



Prefabricated Chamber by Thames Water 15<sup>th</sup> Jan '25 at Bridleways. This did not need 150 trucks.

## Foreword

HS2 (EKFB) intend to build a spring chamber and an HGV access track in the fields close to King's Farm Shop and their plans are to use Dobbins Lane and South Street as a route for Heavy Goods Vehicles (up till now restricted from Wendover) for works.

For avoidance of doubt, we are unequivocally opposed to the scheme as proposed and have made our position clear with Buckinghamshire Council who are the planning authority considering the scheme. Our objection is to the HGV access track, not the chamber.

The scheme has led to much local concern, and Greg Smith, our MP, has also taken up the cause and is opposing this proposal. He wrote a letter to local residents with suggestions for action, and many responded. The Parish Council is backing this stance. HS2 (EKFB) replied to people who complained with a document explaining "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ) which sheds some light on what they would like to do.

Our analysis of this suggests that the vast majority of the HGV movements are not about the creation of the “Spring Chamber”, but are actually related to creating an access track that would allow the HGVs to cross two fields for the chamber construction. We believe that the access track is grossly over-engineered, and that an alternative approach requiring far smaller equipment and far less movement of earth could and should be used. In addition, serious concerns have also been raised about how the creation of a permanent track could increase the risk of future development in the fields which are in the Chilterns National Landscape area of outstanding natural beauty.

HS2’s (EKFB’s) FAQ document suggests that alternative routes to gain access to the fields are not practicable. Our view is that if our proposal is not accepted, then conditions should be attached to planning approval to ensure that the design is radically rationalised so that large trucks are not needed and access to Dobbins Lane is kept to an absolute minimum.

The Wendover HS2 Mitigation Action Group has been concerned about this since last April, and this brief report explains the background and the current situation.

### What’s it all about?

- Following detailed evaluation of the impact of the North Cutting on the Groundwater flows from the Coombe Hill aquifer, the Environment Agency require EKFB (HS2’s construction contractor) to carefully measure and increase the flow of water into Stoke Brook near the Kings Farm Shop.
- From details of the works presented last May by EKFB, a “Spring Chamber” will be created, being a concrete box about 3m square buried in a field behind Kings Farm, together with an inspection manhole.
- We are told that the Environment Agency need this to be in place before further excavation of the Wendover Green Tunnel and the North Cutting starts around Nash Lee.
- EKFB has proposed that the existing track be upgraded to allow heavy vehicles to cross the fields at the end of Dobbins Lane to allow the chamber to be constructed. This would also be used in future for maintenance access.
- EKFB have reportedly agreed in principle with Buckinghamshire Council (BC) Officers that the materials for the track and the heavy equipment can be transported to site with a route from the A413 along South Street and Dobbins Lane. EKFB say that up to 12 Heavy Goods Vehicle return trips a day could be needed for the duration of the works.

- Historically EKFB suggested that the works would take about two weeks, including the construction of the access track, starting in Spring 2025 and require a minimum number of trucks. However, we were appalled by the information given in EKFB's recent FAQ indicating the works would take up to 12 weeks and, by extension, the number of trucks involved could be in the region of 150. It is reasonable to conclude that the vast bulk of the lorry movements are likely to be related to the building of the track, rather than the chamber.
- Concerns have been raised by local residents since last May at two public meetings regarding the suitability of these domestic roads, the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, and the potential damage to the road surface, parked cars, and the trees.
- Greg Smith MP has responded to local resident's concerns and escalated the matter to Senior HS2 management. He has also asked residents to lodge complaints to increase pressure on HS2 for a change of plan.
- We understand that a formal planning application is to be made in the next week (w/c 27<sup>th</sup> January), after which we have 3 -4 weeks in which to lodge our objections.

### **What Wendover HS2 has done:**

- We engaged with EKFB since last April, when they revealed that their plan for accessing the fields via Dobbins Lane had been approved in principle by Buckinghamshire Council. At that time, EKFB claimed that alternative access had been considered from Nash Lee End and was not practicable.
- We convinced them to hold a public meeting to exhibit their plans for consultation with local residents, and this happened in May at the Tennis Club. Feedback from the community at that stage was mainly about the visual impact of metal fencing that had appeared running down the back of Lionel Avenue and Bridleways. This is to protect a pipe that lies on the ground handling clean water from the Green Tunnel excavation to Wendover Brook.
- We aired the issue of HGV access on Dobbins Lane at the Public Meeting in the Memorial Hall in June, and the feedback received then was about ensuring safety for pedestrians, cyclists and the protection of the road surface.
- Along with the Parish Council we have routinely pressed for progress on both the Spring Chamber and removal of the current temporary fence and burying of the pipe at our monthly updates with EKFB and the Parish Council. EKFB wanted to use the machinery involved in excavating the Spring Chamber to also bury the pipe. With delays on planning the chamber we asked them to separate the issues, and had agreement that they would still sort the pipe by the end of last September. However,

EKFB subsequently decided to revert to their previous position of doing both jobs at the same time, and this is now anticipated happening “in the Spring”.

- In discussion with Greg Smith, we identified that Buckinghamshire Council are best placed to influence what actually happens as the formal planning authority. As the construction site is in the Chilterns Natural Landscape area of outstanding natural beauty, and also outside the “Limits of Land Available for Use” defined in the HS2 Act, Buckinghamshire Council has to consider the formal planning application for the works and apply any appropriate conditions for the development. We anticipate that the planning application will be submitted in January.
- We have communicated our objection to the application to Buckinghamshire Council on the grounds that the scheme (i.e. the track) appears grossly overengineered and poses a highways safety issue.

