



**FRIENDS OF BODDINGTON MONTHLY REPORT TO THE PARISH COUNCIL**  
**April 7<sup>th</sup>. 2021**

Following the report to the Parish Council on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. 2021, emails with HS2, EKFB and FUSION, and a meeting with EKFB, I am pleased to report the following information.

**HS2 Road Traffic Fund:**

The scheduled dates for the pathway scheme in Upper Boddington and the VAS systems in Upper and Lower Boddington as agreed for funding under the HS2 Road Traffic Fund still have not been confirmed.

**ACTION POINT:**

FoB recommend that the PC discuss an appropriate action to establish installation dates. Several residents of Lower Boddington have complained to FoB regarding speeding vehicles on the Banbury Road in Lower Boddington as it is causing severe safety issues to pedestrians.

**Cycling Initiative:**

Friends of Boddington has led the campaign to establish cycling and walking paths along the HS2 route maximising the opportunities provided by the construction. The Department of Transport have explained that the focus on cycling and walking has increased significantly in recent months. The DfT are working with Buckinghamshire Council and Warwickshire County Council to undertake some cycling pilots to look at the interfaces with HS2 and what is needed. DfT will instruct EKFB to cost up the modifications to specific existing bridge designs to accommodate the changes. It is planned that the bridge to be constructed at the Spella Works crossroads will be redesigned with cycle lanes in each direction.

**ACTION POINT:**

PC to build on the established initiative and maximise the opportunity to establish a leisure and connectivity facility which will create a legacy for future generations.

**Fusion's update – Email from Josh Jones:**

*In preparation for our main works we are undertaking the following works throughout spring / summer 2021.*

- *Archaeology*
- *ecological site maintenance and clearances*
- *species translocation*
- *ecological surveys*
- *boundary fencing*

*We have completed the evaluation stages of our archaeological process and are now undertaking wider archaeological excavations to record and mitigate any significant archaeology along the line of route in Northamptonshire. Currently, the closest excavations being undertaken near Boddington are next to Wormleighton on the west side of Leisure Drive.*

*As part of our ecology mitigation work we will also be carrying out vegetation clearance and maintenance along the line of route over the coming weeks. Fusion ecologists check all vegetation proposed for clearance within 48hrs of clearance for active bird nests. If nesting birds are found, buffer zones are set up to ensure birds are not impacted. The vegetation clearance will additionally ensure that newts and reptiles do not re- inhabit the land where they have already been relocated from.*

*We shall be continuing the newt translocation in new areas starting in the spring when the newts are out of hibernation. We shall be installing plastic fencing around the populations to capture them and move them to established habitats away from the route.*

*Ecological surveys will be ongoing throughout the preparatory works which include bat, reptile and water vole surveys.*

*Josh Jones*

## **EKFB update – Chris James:**

I had a meeting with Chris James on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>. March to walk the fields on the construction route in Lower Boddington from the Claydon Lane to Furlong Brook where the bailey bridge for the construction traffic route (YBR) will be constructed and the location for the Furlong Viaduct to be constructed to carry the railway.

**Chris James** - an email to capture a few of the points we talked through:

### ***Construction Progress:***

- *Vegetation clearance and ground investigation works has been taking place along the Boddington cutting. In a month or two we will be starting our site access road works and later in the summer some earthworks activities. A few deliveries of construction plant and machinery will take place using the Welsh road / Claydon road. I will provide further details nearer the time.*
- *The crossing of Furlong brook is a key activity for us and we are starting to do preparatory work for this crossing which will be in the form of a bailey bridge. Once this in place we will be able to access the Boddington cutting from the Chipping Warden direction.*
- *Further afield the main compound set up at Chipping Warden is progressing well, concrete batching plant to be set up in a couple of months, earthworks for the green tunnel has started. A long term closure of Appletree land is due to take place next month and some local footpath closures. I will send you further details about this next week. Also, as we exit Covid and at the appropriate safe time I would like to invite you for a visit to the compound and tour of the works in the area.*

