

## HS2 Spring Chamber Planning Decision - Apr 2025

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of April Buckinghamshire Council rejected HS2's application for planning permission for the Spring Chamber in the fields north of Dobbins Lane on grounds of the visual impact in the Chilterns National Landscape area of outstanding natural beauty of the proposed upgrade to the associated Access Track.

From a Planning Legislation perspective, this was the simplest reason to reject the application, despite the large number of people that had commented on the public safety aspects of using Dobbins Lane and South Street as the proposed site access route.

This decision was unlikely to have been reached without the volume of community responses received, which in turn galvanised local Councillors to take note and "call in" the application to a Planning Committee meeting, rather than just delegate the decision to a senior Council Officer.

The Planning Case Officer had weighed up the relative benefits of approving the application compared to the landscape impact and had recommended approval; but the Council, however, took a different view and refused.

We wait with interest to see what HS2's next move is, as demonstration of the performance of the Spring Chamber to the Environment Agency is a "critical path" task to enable future construction of the northern section of the Wendover Green Tunnel and the North Cutting.

We can predict two scenarios, being that HS2 appeal to the Planning Inspectorate to overturn the Buckinghamshire Council decision; or alternatively that they decide to change the proposal so as to reduce the visual impact of the eventual access track.

We are hoping that HS2 consider their "Good Neighbour" policy, see sense and drop pursuit of the need for a permanent track altogether and thus make it easier for them to consider accessing the site from Nash Lee End near Kings Farm. We are endeavouring to persuade them that this is the best option and have offered to work with them to achieve this.

It is profoundly encouraging in this cynical and challenging time to see that groups of committed citizens can work together effectively, challenging a large government owned organisation like HS2 ... and prevailing. We will continue the fight to preserve the character and beauty of Wendover and the Chilterns.

**Ronald Petersen | Chairman, Wendover HS2 Mitigation Action Group**