: Okay, right. Sorry, I got it wrong. Right, this is the petitioner's exhibit, I think. This is about the complaints commissioner and, as you can see, the opportunity for savage retribution appears to be to advise the nominated undertaker where action could be taken to reduce complaints. That doesn't strike me as being a terribly onerous sanction on the nominated undertaker. We would really hope that the complaints commissioner could be given some teeth so that, if we do have complaints, something will happen and there'll be some inducement for the undertaker to actually do something about it. In other words, the complaints commissioner needs a self-assertion course, in my opinion. Next slide, please.

115. MR BURTON: Sorry, Dr Conboy, just before we go on, I just want to be clear

with a couple of points with you. Now, you haven't mentioned specifically in this list of mitigation Church Street, which you referred the Committee to earlier. I just want to understand what specific request is being made in relation to that narrow road. The other point is we know, in relation to spoil transport and spoil, that HS2 says that the long tunnel, which of course is the town council's ask, will in fact create more spoil. I wondered if you had a response to that, when you're picking up that spoil point.

116. DR CONBOY: I think this was dealt with by one of the Missendens, in that the figures are not really agreed between the two parties and the ways in which the spoil, if there was extra spoil from the long tunnel, presumably from the intervention shaft, the way in which that would be disposed. If for instance it went out by rail, then there wouldn't be more traffic. That's something up for discussion and I believe that was dealt with on Monday.

117. MR BURTON: Church Street?

118. DR CONBOY: Church Street, yes, is really in request to some ongoing dialogue between HS2 and Transport for Bucks to see what sort of enforceable arrangements could be made to prevent the bad effects of the congestion. You might, for instance, put in a width restriction at the top of the hill on the B485, so that HGVs could get through the gap at the bottom and be turned back earlier, that type of thing.

119. MR BURTON: If the problem is displaced traffic and not necessarily HGVs, are there any specific asks?

120. DR CONBOY: I would just ask that TfB and HS2 put their heads together and see what can be done. I think things like a sleeping policeman probably wouldn't do you any good, because the traffic there is so slow – traffic lights, possibly.

121. MR BURTON: We'll reprogram everyone's satnav.

122. DR CONBOY: Yes, that is the downside of HS2.

123. MR BURTON: Okay, so that takes us through the traffic mitigation. Is that right?

124. DR CONBOY: Yes.

125. MR BURTON: Go to the next slide and I'll bring Mr Franks back in, please.

Mr Franks, you're actually going to now, having introduced Chesham, tell us about the specific impacts outside of traffic.

126. MR FRANKS: Perhaps I could start with slide 18, the impact on schools. Now, many Chesham children attend schools in neighbouring towns. We've got about 131 at the Misbourne School, which is on the HS2 trace; 102 at Challoner's High School for girls; others at Dr Challoner's School for boys; the grammar school at Wycombe. Of course, there are large numbers of children from other neighbouring towns who attend Chesham schools.

127. It really is a major logistical, almost a military, exercise moving them all about. Twice a day, it results in added problems for our inadequate road system. We've already mentioned the A416, but there are actually three schools on this road within the space of just over a mile. Of course, a lot of the children travel by coach, but many are dropped off by their parents and later collected by their parents, who bring the traffic to a complete standstill, which is one of the reasons it takes so long to get down that hill. It takes actually half an hour to get down to the centre of Chesham.

128. Chesham Grammar School, which is pictured at the top left there and which has a very fine reputation, has 1,200 pupils, 800 of whom do not come from the Chesham area. They come from places like Gerrards Close, along the A413; they come from Prestwood, Great Missenden and other towns. They use large coaches to get there, but of course a lot of them arrive by car. 80 teachers and teachers' assistants drive in and some of those come from quite considerable distances. The reason for that is that property in our area is so expensive it's really prohibitive for quite a few of them. At morning and the end of school, it's absolute mayhem outside Chesham Grammar School.

129. Due to the cutbacks in the services, some school buses really do go round the houses, these days, and some journeys, we are told, take the best part of an hour, which seems rather a lot. Once construction on HS2 gets going, it seems inevitable that these journeys to and from schools will take longer, because of increased traffic congestion. That means time-keeping will become more difficult for pupils and staff, and that will put added pressure on them.

130. Next slide, please. This is employers. We've spoken to quite a number of firms

over the last few years about the impact that they think HS2 will have on their businesses. Rather than burden the Committee with a lot of repetitious comments, we're giving three case studies on Chesham-based companies – Silverson, Gil-Lec and Orbitpress. Their concerns are evidenced by letters, which I'll refer you to in a minute.

131. The first company up is Silverson. This is a remarkable company, very high-tech. It's Chesham's largest and it's a world leader in shear mixers. These aren't the mixers that you gentlemen use when you're preparing Sunday lunch for your wives. These are very complex machines used by the food and the pharmaceutical industries, cosmetics, chemical industries. They have an amazing list of clients – Shell, Unilever, Johnson & Johnson, Heinz, Coca-Cola and DuPont. You can see the calibre of this firm. These machines are amazing. They're used in 150 different countries. 90% of output is exported and they're planning to recruit more apprentices. Hopefully some of these apprenticeships will go to Chesham children and young people.

132. But they have a big problem; 90% of their staff drive to work, mainly from towns like Aylesbury, High Wycombe and other towns. Some people are from Chesham, but they're very much in the minority. Every day, they receive numerous HGVs delivering supplies and collecting finished machines.

133. Can I see A1401, please? Can you enlarge it a bit? Sorry, it's just a bit too much. He refers to these problems, the Managing Director, and he says, 'I can't see how the construction of HS2 can fail to make the situation worse. Let's hope that the whole system doesn't come grinding to a halt. Please convey our concerns to the Select Committee,' which I'm doing.

134. Slide 20, please. Gil-Lec is probably Chesham's fastest-growing company. I'm afraid that doesn't really give you a good idea of how deep it is; it goes back quite a long way. It's one of the UK's leading independent electrical wholesalers, with a customer base that includes industrial engineers, domestic electricians, lighting retailers and the general public. A Gil-Lec is just round the corner from Church Street and Wey Lane and, as you've heard, Church Street is extremely narrow and totally unsuitable for this traffic.

135. MR BURTON: Where's Church Street?

136. MR FRANKS: It's just around the corner from here. Could we briefly put up A1403, please? Yes, sorry, that is their letter. Can you enlarge it slightly or just a bit? They are very worried about the impact HS2 will have on their business, which will cause them service and operational problems. They actually say at the bottom that, if things get worse, they could be forced to relocate their operation away from Chesham, which could mean job losses.

137. MR HENDRICK: Just going back to the photo, it looks as though the firm is based on what looks like a residential property.

138. MR FRANKS: Sorry, I didn't hear that very well.

139. DR CONBOY: Mr Hendrick asked exactly the question I asked of you, when you showed me that photograph the first time. It looks like the firm is based in a residential property.

140. MR FRANKS: No, it isn't.

141. MR HENDRICK: It looks like a large townhouse.

142. MR FRANKS: It does.

143. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: The small aerial picture gives you a slightly better view.

144. MR FRANKS: Actually, it used to be a factory that repaired church organs. You wouldn't believe; it was splendid. It does look like a house, but it is not. It's just round the corner from Church Street. So why are they so concerned? Could I go to slide 13 again, please?

145. Now, you've heard about Church Street and might be a bit bored about it. I should explain that I've lived there, in the same house, for 46 years, so I've got a very good idea what goes on there. The trouble is, if you're a person who's not using the route all the time, and you use your TomTom or an AA route planner, it's going to send you down Church Street from places like Hemel Hempstead and Berkhamstead and it's really totally unsuitable for traffic. That's one of their concerns at Gil-Lec.

146. My colleague here has expressed the worry that, with the best will in the world,

we wonder whether HS2 will be able to restrict its subcontractors using the lighter lorries and vans, and its workers travelling in cars, from using some totally unsuitable road. Unfortunately at the moment, lorry drivers and van drivers, they tend to go where their satnavs tell them and I've seen every kind of vehicle imaginable coming past, including things like transporters carrying eight vans on the back. I live in Church Street and all of us in Church Street live in dread of things to come.

147. Could I go on to slide 22, please? This is a picture of Orbitpress. It's a small company, but a very highly regarded printing company. They're the sort of company that would do anything to satisfy you. I know them; they probably work over Christmas. They're that sort of group. They have a strong reputation of quality, speed and efficiency, but they also are now servicing clients from towns such as Beaconsfield, High Wycombe and Aylesbury and, because 90% of their completed orders are corrected directly by clients from the shop, they're very worried that people using the A416, the A413 and indeed the B485 will get turned off by, in truth, increased traffic congestion and will take their business elsewhere. Could I have A1403, I think it was?

148. MR BURTON: It was 1402.

149. MR FRANKS: 1402, is it?

150. MR BURTON: 1402.

151. MR FRANKS: I can't see it from here actually. Can you...? Yes, they do say, 'We can expect to lose business if the traffic gets worse. Rival companies won't be affected in the same way.'

152. Slide 22, please. Now, this is a much smaller company. It's a flower shop, but it's a flower distributor. It's another Chesham company with clients in other towns, so they're servicing Aylesbury, Watford and St Albans, as you can read, and they are really not looking forward to using the A413, which they fear will become clogged up. This is absolutely typical of the fears of Chesham businesses.

153. MR HENDRICK: Is it not that these three businesses that you're showing us examples of are not victims of their own success, in that they're growing companies increasing trade and they're contributing to the very congestion that they're complaining

about?

154. MR FRANKS: You may say that, but they are Chesham-based companies, they regard themselves as such and they'd like to stay there. If they can't, then they have to move.

155. MR HENDRICK: Growing companies quite often move.

156. DR CONBOY: In Chesham, we haven't got a lot of room for them to move within Chesham, so that would probably mean they'd move out of our town, which could affect employment and could affect our rates, as well.

157. MR BURTON: Mr Franks, have any of these companies suggested to you that they will be moving, even if HS2 doesn't happen, due to congestion problems?

158. MR FRANKS: No, they haven't. Could I have slide 23, please, about Chesham's markets? Chesham is a very old town, as I've already told you. We've been a market town for over 750 years. There are two general markets each week and there's also a local produce market, and there are also other occasional markets with stallholders from France and Germany coming over.

159. Are these markets important? We think they're very important for the town and obviously for the stallholders. We have a fishmonger who comes every week from Grimsby. It takes him three and a half hours to drive to Chesham and three and a half hours to drive back, but he thinks it's worthwhile, because he can sell his price at a good price and he pulls in the shoppers, because Chesham is about as far from the sea as you can get.

160. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: It's not.

161. MR FRANKS: Well, Tring is.

162. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Derbyshire I think is 72 miles from the sea. I think you're closer than that. If I may so, a lot of this is interesting but, if you could go through it faster, we wouldn't lose anything in the presentation.

163. MR FRANKS: Okay, sir. Thank you very much. Interestingly, another stallholder comes from Birmingham. These markets enjoy support from neighbouring

towns and from visitors to the AONB. Internally, local produce markets provide support for outlying villages and towns. There is a sort of symbiotic relationship here. Local shops, stores, cafes and restaurants also rely, to a material extent, on this regular influx of visitors. There are some 200 shops in Chesham, some 27 restaurants and 12 pubs. Without tourism visitors, these would become less viable.

164. The big worry is that increased traffic and congestion will be a deterrent, will reduce the vibrancy of Chesham's high street and impact the town's economy. Shoppers are mobile; they can go elsewhere.

165. Slide 24, please. The people of Chesham know HS2 is coming. They don't think it will do them any good. I've no doubt that travelling on HS2 could be quite an exciting experience. If I'm still alive when it's finished, I may travel on it one day but, simply because of our geographical position, it's very unlikely that any of our people are going to use it to go to Birmingham, because that would involve getting on a train going into London, getting on another train going across London and coming out of it again. We at the moment can use the M40 and drive to Birmingham in well under two hours. If you want to take a train, you can go over the hill to Berkhamstead, four and half miles from Chesham. The travelling time from Berkhamstead to New Street Station, which incidentally is the middle of Birmingham, takes one hour and 34 minutes, so HS2 is certainly not for us.

166. As to job opportunities, Chesham has low unemployment at the moment. In November 2014, the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance was 396. We have this diverse skilled workforce. Average skill sets lie in areas like light engineering, metal fabrication, printing, graphic design, and professional business consultancies. In December 2013, only 15 out of 650 registered Jobseeker's claimants in the Chiltern district were seeking construction-related jobs and, because 97% of construction companies in the Chiltern district have fewer than 10 employees, we don't believe that there's sufficient capacity among local businesses to tender for work.

167. Slide 25, please. Leisure facilities, the Elgiva hall is owned by Chesham Town Council. This is a major cultural asset. Throughout the year, there's a very wide-ranging programme of professional and amateur theatre productions, comedies, musicals, professional ballads and even live ballet. In the afternoon, the Chiltern

Society puts on films that you'll never see in cinema chains and, this autumn, there will be screened live performances of the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *Othello*, the National Theatre's *Coriolanus* and the Royal Opera House's ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. These are just a very few examples of what goes on there.

168. The problem is that, in 2002, the last time it was measured, 73% of attendees came from outside of Chesham. Our very real fear is that increased traffic congestion will deter visitors and reduce the theatre's ticket sales. This would result in an increase burden for the Chesham Town Council, whose financial support for the Elgiva was £150,000 in 2014. Our accountants calculate a 20% drop in turnover would require a subsidy of £210,000 per annum.

169. Slide 26, please. This is what we call the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim, an open-air heated swimming pool that's open all the year. It's a very modern up-to-date pool, another of the town's delightful assets, but some 25% of the ticket sales, we know, are to non-residents of Chesham. It's not as exposed as the Elgiva Theatre but, in 2014, the council's subsidy for the centre was £90,000, and a reduction in turnover would require a larger subsidy, without a doubt.

170. MR BURTON: Can I just recap on those two slides, Mr Franks? You've got two town-council-owned and –managed facilities there and you're currently subsidising them to the tune of £240,000 between them. That's right, is it?

171. MR FRANKS: Yes.

172. MR BURTON: And you've given us the figures for their visitors from outside Chesham.

173. MR FRANKS: I think that's where I finish.

174. MR BURTON: Yes, so if we just have the final slide, please, this sets out our mitigation in very general terms. Again as we've said, the town council seeks the long tunnel. You've heard why it is; we're a town that has many businesses that are dependent upon tourism and they will be put off. The only solution that we can see to that is a long tunnel. If the long tunnel is not granted, then we are seeking some form of reduction to the business rates, some support for local businesses to help them with their

case for revaluation due to a material change in circumstances.

175. The town council itself, because it is particularly exposed by reason of the heavy dependence of the Elgiva hall on visitors from outside Chesham, is looking for some support to shore up those local amenities, including the swimming pool as well. You've heard the kinds of sums involved in subsidy for both of those facilities and they are considerable. Clearly in the case of the Elgiva hall, if 73% of visitors come from outside the town and they will be affected by construction traffic, and they tail off, then the impact will be felt in the town council's pocket. That's fairly obvious.

176. Dr Conboy's obviously set out the construction position. I won't revisit that slide, but we adopt and very much support the request that Bucks County Council makes on the code of construction practice, in points 84 to 88 of their petition. That is our evidence. Thank you very much. I don't know if Mr Strachan has anything to say at that point.

177. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Can I just inject a degree of proportionality into the response, because we've already seen and heard that Chesham is over three miles away from the line itself. Rightly, the council is not attempting to suggest any direct impact from noise or visual effects of that kind.

178. So far as the concern, as it's expressed – and it's all based on assertion – the concern as to traffic effects from the scheme, P7586 just gives you an overview of access to the strategic road network for the construction of the railway in this general location. This is actually the AP2 proposal; it doesn't take account of the change for the C6 tunnel, but that actually only reduces traffic in the area. You can see Chesham is off to the north. Our strategic construction routes are all of course based around the A413, but going towards the south or towards the M40 and the M25. There are no construction traffic routes through or indeed near Chesham. In fact, the only changes that have occurred as a result of C6 have been to reduce traffic on the nearest road, Chesham Road, which goes up to the vent shaft, as the Committee's already seen.

179. What Dr Conboy and others seem to be referring to is what they regard as an existing serious traffic problem in Chesham. If that is the case, of course that's something that may need to be addressed by Chesham and indeed the highway authority in any event, but certainly HS2 is not adding to Chesham traffic and that is clear from

the traffic routing. There isn't anticipated to be any displaced traffic through Chesham of the type that is being suggested, let alone at a level that would add materially to Chesham's existing problems, if they are problems.

180. There is of course, as you know, the transport management plan, which will deal with the question of traffic on the A413, but you've heard a number of other miscellaneous points, such as an assertion that spoil should go by rail. The Committee's already heard about that. No suggestion's been advanced by Chesham, or any other party, as to how that would be done, but HS2 has actually examined the limited options for taking excavated material by rail. That would involve construction of a railhead itself, generating further construction activity in the area, and is simply not feasible for the reasons Mr Smart has already explained.

181. So far as general construction traffic is concerned, in terms of other subcontractors potentially supplying HS2, it's not identified what the problem is but, of course, if there are subcontractors coming from a wider area, they are subcontractors benefiting from the construction of HS2 and their businesses benefiting from it, rather than suffering from it. The concern appears to be somewhat misplaced.

182. That said, of course, the transport management plans with Buckinghamshire will of course seek to address all sorts of traffic-related issues on the A413 and generally and, therefore, there is actually no basis for any further measures to be required. It is a matter for the highway authority, in due course.

183. The complaints commissioner, I should point out, is a commissioner that's set up to review complaints that aren't properly addressed through the main companies process, which is set out in information paper E1, where the intention is complaints are dealt with at source, immediately, rather than going through a lengthier process. I don't think I can add anything further to the general effect on Chesham, other to emphasise we maintain that there will be no material effects on Chesham, other than of course the positive benefits to the businesses in the local area.

184. CHAIR: Any final comments, Mr Burton?

185. MR BURTON: Yes. Just while I'm making them, could I have slide 11 up again, please? Thank you. Sir, we're accused of assertion, rather unfairly, I have to say. I'm

sure the Committee will not need much persuading that when, as will inevitably be the case, there is additional traffic on a road like the 413 and it becomes closed for whatever reason, the traffic will go where the traffic will go via its satnav. Dr Conboy has explained, in my submission perfectly sensibly, by reference to this rather helpful diagram where it will go. It will go through Chesham.

