



Department
for Transport

Dr James Conboy
The Chiltern Society

From the Minister of State
Andrew Stephenson MP

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000
E-Mail: andrew.stephenson@dft.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

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29 January 2021

Dear Dr Conboy,

Thank you for your email of 15 January, enclosing a report you have helped compile about HS2 works in the Chilterns since Notice to Proceed.

As the dedicated HS2 minister I take community engagement very seriously. I am working hard to make sure that HS2 Ltd fosters good relations with its neighbours.

When the Prime Minister appointed me, he asked me not just to focus on the cost and schedule of the project but also on resetting relationships with local communities. HS2 Ltd Chief Executive Mark Thurston is determined that the company works with communities to help understand concerns at a local level and resolve them where possible. He is striving to improve how they work and consequently to minimise the impact on people's lives.

HS2 is the largest infrastructure project in Europe, which I am sorry to say means that its construction cannot avoid affecting communities and businesses along its route. I recognise that no one chose to live next to the railway, and I have been clear with Mr Thurston and to Parliament that further work is required to reset and strengthen community relations.

I understand that you have been able to regularly engage with HS2 Ltd and its contractors on many of the issues raised in your report and see some of these concerns addressed. HS2 Ltd advise me that they have met with many members of the Chiltern Society, either as individuals or as part of other groups, and I am aware of a future meeting planned for February. I would encourage issues like those raised in your report to continue to be discussed as part of these regular engagements, in order to help identify and secure local solutions.

I do appreciate your keeping me informed and hope to see continued evidence of how HS2 Ltd are working with organisations such as yours to mitigate the effects of the works taking place.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Stephenson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

ANDREW STEPHENSON MP

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT