

Wendover Green Tunnel

The first visible signs of Wendover's green tunnel structure appeared during April, with the construction of the sections of the pre-cast concrete shell being assembled just north of Ellesborough Road.

The inside of the tunnel will be 22m wide, 9m high and it will eventually be 1.2km long. The double arch design is a significant improvement on the concrete box proposed in the HS2 Act, with greatly reduced concrete volume leading to lower carbon emissions during construction. The 2.5m long arch sections are formed using five pre-cast elements, each weighing up to 43 tonnes

They are being manufactured in Ilkeston and transported to site by road. HS2's explanatory animation of how the tunnels segments are constructed is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUAIQY6Eug.

Further south, excavation of the cutting through the old Ellesborough Road is now visible and dump trucks have restarted after the winter break. They are bringing material north from Small Dean, passing under a temporary bridge erected to carry utilities. Further excavation with depths reaching down 29m will be needed for the tunnel foundations south from there to Bacombe Lane, and will probably be completed this summer.

Excavation of the northern section of the tunnel and the 'north cutting' up to Nash Lee Lane is still on hold until the Environment Agency is happy about the impact on the groundwater from the Coombe Hill aquifer. For this they will need to view output from the spring chamber (see front page and p28).

Haul road issues

The green tunnel was the solution to getting the HS2 railway line through the Wendover Gap during the detailed decision-making in



The first section of the twin arches of the Green Tunnel
Photo: Karl Vaughan from his YouTube video youtu.be/Q77SjKwUuLk?si=6kq4dgkKZooVF3W.

2019. The term 'gap' refers to the constricted area south of Wendover containing the A413, the Chiltern Railway line, the National Grid and a range of underground utilities. The 2017 High Speed Rail Act defined that this part of the line would be through a 'cut and cover' tunnel past Wendover, going under Ellesborough Road. It also specified that six houses would need to be demolished to enable the green tunnel to be constructed.

HS2's strategy was to appoint a single major-works/civils contractor for the area to make detailed designs best suited to the construction practices available. In doing so, the contractor changed the shape of the green tunnel shell to a double arch – based on French TGV experience – using much less concrete than the basic box structure proposed in the Act.

Shortcomings were also identified, such as the gap between the remaining houses at Ellesborough Road being too narrow to accommodate a road needed for site traffic alongside the Green Tunnel worksite. This proved to be a problem when they factored in the need for a 'haul road' to handle massive dump trucks through the chicane of Ellesborough Road that had been created by

the requirements of the High Speed Rail Act.

A mass haul plan was developed to move spoil along the route. For example, an estimated 636,000 cubic metres from the South Heath Cutting at Great Missenden would need to be transported to Wendover and past it to Aylesbury. With the volume of truck movements anticipated, a conveyor system was installed to carry the material over the A413 at Small Dean to avoid A413 road congestion.

In addition to the haul road traffic, more dump truck movements will be needed to move rock aggregate needed to create robust foundations for the track. This is already being delivered in 30-tonne tipper truck loads, from the railhead near Heathrow, up the A413 to the compound beside the Wendover bypass, with a daily average of about 120 lorry loads over the last 18 months.

Stockpiles have been used to store the aggregate until required, with other dump trucks subsequently being used to move the material to the specific worksites along the internal haul road. Additional dump truck movements will also be needed to temporarily relocate material under the Ellesborough Road gap, initially from

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excavation for the green tunnel, returning it later for backfill and land restoration. Separate stockpiles are being created for topsoil, sub-soil, chalk and clay.

This all contributes to a complex problem of project sequencing for EKFB. They will need to juggle the conflicting requirements of excavating the cutting, building the tunnel, and accommodating the mass haul of material in both directions through the limited space at Ellesborough Road. Wendover Mitigation Action Group expects that this 'throttling' will extend the project timescales, with the eventual tunnel serving as a dump truck haul route for the land restoration south of Ellesborough Road.