186. I'm afraid it's nothing to the point for the promoter to say, 'It's alright.' This is of course a theme that the promoter has pursued. 'It's alright, because you won't have our HGVs running through your town or our direct construction traffic.' That's no good if the HGVs are on the 413, but all the other traffic is displaced. That's the problem. One simply cannot ignore the displacement effect here.

187. I did believe myself that Dr Conboy was perfectly clear when he was explaining the concerns about HS2's subcontractors. It was the vans of the size below those that would be tagged by HS2, below the HGV side, which would themselves be free to roam through Chesham, in addition to the ordinary displaced traffic. Those were the concerns and they make perfect so, so far as construction is concerned.

188. I regret to say that it's rather a case of HS2 asserting there'll be no impact, when it's pretty obvious that there will be. There's no challenge, of course from HS2, to the evidence that, if one messes up the AONB visually, then that will have an effect on tourism, and no challenge to our evidence that we have many businesses that depend on tourism, just as there's no challenge to the evidence we have many businesses – you've seen the light manufacturing – that depend on a working road network. These are impacts. They are adverse and they do need to be considered. It's just not good enough for the promoter to keep insisting that, if the route doesn't go right by your doorstep, if you don't have the HGVs right by your doorstep, then there's nothing to worry about, because that's not the real world.

189. In answer to some of the points that the Committee has made, yes, there are constituencies up and down the country that suffer congestion problems. Of course there are. The point is that, at the moment, we have some congestion, but we can cope with it and we are thriving. If you tip that balance, it will grind to a halt and we may no longer be thriving. What is likely to tip that balance is HS2, which is why the position is different from those constituencies up and down the country where there is a

congestion impact, but it's not anticipated to get worse due to a Government-sponsored project, and that's why we're here.

190. CHAIR: Okay, thank you very much, Mr Burton. We now move on to you, Mr Conboy.

191. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: The presentation in the pack and the summary of the arguments by Mr Burton were exemplary and very welcome, thank you.

Andrea Polden

192. DR CONBOY: Okay, this is part two –

193. CHAIR: Could you tell us who you are now representing and the other petitioners?

194. DR CONBOY: Yes, this is Andrea Polden who is presenting petition 751, which is actually going to be inserted two slides before the end of the Chesham Society petitions, because that will make it flow better, I hope. Can I have the first slide of our presentation? I think that's 14, 13 one? Right, okay. Although we assisted the Town Council in their presentation which you just heard, the remit of the Chesham Society itself is slightly wider than the Town Council, that is to maintain and improve the environment and amenities enjoyed by local people and visitors. So we cover the AONB outside the town. Unfortunately we have fewer resources than the Town Council so we don't benefit from the legal representation which is why this thing is in two parts, as it is.

195. To go back to the slides, this is a picture of Chesham and if you look to the left, just around here, you can see it's rather narrow; that's where the A416 goes through. This is Lowndes Park and this is the hills on the other side of town. That's an incidental matter.

196. Can I have the next slide please? Okay, thank you for the RIPA C6 announcement; we did have a lot to say about Mantels Wood but obviously we'll not be saying it now.

197. Next slide please? However, just to return to the C6 announcement for a moment, in 2013, HS2 asked for comments on their first set of maps which were released in

November 2012. Chesham Society report says, ‘The bored tunnel should be continued at least as far as the exit of the green cut and cover tunnel beyond Frith Hill’, which is now exactly what has happened. If this had been given serious consideration at the time, many people would not have suffered stress; many houses wouldn’t have been sold; and the Committee might have dined at ‘Annie Baileys’ when they came to visit us. Not least, though, you wouldn’t now be faced with a different set of additional provisions and petitioning and so forth. Also, the PRD page 15, the section says, ‘The Secretary of State has made clear that the proposed scheme set out to achieve the lowest feasible impact on local communities and the natural environment with particular reference to Chilterns AONB’. Now, clearly the Committee took around about an hour to decide that the C6 proposals should be recommended –

198. CHAIR: We didn’t. We were constantly assessing these matters over a period of a number of weeks, and coming to a view. Clearly, it was the last presentation we had, but the Committee had a long dialogue about what we were going to do; it wasn’t a quick decision.

199. DR CONBOY: I apologise for that, but it did nevertheless over the course of a few weeks, or however long, come to the same conclusion that we had reached after looking at the original set of plans in 2012.

200. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: You win some!

201. DR CONBOY: Yes! Sorry, it’s a bit like biting the hand that feeds us and saying, ‘I told you so’, but we did. And the Committee recognised that the promoter’s scheme was not as described, achieving the lowest feasible impact otherwise they wouldn’t have recommended it to be changed.

202. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: That is not necessarily so but – you thought of it first –

203. DR CONBOY: It sounds like –

204. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: They have agreed, move on.

205. DR CONBOY: Well, it is of some significance; this is from the design team that first of all gave you the HS1 link via the North London Line, which was withdrawn, the

Heathrow Spur which was found not to be necessary. They haven't quite given you Euston Station, but they may do; and they also at one point was going to close Hangar Lane for 18 months, which is way beyond the dreams of the RMT for disrupting communications in London. Now they tell us that the long tunnel is not justified. If I just ask the Committee, is it possible they might have got this wrong as well? Thank you.

206. The next slide? Just brief remarks on the Environment Statement. It came out without an index or cross-referencing, and I think this is in danger of collapsing into unusable now that we have all these additional provisions and further additional provisions: which bits of the document are still valid? This is something which I think the promoter should address urgent.

207. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Among the sensible points you make, that is a sensible point, and I think at some stage, the promoters might want to address us about whether an index job could be done?

208. DR CONBOY: It would be greatly helpful if I just knew which volumes referred to CFA9 and I can then find the references.

209. Regarding Chesham, if you take out the few hundred references to Chesham Road in different places, we have, as described earlier, the air quality on the Berkhamsted Road, which HS2 say is nothing to do with them, and we say it is; Bucks CC surface water management plan, which they say is nothing to do with them, and I agree with them, it isn't. And also three references to pottery finds, so basically, they've ignored us since about, probably, the Neolithic period. We also had two minor changes to road layouts as a result of the community forums, which I don't think represented a great return on our efforts in that direction.

210. Next slide please? The operational impact – you all know what this will be – has lapsed into HS2 speak at the top, sorry about that. The cumulative effect of all this is going to degrade the local environment so it will no longer offer recreational opportunities for local residents or attract visitors. Only the residents receptors have been considered for mitigation, and there's nothing for outside users.

211. Next slide please? This represents Leather Lane on the left; Bowood Lane on the

right. This is what people come to the AONB to experience, not to go trainspotting and look at viaducts. I must question how much of the AONB is being disturbed. We hear that it's only 4km of footpaths, I think was the number. I'll just point out that if I went to slash a canvas in the National Gallery, I could say I've only disturbed 2% or 3% of the surface, but I don't think my learned friends would recommend that as a defence. While the length of the parts disturbed may be short, you need to envisage this thing as walks. Now, I have about five guide books to various walks in the AONB which people have given me, and if I look through the index, I can classify what disturbance is to an individual walk by whether it wanders around through the vent shaft country, then that may be minor; if it actually crosses the trace, crosses the A413, for instance, then I count that as a major disturbance.

212. So of 103 walks, I would classify five as having major disturbances and another four as minor. So it's between 5-10% of what you might consider to be the AONB, as perceived by someone who's planning a visit. I also point out that it doesn't actually matter whether these routes are physically disturbed by HS2. If someone looking at the guidebook says, 'Oh, that's going through Little Missenden, they're digging a hole there, we'll do a different one', then people will be dissuaded from going there. So I think this is a better way to make a realistic assessment of the impact on the AONB.

213. Could I have A1409 please? Paragraph 7 at the top, thank you. This is quite incredible; with respect to the effects of noise on outdoor – well, you can read it, it says, 'This is a transitory effect because people are not going to stick around for very long'. Now, why would that be? Because of the noise. This doesn't seem to me to be paying respect to the fact that people may want to use the AONB for the reasons it was designated. If you were to have a picnic and Wendover Dean, next to the house, looking over Wendover Dean, okay, you probably wouldn't. So it would be a transitory visit, but it wouldn't have been had they not get the railway.

214. Now we can go on to the – yes, could we have the next slide in the presentation? That's (7). These are a few comments from Tony Molesworth who is the Chairman of the Chesham Society. Can I have A1414 please? It's a little bit larger. Tony is a – he's the Secretary, sorry, of the Chiltern Harriers Athletic Club, organises runs through the Chilterns AONB; this area is used to train. We heard on Monday how it was used by cyclists; it's also used by runners as you can read here. And, I will go back to the slides,

A1413(8) please? So there's various other organisations train in the area, particularly in the Misbourne Valley, and it's particularly unfortunate that at the time when the government is trying to get us to exercise more, the actions of the DfT are making this more difficult in our area.

215. Next slide please? Okay, what's the point of this? These are the standard requests for noise mitigation which I won't go into, other than to observe that in all honesty it's difficult to see how anything can be done about the viaduct at Small Dean and Wendover Dean because if you are up on the hills, you can actually look down on the tracks and there's a limit to what size a noise barrier you could put on the viaduct. In fact, one of Mr Strachan's profiles through Wendover Dean might be quite an interesting thing to look at if he actually has one?

216. Next slide please? The visual and landscape impacts, again, I think you must've seen these. In the 2012 re-working of the plan, the line was raised considerably and previous to that, we think that cuttings would've masked the gantries over the lines, and they now don't. That's one point. I would just return to bunds and noise barriers, which appear not to be within the control of the local authority.

217. Can we have the next slide please? So this is rather outside my comfort zone I'm afraid, but we would like to restore some local authority involvement in how the bunds and so forth are arranged, because at the moment, under 'D', and planning permission, 'The authority may only impose conditions on approval for the purpose of this paragraph with the agreement of the nominated undertaker', who has, let us say, his only reasons for wanting to dump spoil as closely to where it's dug up as possible and we think that the local authority should have some part in this.

218. Now, at this point, I'd like to introduce Andrea Polden who prepared the slides on the ecology in the AONB, to take over? Can we have petition 751? Sorry, this was a late re-arrangement of the programme and it shows. A1416(1), apologies for that.

219. MS POLDEN: Good morning gentlemen. As Dr Conboy says, my name's Andrea Polden, I read a history degree from the University of London and became a librarian by profession at the British Library. My family and I moved to Chesham in 1960 and to Sunnyside Road in Chesham in 1981. The photo on the left shows Sunnyside Road taken from a few yards in from the A416. My property is near the far-

end of the road, where it bends to the left, which is a little to the left of the arrow shown on the map on the right-hand side. I'm within easy walking distance of the town centre for shopping and the markets, the station and the Elgiva Theatre.

220. Please could I have A1415(1)? Thank you. Since I retired, my main interest has been the environment and the damage that HS2 will do to this very beautiful area, that is my main objection to it; plus the outrageous cost at a time when all our other services are being cut drastically. This interest in the environment and wildlife led me over the years to join my relevant charities and societies. I joined the Chesham and District Natural History Society, CDNHS, in 2000; coming onto the Committee the following year and becoming Vice-Chairman in 2003. This gave me more opportunity to get out into the beautiful local countryside than when I was working in London. The Society have monthly field meetings as well as walks offered by the other societies I belong to.

221. Could I have slide (2) please? Thank you. My main opposition to the whole HS2 scheme coming through this area is the damage it will do to wildlife habitats, when much time and money and many hours of volunteers' work have been put into trying to restore some of the wildlife connections and habitats. These are living landscapes; and the RSPB has similar programmes. This is described in the *Natural Choice* White Paper of 2011 – could I have A1411 please? Thank you. The highlighted area show relevant passages, and the importance of these corridors, especially in trying to reverse the decline of many species. HS2 will do the complete opposite in the AONB. Even HS2 Limited has acknowledged that the barn owl will be wiped out for a mile or so by the side of the line.

222. Could I have 1418 please? The promoter in the PRD, page 73 paragraph 21 states that no additional measures are required to maintain ecological connectivity, but gives absolutely no evidence to support these assertions. I have not seen any reports of any research done into the shock waves and vortices created by ultra-fast trains but I believe they will have a deleterious effect upon birds and insects, including many of the rare butterflies and bees that we have in the Chilterns or bats, such as the protected Bechstein's bats. These animals cannot fly fast enough to get out of the way of fast train, so collisions are inevitable. The provision of wider green bridges for footpaths may slightly reduce the impact on larger mammals.

223. Noise is another factor, especially where birds are concerned. An interested experiment conducted by Boise State University in the USA set up a phantom road. Could I have 1417 please? The phantom road, to separate noise effects from any other effects by reproducing traffic noise through loud speakers in a distant and isolated area, far away from any other noise. This proved that the habitat was degraded by noise alone; not only do birds find it more difficult to attract mates, but because of the sound of their songs being masked by the noise, they cannot hear predators, and have to spend more time watching for predators instead of feeding. If this is true of road noise, surely it will be worse with the noise of a high-speed train passing every couple of minutes.

224. Could I have slide 3 please? As I said at the beginning, I live near the A416. This road suffers from a high degree of air pollution and frequently breaches the legal limit. In the past, I have suffered from asthma, bronchitis and pneumonia; and although I have not suffered from them for a considerable time, I do not wish them to recur, but I do have an increasing sinus problem. I am concerned that there will be a considerable increase in traffic once construction starts, as we have already heard from Dr Conboy, and I fear a further increase in air pollution exacerbated by health problems. There will also be an increase in noise levels, if there is an increase in traffic. As you have seen in some of the earlier slides, the sides of the hills through the centre of Chesham confined the traffic noise and pollution to a very narrow area. You have heard earlier about the fears of getting to Stoke Mandeville A&E department.

225. This is an area of outstanding natural beauty and this designation is supposed to have the highest level of protection after that of a national park. What is the point of such a designation if a destructive project as HS2 can be driven through it? While the extension of the tunnel past South Heath is welcome, the tunnel should be continued under the whole of the AONB.

226. Could I have slide (3) please?

227. DR CONBOY: A1415(3)?

228. MS POLDEN: In mitigation, I ask for a further extension of the tunnel, close scrutiny of traffic noise and pollution levels throughout Chesham, including prompt attention to these matters if they are found to be in breach of current legislation; and that much more attention should be paid to the preservation of wildlife species and habitats

under threat, for the future enjoyment of residents, visitors and future generations to come. The latter will not thank us if they are born into a deserted, sterile and ruined countryside. Thank you for your attention.

229. CHAIR: Thank you.

230. DR CONBOY: Right, thank you Andrea. Can we now go to A1412 please? This is from the *Natural Choice* as well, you've got the highlighted area. It says, 'Too many of the benefits we derive from nature are not properly valued.' The value of natural capital is not fully capture in the prices customers pay in the operation of our markets or in the accounts of government or business. When nature is undervalued, bad choices can be made; this may ring a bell with you, I'm sure.

231. Now, can I have A1413(15), thank you? As you know from the tunnel hearings, we did attempt to address the subject of valuation of the landscape and I won't go into this in any detail; the petitioners who paid for the SQW Report, which made a sustained effort to evaluate the losses that would be suffered in the AONB due to congestion, loss of tourism etc. and HS2 had some difficulty accepting our report. We, on the other hand, have some difficulty accepting their evaluation of the AONB's agricultural land, so we'd request that the parties should – or HS2 should pay for a study, possibly using stated preferences; I believe you'll hear about this later, which is a Green Book method of making this assessment, and we rather wonder why they didn't in the first instance.

232. Right, now can I have the next slide please? This is a summary – may I think the slide organisers before I forget for some flexibility in accepting the slides and so forth, and getting them mostly right on projection. Can I just give you a brief overview of our situation in the AONB and maybe explain why there's no dancing in the streets in South Heath after the C6 announcement. We have a fundamental problem of trust in the way that HS2 project is implemented, starting from the Secretary of State and working downwards. There's a disregard for the protection of the AONB, which defeats the purpose of making the designation, even if it may be all legal; we do not believe it's in the spirit of the law. Nor do we believe there's an overriding national interest in the project, and you can see the debate in another place last Wednesday for the reasons for that.

233. As regards Secretaries of State our experience has not been particularly good.

Phillip Hammond could have strangled the thing at first, but for the concerns about the third runway and machinations concerning that; Justine Greening announced the consultation results in January 2012 and then ignored them; and Patrick McLoughlin presided over a travesty of the summary of the ES response, where they were just listed rather than just given any development at all.

234. When you look at localism with regard to this project, all too often the local authority requests will be complied with, ‘when practicable or if capable of being so modified and with the agreement or approval of the nominated undertaker’. We can appeal, of course, to the Secretary of State, which doesn’t fill us with confidence; or of course, to the Speaker of the House of Commons, who as you know, is a very important politician and may not be terribly interested in whether lorries turn left or right at the bottom of Leather Lane.

235. After this Bill was given its assent, we are essentially going to be powerless. Our ability to travel and the shape of our landscape can be altered on the whim of the nominated undertaker, so we are going to be about as happy as the bunnies at Jones’ Hill Wood when the diggers move in. So for mitigation, we ask that some adjudication by some independent body, not appointed by the Secretary of State with some teeth be set in place after the assent of this Bill and during the construction period.

236. Lastly, I know this Committee can’t defeat the Bill in any way, but as Parliamentarians, if you were to vote against it, having heard the details and being the experts on the subject, I am sure this would send a very powerful message to your colleagues. Thank you; I believe Mr Strachan will not point out the error of my ways.

237. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: If necessary?

238. DR CONBOY: If necessary.

239. CHAIR: Okay, so what have we now done, Dr Conboy? Have we done all the petitioners listed here that you’re going to do?

240. DR CONBOY: We have, yes indeed.

241. CHAIR: We have. Thank you very much indeed. Mr Strachan?

242. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Well, I'm not going to point out all the errors of Dr Conboy's ways, because you've already heard evidence over many weeks where that's already been pointed out on other occasions, but could I just pick up on one or two points where I can briefly summarise some points.

243. Reference was made to structures such as Wendover Dean. As a matter of fact, I think Wendover Dean viaduct is about 4.8 miles away from Chesham itself, which is the principal area that Dr Conboy is dealing with. As to, obviously, those people who walk in the area, you've heard a lot about the public rights of way and the way in which they are kept connected. But just by way of general point – and this covers something raised about wildlife – you were referred to a study about introducing a phantom road into an isolated area and immediate effects on birds, I think. Of course, where the line is in this location, above ground, it's not in an isolated area. It runs, as you've already heard, alongside the transport corridor of the A413 and the existing Chiltern Railway Line, in the way that was being discussed.