### **There are four potential outcomes**

#### **1. That the project can be simplified to radically reduce it’s impact**

- We believe that the scale of the works could be substantially reduced by pre-fabricating the chambers and only providing a temporary access path for a very limited number of tracked vehicles needed for construction and servicing of the chamber.
- Buckinghamshire Council have taken note of this

#### **2. That the project continues its current trajectory**

- Buckinghamshire Council officers had quietly previously approved the South Street/Dobbins Lane access route in principle in early 2024. The subsequent revelation of this caused a vitriolic and voluminous community response with complaints directed to Greg Smith as the MP, to EKFB, to Buckinghamshire Council, and to the Parish Council to prevent this happening.

EKFB and HS2 could strongly influence Buckinghamshire Council (based on the powers they have within the HS2 Act) that the Council could ignore the community feedback on grounds of additional cost or project delay.

#### **3. That an alternative access route can be secured**

- EKFB are telling us that alternative access from the Nash Lee End is “Impracticable”, but that does not exclude the possibility that it (or any other route) is technically feasible.
- That other ways of getting to the Spring Chamber site may be found, but these involve additional cost and project delay (one key factor is getting agreement with the landowner involved, and two recent local cases have taken about 18 months to resolve).
- This approach leaves open the risk of future development in the fields to which the community are, no doubt, strongly opposed.

#### **4. That despite virulent community opposition, limited conditions are attached by Buckinghamshire Council and HS2 (EKFB) proceeds**

- The existing South Street/Dobbins Lane route is retained with an agreed set of controls such as limiting the speed of their lorries, limiting the working hours and HS2 funding resurfacing of the roads after the works.
- We insist that Buckinghamshire Council proactively take on board the residents’ concerns and enforce strict planning requirements accordingly. Further suggestions are welcome from local residents and should be relayed to Buckinghamshire Council.

#### **What you can do:**

- We encourage the local community, in addition to any direct response as requested by Greg Smith, to raise their concerns with Buckinghamshire Council, which can be done through the “Ward Councillors”.
  - Peter Strachan, [peter.strachan@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:peter.strachan@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)
  - Richard Newcombe, [richard.newcombe@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:richard.newcombe@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)
  - Steve Bowles, [Steve.Bowles@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:Steve.Bowles@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)
- Additionally, we would encourage the local community to lodge their concerns when the Planning Application becomes available (which we expect imminently) on the Bucks Council Planning Portal. This website is at <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/building-or-improving-your-property/view-and-comment-on-a-planning-application/> , and if you enter the “Aylesbury Vale” section you can “simply” search for “HS2”

applications. Once you find the application, click on the “Comments” tab to make your response.

We will publicise when the application is made public on the portal.

### What you told us

Some residents that responded to Greg Smith’s invitation copied us in on their complaints, and analysis of those gives us an indication of the community’s view. The respondents told us that the key issues are:

- Dobbins Lane is a well-used, narrow, residential street; the prime concern is safety of school children crossing the road going to and from the Station.  
*We think this can be addressed by a planning condition limiting HS2 HGV use of Dobbins Lane to 09:30 to 14:45.*
- The safety of other users of the lane would be compromised, including Cyclists on the official cycle track; OAPs and others using mobility aids on the road due to the pavement conditions; and visitors to the Bowls and Tennis Clubs. Also, that HGV lorries could damage parked cars and cause vibration affecting house foundations.  
*We think this can be addressed by a planning condition limiting the speed of traffic on Dobbins Lane to 20mph.*
- The “No HS2 HGVs in Wendover” policy should be upheld, with an alternative access route from the A413 being created.  
*We think the best available solution is to dramatically reduce the number of Dobbins Lane vehicle movements, by removing the need for an access track that can handle HGV traffic across the fields for the construction of the chamber.*

### What the bigger picture is

One of our key projects is to review how it is proposed that land will be restored or repurposed following its temporary acquisition by HS2. We have reviewed feedback from residents about how the creation of a permanent road across the fields at the end of Dobbins Lane could facilitate development which the community opposes. In consultation with the Parish Council, we’ve discovered that the current restrictions about development in the Chilterns National Landscape area of outstanding natural beauty are being maintained in the Government’s revision of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Consequently, we think that a permanent road across the Dobbins Lane fields can be shown to be inappropriate and in contravention of the current and future legislation.

### What Greg Smith is doing

- Greg Smith and his HS2 Special Advisor have been meeting with us regularly since last August, and we are pleased that he is raising public feedback about the proposed HGV traffic in Dobbins Lane.
- Greg has also championed other local HS2 related issues, including getting UK Power Networks to finish their works in Ellesborough Road to get rid of the traffic lights. UKPN had been delaying their work repeatedly until such time as Greg's escalation to their Chief Executive, when progress started to happen.
- He is also focussing his attention on the other three issues at the top of our priority list of most long-term importance to the Wendover Community. These are getting better mitigation of the noise from HS2 trains, ensuring that land returned by HS2 is not developed inappropriately, and restoring a safe cycling and pedestrian route between Wendover and Dunsmore.

We hope we have adequately reflected the views of the community and if you feel strongly about the issues, please come and join us to help the fight, by emailing us at [enquiries@whs2.org](mailto:enquiries@whs2.org)



Ron Petersen  
Chair, Wendover HS2 Mitigation Action Group  
24<sup>th</sup> January 2025