### ***Other Points:***

- *The planning submission for the Boddington cutting is expected to be issued to the planning authority this month or next. The landscape reflects the layouts that I shared in our January meeting. As we discussed I will make arrangements for some of the section drawings to be printed on boards so you have them available to show local residents.*
- *I have also got some images prepared of local viewpoints that show the Claydon road bridge and 3d images of the landscaping that I think will be of interest. I will arrange for these to be sent across as well.*
- *Footpath closure of Millennium way understandably a sensitive community matter. As we discussed this topic and we will for a while divert the footpath across to the road though at some stage later this year need to close it when we start work on the bridge. I am in discussions with our team and we are working hard to delay community impact of the closure as much as possible and as our plans develop I will keep you updated.*
- *Further north we are doing an on line exhibition about the Oxford canal viaduct, where HS2 cross over the Oxford canal. I will send you details and an invite in the next day or two. The online exhibition runs for a month.*

Chris James

## **ACTION POINTS:**

- When the Claydon Road and The Millennium Way footpath in Lower Boddington are closed for an extensive period it will have a devastating impact on the community affecting dog walkers, joggers, exercisers, cyclists, workers from home requiring short breaks between phone and virtual meetings. There will be no exercise facilities close to the community. The daily footfall on the Claydon Lane is in excess of 50 per day. Alternate activity routes need to be identified as a priority.
- When the closures are made, parish residents will be forced to use Hill Road in Lower Boddington as the main connectivity route to field walks. However, Hill Road is permanently flooded in wet weather due to blocked drains and natural springs. This winter the ice caused Hill Road to be closed to traffic and the icy footpath posed a health and safety risk for pedestrians. A solution to the problem must be resolved as a matter of urgency.
- FoB, at the earliest time possible, must stage a public meeting in Lower Boddington (the venue to be established) and at the Village Hall Upper Boddington) to display plans, sectional drawings, 3d imaging, photographs, visuals, landscaping and updates of the construction works.
- HS2 construction will have an unimaginable impact on our community with Lower Boddington being significantly affected and blighted for the next 10 years. Unplanned issues which arise will require a focused and proactive approach to react to any developing circumstances.
- PC to be aware of the threat by travellers to take over the Fir Tree Nursery HS2 compound when vacated by HS2. The HS2 compound site on Claydon Lane became redundant on Sunday March 21<sup>st</sup>. and the 24 hour security removed. Immediately surveillance ceased, the three gates into the field opposite (as shown in the photograph below) were taken by morning. Chris James informed that HS2 is aware of the traveller activity.



- FoB to ensure that EKFB provide FoB with images, section drawings and plans of the Claydon Bridge and High Furlong Viaduct as soon as possible

**Photographic record:**

FoB are grateful to Simon Harding who has agreed to photograph the everchanging environment in the Parish throughout the construction period of HS2 and establish a permanent photographic record for future generations.



## **HS2 Liaison Group:**

The draft notes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup>. February. 2021 are as follows:

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### **HS2 Liaison Group**

**Venue: Microsoft Teams**

**Draft notes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 11am**

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**Representatives from the following organisations were present:**

*Cllr Ian Morris – NCC (Chair)*  
*SNAG(*  
*Radstone Parish Council*  
*Brackley TC*  
*Evenley PC*  
*Aston le Walls PC*  
*Hinton-in-the-Hedges PM*  
*Cllr Rosie Herring – SNC*  
*SNATRA*

*Andrea Leadsom MP*  
*Laura Dunn – MP for South Northants Office*  
*Greatworth PC*  
*Syresham PC*  
*Chipping Warden and Edgcote PC*  
*Thorpe Mandeville PC*  
*CPRE*  
*Friends of Boddington*  
*Culworth PC*  
*Sulgrave PC*

**Apologies:**

*Chris Wragg (NCC)*  
*Farthinghoe PC*

**In Attendance:**

*Esme Cushing – NCC (notes)*  
*Denis Winterbottom – SNC*  
*Adrian Oulds - Highways England*  
*Liam Burns – Highways England*  
*Jeremy Dixon – Highways England*  
*Chris James – EKFB*  
*Lucy Colls - EKFB*  
*Nisha Mejer – HS2 Ltd*  
*Gary Rogerson – HS2 Ltd*  
*Josh Jones – Fusion*  
*Richard Aylmer – Fusion*  
*William Woodroofe – HS2 Ltd*

### **1. Welcome, minutes of last meeting and matters arising**

*Ian welcomed everyone to the meeting.*

*The notes of the previous meeting were agreed. HS2 Ltd read out the following statement:*

HS2 Ltd is committed to pay landowners and affected parties for any claims made on their behalf by land agents. Whilst we recognise at the beginning of the process there were a few delays which did result in later payment than originally intended, these issues have been resolved. When a claim is made by an agent, it then goes through our governance process before being signed off and ultimately paid.

