

MINUTES OF ORAL EVIDENCE

taken before the

HIGH SPEED RAIL BILL COMMITTEE

on the

HIGH SPEED RAIL (WEST MIDLANDS – CREWE) BILL

Tuesday 24 April 2018 (Morning)

In Committee Room 5

PRESENT:

James Duddridge (Chair)
Sandy Martin
Mrs Sheryll Murray
Bill Wiggin

IN ATTENDANCE:

Timothy Mould QC, Lead Counsel, Department for Transport
Admas Habteslasie, Counsel, Whitmore and Madeley Parish Councils
Reuben Taylor QC, Counsel, Woodland Trust

WITNESSES:

Ian Webb (Whitmore Parish Council)
Gary White (Madeley Parish Council)
Frederick Smith (Whitmore2Madeley Action Group)
Graham Hutton
Luci Ryan (Woodland Trust)

IN PUBLIC SESSION

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(At 9.32 a.m.)

1. THE CHAIR: Welcome everybody. Just a reminder, I did mention yesterday, if we could have short submissions, they are much more likely to find favour with the Committee. We have quite a tight timescale and I'm keen to keep to it. That said, welcome. It's great to have Whitmore Parish Council here today to start today's proceedings.

Whitmore Parish Council

Submissions by Mr Habteslasie

2. MR HABTESLASIE: Good morning, sir, good morning members of the Committee. I appear today on behalf of both the Whitmore Parish Council and Madeley Parish Council. As you'll be aware, both petitioners appear in support of the amendment to the Bill to include a single-tunnel scheme, in place of present proposals for two short tunnels which I'll refer to as the two-tunnel scheme. There has also been a proposed amendment to that with a southwards extension which you've heard about, which I'll refer to as the extended two-tunnel scheme and we'll touch on that.

3. By way of a very short introduction, you're going to be hearing very little from me. The petitioners and HS2 are mostly on common ground as to the relative benefits of the single-tunnel scheme as against the two-tunnel scheme. As was noted before you yesterday, the issue is really where cost benefit balance should be struck. Mr Mould noted that a significant aspect of that cost benefit analysis, carried out initially by HS2 but now falling to the Committee, relates to matters that aren't easily quantifiable but more qualitative in nature.

4. We would agree with that and with that in mind what we propose to focus on today is seeking to highlight to the Committee the differential impacts between the two proposals, from the perspective specifically of communities in Whitmore and Madeley. That's our modest brief before you today and we aim, and hope that our presentations will complement rather than rehearse or repeat what you heard yesterday.

5. So, the focus today will be twofold: the impact of construction works, in particular on road networks for those two communities, and the impact of the proposed above ground portion of the HS2 line on the two communities. I'm going to be starting with

Mr Webb, who's Chair of the Whitmore Parish Council, who'll be presenting on behalf of the parish council and then we'll move on to Madeley where we've got Mr White, Chair of the Madeley Parish Council, and also Mr Smith of the Whitmore2Madeley Action Group.

6. With a view to moving through matters efficiently and focusing on the key points, I proposed a structure and the evidence with me asking questions and the witnesses responding to those questions, subject, of course, to the Committee's own questions.

7. THE CHAIR: That seems very sensible.

Evidence of Mr Webb

8. MR HABTESLASIE: Thank you. Without further ado then, we'll move onto Whitmore Parish Council. Can we start with A28(2)? So Mr Webb, could you start by setting the scene briefly for the Committee in terms of the kind of environment or community we have at Whitmore.

9. MR WEBB: Good morning, Chair, and good morning members of the Committee. Whitmore parish is a fairly small parish which is just on the borders of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire. It's an area of about 20 square miles; we've got about 700 dwellings all together with a population of about 1,050. Its largest settlements are the villages of Baldwins Gate and the development at Madeley Park Wood and Madeley Park Wood will come into the presentation shortly. Whitmore Heath comes behind that in size and then we've got various small villages spread around within the parish.

10. The parish generally is dominated by green belt and it has a couple of conservation areas and listed buildings. So, it actually sits as a quiet, rural attractive area on the edge of the urban conurbation and provides opportunities for people to come out and walk the network of pathways that we've got throughout the parish. Horse riding is a growing activity in the area and we're starting to get quite an active cyclist activity. So, there's an amenity which is not only appreciated by the residents of the parish, but also by our near neighbours who come into enjoy it with us.

11. There's a couple of things which I would point out for a particular reason which

I'll get back to later on because within our parish, we have two main, major architectural implantations at the moment. We've got the busy A53 which bisects the parish in a roughly east/west direction and we've also, of course, got the West Coast Main Line, which again bisects the parish in a roughly north/south so it cuts it in about four.

12. The important point that I would make there is that despite the fact that we have those two major implantations, neither of them have a great effect on the general aura of the place. As far as the railway's concerned, it runs at ground level, or in small cuttings, and unless you go looking for it, really, apart from one exception, you're not really aware of the fact that it's there most of the time. The A53 isn't quite as well hidden as that but once you're a couple of hundred yards away from it in either direction, you can't see it and we live with it quite happily.

13. There's a reason for making that point when I get to the HS2 line a little bit further down the line.

14. MR HABTESLASIE: Could we have A28(3)? Some pictures of Whitmore.

15. MR WEBB: Whitmore parish takes its name from Whitmore village which is one of the small villages within the developments that we have there now. It's been rather left behind by developments elsewhere within the parish. And the pictures you have there are really the three buildings that come to mind when we talk about Whitmore.

16. The first one is Whitmore Hall on the top right hand side. This is the home of the Cavenagh-Mainwaring family who are now 34th generation at the hall. It's a Grade I listed building designated as an outstanding architectural and historic interest and there's been a house on that site for over 900 years. Admittedly, not the one that you see in the picture which has obviously evolved over the years and developed into what it is now. The current hall was completed in 1676, so it's already nearly 350 years old.

17. The church on the left hand side is well known throughout the parish and the surrounding area. And that's St Mary and All Saints Parish Church, it's Anglican, grade II* listed. Its origin is in the 12th century. The Mainwaring Arms, the pub in the bottom right is also well known, but rather more recent, built by the Cavenagh-Mainwaring family to service the local residents in the area.

18. Given that the Mainwaring Estate is the biggest agricultural and cattle, milk producing estate within the parish, it's a major presence and pretty much everything is related to them in one way or another.

19. MR HABTESLASIE: A28(9) please. And just any comments about tranquillity as a characteristic of the environment?

20. MR WEBB: A very important point as far as we residents are concerned, and the reason most of us are living there is the fact that although it is only within a few miles of the Newcastle development and the six towns behind it, it's the nearest place, I think, to that area that one can go to live to actually live in a totally rural area, whilst being in easy reach of the developed area.

21. We had a townscape appraisal done by AECOM a few years ago, 2013, I think that dates from, with a view to including that in a neighbourhood development plan that we're in the process of producing, which is its origin, but you'll notice there a number of the comments that they make in that, and in particular, there is a high scenic quality across the landscape.

22. The roads and lanes are generally narrow and sunken and have a low visual presence, and I make that point because it's of importance further down the line. The development, if it is there, is generally well screened from the long views across the valley and the key remark at the bottom of that is that despite the presence of the West Coast Main Line and the A51 and the A53 – the A51 being another busy main road lying outside the parish to the west, but linked in with the general scheme that we'll talk about – the overall impression across the neighbourhood area is one of tranquillity. The two shots that we've put in the right hand side there are pictures taken from the road ways looking across the two valleys, which, between them, run from one end of the parish to the other, the Meece Valley in the south, and the Lee Valley in the north of the parish.

23. So we've got the main drive between the north and the south is a wide open, fairly flat valley, which runs almost the entire length and which, at the moment, carries the West Coast Main Line.

24. MR HABTESLASIE: A28(21) please. Thank you, Mr Webb. You're going to

tell the Committee a little bit about the impact that we say construction is going to have on those roads. Could you just start by giving the Committee a brief idea the extent to which day to day life in Whitmore involves use of these roads?

25. MR WEBB: I'm going to use the pointer to try to do this because what we've produced here is a map of the parish, the border of the parish being shown in a black line that runs round there. I'm using the pointer because the importance of what I'm going to say relates to the various roads there, some of which disappear off the picture and come back in in different places.

26. So, at the moment, we have the central development in Whitmore, which is Baldwins Gate village in the bottom middle there, and we have Madeley centre up in the north, up here. One of the reasons why we're doing a presentation today in two parts; firstly Whitmore and secondly Madeley is that the two parishes are adjoining. Between them, they cover the section of the HS2 route which is called and referred to as CA4 and we have common concerns as far as the impact of HS2 on the parishes are concerned, different detail but basically it impacts us both pretty seriously. We also have two short tunnels, one in each parish, and the theme of what we're pushing for here relates and is linked by the existence of those two tunnels.

27. So, what we have here, the people who are living in the bottom end of the parish of Whitmore here use some of the facilities which are offered by Madeley. There's the Madeley centre, which is an activity centre, it's a keep fit area and social gathering area. There's Madeley academy school, the main doctors' surgery, a dentist and a primary school. We also have, down in Whitmore, a secondary doctors' surgery, which is a morning only, linked to the primary one in Madeley; it's part and parcel of the same arrangement. We also have a primary school down here and we have Whitmore village hall where the events that are held in Whitmore are carried out.

28. The importance of that is that we have people in Madeley who travel quite frequently down to Whitmore for those facilities, and those in Whitmore, travel back to Madeley. Obviously, that exists, that sort of thing is pretty well everywhere but it's of importance here because of the impact on the roads which we'll come on to in a moment.

29. The main road which is linking those two is this one, which is Manor Road, and

that's the direct route. The alternative route, should that not be available for whatever reason, is to go round here, up through Keele and then into Madeley at the top. Manor Road is a growingly frequently used road to link between the two.

30. MR HABTESLASIE: So Mr Webb, you've set out how those roads are used. Can you just tell the Committee a little about what we say the impacts of construction traffic are going to be on people's day to day lives in terms of road usage?

31. MR WEBB: What we have traced on the map, overlying the various roads are colour codes, the red lines showing the roads which are officially going to be used as construction vehicle traffic, routinely, and roads which have been marked in yellow, which we qualify as being compromised by the fact of the existence of the main construction vehicle roads, in one form or another and I'll explain that in a minute.

32. So, we have the main road here, the A525 which runs off the page to the left, that goes through to Woore, links to the A51. The A51, which you can't see there, is a – it's north/south on the map, but it comes back in at the bottom end of our parish down here. That links through then, ultimately, to this point on the right hand side, and again, that's off the map there.

33. The A53 that I spoke about earlier is the main road that bisects the parish, comes through to here and then turns off into the A5182 which is again, a construction vehicle road and joins down to junction 15 of the M6, ultimately, somewhere just down here.

34. The problem we've got there is that once this starts, is that Manor Road, the top half of it is going to be an official construction vehicle site, activity, and we've got the second biggest group of development here in Madeley Park Wood. To get to Madeley, they're going to have to go down this construction vehicle site and they're also going to have to negotiate activities of remodelling and realigning Manor Road in this area here.

35. If they want to come down on this side, they run straight into a construction vehicle operation on the A53 and if they try to get round that on these little roads here, which are really one and a half lane at best roads, a bus and a car find great difficulty in getting past each other, so they're quite narrow. And then they run into the construction vehicle route which is the A51.

36. So, basically, although we recognise that not all of the construction vehicle activities are going to take place at peak times, all at the same time, and we haven't had the capacity to sit down and try to work out a grid of exactly how they all match together, but they're all ongoing for several years during this construction period. Anybody living in Madeley Park Wood is, in principle, going to face difficulties relative to what the situation is today, to get to wherever it is they're trying to get to, whether it's into town, whether it's to Madeley, or whether it's down into Whitmore village.