244. I just wanted to pick up on one or two miscellaneous points in the slides. A1413(10), I think the thrust of many of these slides is to suggest that there should be deeper cuttings, or consideration for deeper cuttings. That's a point that's already I think been addressed, when we looked at why the alignment is where it is. But of course, it won't have escaped the Committee's notice that deeper cuttings would of course involve even greater levels of construction activity and the removal of excavated material, quite apart from the additional environmental effects. The balance that has been struck by the promoter is very much one which seeks to balance the depth of the cuttings with the construction effects and the overall impact on the landscape.

245. Can I just pick up on something Dr Conboy said about controls? It's clearly not right to suggest in the way he did that after this Bill is enacted, there are no controls. There is whole plethora of controls, set out in the Bill, on which the Committee has heard some considerable detail. Leave aside the environmental minimum requirements. But the particular one that Dr Conboy referred to was under Schedule 16, and he suggested that local planning authorities can't impose conditions on approval of construction works relating to earthworks and that this somehow displaced their powers.

246. The Committee – I'm not suggesting we need to look at it now – but at some point

will want to reassure itself that the quotation was selected because the power is for a planning authority to approve measures for, amongst other things, in construction, earthworks, site noise or dust screens and other things. And the power is for the local planning authority to refuse to approve plans or specifications for those types of measures, earthworks, where the design or external appearance of the works ought to and could reasonably be modified to preserve the local environment or local amenity, to prevent or reduce prejudicial effects on road safety or on the free flow of traffic in the local area, or indeed, to preserve sites of archaeological interest.

247. The local authorities – and this is just one instance of the many powers that exist under the Bill – the local authority has the power to refuse to approve plans on that basis; the power to impose conditions is with the consent of the nominated undertaker, but the first line of defence for the local authorities is to refuse plans if there are grounds to do so, in the way I've set out. So I would just urge some caution in the way Dr Conboy explained that particular power and refer you back to the specific provision.

248. I don't think I need to say anything more about increase on traffic because I've already responded to that and as to the question of consideration of environmental impacts, the Committee has already heard considerable impacts from the promoter as to the way in which that's been done, taking into account the effects identified in the Environmental Statement and of course, the WebTAG analysis that's been done. But I don't think it's necessary to repeat evidence that you've heard, unless you want to go back into it on any particular point now.

249. So, subject to those points, I'd refer back to the evidence you've already heard.

250. CHAIR: Dr Conboy?

251. DR CONBOY: Right, thank you for clarifying the points of law for me; I defer to you on that. I think what we have here is the effect of not having a full, strategic environmental impact assessment of this route before or soon enough, which would have revealed the fact that either you had low cuttings and the line invisible but a lot of spoil or else you didn't and the line would then be nearer the surface. All these questions should've been decided far earlier in the process, as I think I said earlier. Otherwise, thank you very much gentlemen.

252. CHAIR: Thank you very much, Dr Conboy. Thank you very much for sticking to time and being succinct. Right, next I'm going to call 1834, Alison Robertson? 1834, Alison Robertson. Not here? 1880, Roy and Carole North? 1880, Roy and Carole North? Not here. 1828, Jean Slater? 1828, Jean Slater? Not here. 1833, Mrs Sowden? 1833, Mrs Sowden? Not here. 1808, Alison Braint? 1808, Alison Braint? 344, Judith Spindler? 344 Judith Spindler? Not here. 506, Maureen and Stephen Timothy? 506, Maureen and Stephen Timothy? Not here. 638, Daphne Fanthorne? 638, Daphen Fanthorne? Not here. 643, Catherine Watson? 643, Catherine Watson? Not here. 645, Graham Watson? 645, Graham Watson? Not here. 652, Sarah and Christopher Embleton-Smith? 652, Sarah and Christopher Embleton-Smith? Not here. 1822, Anthony Muir? 1822, Anthony Muir? Not here. 1836, Emily Lawson? 1836, Emily Lawson? Not here. 1862, David Mee? 1862, David Mee? Not here. 1870, Miss Natasha Michel? 1870, Miss Natasha Michel? 1893, Freddie Lawson? 1893, Freddie Lawson? Not here.

253. All those people who haven't shown up who have been listed for today we deem to have been heard. If there is any particular difficult family circumstance in which they have found themselves, they can't be here, they should contact the Clerk.

254. We now go back to 1214, The Lappetts Lane (South Heath) Neighbourhood Watch Scheme with Mike Johnstone? They're not here? They are here; they're in the café. Right! Being in the café is fine; it proves you at least intend to be here. I suppose we can't do 871, Amersham Town Council? Yes? Well, let's do Amersham Council.

Amersham Town Council

255. MR BURTON: Thank you sir, it's the last time you'll hear from me for today, at least, I'm sure will be a relief to all concerned.

256. CHAIR: Not in the process, though, I'm sure.

257. MR BURTON: Sir, I'm here, on this occasion, on behalf of Amersham Town Council. Amersham is a town – again, another town that the Committee may not have heard very much about so far – it's a town of some 15,000 souls. If we could just perhaps bring up the promoter's exhibit 7541, so we can quickly orientate ourselves? Thank you very much. Could we zoom in on Amersham, are you able to zoom it in?

Then I must admit I have been using this one and using in. Amersham, you can see – could we centre it on Amersham? Brilliant. So, Amersham you see here, this cluster of red dots. Amersham old town, you can just about at this magnification make out the words, ‘Amersham Old Town’ just down there in this triangle, where you have the A404 where it comes up to meet the A413, where the A413 has this rather interesting kink in it. The route here is, of course, in a tunnel and the Town Council are grateful for that. But there’s a vent shaft here, just basically at the point where that the triangle of the A413 comes down to the route, at the southern extent of Amersham Old Town.

258. Now, I may sound like a broken record, but Amersham is another place at which the promoter’s Environmental Statement has downplayed the impact. In the case of Amersham we do at least have clear acknowledgement of that from the promoter because in the Supplementary Environmental Statement the promoter has produced for AP2, it has revisited some of the original material in the Environment Statement and acknowledged that corrections needed to be made. We may in due course actually bring up that slide. It’s not a slide – not now, but it may be possible to actually bring up the corrected, supplementary ES for Amersham and we can look at those. The long and short of it is that the original ES just failed to understand that there would be significant adverse effects in terms of traffic impact on Amersham during construction.

259. Now, our asks – and I will leave it to our one witness, Mr Nigel Shepherd who I will introduce shortly, to explain them in more detail – but they are essentially that the promoter does a proper job in understanding the traffic and economic effects on the town, fully recognises all the costs that flow from the project for the local community, and does nothing more than follow government guidance, its own – in fact DfT guidance – when assessing the impact and alternatives. I will turn, with no further ado, immediately to Mr Nigel Shepherd, who is an Amersham Town Councillor, he is in fact a former Mayor of Amersham. He’s also a Chiltern District Councillor and the current Vice-Chair of that Council. He does bring with him his own fairly extensive career experience of matters transport related. He will introduce himself perhaps a bit more fully, and also, the town of Amersham. So, on to our second slide in our presentation, and Mr Shepherd?

260. MR SHEPHERD: Thank you very much. Amersham is much more than a dormitory town. I don’t know how much you know about it, probably not that much.

261. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Lots!

262. MR SHEPHERD: Well, you're all the better for that experience, I'm sure! It's at the end of the Metropolitan Line. We're a vibrant community, that's thrived on its transport connectivity. If you go back in history, we were a coaching inn; in the old town, there's various hotels that are still thriving on that basic thing. At the beginning of the 20th Century, we had the underground come to us, and it's now the end of the Metropolitan Line; we're on the Chiltern Line. We have motorways not very far – we have, maybe it's almost a perfect distance, not too far, not too close! We've got the M40 running up from Birmingham to London; and we've got the M25, five or six miles distance – a good distance, good access. That's actually been very much the success of Amersham. 15,000 as my colleague has said; we're 27 miles to the northwest of London. You can read the slides as well as I. But it's real point is its position and its geography, which has been its success and at the moment is the cause of many of its woes.

263. We're a town that's embraced development and harmony. We're not NIMBYs; we're actually – we have major employers, we have Freemantle Media, GE Healthcare which is just over the border in Little Chalfont now, but that's a relatively new thing, it used to be called Amersham International, which the government sold off – in fact it was the first sell-off, privatisation back in the 70s. Amersham International, there you go.

264. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Was it before the British Transport Hotels and the National Freight Corporation?

265. MR SHEPHERD: I'm pretty certain it was – yes, it was. It was the first. So, a very high-tech, forward-looking community.

266. If we could move on to the next slide please? What are the key issues for Amersham? I'm really going to try and avoid boring you all stiff – I really am going to try, but I have to make some reference because I have to set a scene, but I will try not to be repetitive. I get the message that came through on Friday afternoon and from various things here. I do understand, and I don't want to go the wrong way with you guys!

267. But the construction traffic will have a devastating – I use that word – impact on

both our already overcrowded strategic road network, and the local road network. You've heard Chesham have been talking about the cascading effect. They're real: I used to be a transport consultant; I used to work for Steer Davis Gleave which is where this sorry project really started: Jim Steer and Greengauge 21 for those of you who are very knowledgeable on the history of this project.

268. But Amersham, it's going to hit us in several ways: the local economy. We thrive on our connectivity. It's going to increase journey times – and I think we all accept that – but it's going to make journey times more unreliable, and anyone who knows much about transport and issues that relate to that, unreliability is worse than having a long journey, because if you can plan for that, and you can actually plan if there are other ways you can do things, as I'm going to say going forward in a minute, there are very limited alternatives which is why it makes such an important case and why you're having your ears bent so hard by so many people on this issue. It's not that we're being NIMBY or vexatious. And it will add costs – I will go into that a little bit, but Dr Conboy touched on that quite extensively this morning.

269. Key services: Amersham is the administrative heart of this part of the Chilterns. Centre of local government, with Chiltern District Council, and parts of the County Council. It's also the administrative centre for the hospital trust. Amersham Hospital, you won't hear much about it; it was one of those PFI white elephants, I'm afraid. It cost the hospital trust about £7 million a year; they've got about four wards, they do some outpatients, but it's a very expensive office block for the most part. That's very close to the vent shaft. It's also the centre of the Chiltern Commissioning Group, which is serving this part of the Chilterns. As well as the fire station, doctors' surgeries, pharmacies, shops, it goes on and I don't have to bore you with that.

270. And then there's the social cohesion –

271. MR HENDRICK: Have you got a football team?

272. MR SHEPHERD: We have; it's not that successful, but we've got everything you would expect in a community of about 15,000 and we're doing very well, thank you very much. It's a great place to live and lots of people want to live there. The real downside is it is so expensive, and that has all sorts of –

273. MR HENDRICK: I noticed when we were there, that a great deal of the buildings seem to be very new; the population is obviously growing?

274. MR SHEPHERD: The buildings new in Amersham? It depends on timescale; Amersham works in centuries. Top Amersham – there's three bits of Amersham, there's the old town which everyone knows and is the tourist centre; there's what we call 'Top Amersham', which was a result of the railways that came at the beginning of the last century – they reached Amersham at the beginning, a bit earlier than they actually started building it. Railways take a long time to build, as I am sure you appreciate! And a lot of money. We caused no end of problems for the Metropolitan Line when it happened. If you go into it, we actually had that moved as well! We've actually had this one at least partially buried, but we're still working on it.

275. MR CLIFTON BROWN: You're pleased to have the Metropolitan Line?

276. MR SHEPHERD: The Metropolitan Line is perfect where it is, because where they originally wanted to put it, where the Tyrwhitt-Drake family had all their vast things – it goes back to Sir Francis Drake I believe – but that was the Old Town. They wanted to go in the valley like HS2, and the Tyrwhitt-Drakes who owned all the land said, 'No way, you go up to the top, you go to that grotty north', and that's the origins of Top Amersham, which was called 'Amersham Common' at the time. Amersham Common has now just moved slightly towards Little Chalfont. That's another story, and brings it, I hope, to life a bit, for you.

277. MR HENDRICK: The population, how quickly is it growing?

278. MR SHEPHERD: We are constrained – as you heard a little moment ago – by the fact that 80% of Chiltern district is AONB or green belt, so concentration of development of both homes and businesses is concentrated in a relatively small number of settlements: Amersham, Chesham, Chalfont St Peter, Great Missenden to a lesser extent. That's very limited geographically; there's lots of in-fill development coming along; we have tremendous problems meeting the objectives that we have in terms of housing, but we are trying very hard, and there's a review of the green belt going on, to sort of make some changes to that, that keep the spirit of what it's doing but actually trying to live in the modern world, with the pressures that come to us all across it. Amersham – there's not an awful lot of very new development; there have been some,

but it's mostly relatively small developments of two or three houses, garden development, in-fill where that is appropriate. But we're very, very keen to try and keep what makes Amersham as good and as special as it is. If we actually go to very high density, it loses that character. That's not what Amersham is about. We need a balanced community and Top Amersham has lots of housing and accommodation for average, normal people – that's my ward, actually, Top Amersham. We have that, but we are surrounded by some very large houses and we are surrounded by some very beautiful places.

279. MR BURTON: So just in relation to Mr Hendrick's question, just to make sure: is your response, there's some in-fill development but it's fairly small scale, is that your best answer to, 'Is population growing?'

280. MR SHEPHERD: It is growing, but it's not as fast as places like Aylesbury Vale, for instance, which is a tremendous development further up the A413. It is growing as much as we can; I sit on the planning committee and we wrestle with these issues all the time, and government diktats aren't allowing things, that maybe are not quite right for our community, but that's life and you have to live with it. We have to live with HS2, and what I want to try and do is make sure that we can live with it, by actually trying – this opportunity to try and – given that it is going to happen, you guys can't stop that, is to try and get something that's making the best out of a bad job, as far as I'm concerned.

281. But, just to come back to the social cohesion bit, the two main roads that we're talking about, the A413 and the A355 will be overloaded. I'm going to prove that – I'm not going to ask you to believe me; I'm going to draw on a range of sources that are official or come from independent sources, leading to changed and reduced transport patterns. The change is not necessarily bad, but in this instance I can see very little that's good. It will damage the town, affecting the lives of thousands of our residents and businesses.

282. Can we have the next slide? Very quickly, I just want to try and put this into context because you guys have heard all sorts of things but I think it's useful just to run through some of the overall geography. Amersham as I have implied so far, is the centre of the transport networks in this part of the Chilterns. It's equally, now, the

centre of the logistics operations for HS2, which is my problem. In the Chilterns, transport links tend to follow the valleys; it's a hilly area and there are limited – and we don't want to have big, enormous motorways through it; that would change the nature of what it is we have.

283. So how do communications work here? Well, to the south of us there's High Wycombe, and the Beaconsfield corridor there; there's the Hughenden Valley to the south – you can see that on the map, going Beaconsfield to High Wycombe. That was one of the options in the early cases for HS2 but they picked – Disraeli's house was in the route and you guys really didn't want to do anything about that. So there's Hughenden Valley; that has the M40 and the other part of the Chiltern Line. That's going south-east, north-west, as the corridor. Then it goes up into the hills and it comes down to the Misbourne Valley, it's Amersham, the A413 and the Chiltern Line.

284. The next valley along is the Chess Valley, which is a lot narrower, and there's not much you can really do that that; there are roads but they're not what you would call major or strategic. Beyond that, Hemel Hempstead with the Gade and the Bulbourne Valleys, with the Grand Union Canal, the West Coast Mainline, the M1, the A40; that's where all the major traffic goes. It's where HS2 should've gone, but that's –

285. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: They did consider it, and they've discussed it with us quite a lot!

286. MR SHEPHERD: Well, there we go; the compensation costs might've been a bit higher there, I suppose.

287. So those are the north-south – or north-west, south-east sort of lines of communication. But east-west is actually appalling. It's over the hill tops and it's very, very limited. There's the A355 to Beaconsfield, which HS2 Limited are planning to use as a major through-route; and the A404 to High Wycombe, but that's not really terribly useful because it goes through residential areas, there's lots of junctions and crossings. It's not really a strategic road in that meaning of the word. Those are the only two roads, really, aside from single-track country lanes and things that are only a little bit better than that, between the M25 and Aylesbury. So the east-west links are very limited. So if the east-west – if the arterial routes, rather, become clogged – you heard from Chesham earlier on, and they're saying, 'We're going to have all this

displacement'. It's actually very difficult to be displaced and what you end up doing is going down roads that are inappropriate for any significant amount of traffic, and towns – like Chesham, or parts of it at least – which are really not designed for it.

288. Now the reality is that people will use alternatives, it cascades, because that's human nature, that's what actually has to happen. But they are country lanes and they are going to cause more congestion. So, I really did feel it was a little disingenuous of HS2 Limited – their representative – to actually dismiss it. Because it's not something you should dismiss. These are fairly – they're not fairly, they're very serious matters that are going to impact people's lives. So, big decisions hitting real people.

289. I'd now like to go to the next slide please? I promise I'm not going to linger on this, but it is important. Much of the HS2 HGV traffic will be going to or from the portal construction sites to the north of the town, that's the A413. I haven't quite got Dr Conboy's graphic capabilities here, but basically a lot of traffic will be coming down the A413 from the Aylesbury direction; and the first point where they hit Amersham, I've marked as 'A', that's Shardeloes Roundabout. Now, that's the – that road coming down from Great Missenden – or certainly the first part of it, as it approaches Amersham – is dual carriageway. It's the only bit of dual carriageway anywhere near Amersham. That is actually a road that is fit for purpose. Then it hits Shardeloes Roundabout, marked 'A'.

290. Now, I'm going to talk a little bit about numbers later, but this is a dual carriageway ending at a four-exit roundabout, then going into a three-lane road; a recipe for congestion which already happens at peak hours. When you take into account the rat-running that's going to come as a result, along School Lane – that's one of the junctions that goes into Shardeloes Roundabout, the problems will begin to get more multiplied. That's at point 'A', there's a little road that comes into there.

291. So the three-lane A413 then converges with the vent shaft's Hospital Roundabout at 'B' if you can actually see that on the map there; this roundabout is frequently congested, particularly from the south, the A413, and from High Wycombe. So, there's a lot of congestion that actually comes there. I used to work in High Wycombe for a while. You could easily spend five minutes, on a very good day, considerably worse sometimes.

292. At this point there has been a proposal that hasn't been accepted, that's why I've marked with a question mark on the map, that Bucks County Council were trying to pursue, and I would actually support that as a fall-back position. I think it actually would help, but it is limited. There are some impacts and lots of other issues, but in principle, the idea of trying to keep some of the traffic off that bypass is actually quite a good idea and I would support it.

293. But let's forget that, because you haven't accepted it. At Gore Hill Roundabout, which is 'C' – which by the way, is the one that you had a dialogue with Dr Conboy earlier on; I'd like to thank for him for showing such a good photograph of an Amersham Roundabout as it comes on there. But you can see there – forget the cones – I think that was just some building materials – but you can see there was congestion there, and that congestion – from where my house is, which is half-way up the hill, I can actually see that roundabout; or I can see the road leading into it, coming down on the A355. That is every day; that is congested coming down the hill. I can't see it from my house, but the other junctions are going the other way. So that's really backing. What I would say is that that point, and I'm going to come back to this, because this is actually a very important point – that is where Chiltern District Council have their solitary monitoring station for NO2 and that roundabout, which is right at the centre of the plans as being put forward – talking about Gore Hill here, the Gore Hill Roundabout, coming from Beaconsfield – that monitoring station, I am reliably told by the officers –

294. MR BURTON: We are here now, down at 'C'?

295. MR SHEPHERD: We are down at 'C' now. That – there's a monitoring station on that roundabout, or very close to that roundabout which is frequently up at the maximum levels, the European levels. We'll come back to that later.

296. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Sorry; C is just a point on the A355 –

297. MR SHEPHERD: No, it's not C. It's actually the roundabout that we're talking about.

298. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Well, that's what we're trying to establish. Are you talking about D, or –

299. MR BURTON: Where are you? D, or where are you?

300. MR SHEPHERD: It's not marked, actually. It's the 'M' in Amersham. It's the beginning of that roundabout.

301. MR BURTON: Yeah, that's what I thought. It's the roundabout that's above the C.

302. MR SHEPHERD: Gore Hill roundabout. That is where the monitoring station for NO₂ is. This is, to all intents and purposes, AONB, and you've got pollution levels from existing levels of traffic that are on a very frequent basis going right up to the limit.

303. MR BURTON: By 'the limit', to be clear, are you –

304. MR SHEPHERD: I am not going to be claiming that, like large parts of south-east England, we're actually in breach of the European laws, which we got dragged through the coals fairly recently about, I understand, but we are very close to it. I think one of the key points of the argument that I'm going to be making is that what HS2 is doing – and we'll have some arguments, no doubt, about the number of vehicles, but even if I accept the numbers that HS2 are putting in their documentation, it will still breach it. I think it's more, but that's a slightly different argument. So, that's the situation at the moment. There is also some traffic that will be coming from the vent shaft further along the A413 towards London.

305. That's the local road context, if you like. I'd like to now refer to the Local Transport Plan for Buckinghamshire. I don't know how familiar you are – you're not the Transport Select Committee, but –

306. MR BURTON: So, this is your next slide.

307. MR SHEPHERD: This is the next slide, please, which is LTP3. They're currently consulting on LTP4, so this is towards the end of its life. This is a statutory document, I understand, that guides transport planners. It's a great big tombstone of a book, as these things tend to be, but the key points that I've pulled out from here, as they relate to the Chiltern area, are traffic congestion – this is the Chiltern area I'm talking about here – generated by commuting; congestion in the Chesham and Amersham area;

and carbon emissions. Those are the issues that back in 2011 were identified in the Local Transport Plan, a document of some weight that guides Buckinghamshire Highways. Those were the issues that they saw there. And on top of that, the red box to the right is my sort of interpretation. So, what are we going to do to what is clearly not a particularly good situation in the first place? We're going to increase the traffic on already congested roads, particularly around Amersham and Chesham. That works at several levels. It's not only the vehicles they're doing, but they're also going to displace; you get a cascading effect from other vehicles, which is what Chesham are particularly concerned about.

308. CHAIR: Isn't traffic increasing anyway as the result of housing development in Aylesbury?

309. MR SHEPHERD: I am not an authority on this so I can't say. The congestion on – around the bypass and going to there – it is gradually getting worse, but it is a manageable situation and it isn't dramatic. What we're talking about here is for an extended period – again, we'll talk a bit more about that later on. For an extended period, we're going to have imposed on this fairly small, successful, well-adjusted community – we're going to have this massive disruption. I think that one of the main arguments is I see it as totally unnecessary, not for some high-minded reason that we don't need a train – although we don't – or other things, but purely on the basis that there were alternatives that could have been considered, and, for whatever reason, they don't appear to have been. The main thrust of what I want to say today is to try and ask you, our representatives, if you like, to actually get HS2 to explain why they haven't actually done what I believe and I hope I can persuade you is something that they should have done, in actually considering this thing properly and getting it right first time, rather than going down a route which they are at the moment and then just trying to – 'Oh well, we can fix it here. Do they really matter? In the great scale of things, what does it matter?' That's why I'm here and that's what I'm trying to persuade you about. Anyway, I'll get a move on.

310. CHAIR: Continue through the slides because there's quite a lot of slides.

311. MR SHEPHERD: I will do. Can we move to the next slide, please? The road network condition. We're not actually starting from a very high base in

Buckinghamshire. In Buckinghamshire generally but Amersham in particular, we're starting from a low base. This isn't my personal view or anything; this is the National Highways & Transport Public Satisfaction Survey 2014. I used to have nominal responsibility for it when I was the head of transport research at Ipsos MORI some years ago. I don't know who does it now. Probably them. This is all publicly available on the internet at the moment, but Buckinghamshire is the second worst performing – that's 23 out of 24 county councils – regarding levels of traffic, congestion and satisfaction with condition of the road. I have to say that's a Buckinghamshire figure, but I can tell you from personal experience the south of the county is far worse than the north of the county because there's so much more traffic and there are so many more people. There is a high dependency on cars due to poor public transport provision – we're 20th out of 24 county councils – and there is very limited community transport in the community – that's 21st out of 24. So, we're starting from a pretty low base.

312. So, key issues at this point. Roads are already overloaded, particularly at rush hour. I hope I can persuade you to agree with that. Strategic roads come to a standstill when there are incidents on the M40 and the M25. If you can remember that map I showed earlier on, Amersham is sort of part of a triangle between where the M40 and the M25 meet, and we all have very good communications in our cars these days and if there's something wrong on either the bottom end of the M40 or that stretch of the M25, many people try an alternative route and we are right on that route. The third point I want to reiterate at this point: at key pinch points, emission levels are already – I'm not going to claim that they're over yet, but they are close and at times they are over.

313. If I could move on to the next slide. So, that's the picture so far, and accepting the point we do have a tunnel, which James has commented on already but it is an important point that we recognise because a lot of people don't have that benefit, we as a county council are particularly concerned about the material supply to and from the construction sites –

314. MR BURTON: Town council.

315. MR SHEPHERD: The town council, yes. What did I say?

316. MR BURTON: County council.

317. MR SHEPHERD: Oh, sorry. Views above my station. Material supply to and from the construction site, spoil removal, and the construction personnel movement.

318. Roads are clearly – as of July 2015 when I started trying to think about what I was going to say today, there has been very little assessment certainly that was anywhere in the public domain that I could find – no evidence of an evidential-based logistics strategy. I could find no reference at all to, ‘Let’s actually go back to the strategy. We’re going to build this train; we’re going to build this railway line. How are we actually going to do it?’ I found no evidence of that at all. The last time this country looked at the national transport strategy I think was 2006. I can’t remember the name of the guy who wrote it. I’m sure somebody in this room would know. But one of the key findings in that was the last thing we should be doing is an HS2 – is doing a high-speed railway line. But we are, and we are where we are. I really make that point – have we actually looked at this strategically, not saying, ‘Well, the roads are there; let’s just go and do it’? I could find no evidence of a logical, structured process with a report or something similar to that coming out at the end.

319. As of May 2015 – I get this data from the Bucks County Council petition – no classified counts in the Amersham area. Can I just ask you to think about – here, you’ve got a major development site and we’re going to have some impact – we’re going to be using the roads – that’s at least at the back of their mind – doing this one here and we’re not actually doing any measurements – or we haven’t at that stage certainly put in the public domain – which one would hope they would – anything here. So, aside from the point of view that they gave us a tunnel, it seems to be, ‘Well, you got the tunnel; what are you worried about?’ Well, there’s lots to worry about. But as of August 2015, everything seems to change.

320. MR BURTON: Are you on your next slide, Mr Shepherd?

321. MR SHEPHERD: I’m on the next slide. So, previously reported levels of delays, congestion and pollution – HS2-related HGV vehicles – have been understated.

322. MR BURTON: I just wonder, at this point, are we able to all up the Supplementary Environmental Statement for AP2 for CFA8 Volume 2? Page 7. If you were able to find it, it might help whilst Mr Shepherd just explains the general points and the Committee could see.

323. MR SHEPHERD: The key point here is – if I just carry on talking and if they can find it, would that be the best way of doing it?

324. CHAIR: Yes please.

325. MR SHEPHERD: Road traffic congestion and delays as a result of HS2 construction traffic previously described as ‘moderate adverse’ – that’s the important wording here – are now being referred to as ‘major adverse’. To me – I’m not a specialist in the area – that’s actually quite a big change. They’ve obviously been doing some work, so perhaps I was being a bit unfair there. And pedestrians – I’d like to remind you walking in an AONB – will likely see an increase from ‘moderate adverse’ effect to a ‘major adverse’ effect. Again, I am not an expert. I’ve worked in transport, but I’m not a transport planner or anything.

326. CHAIR: Does this relate purely to Amersham or to the wider area?

327. MR SHEPHERD: No, that actually relates to Amersham, I think. It’s Amersham. It actually relates to the A413, I think. This change of assessment I suspect is quite important, because it could be argued, I would imagine, that whilst impacts were perceived to be modest, there was a case for not spending a lot of money and doing a lot of work on it, but they’ve now gone back and had a look at the Environmental Statement, I would guess, and they’ve had to change it, because they’re recognising that the numbers just don’t add up. So, if it’s now a major adverse impact... However, to quote the summary of corrections to the main Environmental Statement in CF8 Table 1 – this is the document we’re trying to find, and I’m quoting directly the words that hopefully we’ll see on screen in a moment – ‘moderate adverse effect to major adverse effect with regard to delay and congestion to vehicle users’. Then the next bit: ‘There is no change to the mitigation required as outlined in the main ES’. Let’s actually think about that. We’ve gone from moderate adverse impact in my community to a major adverse effect to my community, and HS2 –

328. MR BURTON: We have Table 1.

329. MR SHEPHERD: Can you just point out the relevant bit in that?

330. MR BURTON: Well, it’s these two... Mr Shepherd, you’ve been talking to both

of these, haven't you?

331. MR SHEPHERD: I've been talking to that table. Basically, it says what I said there. If you go to the far right-hand column and look at the bottom bit: 'There is no change to the mitigation required as outlined in the main ES'. Words almost fail me. I would probably be in contempt if I was saying it's arrogance. They come to my community; they promote a project of dubious, to say the least, national benefit; they fail to produce a remotely competent Environmental Statement; they then find they've got their sums wrong, or didn't do them in the first place, and then say – well, you can see what they said: 'It doesn't matter'. Well, it does. I think that you cannot, as an organisation, go away, get it wrong in the first place, then say, 'Oh yes, it is going to have a major adverse effect' and then say it doesn't matter. 'It's all too small in the scale – this is national interest.' Well, precious little national interest I can see in the overall project, but that's another battle for another day – a battle that's been lost. But here in my community this is a big issue.

332. MR BURTON: Are you on to your next slide now?

333. MR SHEPHERD: I'm moving on to the next slide. If we could go on to the next one.

334. MR BURTON: So that's slide 10. Thank you.

335. MR SHEPHERD: I think I can say that we've now established that Amersham is a successful and vibrant community close to London and other economic – to use the word of the moment – powerhouses. We have an inadequate road network – one of the worst in England, if the independent research is to be believed. I know politicians have some lack of confidence in market research these days, with some justification, but this is a very long-term study and is pretty robust, from a reputable supplier. We've got high levels of congestion. That's not me; that's not us locals – us NIMBYs. This is LTP3, Buckinghamshire County Council. Emissions levels on the bypass are bordering on exceeding EU limits, for which the Government is already being dragged over the coals – and quite rightly so, particularly when you think about all the news that's been going on. Did you hear on Channel 4 News last night that 23,000 people die from emissions in this country? Channel 4 last night. This was all in the context of the Volkswagen scandal at the moment. There you are. This is an issue. This is serious. Here we are.

We actually have a major project that will in the long term – the very long term, I would add – actually probably be good for the economy and emissions. It's far longer than the Government suspect, but it will do that – but in doing this, they're actually going to cause considerable disruption to my community.

336. Here on this chart – I'm just going to run through this very quickly, because I hope that the point is made that there's going to be a lot of traffic; HS2 have accepted it's going to have a major impact. They're actually saying, looking at Gore Hill, which is the roundabout that Dr Conboy used a photograph of earlier, with the cones – at that roundabout they're claiming that there will be 167 HGVs each day on top of existing traffic. That's what HS2 say. That's on their chart. But if you look at other charts in their data, it shows all the construction sites and the things. I'm very quickly going to run through these ones here. You look at these sites here and, yes, it's only over a period of 17 months, but we don't know what 17 months. We don't know whether they're all going to happen together or they're all going to be done separately as discrete items. I would imagine this part of the construction project will actually happen more or less at the same time. I can't prove that; it just strikes me as that's the likely way these things tend to happen. Here, if these all happened at the same time, and excluding the Chalfont St Giles vent shaft, which I think is going the other way, you're talking about 430 vehicles. That's considerably more than the 167 that HS2 Limited are claiming, which still – that 167 presumably is going to be relating to the major adverse effect.

337. If we could move to the next slide quickly. I'm not going to repeat myself too much, but all the traffic is coming down the A413. It's agreed it's the major conduit. You've got all these construction sites. You've got all the little boxes that they've got here. It has changed because of the tunnel extension, but it's swings and roundabouts. Over a peak period of 18 months – I don't know quite whether they're all going to be happening at the same time, but that's another 690 vehicles on top of the ones being generated locally.

338. If we move to the next slide, here we've got all the cuttings and things going on, and there's a whole load more... I don't know which direction these trucks are going – it isn't clear from the data – but I think it's really clear to say that even on the basis of HS2's 167 trucks at Gore Hill, which is more or less the centre, nearly, of where everything will pass through – they're saying 167. Even that has a high negative effect.

I'm saying I believe, on the face of it, it will be a lot more.

339. MR BURTON: So just to be clear, you're saying they recognise 167 movements equals what they've described and you've shown as a major adverse effect; you think it may be more than that vehicle number.

340. MR SHEPHERD: I am not an expert. These things are done in computer models and things these days, but I must admit it doesn't actually ring true to me, and I would actually just sort of ask the Committee to try and get some clarification on this, because it just doesn't add up. That's all I would say to you. It would be nice if they could be asked to do that. And there's a whole load more – so we're talking an awful lot of trucks; an awful lot of problems.

341. HS2 have consistently failed to assess the –

342. MR BURTON: Are we on to your next slide now?

343. MR SHEPHERD: We're on to the next slide. Sorry.

344. MR BURTON: 13.

345. MR SHEPHERD: HS2 have consistently failed to assess the impact of this project on my community. Given that, back in 2013 – it's going back a bit now, but it's not too far into history – Bucks County Council commissioned consultants to look into this matter across Buckinghamshire. So, it's not specific to Amersham. If I just go through this slide, Oxford Economics' Review of Construction Impacts reviewed the whole project spreadsheet data which was on the HS2 website at the time. It's now archived. I have got an FOI in to try and get hold of it, but it hasn't come through yet. This isn't me; this is these consultants, who I have heard of and I believe are reputable and wouldn't have been employed by a county council, I wouldn't have thought, if they weren't good at these sorts of things. 'It was clear that the rows dealing with construction impacts had a "zero" entry.' If you actually imagine it – I can't see it because I haven't got it – there they have the big spreadsheet for the whole project and they've got a line that says 'construction impacts' and – this relates to Buckinghamshire; it may relate to more, for all I know – it says 'zero'. I did actually ring up Buckinghamshire Highways and say, 'Is this true?' and have they done anything about

that. The answers were ‘yes’ and ‘no’ – yes, it is true; and no, they don’t appear – I don’t know what goes on inside HS2 Limited, but they don’t appear to have done anything about it. So, they don’t appear to have actually looked at the impact. I could imagine that that might be acceptable if the first look at it said, ‘There’s going to be a negligible effect on people’, but when they go back and they take a second look and it says it’ll have a major negative effect, to me, at least, that sounds like a very different kind of a picture. As I understand it – somebody mentioned WebTAG. WebTAG, for those around the table or whatever who are not familiar, is the transport analysis guidance; it’s the DfT’s guidance on transport modelling. It could be, I suppose, described as the transport planner’s bible.

346. MR BURTON: I think we have it extracted, do we not?

347. MR SHEPHERD: We have an extract.

348. MR BURTON: 1408. The second slide of that exhibit, please.

349. MR SHEPHERD: This is just the introduction. This is intended to provide guidance to transport planners. It’s to set objectives and identify problems – yes, sounds – it’s all pretty good stuff – to develop potential solutions, to create a transport model for the appraisal of alternative solutions, and how to conduct an appraisal that meets the Department’s requirements. Given this is a Government thing, do you actually have to follow WebTAG or is it just good practice? I don’t know. It may be something you want to find out on that one there. But given the nature and scale of this project, one would imagine that even if it wasn’t obligatory, given that it is best practice, they certainly ought to be following it.

350. Could we go back to the slide? Going back to this report, HS2 Limited does not appear – don’t know what goes on inside – to have quantified construction impacts on our community as a result of local road closures, diversions and delays. I think they should. More importantly, it would appear at least on the face of it that the Department for Transport would have that as a requirement, and if it’s not as a requirement it’s certainly best practice. I’ve made the point here. HS2 also don’t appear to have quantified the economic benefits – there could be some benefits of the construction; burger vans I suspect will do quite well, but that’s probably about it – on non-users, specifically the residents of Amersham, of the construction process. You’re looking as

if you wanted to ask a question.

