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18th October 2020

Dear Mr Paterson,

On behalf of Woore Parish Council, may I say we are delighted to hear that you are returning to your post as our MP and we very much look forward to working with you again.

Since our last communications, the Parish has submitted the Petition against HS2 to the House of Lords (HoL) on the 14th September 2020. I attached for your information a newsletter created for Woore Parishioners which summarises the current position in relation to HS2.

One particular aspect of the Petition presentation, which was a last-minute addition, is worth bringing to your attention. The Parishioners of Woore are indebted to our neighbouring Petitioners from Yarnfield who shared with us this lifeline in relation to HS2 trying to stop us raising any material that would be considered as an Additional Provision. Prior to the Petition hearing, it was made abundantly clear to us, by several different modes of transmission, that we would not be able to raise any evidence that would be considered to be an Additional Provision and indeed, proceedings would be stopped if we attempted to raise any.

The information shared by Yarnfield is that they believed under the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) 1992, it would be possible to implement the alternate route via Keele without the need for an Additional Provision to the HS2 Hybrid Bill. This belief, that we share, is taken from our understanding that a TWAO gives far ranging powers that are the equivalent of a Hybrid Bill (notwithstanding planning permission may be required for large works). The Act, gives the promotor power to use or compulsory purchase land and to provide an alternative route. It also makes clear that the Minister for Transport is the final arbiter of decisions both for Hybrid Bills for Transport and TWAOs.

This was truly a revelation and set the lawyers advising HS2 to scrambling for the Act in order to provide guidance to the HoL Committee. We are not lawyers, but we believe that advice provided by HS2 was incorrect. It is very early days, however we are currently meeting with our Yarnfield neighbours to explore whether an appeal could be launched or indeed a judicial review might be sought.

Meanwhile, since the presentation of the Petition to the House of Lords, the Parish Council have been put under considerable pressure to agree the minimal list of mitigations proposed for the Parish, despite not having the final report from the House of Lords proceedings.

At the Meeting on Monday 12th October 2020, the decision was taken to reignite discussion with Shropshire Council alone in relation to the mitigations proposed for the Parish which would be subject to review if the HoL award any assurances from our evidence.

We hope this precis is helpful to update you.

We are happy to elaborate further if that is helpful.

Your sincerely,

M.E. Cowey

Mike Cowey
Chairman Woore Parish Council