Unfortunately, I'm not able to give you the stats of average length of payment or similar, as each claim is different. For example, if someone has a claim for crop loss in August, but this is held back by an agent and not submitted until February as its part of a wider claim, then it is entirely feasible not to reach someone until May/June at the earliest by the time we've done our checks and balances. Affected parties should speak directly with their agents, confirm what claims have been made and submitted to us and what have not yet been formally submitted – i.e. held back as part of a wider claim. If there are specific cases where it is believed that payment is delayed, either direct those through agents to HS2 / our agents.

AL outlined that the statement did not answer the original query and that there are still a number of landowners with outstanding claims and that further transparency is needed.

**Action – HS2 Ltd to provide AL with further information regarding claims and outstanding claims**  
HS2 Ltd confirmed that the location of gantries was not available as yet.

**Action – HS2 Ltd to provide additional data on location of gantries (when available) at a future meeting**

Highways England have responded to Hinton-in-the-Hedges and Evenley PC original correspondence. Further clarification questions have been submitted by the Parish Councils.

**Action – Highways England to respond to Hinton-in-the-Hedges and Evenley PC on their further queries by next meeting**

**Action – Any questions for Highways England to be sent to NCC two weeks in advance of the next meeting**

A meeting was held to talk about HS2 and cycling at the end of January, with support for providing cycling infrastructure along the route. The opportunities were discussed particularly in relation to the HS2 interfaces. Based on this discussion DfT have instructed EKFB to undertake feasibility design for the A43 overbridge, B4525 Welsh Road and Warwick Road/Banbury Road/Claydon Road. NCC are continuing to work with DfT to progress. DfT have also instructed EKFB to look at the opportunities to use the maintenance access roads/ site access road to provide a cycling legacy subject to discussions with landowners. NCC is also working with DfT to develop a Brackley Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan which will identify the opportunities for cycling provision in the vicinity of Brackley and to villages to the north.

Cllr Herring noted that there were a number of ongoing proposals around the Radstone Fields area and that the LCWIP should inform S106 discussions if at all possible.

SNATRA raised the importance of considering cycling for utility rather than just leisure journeys.

**Action – NCC to report back at the next meeting on cycling scheme progress**

Fencing discussion between Cllr Herring and Fusion still outstanding due to not being able to do a site visit due to COVID restrictions.

**Action – Fusion and Cllr Herring to get in touch to organise fencing site visit once restrictions are lifted.**

There are still some lighting issues at the Greatworth Green Tunnel compound outstanding. EKFB will be looking to minimise the lighting impacts from this construction compound going forward.

Evenley PC outlined that they still had concerns regarding construction impacts on the A43, the details of which have recently been published in the Traffic Information Guides (1000 HGV movements). This information was not directly communicated with the Parish Council and it is felt that the information is being hidden. A response to Hinton-in-the-Hedges and Evenley PC has now

been received from Highways England, but communication has been less than satisfactory as it has taken 18 months following the initial meeting.

**Action – Highways England to respond to follow-up queries from Hinton-in-the-Hedges and Evenley PC by next HS2 Liaison Group meeting.**

EKFB confirmed that the Traffic Information Guides were about being clear with what the figures were and this is why they were published on Commonplace and apologised if they hadn't been picked up by Evenley PC.

## **2. Noise mitigation at Radstone**

AL introduced the agenda item by saying that Radstone did some great work during the Hybrid Bill process and argued successfully for a noise barrier as mitigation and it is very concerning that it is now being removed. AL is seeking a meeting with the HS2 Minister but also wanted to bring the issue to this group.