37. These two little roads here, which are marked in red, we've got an alternative road at the moment, little used, but it's used when we need it. That's Snape Hall Road and that goes right the way through to pick this road up here, so it gives an alternative access to get out of this area. Part of the construction vehicle activity is going to widen this road and section it at the point that it reaches the new HS2 line and that point of access will disappear. So anybody in Madeley Heath is going to be obliged to come down a construction vehicle road to the A53, then down a construction vehicle road to wherever it is they're going, so they're going to be right in the middle of whatever is added to the road network by the construction vehicles.

38. The actual consequences of that won't become entirely clear until it's all in place, of course, but it's pretty obvious that the roads, which are already quite busy, added to that, the construction vehicle access, are going to cause a certain number of constraints during a period of six to seven years.

39. MR HABTESLASIE: Thank you Mr Webb. Can we now move on to the situation once the train line has actually been built? Could we have A28(10)? What do we say that the overall – we're moving onto specific examples, but what do we say the overall impact is going to be on the character of the area?

40. MR WEBB: Well this slide here is taken from the flyover mock-up that HS2 has done; I think it's quite remarkable what it's able to do with technology these days. I do recognise entirely that that is not an accurate picture of exactly what it's going to look like when it's finished. It is a test set up and we're taking it for what it is. We have to be aware that that is a picture of the sort of thing that's going to exist a good many years after the construction has taken place. Many of the tree planting schemes which are put into place there are shown as they will be in the somewhat distant future, shown as

mature trees which, for the present time, have not even of course been planted. The actual picture, how much it's going to look like that, I don't know, but there is a point to showing you this and if we could do onto A28(11) please.

41. This is the second slide of a similar nature. This shows the viaduct when it's coming over the River Lee, so we're now in the northern section. The previous slide was down here in the Lee Valley. If we could come onto A28(16) – I think it's 16.

42. MR HABTESLASIE: Seventeen.

43. MR WEBB: Seventeen, sorry. This is another view of the River Lee viaduct which is a sizeable implantation which, at this point, reaches a peak at the present design stage of the project, of 21 metres above ground, is the level at which the train will be running.

44. Now, the importance of showing you that is to try to illustrate why the residents of the parish are so concerned about what is currently being put forward. I talked earlier about the fact that we have the A53 which bisects the parish, and we have the West Coast Main Line which bisects it, neither of which have a massive impact, visually or noise-wise, because they're all at ground level. In this case, we're talking about an operation that runs from one end of the parish to the other. It comes in 10 metres above ground, and it goes out 21 metres above ground, and only time it's not above ground, is when it's going through a tunnel or the wood because it hits a pile of ground in between times.

45. That, contrary to what we've got at the moment, is going to be seen and heard for miles around within the parish. From our point of view, that is going to change the aspect and the amenity offered by the rural parish of Whitmore massively. It is totally out of context with everything that it stands for at the moment, so for us, that is a major, major problem.

46. MR HABTESLASIE: Could we have A28(13)? Do you have anything to add on this slide, Mr Webb?

47. MR WEBB: Yes, this is one of the issues which has been addressed in the list of opportunities which has been brought out very recently by HS2. This, to us, is a major

issue within the parish because the A53 at the moment carries about 14,000 vehicles a day, counting the two directions combined. It links the West Country and south-west Wales with the towns of Stoke-on-Trent and the others, so it's a major connection route from the west.

48. It's a two lane road, it's narrow by current standards of design, as I understand it, and what is proposed here is, because the lie of the land is such that the tunnel won't go under it, as it stands, it's currently planned to lift the A53 four metres.

49. MR MARTIN: Chair, can I interject with a question?

50. THE CHAIR: Yes, please.

51. MR MARTIN: I believe that the southern portal has already been agreed to be changed by HS2 and that there will now be no difference between –

52. MR WEBB: That has been changed, actually agreed, has it? It's not a proposal? I'm sorry; I thought it was a proposal at the moment.

53. MR HABTESLASIE: We're going to deal with that – my next question is to the extended tunnel scheme, how are these impacts affected in your –

54. MR MARTIN: Well, as I understand it from the HS2 proposals, there is no difference between the southern portal now to the one that was being proposed as part of the single tunnel system and that the A53 will not need to be diverted or bridged or closed, or anything.