351. CHAIR: No, I was just hoping that we'd be moving through the slides a bit more rapidly than we are.

352. MR SHEPHERD: Fine. Well, this is sort of the key point. Next chart.

353. MR BURTON: The Committee have read all the slides.

354. MR SHEPHERD: Okay. I'm not going to go through this one. You've seen these figures before. HS2 Limited should, I would have thought, on the basis of what I've said there, have actually gone through and looked at – costed – and other people have. We've had to run jumble sales and sponsored this, that and the other to pay for lots of this kind of work. We've actually done it, and it's coming out at about £100 million in the Chilterns, a significant proportion in Amersham. You've seen these figures before; it was particularly in the Chiltern Society presentation. The HS2 response to that presentation I have to admit – I was very unhappy with this – 'large number of assumptions, many of which were not supported by robust evidence'. Well, given that on the face of it you should have done the work yourself in the first place and that you didn't, they've done it; if you want to criticise it, go and do the work and actually assess the damage. Until you actually know what's happening and the costs, how on earth can you go forward?

355. Can we have the next slide? Social costs. Access to general hospitals. We've heard earlier on and I'm sure you'll hear from other people about this one, but if you just think about it, the hospitals are all accessed by the A413 or the road to Beaconsfield – every single one of them: Stoke Mandeville, Wexham Park, High Wycombe. I sit on the Buckinghamshire Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a not totally dissimilar situation to this. I did challenge the ambulance service on this, and they said, 'Oh, we put the blue lights on; everyone gets out of our way'. Well, maybe they can do that, but not everyone going into a hospital has that ability to do that.

356. CHAIR: They could have petitioned us.

357. MR SHEPHERD: Well, lots of organisations of that type don't do it because they might upset the Government, I think. I don't have any such inhibition.

358. CHAIR: Well, we've had fire brigades and police authorities petition.

359. MR SHEPHERD: All I can say is I took the issue up with them – this one here – and I have to say I thought their position was complacent. But I do accept the point that if you're running with your blue lights on, if you can get through central London, you'll be able to get through here. That I don't think is my main point. My main point is not everyone going to a hospital is going in a blue-light ambulance. That's all I say.

360. The bus network. I've already said our bus network isn't terribly good, but even having said that, Whielden Street, which is the road that I'm sure in the next 48 hours you'll hear a great deal about, has about 100 buses a day going through it. That's very close to the vent shaft. Part of the road is being taken, I understand, as part of the land take for a while, and there's going to be a considerable amount of disruption to the bus services.

361. Perhaps the thing that most concerns me, in many ways, is the crematorium. The crematorium serves this whole part of – a very large area around the Chilterns. There are two cremations every 45 minutes. If there's going to be congestion, which there is, you've got parties of mourners, and let alone the deceased, going to there, and if you could think of a worse situation than actually having those last memories being fraught with worries, 'Am I going to get there or am I not?' – I find that really quite concerning.

362. Can we go to the next slide? 'Towards a solution.' Amersham residents will be severely impacted by proposed construction traffic. As a first step, we petition that HS2 Limited be instructed to comply with the DfT guidelines, as I've already explained here. I would also add that the UK is still a member of the European Union and signed up to the environmental standards on air pollution as a result of HGV movements. Current logistics proposals will breach these standards with regard to both NO₂ and PM₁₀ emissions. We therefore request that this Committee instructs HS2 to obey the law. No more. I've referred to the lack of a transport strategy. At no point have I really seen a proper document or anything that actually resembles that that looks at the whole options here, whether it's road or rail, or pipeline for slurry.

363. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Are you on page 17?

364. MR SHEPHERD: I'm on – sorry, yes. No, I'm on –

365. MR BURTON: You are on 17.

366. MR SHEPHERD: I'm on 17, yes. Therefore request that the Committee instructs HS2 Limited to develop or show to us – I'd love to see it – a proper, fit-for-purpose document that actually looks at – 'We've looked at all the options' not, 'We've just gone for road because it's cheap and quick and easy'. Can I move on to the next one?

367. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: One of the reasons why we've been quite keen for people in a local area to consult with each other is we sometimes find ourselves going through one day what we went through the day before. I think you're going to come to one of those points – about using the railway.

368. MR SHEPHERD: I've no idea who's talked about the railway.

369. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Well, I don't think any of us are conscious that an organised body or a sensible plan has come forward on how you can use the railway alternatively for construction.

370. MR SHEPHERD: No one has.

371. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Not that I can remember. Not in a substantiated way. I have a frightful fear that you're not going to be able to either. You're going to mention it.

372. MR SHEPHERD: I'm going to say –

373. MR BURTON: The gauntlet's down, Mr Shepherd.

374. MR SHEPHERD: And I'd like to accept the gauntlet. I'm not sure I'm competent to, but I will try to accept it. For many years I did transport –

375. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Sorry. For this project, using the railway instead of the roads. Stick to that, please.

376. MR SHEPHERD: Yes. Okay. There are two railway lines you could use.

377. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: We're aware of that.

378. MR SHEPHERD: I would have thought so. They don't appear to have looked at

it, and certainly don't appear, as far as I have seen – it may have happened, because I obviously don't see anything; I'm just a local town and district councillor. They don't appear to have taken looking at the railway options seriously. Certainly, when it came out at Mantles Wood, I could see, just looking at a map, there was an opportunity to actually put a railhead at the point, because it's at the bottom of the hill where the junction is. The Chiltern line runs parallel to the A413.

379. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: You're proposing that the Chiltern line should be used during the day for construction.

380. MR SHEPHERD: I am suggesting that the Chiltern line could be used – whether it's in the day or whether it's in the evening, that's a scheduling matter – for the movement of materials that would otherwise be on the road.

381. CHAIR: Indeed it has come up before, and I think there are some problems with that, particularly that it would disrupt some of the traffic on the Chiltern line.

382. MR SHEPHERD: I find that very hard... I worked particularly on rail and rail freight for many years, doing customer satisfaction surveys amongst rail freight things, both for Railtrack, as it was, the Office of the Rail Regulator and the Strategic Rail Authority. In talking to the freight operators – it was Robin Gisby, the head of Network Rail recently – he was head of rail freight at – what preceded Network Rail?

383. MR BURTON: EWS?

384. MR SHEPHERD: No, no, no. Railtrack. That one there. His view was that we were very much running a passenger railway rather than a freight railway, and it was very much a thing that was sad. But I have yet to see – and I've got a slide a little bit further on that says... Where is it? I'm aware that you only hear these things second hand, and what I've been trying to do is get some definitive view. It is rumoured, and things, that Network Rail have said, 'No, there's no capacity'. It is rumoured –

385. MR BURTON: It's slide 22, isn't it? 'Rail capacity: let's hear the facts.'

386. MR SHEPHERD: I don't know the answers here. I'm almost trying to put the challenge back here. Network Rail have been reported as stating there's not rail capacity. That's just anecdotal. I'd love to see that and actually enable those people

who understand these kinds of things – and I don't – to challenge it. Others who've spoken with DB Schenker report that they believe there is capacity. They could make money out of it, so they probably would say that. But the question I would put to you is: what are the facts? I'd very much appreciate it, if nothing else comes out of – have you really looked at this option? Because all the pain and anguish that is going to be caused could be avoided if rail could be used. For someone who's worked on railway projects for many years, I find it very hard to believe that there isn't capacity on that line or, if there isn't at the moment, it could be something that was very easily addressed on that one there. I think that's a really important thing to do, because you look at that line; you've got a train every half hour going up and down it and we're now being told there isn't the capacity. I'm sure it could be looked at and we could find something that would be useful on that.

387. The one other thing I would say to you – and I will go back to whatever slide number this one is –

388. MR BURTON: Slide 20. The Committee have read about the benefits of rail and I'm sure don't need reminding of that, so your picture at slide 20?

389. MR SHEPHERD: You don't actually need roads to build a railway. That's the Canadian Pacific. Those are not the Chilterns in the background; that's the Rockies. We have a situation here where you have a railway line that's going through an area of outstanding natural beauty where you actually have them admitting that we're going to cause severe disruption to communities, and they haven't even bothered to go and do the work and they're saying, 'We can't do the rail'. If we can be persuaded that rail is not an option, for really sound, sensible reasons – not just 'it costs a little bit more' – and by the way, as you've read in my slides, there are Government grants in the DfT to actually enable you to do that, because it's 44p for every mile a lorry does.

390. MR BURTON: That's slide 21, isn't it?

391. MR SHEPHERD: Slide 21. I'm doing this one here. All I would ask – and I'm trying to be reasonable here – is: if you're going to inflict that pain, there has to be some justification for it. That this is not a viable option – there is a railway line running next to it and they're saying, 'We can't use it'. If you can't use it and you can persuade us – why can't you? What is it that means that you can't use the trace of the line that you're

building? That's what they did in those days. If those arguments can be put rather than just dismissed as, 'Oh, we've looked at it' and 'move on, little person', I will go away happy, but I think that's the point. We're going to have big disruption; we're going to be impacted. I believe – or on the face of it – there are alternatives that they haven't looked at. Convince us through logical, rational argument and we might be more supportive.

392. CHAIR: We have heard they're going to use the trace as much as possible, but in certain instances, where there are viaducts, you can't do that.

393. MR SHEPHERD: But that's not the case round Amersham. Anyway, you've seen those presentations there. I think I'll go to the conclusions now, because I hope I've made the points that it's important that I actually make.

394. MR BURTON: So we're on slide 24. We'll take slide 23 as read.

395. MR SHEPHERD: We're on slide 24. We're going to be impacted significantly by the construction of this railway. We request the Committee instruct HS2 Limited and the DfT to comply with their own policies, guidelines and legislation by identifying and costing the construction impacts on Amersham residents and businesses in terms of both congestion and economic impact. On the fact of it, that should be done under WebTAG. Demonstrating that the approach to construction logistics takes into account the full costs, including the cost to local communities, particularly Amersham – on the face of it, with a 'zero' entry in that project spreadsheet, that hasn't been done – and ensuring that construction logistics operations comply fully with all relevant legislation, and I would say particularly emissions, because you're going to be breaking the law – or they will be breaking the law – consciously and quite deliberately. Sometimes that's necessary, but if there is a viable alternative, which, as I hope – I'm trying to get the point across to you – if there is a viable alternative, that at least needs to be looked at seriously and not just cursorily and dismissed.

396. One last point: should I not get that ask – which I do understand is probably quite a big one – we are about seven or eight miles from the M25, which is the boundary of the low emission zone. I did a lot of work on that as well. One of the side impacts of the low emission zone is all the lorries that go into central London are nice, new, clean and non-polluting. What happens to all the older ones? They get moved out to all the

rest of us. Bearing in mind that this is an area of outstanding natural beauty very close to London, I think that, for the purposes of this project, vehicles used by HS2 Limited should at least comply with the prevailing low emission zone standards. I await the response from HS2 Limited with bated breath.

397. MR BURTON: Thank you, sir. That is our evidence.

398. CHAIR: Okay. Mr Strachan.

399. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): P7586, please. I'm trying to take this as quickly as possible, but I just want to make an overall point. Mr Shepherd's analyses of the traffic implications for Amersham are not correct and they're not reflective of the material that's publicly available in our slides. I'll just try and take it very simply, just to explain. I know the Committee may have seen some of this already, but we've moved slightly down the line at this point.

400. If you can look on the screen, you see where Amersham is. The line in this part is in bored tunnel, avoiding Amersham, and what we have by way of construction activity is the construction of vent shafts. There's one we call the Amersham vent shaft, which is just off the A404, and the construction vehicles for that will turn right onto the A413 and then right again onto the A355 Amersham Road. Then there is the further vent shaft in the vicinity of Chalfont St Giles. Traffic related to that is going right; it's not going up towards Amersham. So, the principal construction activity traffic is from the Amersham vent shaft. As the Committee has already heard, on the A413, there is some vent shaft excavated material coming from the Little Missenden vent shaft further up the A413 and the Chesham Road vent shaft – again, all products of bored tunnels in this location. You can see that the construction traffic routes are heading to the main motorways; there's no construction traffic routing through Amersham itself.

401. If I can take you to P7590, despite what Mr Shepherd says, we have repeatedly made clear – but I'll make it clear again – that these construction sites do not all operate at the same time, as the Committee knows, and the levels of construction activity will depend on specific periods of activity over the overall period. We have provided information about that, but you can see in this location P7590 gives you the location of the Amersham vent shaft satellite compound, the A413, which is going along this way, and then Amersham to the north. This slide relates to the scheme prior to the C6

proposal. At this point, there was a proposal under AP2 to remove Hunts Green sustainable placement area. That was taken out by way of Additional Provision 2, as the Committee will recall, at the request of a number of petitioners. Therefore, at this point, the predictions were that at E and F – if I can show you E and F; these are flows of traffic travelling along the A413 Amersham Road. You can get the flows over from these tables here. You were having 205 HGVs either way at E and F, and that was a product of the construction of the vent shafts and the sustainable placement areas bringing traffic down on the A413. As a consequence of the proposed AP4 and the extension of the bored tunnel, there is now the proposed Chesham Road vent shaft being constructed, but the Committee's already heard that as part of the revision to the construction, we now avoid taking any excavated material from the South Heath area southwards towards Amersham. In fact, it goes northwards along the A413, with the blocker of the viaduct, so it has to go along the road because of the viaduct blocker, and then it goes back onto the trace just past Wendover. There's that two-mile area of the road. And we're now avoiding taking excavated material south towards Amersham, save for the vent shafts that are being constructed in that area. AP4, if I just show you P8141 –

402. CHAIR: We heard yesterday that probably the vent shafts would be done in a sequence, so not all at the same time, and we're talking about three months of traffic.

403. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): You're ahead of me. Those were the two key points I was going to repeat. Just to show the effect of these new proposals, E and F, the same location, you can see now the traffic in HGV terms has gone down to 160 HGVs and 160 HGVs the other way. That is, of course, representing the period of activity when the vent shafts are being constructed and the material being taken out. It is a three-month period for each of the vent shafts. So, for E to F it's Little Missenden and Chesham Road, but the intention is they won't occur at the same time, and the period of that level of activity is very limited indeed; it's the three-month periods when the material's being transported.

404. If you just move down to Amersham vent shaft, you can see that is a similar process. It'll be approximately a three-month period, and that combines into C and D to get your average flows of 164. Then the traffic turns right on to Gore Hill, and you can immediately see that whilst Dr Conboy and, again, Mr Shepherd made points about

roundabouts elsewhere – there’s a roundabout up here that they referred to and they had their photograph of – it’s just simply not right to suggest we’re causing any problems to those roundabouts. At G and H, the flows through that roundabout are four HGVs per day.

405. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Not per hour? Per day.

406. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Not per hour. That’s a four HGV addition to the existing flows on that roundabout. The cars and LGVs are 54 per day, assuming 100% of workers go by car with 20% car share – all of those very worst case scenarios. To add in these roundabouts as problems which HS2 are causing is just simply not right. The Gore Hill junction we are in discussion on with Buckinghamshire County Council. That is a roundabout, and the concerns that we’re looking at with Buckinghamshire County Council are about the safety of the junction, not capacity, because, even with the flows we are suggesting we will put through of 163 vehicles, it’s within capacity, as we understand it, for that roundabout. But we are looking at the points Buckinghamshire have made about the safety of it.

407. You can immediately see – very basic points – the levels of traffic we’re generating are those associated with the vent shafts which need to be constructed. We are using the A413 because it’s the main road in the area. The periods of activity when we’re adding traffic to the road are limited and they’re not combined, and that immediately is an answer to why the idea of taking vent shaft material out by train becomes somewhat absurd. The reason I mention that is there are three basic things you need to take it out by train. You need to get the material to a railhead; you’ve got to them have the railhead constructed; and you have to have the train paths on the railway line to allow the material to go out. The first two points are just basic points, which no one has yet come forward with a solution. Where is it being said that we would take the material to a railhead without going on the A413? Secondly, even if that location’s identified, you have to construct the railhead, which itself involves massive amounts of earth moving and the creation of sidings so you can put material onto the railway. No one’s identified where on the Chiltern line in the AONB they want to see sidings constructed of that kind. Put it in the context of a three-month period of activity when these vent shafts generate peak activity, you can quickly see that the idea of building railway sidings to take three months’ worth of vent shaft material becomes fanciful in

the extreme.

408. CHAIR: We did have a discussion, I think, around Wendover about whether or not you could find a spot there to access the Chiltern railway, but it was just too difficult to find sufficient space to put in the railhead.

409. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Yes. What the Committee also looked at was having a railhead at Stoke Mandeville, in the context of a long bored tunnel and the implications of doing that, and Mr Smart's addressed you on that in detail in evidence. Of course, none of that would be relevant or assist Amersham in these vent shafts because it will still involve taking the material up the A413 to get to the railhead in the first place. These are serious matters, but it's important that a degree of objectivity and seriousness is applied in understanding what's going on in the area. Once one does, one can see very quickly that the points being made about the effects on Amersham and the idea of an alternative solution are not real – they're not realistic based on what we're proposing here. What we have done, of course, is seek to reduce traffic on the A413. We will have the traffic management plans, and we're continuing to investigate with Buckinghamshire County Council flows along the road and how best to manage that, of course, but we don't anticipate, apart from those peak periods of activities, sustained periods of construction activity affecting these roads.

410. I just wanted to show you P7596(6), because, for the avoidance of doubt – it won't come as any surprise – the Amersham vent shaft period of activity is no different to Little Missenden. Here it is. You have blue mass-haul HGVs. Those are taking excavated material. It's for this comparatively short period of time. The other times are cars doing internal civils fit-out or light goods vehicles, and then internal systems fit-out, but, again, on the worst-case assumption. I hope that gives you at least a flavour of why the concerns being advanced –

411. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Just remind us: do the vent shafts go in before the tunnel boring machine comes underneath?

412. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Yes. But just to pick up on another point you heard yesterday, the idea of slurry pipes to take the material out plainly can't work either, because it's not slurry that's generated. I'm sorry to repeat the point, but for the benefit of Mr Shepherd, the same obvious point: in contrast to railways which have been

constructed where material is taken out on the trace, here we're dealing with a twin-bored tunnel where you're constructing the vent shaft. There isn't actually anywhere you could take it out on the trace, because the tunnel has yet to be constructed.