Andy Smith from Radstone gave a presentation to the group to explain the situation. Their key points were:

- Radstone is the worst impact in Northamptonshire
- A number of options were explored during the Select Committee process and lowering the line up to 1.5m and a noise barrier was agreed and on this basis Radstone PC withdrew their petition
- HS2 are not now delivering what was secured; they are proposing to only lower the line by 0.53m and use noise bunds rather than a noise barrier
- Radstone are looking for a lowering closer to the 1.5m in the Undertaking and Assurance and for the noise barrier to be installed as agreed

EKFB explained that there had been a great deal of technical work undertaken.

- Why do HS2 believe they can remove a sound barrier solution clearly specified in AP4 that was specifically put in by HS2 into the bill after detailed discussion and negotiation through the Select Committee process and a legal undertaking?

**The Assurance given was to review noise mitigation through the introduction of an Additional Provision and an update to the environmental impact. We have identified through our modelling that the mitigation to achieve those impacts in the supplemental ES can be met through a noise bund.**

- Why do HS2 believe it is acceptable to not deliver upon a written assurance on behalf of the Secretary of State to lower the vertical alignment of the line by up to 1.5m, a depth that was proposed by HS2 during the Select Committee process and part of the additional mitigation for Radstone resulting from horizontal re-alignment closer to Radstone in 2010?

**The Assurance was to reduce the height by up to 1.5m and increase the bund height by 1.0m, so far as is reasonably practicable. There are limits to how far we can lower the track, but we are developing our design to increase the bund by 2m to offset this; this may have some benefit in providing further noise mitigation which will be assessed in the coming months.**

Discussion followed to clarify further.

Noise bunds can achieve the same noise mitigation as a noise barrier. There are technical limits to how much the route can be lowered and these have been explained fully in technical meetings with Radstone and the restraints of reducing it any further.

HS2 added that there were a number of checks and balances and that trains cannot run until the process has been followed. One of these checks is the Schedule 17 process and HS2 have to be compliant with Information Paper E20 Control of Airborne Noise from Altered Roads and the Operational Railway and Planning Forum Note 14 Operational Noise from the Railway and Altered Roads. Any noise impacts have to be at least as good or better as those identified in the

*Environmental Statement. The hierarchy is a preference to use landscaping in the first instance, particularly in a rural setting which is why this proposal has been put forward.*

*Radstone outlined their concerns regarding the noise modelling being very theoretical, that changes to assumptions can be made and that it will be too late after the railway is built. Radstone questioned why a noise bund wasn't put forward in 2015 if it was the best option.*

*SNC gave an overview of the Schedule 17 approval process which applies to certain elements of the construction. Where needed for scheduled works, noise mitigation measures have to be fit for purpose and a noise demonstration report is part of the Schedule 17 process. The noise report outputs are reviewed to ensure that the proposed measures achieve the attenuation requirements. To date, SNC haven't had any discussions on noise mitigation measures in the Radstone/ Greatworth area as it is still a work in progress. Ultimately it will be for West Northamptonshire Council to approve the Schedule 17.*

*Cllr Herring supported Radstone's view particularly in light of the changes to the track design and rolling stock and suggested that independent technical expertise was needed to look at the evidence presented.*

*HS2 emphasised that all of the assumptions have been agreed with the LAs along the route through the Planning Forum subgroup and is published and available.*

*Chipping Warden and Edgcote PC highlighted that similar issues were happening elsewhere along the route. At Chipping Warden, the noise barriers proposed to be installed during construction around Allen's Orchard have not been forthcoming but permanent noise barriers are to be installed elsewhere on the relief road.*

*AL highlighted that Radstone needed support which should be paid for by HS2 Ltd or the Council for a third party assessment as that it was unacceptable that they were having to deal with it on their own.*

*HS2 pointed out that there are Service Level Agreements for the LA's in place. SNC noted that the SLA was in relation to the costs incurred by the LA to deal with the workload generated by HS2 Ltd. The Schedule 17 process only includes statutory consultees, all public engagement is undertaken by HS2 Ltd.*

**Action – Opportunities for supporting Radstone with noise/legal advice to be explored by NCC/SNC**

### **3.Highways England update**

*HE gave a brief update on progress since the last meeting.*

*HE continue to be involved in significant engagement regarding the A43 which reflects the scheme development, the design and temporary diversion of the SRN. There continues to be discussion around the A43/ Radstone Road compound access between HE/ HS2/ EKFB and NCC on a solution as well as the A43 overbridge design itself and how it will be constructed. Discussions are also ongoing around cycling provision on the A43 overbridge and HE have submitted their views to DfT regarding the standards that would be acceptable.*