55. MR HABTESLASIE: Undoubtedly the issues with the A53 will go to one side, but there are still broader impacts in terms – just simply to address those as well.

56. MR WEBB: Well, the situation as I understand it is that, until this proposal was actually brought forward as part of the opportunities, the actual project which was on the table at that time, which is a couple of weeks ago, was that the A53 was going to still have to be lifted in order to get the train underneath. This proposal is one of the eight opportunities that have been put forward. I wasn't aware that it had been formally introduced into the project but I –

57. MR MARTIN: I think we've got that information, so let's move on, Mr Webb.

There's plenty of meat on what we need to decide. Let's not rehearse what's happened historically; let us move on.

58. MR WEBB: We do recognise it's a major improvement.

59. MR MARTIN: Excellent, let's move on.

60. MR HABTESLASIE: A28(15)? What's the key point that you want to raise from this slide.

61. MR WEBB: One of the major construction issues here is when the current design of the HS2 line runs through Whitmore Wood and I'm not going to talk about Whitmore Wood particularly because that would be addressed by other people in more detail, but you're all aware already that it's one of the major issues that we have.

62. One of the problems with that is because of the way that the actual track is going to be sitting within the wood, there is going to have to be, at the present design, concrete retaining wall which is put in place, in order to retain the wood that it's left behind, after they put the train through it.

63. Now that wall is nearly 600 metres long. We're told it's 20 metres deep; in another part of the text, it talks about 13. We think that means that it's 13 above ground and seven under, but I've asked the question but haven't yet got confirmation on that. But that is a massive concrete installation which is going to cause concern because of the projection of the concrete and so forth which is going to be done local to that site.

64. There is also another issue which I need to talk about on that and that calls for the imported – what we have got here is the current West Coast Main Line running down there. This is in the Lee Valley, the northern section of our parish. Here, we've got Madeley Park Wood and here we've got the line of HS2. Behind that, we're going to have Whitmore Heath that it goes under in a tunnel but there, we're going to have Whitmore Wood with the retaining wall behind to the right of this HS2 line.

65. The problem we've got there is the impact that this is going to have on the residents of Madeley Park Wood. There are about 140-150 dwellings there. That's a bit imprecise because it depends exactly what one decides to count in it, but it's 140 plus, let's say. It's accessed along Manor Road which we spoke about earlier.

66. When you come off Manor Road into Madeley Park Wood, the road quickly drops away, quite steeply in places, down into the valley here and the houses which are in this part of the dropping part of Madeley Park Wood are all on the downward slope, overlooking, geographically, the West Coast Main Line. Some of them can actually see it quite clearly; some of the sites are partially blocked by other house.

67. THE CHAIR: Can I just stop you there for a second, Mr Webb, for a question?

68. MR WEBB: I'm sorry.

69. MRS MURRAY: Can I just ask, the green area on that map, I believe is shown as proposed tree planting?

70. MR WEBB: Yes, correct.

71. MRS MURRAY: Would that, in your opinion, the tree planting screen the retaining wall from the view of those houses?

72. MR WEBB: It would yes, you're quite right. Well, yes and no. It would screen it visually but I understand from the people that deal with this sort of thing, the trees actually don't do much for noise abatement as such. They hide it from view but the noise comes through.

73. MRS MURRAY: That's something I can ask when we hear from the other people, thank you.

74. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Just while we're on that point, can I just make one other point of fact, not only with that embankment that you have been pointed to and where the cursor is now, not only will it be planted with trees, but also, its affect will be to place the railway in a four metre deep cutting.

75. MRS MURRAY: And cuttings reduce noise, am I correct?

76. MR MOULD QC (DfT): They reduce noise and obvious, reduce visual impact as well.

77. MRS MURRAY: Thank you.

78. MR WEBB: Now the only problem that we have there and why I'm talking about

this; I've talked about the Lee Valley being a quiet, tranquil place. I had occasion in the last few weeks to be invited to come along and just listen to trains going past here, and this the one exception because they're so close to the trains with nothing between them, that actually, the trains are quite noisy at that point.