Dobbins Lane and the Spring Chamber

Just before we went to press the public consultation for the spring chamber planning application closed, and unexpectedly, Buckinghamshire Council rejected the application. (see front page and p28)

The main point of public unrest is the proposed use of South Street and Dobbins Lane for site access with HGV trucks and other vehicles. HS2 had been hoping that

the minimum groundwater levels achieved by use of the chamber can be measured this autumn. This now seems unlikely.

Small Dean Viaduct

The deck of the Small Dean Viaduct has now been lowered into its final position and the next stage is to complete the installation of precast reinforcement slabs and fix them into place with poured concrete.

To ensure public safety during the works, weekday night-time closures of the A413 are scheduled until the middle of May, and the Chiltern Line is running rail replacement buses every weekend until the 26th May Bank Holiday Monday.

Issues with HS2?

If you're affected by the construction activity, please contact the HS2 Helpdesk team on 08081 434434 (which is available 24 hours a day) or email hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk to get your issues resolved.

It helps if you have photographic evidence and please get a complaint reference number so that we can follow up issues as needed.

Need our help?

If you need further help, want to join us, or have ideas and suggestions that would mitigate the community impact, then get in touch at enquiries@whs2.org.

The Wendover News team makes extensive use of drone videos provided by Karl Vaughan on YouTube. Recent videos include:

- A narrated fly-over of Wendover Green Tunnel and parts of Bacombe Lane area in April 2025 – www.bit.ly/4cGCl1r
- Stoke Mandeville to Wendover showing the works between the old St Mary's church and Nash Lee Road, April 2025 – www.bit.ly/43ZBITX
- SEALR South East Aylesbury Link Road from the air – www.bit.ly/42M0z5X

All these videos are free to watch (subject to YouTube's advertising) and Karl typically ends each episode with a request to 'buy him a coffee.' He has pointed out that he has had enough coffee to fly – even without his drone – and might sometime just prefer a small monetary donation!



Green tunnel cutting under the temporary utilities bridge at Ellesborough Road.
Photo: Murray Cooke.

Swimming in Wendover!

Did you know that Wendover has a swimming pool on the schools campus at Wharf Road? It's a volunteer-run charity and has public swimming sessions every day. There are free and paid memberships available, and bookings are fully online. More information, membership and booking at www.wendoverswimmingpool.co.uk



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The
Wendover
Swimming
Pool

HS2 Spring Chamber rejected by councillors

By Frances Tipper

Buckinghamshire Council's Strategic Sites committee meeting, held on 16 April, turned down HS2/EFKB's application to build a 'spring chamber' in one of the fields at the end of Dobbins Lane, Wendover.

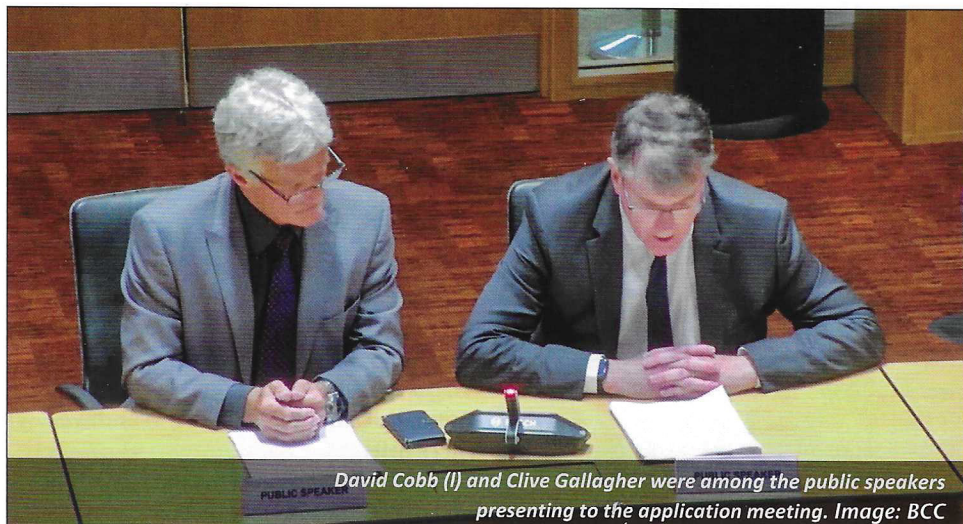
The scale of the defeat for HS2/EFKB was surprising. Eight out of nine of the committee members refused permission, against their own planning officers' recommendations. This is highly unusual and followed robust and incisive questioning from each of the committee members.