413. I hope that explains the general situation in this location. I'll just pick up on one or two other points. I'll just show you – no doubt this may crop up with Buckinghamshire. Can I just show you slide P7617(1)? Again, Mr Shepherd was liberal in his allegations that we haven't looked at various other options. That's just simply not right. We have. One of the proposals from Buckinghamshire County Council was to construct a haul road at the Amersham vent shaft so that it would cut out the triangle from the A413 to the A355 at Gore Hill. We've shown that and, at 7617(2), we've looked at the implications of that. We don't think it's a sensible solution. It would involve the construction through a hill of a 15-metre-deep cutting into the AONB in order to put in a haul road which is going to be catering for a three-month period of peak activity. We've listed those on A7617(3) and (4). We've listed the comparisons and the consequences. So, we have considered these things, but, in our current view, they're not a sustainable solution to what's effectively a short-term construction effect.

414. I don't need to say too much more about the Environmental Statement, other than to say of course we have looked at effects and where we're identifying effects on junctions we're looking at them in more detail. What Mr Shepherd confused in the AP2 analysis was that where we identified an increase to a major adverse effect on one of the junctions from the A413 under the AP2 proposal, it was a consequence of adding in the removal of the sustainable placement area from Hunts Green and transporting material southwards, which led to an increase in traffic going through along the A413. That has now been removed by our latest proposal under AP4. It is important that people understand that – that we are continuing to reduce the effects on the A413 in the vicinity of Amersham.

415. There was one issue about air quality that was raised. Bearing in mind what I've just shown you, we don't anticipate having any material adverse effects on the air quality in the area given the levels of materials. There isn't a low emission zone in this area, but, as Mr Miller explained to the Committee in the context of Ickenham, it's anticipated by the time this scheme comes to be constructed in 2017 most vehicles

operated by main contractors will in fact be EURO VI type vehicles in any event, for the reasons he explained. There isn't actually a specific requirement in this location to impose any additional restrictions. I hope I've covered it as quickly as I can. If there are any further questions at any stage, we'll no doubt visit them.

416. MR HENDRICK: NOx levels are at the limit now. Do you not envisage those rising at all as a result of the work?

417. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): No, not from our scheme. There are two things at work, of course: NOx levels are predicted to go down as a result of changes in technology, and that's factored into the modelling; and the levels of increased traffic that we are proposing into that junction are effectively so small compared to existing traffic that, as I understand it, we're not predicted to cause any material increase.

418. MR HENDRICK: So you're saying the NOx levels will actually be less by the time this work is done.

419. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): I think that's the current – the way the model works – if I've got that wrong – but they're all predicted to go down naturally through changes in technology. Increases in traffic obviously bring them out, but sometimes one cancels out the other. So far as we're concerned, the levels of traffic we're proposing won't cause an air quality issue. Mr Shepherd referred to existing air quality issues. Those will have to be addressed by the relevant –

420. MR HENDRICK: The county council.

421. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Now. If there are those issues, they should be being addressed now; that's not a consequence of the HS2 scheme.

422. CHAIR: Okay. Mr Burton.

423. MR BURTON: Yes, sir. Sir, the difficulty the promoter has here, of course, is that it cannot get away from the fact that it started off telling everyone in Amersham that in terms of traffic impacts there'd only be a moderate adverse effect, and it's had to own up publicly and in its own Supplementary Environmental Statement to the reality that they'll be adverse. So, it's got off on entirely the wrong foot.

424. Contrary to what my learned friend has suggested regarding Mr Shepherd's evidence, it was accurate. Whilst I'm speaking, could I just speak to P8141, please? You will I'm sure have appreciated, as Mr Strachan was pointing out precisely the same features using precisely the same descriptions as Mr Shepherd had pointed out, that Mr Shepherd was not getting it wrong. Of course, with a previous slide, Mr Shepherd recalled accurately that the Chalfont St Giles vent shaft traffic would go the other way, so he didn't get that wrong. I think there was a general suggestion that he'd misunderstood the figures. You'll see from the top right hand A column in the table there he'd not misunderstood the figures at all; he understood and you heard him refer to the figure of 167 additional lorry movements predicted on A going into the Gore Hill roundabout that you heard from him on. He was talking about this roundabout here at Gore Hill.

425. I'm glad that the promoter did ultimately turn to the air quality impacts, which it's pleasing to see is an issue that has finally risen somewhere up the agenda so that people now, I think, are understanding generally quite how serious they are, but the fact of the matter is that we all know the impact that heavy goods vehicles have on air quality at the moment. Unfortunately, we all also know, because it's the Government's own publication that tells us this, that so far EURO standards for vehicles simply have not delivered. They've not done what they were meant to do. That's all before the Volkswagen scandal, of course; that was acknowledged by the Government's draft air quality plans that it published at the start of this month, none of which, I have to say, unfortunately for the zones in exceedance – and there are 38 of them, of which the south-east is one, of course – predicted compliance before 2020.

426. What we have here is another occasion – but this time, fortunately, documented by the promoter itself, because it's had to make corrections – where we know there will be major adverse effects through traffic. We know that they will happen with Amersham. Of course the Committee won't be sucked in to believing that they'll only last for three months. Each vent shaft, three months; add up the three months. Nor, I'm sure, will the Committee fall for the trap of thinking that it's only vent shaft traffic that HS2 will produce, because obviously there will be more than that that will be hitting the roads. That's why we're here. The ask is really very reasonable, particularly given that HS2 has had to acknowledge that it got things wrong at the start. It's to do the work – to do

the work in accordance with Government guidance, which it hasn't done. That's what we're asking for. Thank you very much.

427. CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed. We have three more petitioners: Lappetts Lane, who I understand could be about 45 minutes, and two other petitioners who are going to be about 10 minutes. It would be my intention to adjourn for five minutes and then go straight through to 1.30, unless there are any screams of concern. That allows people, if they need to be relieved, to phone the cavalry – if you have cavalry. Order, order. We reconvene in five minutes.

Sitting suspended.

On resuming—

428. CHAIR: Order, order. Welcome back to the HS2 Select Committee. We now go to petition 1214, Lappetts Lane (South Heath) Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, represented by Mike Johnstone. Welcome back, Mike.

The Lappetts Lane (South Heath) Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

429. MR JOHNSTONE: Thank you. Apologies, Chairman, for missing our earlier slot, but we were in the building since 10 o'clock and we were quite a way back on the running order.

430. CHAIR: That's fine.

431. MR JOHNSTONE: First slide. Thank you very much. We, as you'll appreciate, love the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and we want it preserved for us, for our children and our grandchildren. I'll show unashamedly one of the best views we have in the Chilterns area, looking across the Misbourne valley.

432. Next slide, please. I'm Mike Johnstone. I briefly introduced myself on Monday under the Great Missenden Parish Council presentation. I'm now here with my local petitioners under the Lappetts Lane Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, petition number 1214. We have four witnesses who are both residents and petitioners who want to come and express their concerns. Just to recap, I've lived in the Chilterns now for 45 years, moving to South Heath eight years ago. My wife and I moved here in advance of my retirement because we enjoy the tranquillity of walking and cycling.

433. As a family, we seem to be blighted by HS2 – as an aside. My mother in law lives in Wendover, less than 300 metres from the line; our daughter and her family in Fairford Leys near Aylesbury, about 1km from the line; and to reach our granddaughter for her regular collection from school for extracurricular activities, we're going to be crossing the line four times.

434. Next slide, please. These petitioners listed wish to be associated with our petition this afternoon. I wanted this fact to be recognised and so I've listed them all here.

435. The Lappetts Lane Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is a member of the REPA, which is Residents' Environmental Protection Association, and we are grateful for the support that REPA has given us and for the case it has and will continue to put forward for extending the Chiltern tunnel.

436. I intend to run quickly through the first few slides to point out where we live, who we are and how we're affected, then hand over to our four witnesses, and then sum up. Next slide, please. We are close to Great Missenden, which, together with Prestwood, are the largest villages in the AONB. The area has good access routes, both road and rail. It's served by Chiltern Railways; only 40 minutes from central London, so a good gateway for tourists and visitors to the AONB. We either straddle or are close to all the important recreational routes of the Chilterns.

437. Next slide, please. Lappetts Lane is part of the South Heath community. We're a closed loop of bungalows, which I've marked in a red ellipse down the side there – two houses and bungalows, quite rural neighbourhood. You'll note from the photographs no streetlights, but we do have overhead power cables – a sign of a rural nature. I live with my wife in the bungalow on the right hand side of the photograph at the bottom.

438. Next slide, please. We like living here. It's quiet, close to amenities in Great Missenden, on which we rely quite heavily, and good access to London. In addition, you can see from this photograph that we're quite close to woods, with many footpaths, so that we can enjoy the recreational aspects of living in the area. The whole village is within the Chilterns AONB and within the green belt, which has served to protect us from unwanted developments until now. It was not long ago that we needed to get planning permission for even a conservatory, but now they're building a large railway that over-rides everything.

439. Who are we? Next slide, please. We're a friendly group of neighbours comprising 34 homes, from families with young children to the elderly, working groups that have retired. In fact, HS2 has made our community rather stronger. We all know one another, which makes for a safe environment, particularly within the neighbourhood watch scheme, and have an annual street party, from which this was taken last month on the bank holiday Monday. In spite of the weather, we decided to carry on with the street party, put up the gazebos, and in true British spirit cope with the rain, as you can see from there.

440. Next slide, please. In relation to where we are on the line, we are between 650 and 900 metres from where the train exits the portal and about 400 metres from where the construction starts. We're about 600 metres from vent shaft and Annie Baileys. Next slide, please. The following map gives you an aerial perspective. I've superimposed the schematic of the portal to show you its location, and from there is an access to Frith Hill. The line comes in a twin-bore tunnel from the right along the dotted line and breaks to the surface just off the picture to the left. We'd like to thank the Select Committee for C6 even though we didn't ask for it. It saves the area to the east – or right of the village as you're looking at it now, but I'd like to remind the Committee that we asked for what HS2 have called C5, an extended tunnel to Leather Lane.

441. Next slide, please. In looking at the bored tunnel, as has been pointed out before, the vertical alignment of the line is such that it comes from under Shardeloes Lake from the right, climbs up to the north portal and then continues climbing to reach the highest point close to Liberty Lane. The overall climb from Shardeloes Lake to Liberty Lane is just over 100 metres. We believe and are concerned that the catenary masts and the pantographs should be visible at this point near Liberty Lane, with associated noise and light pollution from arcing.

442. Next slide, please. To visualise where we are, I've circled where you came out on the two site visits. You stopped briefly at the Weights and Measures Gym on the bottom left, down here, then went to Sibleys Rise, then went across to the end of Lappetts Lane, which is Wood Lane, Kings Lane and Lappetts Lane. There's a large group there. At that position, we heard REPA's proposal about the extended tunnel. You then journeyed on to South Heath Garden Centre, which is marked. On the second

visit, the group were going to come to Bury Farm, which is on the far left, and we placed a gazebo in the field on top of the location of the new portal, but unfortunately time did not permit you to meet the 200 or so people who were gathered there, many, in fact, from Lappetts Lane.

443. We've discussed the operational phase, so I'll quickly move on to the construction phase. Next slide, please. This shows the temporary haul road going down to the link road roundabout, with two spoil dumps and a construction compound at the end. 270 vehicles a day at the peak using this road. You've seen the map before. At this point, I'd like to take issue with Mr Strachan on the basis that on Monday Sir Peter wanted to know more about the suggestion to reposition the temporary haul road further to the left of this map in a natural fold which comes down here and down here. So, we move that to the left, further away from Stocking's Wood, which would help prevent any collateral damage to the woodland and also to enable it to join the A413 at a different place.

444. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Sorry, can you just mark where the fold is?

445. MR JOHNSTONE: The fold is down here. The other side of that – there. So it's further left. That's it; down there. This in fact is on top of a hill. The hill goes up, then goes down again. If you bring it round that side, it'll be less visible.

446. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: All the way down to the roundabout, or just –

447. MR JOHNSTONE: Well, that's the debate. Mr Strachan alluded to the fact that Bucks County Council highways had supported the temporary road joining the A413 at the link roundabout. Yesterday I enquired and my contact with Bucks County Council highways could not support this statement, but it did refer again to the fact that off the link road roundabout there is a north spur that's been metalled, which is used for craft fairs and exhibitions. So, I think that's probably the reason why they've naturally just joined it up. It does not mean – and they are quite adamant at Bucks Highways that it does not mean – that it's the best place for the haul road with its traffic to join the A413. They are continuing bilateral meetings between HS2 and Bucks County Council highways, and they believe that when AP4 becomes available, with its associated traffic figures and Environmental Statement, they will do some more traffic modelling on where they think that junction ought to be. We are concerned that at the moment it's at the link road roundabout, primarily because of the positioning of the skate park,

playground and tennis courts nearby. So, I would still like to have it recorded that we consider the reposition of the temporary haul road as another possibility.

448. Next slide, please. I've summarised our main concerns here and will go through them in a bit more detail, and we'll have our witnesses to try and emphasise some of these points. So, it's primarily noise, dust and dirt, traffic congestion – which we've all heard about – property blight, health and wellbeing, and recreation in the Chilterns AONB.

449. Going through them fairly quickly, first of all noise. Next slide, please. The first is noise in operation and, we believe, noise and dust during construction, emanating from the vent shaft from the right – which is circled – and obviously from the construction of the portal in the middle of the screen. As I said before, the edge of earthworks at the portal is about 400 metres from Lappetts Lane.

450. I'd like to consider one other aspect, please. Can I call up one of the promoter's slides? 8120(11). Thank you. This is the operational AP4 diagram for the construction area of the portal. The reason why I'm calling it up is – a cross-section was taken 1A to 1B, and that is one the same series but slide 13, if you could pull that up as well, please. That's 8120(13). Potter Row is on the right hand side, going along through some presumably new escarpment. Part of that I think is Jenkins Wood. The railway line is on the bottom of the cutting and then down towards Frith Hill – well, A413. The reason why I want to show that is that that is a very shallow cutting – the slope there is quite shallow – and we believe and we're concerned that it wouldn't take much wind during construction phase to bring the dust and dirt out of there towards South Heath, which is only 400 metres away. We think a better solution for that cutting would be to have it in a retained cutting so there'd be less aspect of the wind coming through and also, obviously, less noise and less spoil being taken out. We did note that we couldn't find on that particular slide where the high-security fence was going to be, bearing in mind that this security fence is going to go the full length of the railway throughout the whole of the Chilterns. We'd hope it would be halfway down this slope so you can't actually see it from the landscape otherwise.

451. Can you go back to slide 15 of the original presentation, please? Thank you. Our second concern is traffic congestion. We've got a number of pinch points circled in red.

We are concerned about the junction between Kings Lane and the B485, particularly during the construction of the vent shaft, albeit for a short period of time. I've indicated in smaller and thinner arrows the fact there are some HGVs going up and down that road, not to a large extent but they will be there. The next area is obviously on the Frith Hill road, where the permanent access road joins Frith Hill. We're concerned about a pinch point there – both traffic during construction and any maintenance thereafter. That then has to go down towards the Frith Hill South Heath leg to a junction which I've put a picture of on the right hand side. Very pretty rural lane, but it does start off with a very steep corner to get up to that road. We've mentioned before the other area, which is the A413, the other large area, where there's congestion between the two roundabouts. I've just illustrated below the two roundabouts, and it's the main confluence of the two main routes, north/south and east/west, across that roundabout. More people I think will be talking about traffic congestion and pinch points in other situations.

452. Next slide, please. Another area of concern is property blight. We've highlighted there the distances between 500 metres and 1km from the line. We know that some houses have been sold to HS2. One I know was quite early, under the exceptional hardship scheme, on the second attempt; a few more recently under the Need to Sell scheme. Others gave up the rigours of the Need to Sell scheme and sold on the open market and took a hit on their house value. We ask for all the houses owned by HS2 to be returned to private ownership and the land not developed, because we're concerned about the impact of Clauses 47 and 4. Some folks do not want to move now, but they can see circumstances over the next 12 to 15 years we're talking about in which they would want to move, so they now feel trapped. We have an unfortunate cycle on the left hand side where the property can go up for sale, it could be to let, then some end up by being locked up and, unfortunately, after that is the total blight phase. That's a picture of Annie Baileys as it now stands. It's even become a source for fly-tipping, which is the reason why the council has put the protective gate up on the left hand side.

453. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Can you point out Annie Baileys on the map, please?

454. MR JOHNSTONE: It's just off the map, I'm afraid. It's to the right hand side.

455. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: So it's not exactly the same as Lappetts Lane.

456. MR JOHNSTONE: No, it's not.

457. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: You seemed to go from one sentence to another rather than one chapter to another.

458. MR JOHNSTONE: No, that's quite right.

459. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: And I'm not absolutely certain Annie Baileys is owned by the promoters.

460. MR JOHNSTONE: It is not owned by the promoters, no, but it's in that state at the moment.

461. Next slide, please. Health and wellbeing. Stress takes its toll in a number of forms, as was outlined by Dr Barnes in her presentation on Monday. Amongst professionals, stress is not always accepted as a cause, as they feel they should be able to cope with it. However, over the last five years there's been no let-up. We've found the formal route changes in 2012, community forum meetings and bilateral meetings all drip-feeding us changes and not providing us with many answers. We've had quotes such as, 'This is only outline planning at this stage' quite often mentioned, or, 'It'll be a matter between the promoter and the undertaker or contractor'. This did not help, and does not help. We feel that our dialogue with the Committee has helped to clarify some situations and to improve our understanding, whether we like it or not. We deserved better information at our earlier meetings with HS2.

462. Next slide, please. The last area of concern was recreation in the AONB. This is, again, a photograph of the operational impact of the line, and I've highlighted the three main footpaths coming up from Great Missenden which cross the line. GM2 comes up; it's diverted along towards Liberty Lane, crosses over Liberty Lane and back again. This is alongside the cutting. GM12 comes straight up on an over-bridge on the railway line, of which I found a photograph of HS1 on the left hand side – was in quite a high over-bridge on the line – something akin to that. GM13 comes up from Great Missenden and then is diverted around the portal, as you can see, re-joins at Jenkins Wood and goes off towards Potter Row. Potter Row is towards the top of that map,

slightly off it, and it's a favourite cycle route of mine to get to The Lee shop for the morning paper. I'm a bit concerned as to how it's going to be affected.

463. To recap, these are our major concerns and four of our neighbours would like to tell us about how it affects them. Next slide, please. I've repeated the major concerns, and I'd like to call Ann Pummell to join me up here and say how it affects her.