79. The concern is that once all this is built, we're going to have the noise coming from this line, added to what's already there. There's going to be reflected noise from the wall and while I take the point, it certainly won't make it entirely quiet. So, there is going to be a positive increase in the amount of noise there. And we're talking about the HS2 line ultimately targeting to be run by something like 18 trains in each direction an hour. That's sometime, admittedly in the future, but the picture for the people living here is going to be one of increased noise which is then going to steadily increase over the years because on top of that, I also understand that the intention ultimately, is that freight traffic will be moved primarily to the West Coast Main Line. Freight traffic tends to run by easy evidence, by going to listening to one, on slower trains and makes a good deal more noise than the ordinary passenger trains.

80. So there is a combination, and I'm not an expert in there, I can't give you numbers or anything, but it's obvious, to me at least, that if you add those three or four factors together, this is going to become quite a noisy little area.

81. MR HABTESLASIE: A28(16) please. Last slide from our presentation. What do you have to say about this picture, Mr Webb?

82. MR WEBB: That is just simply a schematic. We've drawn a red line on it in crayon there, but that's showing the approximate position of the HS2 line relative to Whitmore Wood. The single point really of showing that is that it is going to cross Whitmore Wood, it's not going to cross one end or one part of it, it's going to pretty much for the entire length of it, straight through the middle there.

83. MRS MURRAY: Can I ask a question? Where is the West Coast Main Line on this photograph? Is it in the foreground?

84. MR WEBB: Where's the white lettering?

85. MR HABTESLASIE: Where's the West Coast Main Line?

86. MR HUTTON: The West Coast Main Line is just below the white lettering, is it not?

87. MR WEBB: It's just below, down here.

88. MRS MURRAY: Thank you.

89. MR WEBB: I didn't catch the question, my apologies.

90. MR HABTESLASIE: Can we have P34(10) please? Now the point has been made; we have heard about the amendment to the two-tunnel scheme, the extended two-tunnel scheme, and the point is made by the promoter there that it is going to be possible to lower the viaduct by up to 3.4 metres at its highest point and by an average of 1.5 metres. You've touched on this already, but can you just give the Committee an idea of how that change affects the evidence you've given about impact?

91. MR WEBB: Well, again I'm not an expert in design or of any other form on this sort of thing, so I can't quote you chapter and verse and percentages and so forth. The only thing I would say is that at the moment, the viaduct is planned to be up to a maximum of 21 metres high. As I hope, an educated lay man, but without specialist knowledge, the idea of something 21 metres tall with a fast moving train on top of it put in the middle of a wide open valley, which at the moment has got nothing visible in it, apart from trees and grass and the West Coast Main Line in the bottom, is a massive impact on the visual thing.

92. To reduce that 3.4 metres, it's going to be better if it's only 17.5 than if it's 21, but I'm not sure the difference is going to be that noticeable to the observer. That's all really I can say on it.

93. MR HABTESLASIE: Thank you, Mr Webb. And is there any further points that you think will assist the Committee in making the cost benefit analysis? Is there anything you feel you need to add to what you've said?

94. MR WEBB: I'll leave that till the end if you like and we'll come back to that.

95. MR HABTESLASIE: Thank you very much, Mr Webb. I propose, if I may, to move on to Madeley Parish Council, subject to questions.