It was clear that the main concern was that HS2 and the contractor EKFB were proposing a disruptive and unpopular access route for HGVs and support vehicles through the heart of Wendover residential streets along South Street and Dobbins Lane.

The potential alternative access from Nash Lee End (avoiding residential areas and crossing fields next to the Kings Farm shop) was mentioned briefly in the planning application, but only to order to rule it out.

Despite this being the main concern, following legal advice given by the Council's own planning lawyer Teresa Coppock, the application was refused on grounds of "visual and landscape harms."

Clive Gallagher, chair of Wendover Parish Council, said "We are astounded that the



David Cobb (l) and Clive Gallagher were among the public speakers presenting to the application meeting. Image: BCC

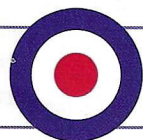
case officer's report accepted that this option has been considered. Nothing is further from the truth. The applicant has been consistently misleading the public and Bucks Council on their assessment of the other access options, even saying that they cannot get access rights to the Nash Lee End option when in fact they had not even spoken to the farmer concerned. The farmer has stated to me personally that he would be happy to discuss how he can help the applicant."

The Committee Meeting lasted almost three hours, starting with the Bucks Council Planning Officer, Tom Blackman, presenting the Council's recommendation. He delivered a measured and detailed summary of EKFB's

planning application and confirmed that there was "no objection to the Construction Management details with regards to highway safety." He did note, however, that "there is identified landscape and visual harm created by the proposal which conflicts with the development plan." It was this aspect of the application that became critical to the refusal of the application.

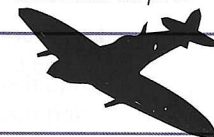
There were six speakers representing the residents: three Wendover ward councillors, Peter Strachan, Richard Newcombe and Steve Bowles; WPC chair Clive Gallagher; Dobbins Lane resident David Cobb;

continued on p.28

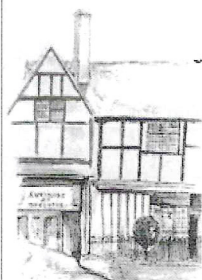


RAF Flypast

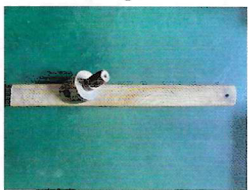
To celebrate the completion of training at RAF Halton, a flypast will take place, weather permitting, at 13:30 on **Wednesday 7th and 21st May 2025**



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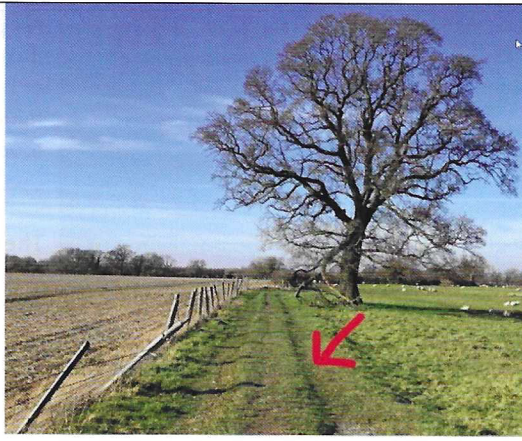
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Route of Access Track 1



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL



continued from front page

... Andy Band from the WHS2 Mitigation Action Group, and Greg Smith, Mid Bucks MP.

