



## **FRIENDS OF BODDINGTON MONTHLY REPORT TO THE PARISH COUNCIL FEBRUARY 5th. 2020**

Following the report to the Parish Council on January 8<sup>th</sup>. Friends of Boddington HS2 Drop In Event January 16<sup>th</sup>., Friends of Boddington monthly meeting January 16<sup>th</sup>., HS2 Liaison Group meeting January 17<sup>th</sup>., and subsequent meetings, I am pleased to report the following information.

Friends of Boddington invited the residents of Lower and Upper Boddington to a drop in event at The Well House, Banbury Road, Lower Boddington on 16<sup>th</sup>. January to present an update on HS2.

The latest information was presented by a number of specialists from the Eiffage Kier, HS2 and Fusion team including:

- Landscaping proposals for our local area
- Information on the recent noise model and the proposed mitigation relating to the operational railway
- Information on the construction approach and arrangements
- Update on the latest programme of works
- Local Traffic Management Plans

The event was a great success and residents found out about the current HS2 works in our area and they were able to discuss concerns with the contractor representatives.

Latest information on the Yellow Brick Road (Haul Road) was provided.

- It will be constructed to highway standards to last the duration of the construction period of HS2.
- It will be for the use of number plated vehicles only.
- Construction vehicles such as bulldozers, diggers, haulage vehicles etc. will use the middle section of the Trace only.
- After construction the YBR can remain, or be removed subject to the consent of the land owner.

- The use of the YBR as a cycle road after construction presents great opportunities for the Boddington Parish.

### **HS2 Liaison Group Meeting:**

Andrea Leadsom presented a brief update on what is happening with the Oakervee Report. She stated that she understands from the Transport Secretary that the decision on whether or not to proceed with the project is a matter of weeks away, rather than months, although the Department for Transport has requested additional information to assist in their deliberations. Whilst the final report from the Oakervee Review has not yet been published, the former Deputy Chair, Lord Berkeley, has made available his Dissenting Report because, as has widely been reported in the press, he does not support the draft conclusions. Andrea Leadsom continue to raise constituents' views on the business case and value for taxpayer money at every level.

Andrea Leadsom stated that she is still working with a number of constituents who are directly and indirectly affected by HS2, and has made clear at the meeting her frustrations with HS2 Ltd, particularly its Land & Property team, over the way they treat landowners and residents. There is an unacceptable disregard that runs throughout their entire approach to taking possession of people's land and homes, with compensatory payments frequently late and often substantially lower than expected. She continues to call for fairness and transparency from HS2 Ltd in their engagements with people in South Northants and along the line-of-route, and she has raised this matter directly with the Transport Secretary, to ask what he can do to ensure HS2 Ltd treats everyone with dignity and respect. If anyone is affected by HS2 and has not contacted her, please do get in touch and she will do everything she can to assist.

Andrea Leadsom has also discussed ancient woodland sites in Halse Copse (between Greatworth and Radstone) and Fox Covert (to the west of Upper Boddington) which have

been clearly identified as ancient woodland in the HS2 proposal, and a small but significant part of both will be lost to HS2. Whilst we are not aware of any imminent HS2 works that would affect either of these areas in the next few months, she has written to the Transport Secretary to ask him to provide her with his reassurance that no vegetation clearance or other ecological works will be undertaken in South Northants ahead of the outcome of the Oakervee Review. Similarly, residents in Brackley have also raised concerns about works to trees and to clear vegetation in Turweston that are imminent; whilst the village is in Buckinghamshire, she has also flagged this to the Transport Secretary as a local concern for his comments.

Andrea Leadsom stated that she has raised substantial concerns over the proposals to house between 300-400 HS2 Ltd contracted workers in temporary pre-fab housing near Chipping Warden, and what steps HS2 Ltd would be putting in place to ensure the safety and security of all in the area, as well as what arrangements would be in place for these construction workers to entertain themselves whilst not working so as to avoid overwhelming the local pubs.

HS2 Ltd assured the group that on-site facilities would be provided, however Andrea Leadsom has asked HS2 Ltd to report back on this as they progress their plans, as clearly this will be a key concern to local residents. There were also concerns about ensuring that any works structures erected during the construction period were removed and not made into permanent industrial sites; this included landscape modification for material extraction. HS2 Ltd confirmed that all construction sites would be made good at the end of their use for the HS2 project.

Andrea Leadsom also considered the current public engagement being undertaken by HS2 Ltd to consider the design of HS2's Common Design Elements for the Phase One route. These are parts of the railway with a standardised appearance which will give it a recognisable look and make it more efficient to build. They include frequently used structures, such as bridge piers and parapets, as well as lineside noise barriers. She stated that she is concerned that the

engagement is too limited in scope and does not allow for a full consideration by the community of the various design elements, particularly given HS2 Ltd's stated aim that it will always consider aesthetics and local sensitivities as part of the design development process.

She is further concerned that there is no current opportunity for residents to comment on the proposed design and development of the gantries and Overhead Catenary System which will carry the powerlines for HS2; she has raised these points with Mark Thurston, HS2 Ltd's Chief Executive, in a letter to him earlier this month.

More information about the Common Design Elements engagement and the survey is available online or in the HS2 leaflet on the subject. FoB has a copy and FoB would encourage everyone to take a look,

Andrea Leadsom thanked Tommy Gilchrist, Senior Parliamentary Assistant, for his work he has done for residents and communities affected by HS2. Tommy had a dedicated focus in supporting residents in their fight against HS2: he is moving on at the end of the month and will be replaced by Laura Dunn.

### **HS2 Road Safety Fund Update**

Esme Cushing reported that all the schemes were submitted in January to HS2 and scheduled to be started between April and June 2020.

### **HS2 Meeting at Boddington village hall to be held on February 12<sup>th</sup>.**

As previously notified, HS2 have arranged for a combined meeting with neighbouring parishes on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February to update community representatives on HS2 works. The meeting is taking place at Boddington village hall starting at 19.00 hrs and expected to last an hour and a half. Representatives from Byfield, Wormleighton and Priors Hardwick will also be attending the meeting.

The purpose of meeting is to present the latest information and design that covers the following topics

- Landscaping proposals for your local area
- Information on the recent noise model and proposed mitigation relating to the operational railway
- Information on the construction approach and arrangements
- Update on the latest programme of works
- Local Traffic Management Plans

EK will have a number of specialists from the EK team to provide these updates and there will be an opportunity to ask questions. EK would like to invite two or three representatives from Boddington to attend the meeting, please advise who is able to attend.

FoB works with the principle of fair mindedness for every resident in the Boddington parish, addresses community, heritage and conservation concerns, fights for the best interests of all parishioners to deliver a better deal for Boddington Parish.

Philip Freer

Friends of Boddington