96. THE CHAIR: Just to clarify, have you finished with Mr Webb?
97. MR HABTESLASIE: Yes, yes, sir.
98. MR WEBB: For the moment.
99. THE CHAIR: That's why I'm saying, for the moment. Have you finished with Mr Webb or not, for the moment, in case he's going to come back? So I'm confused what you're intentions are.
100. MR WEBB: We'll simply – if you ask the question of anything else at the end – you prefer to do it now?
101. MR HABTESLASIE: Yeah.
102. MR WEBB: If we could have slide 28(7) and we'll cover it now to save – we were going to cover this, both of us at the end, but I'll cover my bits now, if you like.
103. THE CHAIR: I think that's helpful to the Committee for our planning, to know that we've heard all the arguments from you, we can then move forward.
104. MR WEBB: There's no problem, thank you. The purpose of this slide, again because of, in this case, planning application for a development in the parish, we had made available to us a traffic survey that was done on the A53 through the main village of Baldwins Gate for the developer. That's on public record and the references are there is anyone wants to go and look for it.
105. They showed that the average five day two way traffic flow was 13,715 vehicles a day down that road. I quoted 14,000 in round figures earlier. Of that, some 900 HGVs were involved, 500 of those were Class 1 and 400 were Class 2, in round figures.
106. HS2 have indicated that there is going to be up to an extra 500 heavy construction vehicle movements taking place per day. Now, I've got there throughout the seven year construction period, but you'll notice the 'up to'. I mean, I've just got the peak and the total duration, so a fair part of those seven years, there would be obviously less than 500, but the 500 vehicles is going to increase that 400 heavy vehicles to 900 when it happens, and the A53 –

107. THE CHAIR: Can I intervene with a quick question?
108. MRS MURRAY: Yes, just very quickly, is that definitely 500 heavy construction vehicles per day throughout the seven year period?
109. MR WEBB: No, it's up to a maximum during that period.
110. MRS MURRAY: Because I understood that there will be a shorter period of perhaps heavy goods vehicles.
111. MR WEBB: I think it comes in different stages according to what's going on but I don't have a laid out, detailed plan, I confess.
112. MRS MURRAY: Okay, thank you.
113. MR WEBB: But I did try to make the point that it wasn't constant.
114. MRS MURRAY: Yeah, I understand.
115. MR WEBB: So, I'm not trying to exaggerate it.
116. THE CHAIR: Perhaps later on Mr Mould, perhaps you could provide us with those figures.
117. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Certainly.
118. THE CHAIR: Not necessarily now, but in the indicative.
119. MRS MURRAY: Thank you very much. Sorry to interrupt.
120. THE CHAIR: Back to you Mr Webb.
121. MR WEBB: Now, there is a situation there because – and I do recognise that it's quite difficult probably to put accurate figures together over such a long period of time so this is not a criticism, it's just a worry. And we don't have the, we haven't had the time but we don't have the capacity to try to do a running detailed analysis of everything that's going on because the actual traffic report is about that thick and there's table after table so, it's pretty complicated but, there are a couple of things that I happen to note in the last few weeks.

122. The first one is something that was put out by HS2 as one of the two pieces of information in the last few days I think and it's the construction impact comparison between the proposed scheme and the twin bored single tunnel option. I have got the reference there it's HOC100060009.

123. MR HABTESLASIE: P34(8).

124. MR WEBB: Did you catch that? It's quite a long number. Sorry, it's number eight. Okay. In that, I noticed that as opposed to what we understand to be the peak maximum of 500, here it's actually talking about 706 so we're talking about a worsening, not from 400 to 900 but to 1100 and that just makes the concern rather more difficult and there is a second thing that I happened across in the ES volume 5 technical appendices and I do apologise because I haven't forewarned you of this, part 2, but I'll just quote the numbers. I don't know that you necessarily need to find it but it's section 94(15) in that thing. It talks about a comparison of the 2023 baseline, so this is calculated several years ahead without HS2 being in place and with HS2, so the effect of HS2. Now, on the 5182 Trentham Road between Whitmore Road and Newcastle Road, that's the road between where the 53 turns off and it turns off down to junction 15 as I showed you on the right-hand side of the map earlier. That already to us is quite a pinch point at busy times. We get traffic backing up on there for several hundred yards on bad days. People literally come down, turn around and try and get out again to get away from it. The point of mentioning all this is, amongst all these myriad numbers that are put forward, all for very good reason but I haven't got time, as I say, to sort them all out, on the 2023 baseline between the peak hours of 17.00 and 18.00, without HS2 in place there's a total of 577 vehicles, two way, going down that road, so 600 in that figure. With HS2 in place, that becomes 1,800. There's another 1,200 vehicles according to that in an hour going up and down that road. Well, I can assure you that those 1,200 vehicles won't be going very far because the road will simply overflow. So, that's an evidence of the type of thing that's causing us the concern so it would be interesting to see some sort of contact to explain exactly what is being looked at and what is being done at some point.