*HE extended an invite for anyone to get in contact with any further questions/ queries.*

**Action – HE to keep SNATRA informed regarding the A43 and cycling provision**

*Cllr Bagot-Webb asked for clarification regarding the slip roads works on the Radstone turn that were proposed to start in next couple of weeks. Further details will be published on Commonplace in due course.*

*A question was also raised regarding whether the Towcester Relief Road and the A43 overbridge works would be taking place at the same time.*

**Action – HE to update at the next meeting on the timescales for Towcester Relief Road and A43 overbridge**

*Cllr Bagot-Webb also highlighted that some time ago those living in Radstone Fields were told that triple glazing would be provided as a result of the A43 realignment. EKFB stated that as the railway has been lowered and also the proposal is to rebuild the A43 on its current alignment it will not be moving closer to Brackley.*

**Action – Cllr Bagot-Webb and EKFB to discuss triple glazing at Radstone Fields.**

#### **4. HS2/Fusion/EKFB progress update**

##### **Community engagement**

HS2 gave a brief overview of community engagement since the last meeting.

- £780k been awarded through CEF in Northamptonshire

##### **Enabling Works**

Fusion gave a presentation. The key points were:

- Chipping Warden RR will be completed during April. Initial pre-opening Road Safety Audit has been undertaken and there are some minor bits and pieces to address.
- Welsh Road/A361 is now fully open.
- M40 J11 – existing power feed not adequate so WPD have done a design, awaiting a final date.
- Archaeology – the main trial trenching evaluation phase is almost complete. There are signs of interesting archaeology in specific sites which we have already indicated in webinars last year. We shall be sharing specific local finds in Parish Council meetings when appropriate. We shall also be aiming to engage with the Northamptonshire community in Summer/Autumn when the excavation phases are nearing completion. Vegetation clearance has been and will carry on being carried out across the line of route to make way for the main works contractors and also as part of our ecological newt and reptile mitigation strategy.

##### **Main Works**

EKFB gave a presentation.

The key points were:

- There will be a virtual exhibition for the Oxford Canal overbridge which is a key design. Communications will be going out.
- Boddington cutting is a developing design. One of the changes is the change to the landscape form. This has been talked through with Boddington and Aston le Walls.
- Greatworth green tunnel compound is being set up and there is still some refinement to the lighting to be made.
- The temporary Greatworth T is now in the planning process – the proposal will minimise construction impact
- The A43/ Radstone Road will need to be closed whilst the slip road works are carried out.

The key concerns raised were:

- Radstone Road is an important link from/to A43
- There is increased litter through the village of Radstone
- The Greatworth T may be impacted by the application for a Solar Farm in the area
- There are still lighting concerns from the compound on in Thorpe Mandeville

##### **Action – Rosie Herring to send EKFB further details about litter issues**

##### **Road Safety Fund**

HS2 have approved the funding for the Aston le Walls scheme. This is already programmed for the summer. Following circulation of VAS locations there have been issues raised/ changes proposed. The works will now be in the next financial year.

Other schemes that are on site will be completed by end of March.

##### **AOB**

Cllr Rosie Herring shared photos of vegetation clearance in the Helmdon disused railway SSSI and raised concerns regarding the extent of the clearance and lack of communication. Fusion explained

*that all the consents were given by Natural England and it was part of a legal obligation to clear for newts and the area ultimately will be subject to a landscaping plan. EKFB added that there had been discussions with the Wildlife Trust and Natural England and it was about habitat enhancement. The area is designated as a SSSI due to the unique grasslands and two species of butterflies. Cutting back the vegetation allows the grasslands to regrow, but acknowledged that there could have been better communication.*

*Cllr Morris explained that he had enjoyed Chairing this meeting, but that it was his last meeting as he would not be standing for the West Northamptonshire Council. The group extended their thanks to the Chair for his leadership over the past four years.*

***Date of the next meeting***

*The date of the next meeting will be agreed once the May elections have taken place and a new Chair has been agreed. In the meantime, any relevant information will continue to be shared via email.*

Friends of Boddington 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