Each presented direct arguments about a safer, shorter and simpler route, directing the HGVs and support vehicles via Nash Lee End to the site of the Spring Chamber. Each presenter confirmed that they had no objection to the Spring Chamber but challenged why the route via South Street and Dobbins Lane had even been considered by HS2/EKFB.

Dobbins Lane resident David Cobb said, "The highways assessment of the Dobbins Lane access route says it is not considered unacceptable in planning terms. This is a massive and dismissive understatement, which blindly places planning terms above civilian safety."

As WPC chair Clive Gallagher stated, "The Nash Lee End access route is roughly half the distance of the Dobbins Lane gate to the spring chamber location and has none of the engineering challenges cited in this application. It will save the taxpayer money too." Greg Smith MP added "It just beggars belief that that option wasn't the natural option for HS2 to go with, rather than this heavily-populated pedestrian set of routes."

HS2's contractor, then had the opportunity to reinforce the fundamental requirements of their application, the necessity of the spring chamber and that this is a critical part of the wider HS2 project. In fact, the Chartered

Town Planning Officer for EKFB, Rebecca Locke, stated that "if it cannot proceed, significant programme delays and costs in the tens of millions of pounds are expected." Ms Locke said that HS2 had responded to the community's complaints and was "committed to restrictions on HGV movements, including speed limits, numbers and times."

However, the EKFB ecologist, Robert Sinclair, admitted, under questioning from Councillor Sue Lewin, that he had not done a detailed assessment of alternative routes. There was laughter at this point from the public gallery. The planners also said there is no significant archaeology to consider.

The councillors were directed repeatedly by

their own planners to focus on the planning application itself and not the consideration of other routes.

They did so with striking precision, asking for details of the structure of the proposed access track and a concrete ramp near the Bridleways end, how EKFB would arrange access to the site and how the construction vehicles would turn in the very restricted area at the end of Dobbins Lane and Bridleways, where the traffic marshals would work, the amount of new road that would be built and the loads that each vehicle would carry.

In the open discussion between the council members, Cllr Patrick Fealey felt that "to me this seems a hugely overengineered proposal and highly inefficient." Cllr Peter Cooper stated that he had no objection to the purpose but that, after 35 years in the construction business, it was "not a suitable access point for any size of construction."

He went on to say that "this is by far the worst option and I don't think it is either suitable or safe." He felt that "HS2 needs to learn something from this."

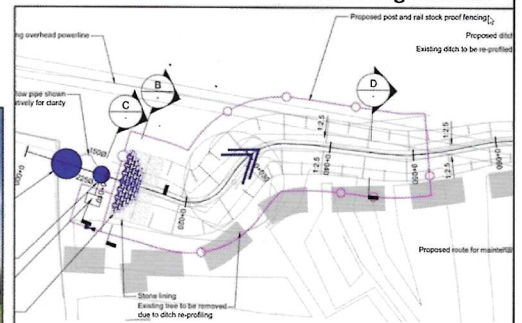
Cllr Ashley Bond suggested, as a farmer himself, he "would get the digger, drive down there, dig a hole and it would be done." Cllr Frank Mahon felt that "HS2 had failed to consult or listen to the local residents" and "on cross examination, it was clear that HS2 did not look for an alternative even

Environmental Benefit of the Scheme – Afforded Very Significant Weight



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though it knew the strength of feeling in this community."

At this point, the Councillors were given legal advice by the council's own planning lawyer Teresa Coppock, and told that they could not reject the application on highways grounds as it would leave the Council vulnerable to the award of costs if HS2/EKFB went to appeal. However, they could reject the application for the impact on the landscape as "visual and landscape harms" had been noted in the Council Planning Officers' report.

The motion to reject the application went to the vote and the application was refused by eight of the nine councillors.