464. MS PUMMELL: Thank you very much and good afternoon. I live at 5 Lappetts Lane, which is the opposite corner from Mike, and I live on my own except for my dog. In order to explain how this scheme personally affects me, I just wanted to make a few comments about noise first, and the perception of noise.

465. In rural areas, obviously noise travels a long way. You already know that we can hear the Chiltern line from South Heath, and you've also heard from other petitioners that they can hear the Chiltern line in Swan Bottom, which is actually further away. It doesn't cause a nuisance for us because this service is very infrequent. Similarly, just to give an example of noise, we can hear combine harvesters when they're working alongside Potter Row in Lappetts Lane.

466. The capacity for noise to cause stressful and sometimes intolerable intrusion into people's lives depends not just on the loudness of the noise – and obviously the loudness is very important – but also on the frequency, the pitch and the appropriateness of the noise to the setting. I just wanted to give an example. If you were to go to a seaside resort and walk along the pier and you came across an amusement arcade, if you don't like amusement arcades you'd probably just walk by, but your brain would acknowledge that the noise is to be expected in that kind of setting. But if you went to the Lake District and walked around Buttermere, let's say, and you found an amusement arcade had been placed there, I think you would regard it as very inappropriate. Like other residents in the Chilterns, I choose to live where I do because I value the peace and the beauty and the tranquillity. I choose to live in this environment to be outside, not to be indoors with my windows closed. So, an essential part of living where I do is to experience the peace of my garden but also to have immediate access to beautiful countryside. The placing of a high-speed railway through the broadest part of our AONB is almost like introducing something as alien, really, to our environment as the amusement arcade would be to Buttermere.

467. If the bored tunnel portal is placed at Bury Farm, which is actually very near South Heath as well as Potter Row, we're told we can expect to hear trains travelling faster than HS1 and faster than any current train in Europe come hurtling out of the tunnel portal into cuttings that lie in green fields. The trains won't be emerging into an urban area. There's no factories there, there's no industrial noise, nor is there a motorway close-by. HS2 Limited have told us that they only think that very few properties in the immediate vicinity will be affected, but, because we know how sound travels in our area, I'm afraid that we don't regard that as credible. We think that all the hilltop villages and the beautiful countryside in between will suffer from effects, and we obviously know that in addition to persistent daytime noise, regular maintenance has to be carried out at night for the safe running of a high-speed railway, such as rail grinding. Before any of that happens, we face a very long construction period, again with heavy, noisy machinery working for very long hours, creating dust and disruption not just for weeks or months but in total for several years.

468. Regarding the landscape just quickly, we've talked about barriers, higher barriers, security fences and so on. Barriers within barriers have been mentioned in regard to St Mary's Church in Wendover. We also know that two viaducts are planned. We've been assured that the viaducts will be world-class design, and I'm sure they will, but the point is: do they add anything to our landscape? Do the people who live in Wendover – the people who look out across the valley – want to see the viaducts or do they want to see the natural landscape? They certainly don't want to hear the noise of trains travelling over the viaducts.

469. How this affects me personally is this. I grew up in Harrow, but my parents were very keen walkers, so I was taken out to the Chilterns to walk at weekends. In 1979, I moved to Hyde Heath with my first child. I then had second child and my children grew up playing and walking in the woods and the fields around the area. My daughter learned to ride – she had a horse at Middle Grove Farm – and riding is still a passion for her now. I know how much the quality of the environment contributed to their wellbeing and I would like to think that thousands of children in the whole of the Chilterns can have that opportunity in the future.

470. In 2001 I moved to South Heath, where I am now. In 2009 I was diagnosed with a serious illness which required 18 months of treatment at a local hospital, where I still

have check-ups. Unfortunately, this meant that I had to stop teaching. During my treatment, I did discuss with medical staff the possibility of going back to teaching and I was told, 'You need quite a bit of time to recover and the best thing you can do is to avoid stress'. Teaching, as you know, isn't the most stress-free of occupations. So, I found myself, obviously, alone – because, as I say, I live on my own now – not fully recovered and then finding that HS2 was definitely going to come through our area. I developed really quite severe anxiety. In order to try and deal with that, and because I've always loved walking, I got a dog, and he and I walk every day, twice a day, from my home, along the footpaths through the fields and the woods that surround South Heath and Potter Row. I won't point them out because I know that you already know where they all are. This and the peace and quiet of my garden are really important to me and they're fundamental to my wellbeing. It's not an exaggeration to say from the moment I step out of my house, within five minutes I can be in woods and fields. I can watch the changing of the seasons; I can hear woodpeckers and skylarks. It literally means the world to me.

471. If the current proposals go ahead, many of those options will no longer be available because of the noise and the disruption. Because I think the spread of the noise has been so underestimated, I could find myself in the ironic and I think quite shocking situation of being a resident of an AONB and actually putting my dog in a car to go somewhere else in order to try and find the peace that used to be on my own doorstep. I also know, speaking to many other friends and dog walkers and other walkers, that people have no desire whatsoever once the footpaths are reinstated to walk around a tunnel portal or in the vicinity of a high-speed line. So, that area will not appeal to walkers; it won't appeal to visitors; and it won't appeal to horse riders, whose horses could easily be spooked by the sudden noise.

472. The implications of all this are really profound on me and so many other people in the AONB. Basically, what we're being told is that life that we thought we had is really not an option anymore. Instead of the peace and tranquillity we've got now, we're going to have persistent noise every 100 seconds throughout the day, throughout all our waking hours, and also some disruption at night. I don't want to leave Lappetts Lane. It is my life. All my activities really are centred around that area, within a radius of about 10 miles. The friends that I have, the social contacts that I have, again, are all in that

area. Quality of life is really closely linked to quality of the environment, and the Chilterns have been designated special for all the reasons that you already know. They haven't suddenly become not special anymore. So, my plea is: please, please reconsider and please put this line in tunnels, preferably all the way through. Thank you very much for listening.

473. CHAIR: Thank you. What's the dog called?

474. MS PUMMELL: Tino.

475. CHAIR: Okay.

476. MR JOHNSTONE: In all weathers, twice a day.

477. MS PUMMELL: In all weathers, twice a day. And that's true. Thank you very much.

478. MR JOHNSTONE: May I welcome Emma Jones to voice her concerns?

479. MRS JONES: Hello. I live at 37 Lappetts Lane with my family, and I've lived there for just over 10 years, and I lived on Potter Row for the previous nine years. My husband and I have four children aged 17, 15, 12 and 10, and they attend four different local state schools and colleges, and I work at a fifth. The eldest is at Aylesbury College; the next is at the Misbourne School in Great Missenden; the third is at Dr Challoner's High School in Little Chalfont; and the youngest is at Great Missenden School. I work at Lee Common First School. I know that you've already heard from heads at two of those schools and I share their concerns about the future of those schools, especially the smaller village schools for whom pupil numbers are so vital.

480. On a more personal level, I'm concerned about the effect particularly of the building phase on our family life. As you can imagine, it's no mean feat to get four young people out through the front door in the morning to four different places as well as then getting myself to work and supporting my husband, who runs his own business from home and who will present his own petition next month. In order to do that, we rely on the trains, a school bus, lift sharing with neighbours, and I drive two of the children down to Great Missenden in the morning, crossing the A413 and using the link road roundabout. Then, to get myself to work, I cross back across the A413. I'm

concerned that the congestion and added distance and journey times will have an impact on all of us.

481. I'm also concerned about the community that the children are growing up in, which is wonderful for them. They're involved, apart from the usual school routine, in a wide range of extracurricular and social activities, from rugby in High Wycombe to Scouts in Lee Common – all over the place – and I'm worried that the thriving Scout group and the tiny chapel that we belong to will suffer from falling numbers as access and travel between our hilltop villages and Great Missenden becomes become more difficult. We have a range of local events such as the church fete and the flower show, at which the children are given great responsibility and freedom, and encouragement to express their creativity. That's likely to change as the local demographic changes as families have to move away and young people are no longer moving to the area. So, that's a concern of mine as well.

482. I know that you've heard already from lots of elderly members of our community about their healthcare worries. Young families are anxious too. In addition to the usual childhood accidents that require dashes to our local A and E at Stoke Mandeville, such as broken arms on the trampoline and bumps on the head and things, our eldest daughter has had serious and extensive mental health needs. Thankfully, she's now recovering, but at the height of her illness she had stays of a week and two weeks at Stoke Mandeville, across the A413 from us, and she required four months as an inpatient at the adolescent mental health unit in Oxford, which meant that one of us was travelling daily to Oxford while the other transported the other children around their vital daily routine. Other families who might still have to face that will have added stress and difficulty at what's already a traumatic time for the whole family. She continues to have healthcare appointments in High Wycombe, Aylesbury and Amersham, and regular appointments with our GP down in Great Missenden, from whom you heard the other day. It's hard enough for her to attend those appointments anyway on an emotional level, and adding stress and difficulty to her journeys won't encourage her to attend regularly, which she needs to do. Our most recent trip with her to A and E was on Monday evening, when 111 suggested that we needed to get her there within an hour, which we can do at the moment but I don't know whether we'd be able to do in the future. We've called ambulances to the house on her behalf on three separate occasions and on at least one of

those a delay caused by congestion and route changes could have had a very different outcome for us. Thank you.

483. CHAIR: Thank you.

484. MR JOHNSTONE: Thank you, Emma. Paul.

485. MR BURKE: My name's Paul Burke. I live at 32 Lappetts Lane. I run a small drainage business. I park my van at my house and then my bigger jet machine up the road. I've got a tanker, which is just round the corner as well. If the traffic's going to build up like they're saying, I'm going to struggle to operate my business. I do the work for the Amersham crematorium. If they've got a blocked drain, I've got to get over there straightaway. I do drainage work at a hospice up at Berkhamsted. We do the Hearing Dogs down at Princes Risborough. We cover an area all round, and I need to get to these points ASAP. Normally they give me a sort of estimated time of arrival, so for me it's important that I get free movement around where I live and what I do.

486. MR JOHNSTONE: Paul, how many times a week or a day –

487. MR BURKE: We get a call-out per day – an emergency call-out every day, so – when there's a problem. So, that's my business. Secondly, my house is part of my pension. I have a pension with Equitable Life and I paid into it, and [it was just over? – 42.20], so I stretched myself, but I'm not paying into a pension anymore. I stretched myself on my bungalow. I bought my bungalow, and it's turned out that obviously it's not going to be worth as much when I cash it in for my pension; it's going to be worth a lot less. I spoke to my neighbour yesterday about his bungalow, and his bungalow is still the same price – he's had it estimated, the price, for extension, and it's still the same price as what it was seven years ago. He's got his extension money, but the house price hasn't gone up in real terms in seven years. I want my house valued eventually for like-for-like in the same sort of area – not far away – and be compensated for my loss of my house when in about 10 years' time I will need it for my retirement.

488. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Didn't one of the houses in Lappetts Lane get sold in 2014 for 25% more than it was sold in 2011?

489. MR BURKE: Whose was that?

490. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: I can't tell you.

491. MR BURKE: Well, my next door neighbour had his valued and I was talking to him yesterday, and he bought it for 415 –

492. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: I don't want to go into the detail. All I'm trying to say is that what homes sell for is a matter of public record, and if they've been sold twice in the last five years or so, that's a matter of public record and the figures, I think, are there. I'm not arguing against you; I'm just putting something –

493. MR BURKE: Yeah, but my main concern for my house is that I get the right value for it, like-for-like, say in Penn, which is five miles away – a bungalow, like-for-like, same sort of – instead of that area where we live now, which has got blight on it. And I should be able to sell it and use that money as my pension.

494. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Got the point, yes.

495. MR BURKE: Yes. That's what I'm trying to get across. And I think that's a fair point, but if I'm not going to be compensated, it's another thing that –

496. MR JOHNSTONE: Well, the problem at the moment is you must be trapped because you can't move out at the moment and it could last another 10 or 12 years.

497. MR BURKE: Yeah. My business I'm going to have trouble with, and now also I'm going to have my property... But I would have to have good reason to sell, which I shouldn't; if it's part of my pension, I shouldn't need a reason to sell other than I want to cash it in.

498. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: It's what we tend to call 'age and stage'.

499. MR BURKE: What does that mean?

500. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Well, it means you've got to a certain age and a stage of life when you want to make a change in your life, so there's a need to sell.

501. MR BURKE: Yes. I don't need to be stressed over it or start thinking about it over the next 10 years; I just want to have a bit of peace of mind that I'm going to be okay, sort of thing.

502. CHAIR: Okay. Thank you very much indeed. Thank you for giving us your evidence.

503. MR JOHNSTONE: Last but not least, John Baker.

504. MR BAKER: Good afternoon. John Baker. I live at 14 Lappetts Lane, two doors up from Mike. We have a very strange numbering system. I've been in South Heath for 17 years. We originally moved out there because of the quiet rural nature, but, as Mike was saying earlier, it's still close to the infrastructure so that I can commute to London, I can drive to Birmingham and get to other places for work. We've got two children. I live with my wife and the two children, 15 and 12, both of whom go to school in Great Missenden. The eldest also plays rugby in Amersham and is training there twice a week and again most weekends, and the younger one playing tennis over in Wendover. So, that and the other events – again, the traffic congestion that's going to happen during the construction phase – we as a village are going to be cut off, almost, from our main town of Great Missenden. Also, my mother lives in Great Missenden. She is 83 tomorrow and not in the best of health, and it is on several occasions that my wife has had to go down there and help to put her into an ambulance with heart problems to go to various places. As we've heard from other people, this lack of timeliness and guarantee that you can get to somewhere is going to cause a problem in the future.

505. As well as the school run, my wife is a gardener. She works with a friend of hers and they trade as Nutty Birds, which is the confusing logo that you have on the screen here.

506. MR JOHNSTONE: It's very pretty, though.

507. MR BAKER: It is very pretty. In the mornings, they're taking the children down to school and then she has to get on to work, which could be either side of the A413, sometimes the other side of Aylesbury, sometimes out in Tring, or even more local than that, but it's going to make it very hard to still do a full day's work, getting the children to school, getting to jobs on time – and reverse that process in order to pick the children up by 3.30. If you can't rely on the time that it's going to take you to get there – you can't be late picking the children up – it means that you've got to start sacrificing the work side of it as well. So, going forward, that's going to be an impact on it. And also, getting deliveries. As a gardener, we have deliveries of plants to the house. If they

can't get through, if they're delayed, then they're obviously going to suffer a lot if they can't get planted.

508. We don't have the best infrastructure from a power and telephone point of view at the moment. In Mike's photographs, you saw that we had overhead power lines. It's a lot better than it used to be, but we do still seem to get power cuts a lot more often than we've had anywhere else, and disruptions to things like the broadband signal. I'm concerned that with the construction that's going on there and the movement around those existing facilities, we're probably going to suffer more from those in the future as well.

509. At the moment I have no plans to move. I have a 12-year-old in school still; I have my mother locally. But this is a construction that's going on for 17 years and in six, seven, eight years, I can easily see that the children will be out of education, my mother probably won't be with us, and we would want to leave, but we'll be trapped by the construction that's going on. So, we're grateful for the tunnel that's already been proposed, but it is still impacting us and the only way that you can really make this better is by building the edge-to-edge tunnel.

510. CHAIR: Thank you very much. Succinct and to the point.

511. MR JOHNSTONE: So, you've heard from our four witnesses to reinforce the points on noise, particularly with the footpaths and the AONB; all the traffic congestion issues that we've listed on the slide, particularly access to schools and also businesses, with deliveries and customers; health and wellbeing and recreation we know you've covered; but the overriding concern has been property blight. We feel trapped and we'd like the Committee to appreciate that.

512. Can we move to the next slide, please? Just to confirm what we want – what are our asks? We'd like to have a longer bored Chiltern tunnel and, as John has just mentioned, we're particularly keen on the edge-to-edge in terms of the AONB going thorough towards north of Wendover – so, the longer tunnel. If that is not possible, then we'd like an extra mile of the existing tunnel to Leather Lane. If that's not possible, then there are quite a few individual mitigations. We believe that the long tunnel – the edge-to-edge tunnel – addresses all our concerns, of which I've listed some down there, and in terms of the extra mile it addresses nearly all our concerns, and, again, I've listed

the main ones down there on the slide. If it's not possible, then a tunnel extended to Leather Lane – the C5 option – certainly would address nearly all those concerns.

513. Next slide, please. Again, against those same concerns on the left hand side, I've put down our asks on the right hand side, and it's primarily assurances. The Construction Code of Practice is not independently enforced, and we are very concerned that, with the relationship between the promoter and the undertaker or even subcontractor, that could result in plans proposed by HS2 not actually being enforced. What we're suggesting is HS2 Limited should set up and fund an independent group to monitor all these aspects. The local authority has not got the capacity for monitoring all the air quality, noise, vibration levels, light and dust pollution that we believe – they've been specified under the LEMPs, but we also ask for an independently-funded group to enforce them. For example, if they're not met, then we want things like better noise barriers to be considered. We've been given some noise forecasts. I know other people will be coming on discussing noise in other petitions, but if they're not met, then we believe various mitigations should be taken into account, like better barriers, maybe lowering the train speed, maybe additional landscaping, etc.

514. We also ask for an independently-funded group to enforce the traffic plans under the CoCP. This is to ensure that plans are met and, if not, then they can order some remedial action.

515. Moving on to property blight, we ask that the Need to Sell scheme at the unblighted price is improved, made more accessible and made available for up to 15 years so that we don't feel trapped as we do at the moment. How about a Right to Sell scheme rather than a Need to Sell scheme?

516. Our health and wellbeing and recreation in the Chilterns will be helped by all of those above, and an air ambulance service provided during the construction period will also alleviate a lot of concern to the elderly – and, as you heard from Emma, in some cases some of the younger children as well who've got ailments.

517. Last slide, please. I'd just implore you to please give us a longer Chiltern tunnel. Thank you very much.

518. CHAIR: Thank you very much. Mr Strachan.

519. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Can I just say we've obviously covered a lot of these same topics to I don't mean any disrespect to the petitioners if I don't go through them all again – including all residents in this particular area, in Lappetts Lane? Just to clarify one or two things, though, there isn't any intended light pollution from the railway, whether from the fact there's no lighting of the rails itself and, indeed, arcing is not a feature – or shouldn't be a feature – of high-speed rail, which I think was referred to.

