

Dear Members & supporters,

High Speed 2 - and current issues

High Speed 2

Meanwhile, much time has also been spent considering a response to the government announcement of its preferred route for HighSpeed2 through the Chilterns, and the Society has been organising its plan of action. I am writing to let you know where we currently stand. Updates and our plans can be found on our web site at <http://www.chilternsociety.org.uk/activ-planning-hsRail.php>

Your Executive Committee met within a few days of the publication of the routes and agreed that we would oppose any high speed route that crossed the Chilterns. It was also agreed that we would participate fully in the government's consultation – the first part is due in the autumn – and in the meantime we would consult all our members to ensure their majority view is in accordance with our actions. Shortly after Easter a small group of Society members with particular expertise met to flesh out a campaign in more detail and to establish our objectives and strategy.

We agreed that our primary objective should be to promote the Chilterns as a jewel in the English landscape and to campaign successfully against proposals for a high speed rail route across the Chilterns. We further agreed that if, ultimately, a route alignment is chosen that crosses the Chilterns, we shall use every effort to ensure that we obtain the maximum mitigation and that it causes the least harm to the environment.

Our strategy is basically:

1. To mount a broad campaign, based on sound argument and analysis and effective lobbying, to achieve the primary objective.
2. Participate effectively in the forthcoming debate about the strategic case for HSR in the UK in order to influence outcomes that would help achieve the Society's objectives.
3. Compile a comprehensive proposal/bid for mitigation measures that would help to offset the harm caused by any new HSR route across the Chilterns.
4. Liaise effectively with other organisations and groups to seek reinforcement for securing the Society's objectives.
5. Promote the special values of the Chilterns.

We have set up a Project Board and two action groups to oversee this campaign. The Project Board so far comprises Peter Brown (PR), Ian Phillips (Media), Ken Edwards (Technical) Geoff Wiggett (Volunteers), John Gladwin (Finance and Admin) and Mike Overall (Strategy) and I. We expect others with complementary expertise and commitment to join the Project Board in due course .

The two Action Groups will be overseen by the Project Board. One will co-ordinate the many technical and economic aspects of the proposal and the other will co-ordinate our campaigning actions. In addition, the Project Board aims to secure legal advice and fund raising skills.

The Technical Action Group will examine in detail various aspects of the Government

and HS2 proposals, namely:

- ***Exceptional Hardship Scheme, the strategic cases for HS2 and national high speed rail networks, route options, environmental impacts and mitigation.***

The Campaigning Action Group will comprise specialist advisers and volunteers, who will organise a wide range of volunteer activity, including:

- ***Lobbying, Promotion, Surveys, Media, Social media, Advertising, Events, Liaison with other campaigning groups and organisations.***

You will appreciate that all this activity involves much time and expense. With your help we can be more effective. Geoff Wiggett has kindly agreed to organise our volunteers. If you have an expertise you feel could be helpful, and you feel you could spare the time to serve on one of the sub-groups, please email him on our special HS2 email address – hs2@chilternsociety.org

Similarly if you want to help in a general way, be it putting up posters; helping at events etc, also contact Geoff at the same email address.

I'll be giving you further details of our Fighting Fund shortly, but if you are willing to contribute now, then please send cheques (made payable to Chiltern Society HS2 Fund) and donations to our treasurer, Richard Chantler at the White Hill Centre, White Hill, Chesham, Bucks. HP5 1AG

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW- During this election period, we would like you all to write to ALL the candidates in your local constituency seeking your vote and ask them to spell out their personal opinion of this proposal, and then send a copy to Tracey at our office so that we can hold them to account in the future.

Don't forget to keep in touch with our website – www.chilternsociety.org.uk - where regular updates about the campaign and the latest developments are posted. Particularly, try out the 'You Tube' clip from Germany of what High Speed Rail could look and sound like.

The preferred route of HS2 presents the Society with its biggest challenge and its biggest campaign since it was formed in the wake of the M40 campaign 50 years ago.

I know that as members you have joined the Society because you agree with our aim...*We care for the Chilterns*. I hope you will be able to join us in showing how much you care now that the Chilterns are under threat as never before.

Best wishes

Chairman

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The Chiltern Society is a registered charity which relies on membership subscriptions and gifts in wills. Please support our work to care for the Chilterns.