Afterwards, Clive Gallagher, Wendover Parish Council chair, said that the result demonstrated "the power of working together" as a community. Dobbins Lane resident David Cobb, who had worked hard to gather the 816 signatures for the petition, was thrilled, stating that the committee meeting he had "witnessed a very rare event, seeing little Wendover bash the HS2 behemoth." He also noted that "this is a battle won and the war is not over," in reference to the immediate response from HS2/EKFB that they would go to appeal.

Wendover News asked HS2 to comment. A spokesperson said "We are disappointed by the committee's decision given that the council's own officers recommended approval. Dobbins Lane is already used by HGVs and bin lorries – and there is no reason to think that an average of one extra return journey per day would pose a significant risk to people living nearby. We are now considering our next steps."

Andrew Band, WHS2 mitigation group member, responded: "We think one HGV movement a day is misleading as what is not mentioned is that there will be a whole fleet of additional support vehicles going along South Street and Dobbins Lane, moving workers and materials. It is the total volume of extra traffic and how it is organised that matters, not just HGVs."

Bucks Council's 160 minute recording of the hearing can be viewed here: www.bit.ly/4iwPQ53



Club Corner

Wendover Cricket Club

Jonathan Seabrook writes: Wendover Cricket Club will be starting outside this month, after the winter's indoor training, with a full programme of junior and senior cricket. There are some 120 junior fixtures and senior ones at weekends from end April to September. Enquiries re seniors to Jonathan Seabrook 07767 148119 or jseabrook@wendoveremail.co.uk.

There is some space still available for children in years 4 and 5 to join the teams and for girls years 5 to 8 – email Dave Smith wccjuniorscontact@gmail.com to enquire.

Ground re-grading works are continuing at the new Tring Road site to create the new levels and in the coming months, the cricket-playing areas will be formed. The contract for the new pavilion is likely to be signed this month with these works starting on site in July.

The club is also investing significantly at Witchell, with a new nets facility hopefully being constructed in May (and the old nets will be removed).

Wendover Evening WI

Sandra Borns writes: The sun shone on the Wendover Evening WI Spring Charity Stall on Saturday, 15 March. The stand, as usual, was bursting with homemade cakes and jams, plants and crafts.

The Easter Egg Tombola proved particularly popular! However, word soon spread and a flurry of activity saw stocks run out by early afternoon. Another successful morning's work by our clever and industrious members!

Wendover Bowls Club

Don Knight writes: The indoor season came to an end with a final flourish when all the matches to decide who should win the Club silverware were played on 'Super Saturday' in

April. Well done all the winners. Never mind to the losers... there is always next year!!

Now at last we can think about getting out on the green, which is looking most promising after all the ministrations lavished on it through the winter. If Mr Fox is reading this please go and dig up someone else's grass this year.

So here we go with a full programme of matches against other clubs and in various leagues.

Outdoors bowls is a completely different game to indoors with much more physical effort required even though the object is still the same, namely to get your bowls close to the jack, though at times blocking tactics are wanted.

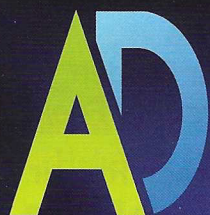
It is a great sport and we are blessed with a smashing club in Dobbins Lane here in Wendover.

If you fancy a go we will be holding open evenings every Friday at 18:00 throughout May. Coaching and bowls will be provided. All we ask is that you wear flat shoes that won't damage the green. Stiletto heels are great for aerating the grass but frowned on for play. Best of all it is FREE. Fingers crossed for a sunny summer.

BBOWT Activities

Richard Birch writes: Our summer walks programme starts with a series of guided visits to Wildlife Trust reserves locally beginning with Sat 3 May, 2pm; 'Introducing Dancersend' with warden Mick Jones, Sun 25, 10am; 'Introducing Aston Clinton Ragpits' with warden Phil Townsend.

There is a number of activities for children and young people planned by College Lake staff, go to www.bbowl.org.uk/events to book onto any of these, or the adult Dawn Chorus Walk starting at 4.30 am and finishing with breakfast in the cafe on Sat 10 May.



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