520. Can I just deal with the haul road? A8120(16). I don't think I ever said that Buckinghamshire County Council had approved or supported the access onto the A413. I think we're in discussion with that. What I identified was that Buckinghamshire County Council had requested a haul road, which is what we've provided, and the precise details of it obviously they'll be able to comment upon. But the reason why we've taken it – I think we've previously explained – from the existing roundabout is that there is an existing roundabout and junction there, and what I identified on the last occasion – P8120(19) – is that we internally had identified the problems with any alternative access onto the A413 in the location of the fold of the land, as it's been put. If I point the cursor there, you can just see that down there, there are two footpaths coming in and an under-bridge, which is one of the under-bridges we said we'd look into about ensuring footpath access. I think what's being suggested is some new link onto the A413 there, which obviously is problematic bearing in mind the A413 is going over either a ditch or some sort of land there. So, the creation of a new access onto the A413 in that location, in contrast to taking it off the existing roundabout, is problematic, which is why we've proposed the use of the arm off the existing roundabout. No doubt that's something we'll continue to discuss with Buckinghamshire, but I just wanted to make it clear to the Committee some of the problems – significant problems – of an alternative access. There's also the issue of creating a new access in proximity to an existing roundabout junction, for obvious reasons. I just wanted to be clear why we've proposed what we have.

521. So far as the cutting itself where the portal comes out west of South Heath, you'll be aware from the Code of Construction Practice that there are dust suppression measures. We don't anticipate dust pollution because of those measures which are taken to ensure any dust is suppressed during construction. And that's not affected by

the sides of the cutting or the slopes that are taken. The slopes we have taken are based upon – as I’ve previously explained – prudent assumptions as to geology in the area, with the potential in the future to steepen them if it’s possible – and it may be possible. The access road which we can see on this –

522. CHAIR: And – sorry – the depth at that point?

523. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): The depth as it comes into the portal is 17 metres down below existing ground level, and that is important – which is a point we’ve made before. There’s also, as you can see on this diagram, these bunds around the portal so that we anticipate – and we’ve sought to show this already – that the effects of mitigation are not just on Potter Row but also generally on South Heath, and in particular Lappetts Lane. So, the sinking down of the portal, coupled with all the other measures, is not anticipated to have any material noise effects on the residents of Lappetts Lane. I understand that’s a concern, but these improvements through AP4 should only improve the noise situation. Even before these improvements, we weren’t predicting any material noise effects on Lappetts Lane – I think 1dB increase during the day on the LEQ levels, and zero or one at night, which are imperceptible changes on LEQ levels, and ranges of 63/65 LAmaxes as compared with existing LAmaxes for that area of a range of 62 to 66 – subject always to the point, I know, about the qualitative effects of railways versus other things, but that’s the order we are talking about. That’s why – and I hope it provides some assurance – we consider that this proposal will continue to ensure the amenity protection of Lappetts Lane residents in terms of noise and, of course, visual effects, bearing in mind where the scheme lies.

524. In terms of the Need to Sell scheme, that clearly is a scheme which exists to deal with, for example, the need to release money for a pension if you had to move, and certainly for one of the petitioners who was concerned about future plans in 10 years’ time, that scheme is going to operate up until one year after the railway comes into operation in 2026 as predicted. Thereafter, you have Part 1 claims that can be made under the 1973 Act. A mention was again made of Annie Baileys. Just to be clear, Annie Baileys is not owned by the promoter; it’s owned by a private owner, and the state of that property, in contrast to properties which are owned by the promoter, is not something within our control. Those properties we do acquire under the Need to Sell scheme or other schemes, as the Committee has already heard, are generally done up

and then let out, and you've got some statistics on that and the way in which we let our properties once we've done them up.

525. Traffic was a frequent point raised. The AP4 proposal has the beneficial effect of removing traffic from Potter Row and Kings Lane, as you've already heard, and taking it off Frith Hill, so it's a significant improvement for those people who are using those roads. I just make the point once again that the traffic that's proposed as a result of this scheme is less than that which would occur if one were to try to construct a bored tunnel throughout the whole of this area, with the consequential intervention gap and the removal of excavated material that that would involve. Whilst there is an effect on traffic in terms of construction, it's less than that which would occur with a bored tunnel throughout the area.

526. CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. A brief final comment, Mr Johnstone?

527. MR JOHNSTONE: Yes. I take your point about joining the A413. We deliberately weren't suggesting a particular position on the temporary haul road to join the A413, but we felt there was a better position than joining the link road roundabout. So, I suggest that your discussions with Bucks Highways would cover that.

528. The dust part of the portal – we are concerned that while the bund is being built and while the cutting is being made, the wind will be blowing dust towards South Heath. I accept towards the end of completion of construction, the situation may get slightly better.

529. You mentioned again the bored tunnel going towards Wendover would create more spoil to go on the roads. We feel strongly that that should be offset by the fact that you're no longer making disruptions to things like Back Lane, Leather Lane – there are about eight tracks and farm tracks and the Chiltern line which will be disrupted by cutting straight through them. That will offset some of the impact of lorries on the road.

530. Can I just close by switching back to my last slide?

531. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Just before you do, I did mention, I need to say also, that the access road to the portal is not a construction route onto Frith Hill. That's just an access road for maintenance purposes. I think it was a point of concern raised. It's

not a construction route and it's for very limited access for maintenance purposes.

532. MR JOHNSTONE: The concern was – I agree. We don't know how much traffic's coming out there, so it's a point of concern for us, and the rather tight bend at the bottom of Frith Hill.

533. CHAIR: Last slide.

534. MR JOHNSTONE: We've shown earlier how the line goes under Shardeloes Lake and climbs up 100 metres to the top of South Heath near Liberty Lane before working its way down again. The picture on this slide is of Mount Everest. I believe that we have the finest engineers in the world in Great Britain. I'll leave you with the thought, gentlemen, that if the Chinese plan to tunnel a high-speed train under Mount Everest, surely we can tunnel this line under South Heath to Wendover and preserve the AONB. Thank you very much.

535. CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed, Mr Johnstone. We now move on to 552, Elizabeth and Peter Boulton. Hello. Are you going to kick off?

Elizabeth and Peter Boulton

536. MR BOULTON: Can I have my first – in fact, my second slide, probably? I don't recognise that one.

537. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): I think the petitioner didn't send the slides to us. They may have come –

538. MR BOULTON: I sent them to Neil Caulfield on Thursday or Friday last week.

539. CHAIR: Can you just continue and do your best?

540. MR BOULTON: Okay. I'll hold a piece of paper up and you can all have a look.

541. CHAIR: If you present your case, if you could give that to Neil afterwards and he will photocopy and give us all the slides so that we can read them at our leisure afterwards. But you speak to how you feel and what your concerns are.

542. MR BOULTON: Okay. Thank you. Well, don't worry; this will be short and sweet. I just want to tell you briefly we moved into Hyde Heath in the area of

outstanding natural beauty in 2001. I'm self-employed and I work from home. We benefit from the new C6 tunnel, so thank you for that. I'm 58, although I probably look younger –

543. CHAIR: Not after sitting at this Committee.

544. MR BOULTON: Take that off the record, please. I don't want to talk about my own mortality, but the last three generations on my father's side died before the age of 50 with heart disease, so exercise and health are very important to me – and obviously not just to me. You would have seen a nice photo of me cycling in the Chilterns. I'll send you the colour version as well.

545. CHAIR: In Lycra?

546. MRS BOULTON: At least he won't get rude comments.

547. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: We're all going to buy shares in Halfords, I think.

548. MR BOULTON: Because I'm still in full-time work, I don't have that much time for exercise, so what I aim to do is a fast 10 miles. I've got various routes, and I did have them on my presentation. Going south-east from Hyde Heath takes you towards Amersham and lots of traffic, so I tend to cycle out towards the areas that we've been talking about today, which are very beautiful and relaxing to cycle in. I see lots of cyclists while I'm out on my bike, and I'm sure there are probably hundreds and hundreds of people not only who live in the Chilterns but also who travel to the Chilterns for cycling and exercise. My concerns are the same as everyone else has articulated; there's no point in me repeating what other people have said more eloquently than I have.

549. The construction lorries are a concern, loss of natural beauty, pollution, noise etc. When it's raining I go walking, so obviously the loss of footpaths and peace and quiet etc through the construction phase and also the go live is an issue. At the end of the day, I wonder with the current plan whether we can still call the area an area of outstanding natural beauty.

550. I found a couple of things on the internet about water quality, appendix two of the Department for Transport consultation, which I won't read but I'm sure you've heard

already, and Dr Haydon Bailey to the Select Committee. And so I am concerned about the potential dangers to the water supply. I don't think it affects just me. I think it affects a quarter of London, and I hope that the safeguards will be put in to strictly ensure that water quality is retained.

551. Concerns about traffic: again, I was pleased to hear that the tunnel output will be going north rather than on the 413 near me, but on the other hand I think I heard a quote of no displaced traffic mentioned during this morning's response, and to me that seems naïve. There's going to be displaced traffic.

552. As for what I want, I had a great slide which showed the five different tunnel alternatives and the costs of each of them, and they range from 31 million to 273 million if my figures are correct. And then looking at the total cost of HS2 at 42.6 billion or more, just trying to work out what the percentage of the different tunnel options would be of the total cost. C6 is 0.073% and C3, which I understand is the long tunnel, the most expensive, is 0.643%. And to me, given the size of the project, the absolute 273 million obviously is a huge amount of money, but within the context of the overall project it is such a small percentage. And it's a case of weighing cost versus the intangible, or partly intangible value, of leaving the Chilterns the way we found it, which I understand at the end of the construction phase, if we went for a long tunnel, would be the outcome, and obviously that's the one that I'm asking for.

553. Another way of looking at it, and I don't mean to give offence to anybody here, is I looked at the HS2 annual report and accounts for last year, and I see that the total costs were – I haven't got my glasses on. I think it's 185 million, which goes quite a long way towards the long tunnel, and that's just in one year. So if one wants to compare the amounts of money one's prepared to spend on this project, put the long tunnel cost against those kind of costs and the long term effect of what we're going to hand over to our descendants, and I believe a long tunnel looks like a good solution. You'll be pleased to know that's the end of what I've got to say. You're all hungry, I'm sure, but I hope that although my presentation's been short, I hope that my concerns have been registered. I don't have solutions because there are more expert people than me that can offer them, but just because I'm short doesn't mean it's not a point.

554. CHAIR: No. Short people we remember. You get people go on for a long time

and we think they have a point, and then after about 35 minutes that point goes, because they've thrown so much information in.

555. MR BOULTON: Okay. I hope I've been short but I've also had a point.

556. CHAIR: No, absolutely. Thank you. If you could give your slides to the clerk then we will get them circulated. I'm sorry about that. Thank you both very much indeed. Thank you.

557. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): If anyone is watching, the convention is that – it's not a criticism, but the slides should be sent to us because that avoids this problem. I just want to make that clear, because if people are watching they shouldn't be sending them –

558. CHAIR: Yes. We'll send you a copy as well

559. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): No, it's fine, Chair, but I just want people to follow the same practice. That was all.

560. CHAIR: I have to say, we're at 14 months, there's only one other occasion when something went a bit wrong, so I think we're doing pretty well so far. Thank you very much.

561. MR BOULTON: Thank you.

562. CHAIR: And thank you for your comments and for you and your wife sitting through all the proceedings today. We now go onto 1896, which is James Rodda, who's, I think, sitting at the back.

James Rodda

563. MR RODDA: I thought I was going to be the very last one.

564. CHAIR: Last but not least.

565. MR RODDA: But I think your work is not yet over. I'm afraid you've only got me, and you've got no slides either. My IT support is doing officer training somewhere. I come into this as a rather cynical accountant and a railway rambler. I was born and brought up in very flat, rural Essex, on the marshes, and moved to the Chilterns on the

recommendation of my wife's history teacher in Nottingham, who lived in Chesham. And she said, 'That's a nice place to go if you want to work in London'. And so we came down and we loved it, and so we lived in Missenden, Prestwood and now Amersham and then Great Hampden, where I now live.

566. I'm also a Railway Rambler, and it suited me coming from Nottingham down to the Chilterns because the Great Central had just closed, and I walked the route down from Nottingham down to just north of Aylesbury. And that's about it from me, I think, for that bit.

567. I've got four points tagged to my petition. First of all, I'm a life member of the Chiltern Society. I'm on their anti-HS2 team, and I fully support the tunnel under the whole Chilterns. I think it would set a huge precedent for the rest of the country. The Chilterns is an AONB under tremendous pressure, and I think to put HS2 through it is about almost the last straw, frankly. I moved from Amersham because the pressure in Amersham was too great for somebody's who's retired from commuting in London. I volunteer for the open air museum in Chalfont, and I drove back from there, and the County Council had stopped one carriageway on the A413. It took me 15 minutes to get through that, and you'll see that's partly the thing that's been affected. So the traffic is really bad there.

568. I thank the Committee for their extension of the tunnel, but what it does is it's designed to reduce the opposition, I feel, and it's a halfway house, but it also reduces the extra cost that would be needed for a full tunnel, by going a little bit of the way there. So it changes the decision making, and I think the whole thing should be reviewed on the basis that the Chilterns is an AONB. The first time I heard of the proposal I went back to a poem that I'd read a long time ago, and accountants don't usually read poems very often, and I certainly don't. But the poem is called 'Almanac' by Primo Levi, and it's almost like a manifesto for the Green Party, but it really resonated with me. And I've given a copy to the clerk to give out. I think it's a tremendous poem. It's been well-translated. In fact my wife pulled it up for me on the computer yesterday, because we're having computer trouble, and she had a different translation and it was a different poem, but this one's tremendous.

569. So I really think the Chilterns deserve a full tunnel under their – I was the area

treasurer for the ramblers. We have seven groups working in North West London, Aylesbury, High Wycombe, everything else, and just like in Yorkshire they all fought amongst themselves for money. And the different groups had different priorities, because the areas are different. Aylesbury is in flat land, High Wycombe is in the High Wycombe area and Aylesbury in the Aylesbury area, but the ramblers can make their own case for this, but it shows the volume of walking that is actually done. Buckinghamshire, I think, has more footpaths than any other county, and they're concentrated in the Chilterns. And the way HS2 have not said they will use their best endeavours to restate those footpaths is a disaster.

570. If you walk the Beaconsfield bypass, for example, and many other places, you have to walk as you saw from that footpath that went around the tunnel portal. They don't go straight over. You don't want to go along a railway line for a long time. The classic way is to go up along, over and back again, and that destroys the footpath and people don't use it anymore.

571. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: I apologise for that noise. That was calling me back to the afternoon session.

572. MR RODDA: Unless you're a keen railway man you wouldn't... Okay, thank you. I realise we're over running. I promised about four minutes for this. I offered a framed copy of Almanac to Mr Hammond but he didn't accept it. He ignored it.

573. I read a book called *Nothing Like it in the World*, which is a book on the construction of the American intercontinental railway, where all the money ended up in the construction companies, run by four large companies – four large families rather. And the experience there is quite, I think, comparable to now, with Congress not really making up their own mind what was going to happen for a proper structural thing. But talking to somebody from Holland and Germany, they say that when there's a big process like this, they would talk to as many people as possible. It's like a green paper and a white paper. You indicate your ideas vaguely so people are aware of it first in a general way and can then participate in that railway.

574. This HS2 was sprung on us. If you read Peter Mandelson in *The Financial Times* he explains the process, how it all started, how it wasn't reviewed very well, and it was a political project just to get an idea into a manifesto, and it was rushed out in the timing

for the general election. It wasn't rushed out because it was completed. So it's a half-baked proposal, and when you begin to look at it as a railway person, which I'm not – I've got two things for the Committee. There's probably lots of other things, but one is the – this is a gradient profile of the West Coast Mainline, and you can see it's not very even. There's a lot going on. And this is the gradient profile for the East Coast Mainline, and you can see it's just flat.

575. And when this book was written, at the time, they'd just finished electrifying the East Coast Mainline, and the journey time was just less than four hours, whereas the journey time for the West Coast Mainline was five hours. They've since made improvements to the West Coast Mainline and the journey times are about the same, but I think there's a big argument for the East Coast Mainline and following the M1. I had a friend who was a senior surveyor for HS1, and he said, 'If you want to find out why the Government is pursuing HS2 in the way it is, it's because of the experience with HS1, where they had six or seven routes, none of them satisfactory, everybody was up in arms, and eventually they took a completely different route'. They had bought properties in the meantime.

576. They took a completely different route that followed the M20, and the East Coast route could follow the M1. I wrote to the Department for Transport. I got a letter from Justine Greening saying the countryside has already been devastated there already. That's the whole point of it. It doesn't make any difference there, but it makes a huge difference to the Chilterns. And it's the wrong idea – you're going from the bottom of the Chilterns to the top of the Chilterns, and at one stage there is a gradient of one in 33. That is going to cost the railway, and the bend is going to cost the railway. There was that accident in Spain that you saw on the television of a high speed train going round a bend, a very sharp bend, which wasn't – the driver carried on, and... That bend is going to be the – the managing director of Birmingham Metro, your predecessor –

577. CHAIR: Your'e moving a bit off HS2 at the moment.

578. MR RODDA: Well, I'm wondering about the comparison of HS2 to other projects. He was –

579. CHAIR: That isn't –

580. MR RODDA: I understand that.

581. CHAIR: We're tasked with very precise instructions in the House. I would love to redesign the route but I can't, because the route has been decided by people above.

582. MR RODDA: I'm just saying there are difficulties with having the Chilterns for future expansion if this is the main spine of the railway. The head of Birmingham Metro said it would be a four track route eventually. The HS2 started with just two tracks, and then they realised they might have to stop a train occasionally and they put in passing loops, but that was a sudden addition. If you have something called scenario analysis people will look at this.

583. I tutored scenario analysis for the Open University MBA, and as a person I am upset that they – Network Rail use it for their five and 10 year plans. It's alternative futures. It is difficult to do properly. They don't get it right, of course, all the time, but it should have been done, and that would have been an open process starting and taking a long time, with as many views as possible into it. Instead, HS2 meetings were held in secret with the County Councils and then suddenly released to the public. So that's my views. Thank you.

584. CHAIR: Okay. Thank you very much. I'm sorry that you had to sit through all the procedure and be last, but thank you very much.

585. MR RODDA: That's alright.

586. CHAIR: Order, order, if you could please withdraw from the room so we can clear our thoughts for the petitioners we've heard today. Thank you.