125. THE CHAIR: Are there any questions from the Committee for Mr Webb? Mr Mould, two options: one is to move on to the next witness and for you to say a few words after that and cross-examine, for want of a better word, or to do that now. Have

you got a preference? There's a case for pressing ahead for brevity although it's up to you.

126. MR MOULD QC (DfT): I don't wish to cross-examine. I can help you with the traffic numbers now or later, whichever you prefer. As you've got it on the screen, maybe you want to deal with it now.

127. THE CHAIR: That's an excellent idea and then we'll confirm the next witness maybe. Thank you very much. Mr Mould.

128. MR MOULD QC (DfT): What we have on the screen is a very brief summary of our estimate of the peak traffic numbers under the twin tunnel scheme on the left hand side and if you substitute the single-tunnel scheme on the right hand side and you can see for the two principal routes in, we have at the second bullet down, peak construction HGV traffic on the Newcastle road between the points there described, the Trentham Road in the proposed scheme, 706 heavy goods vehicle movements per day. That's movements, that's two way, and then the duration of that of the peak and busy period is estimated at 10 months and you already know what we mean by that. That's what's said in the brackets. And then we're given the same data for the A525 Baa Hill Road, 522 HGV movements per day, peak busy period duration estimated at four months. If you then substitute the single-tunnel scheme, you'll see the corresponding figures are on the A53 we have 650 HGV movements a day peak construction traffic but the duration of the peak busy period is estimated to increase to 18 months. The reason for that is quite straightforward. The main construction facility for the single-tunnel scheme on our assessment would be located to the south of the Newcastle Road and the significantly increased exercise in importation and exportation of materials is the reason why the duration of that peak and busy period of activity would be extended. And then we give you the same data for Baa Hill Road under the single-tunnel scheme, 330 HGV movements per day so we get quite a significant reduction at that point because the main centre of construction actually has moved southwards but the duration increases to 13 months for a variety of reasons.

129. There is a more detailed analysis of this in the tunnel report at R3 page 83. I'll just show you that because you have the document in your packs but you'll see that what we've produced are these graphs which are known as histograms in our jargon and

what you see is the pattern of HGV traffic on the orange bars for the twin tunnel scheme, for the proposed scheme, and you can see although it's more peaky overall, the duration of the peaks is rather shorter for the bill scheme as compared to the single-tunnel scheme. That's for Baa Hill Road. And if you then go the next page, 84, we've got the same analysis for the A53 and you can see again although the bill scheme, the twin tunnel scheme has got the higher outright peaks, as I explained to you, the duration of the peak and busy activity as shown by the blue for the single-tunnel scheme is more prolonged for the reason I've just explained. So, in a nutshell, that's our analysis of the position in relation to those two key roads.

130. THE CHAIR: That's very helpful and very clear indeed. Thank you very much.

131. MR HABTESLASIE: It's Mr White.

Madeley Parish Council

Evidence of Mr White

132. MR WHITE: Good morning, Committee members

133. THE CHAIR: Morning.

134. MR WHITE: I'm Gary White and I'm the Chair of Madeley Parish Council. Thank you for hearing our petition today. What I'd like to do first of all is take you through and set the scene, what is Madeley? You don't know it. We know it implicitly. So, Madeley is a village in the ward of Newcastle-under-Lyme and it is split into four parts. The last census in 2011 showed a population of 4,200 people. It's much bigger than Whitmore Parish. The majority of Madeley actually sits between the M6 motorway to the east and the West Coast Main Line to the west so already we have two pieces of big infrastructure within our community. This third element has a massive impact upon us and we're going to take you through the reasons why.

135. As Mr Webb has already explained, Madeley is a rural hub so for the surrounding communities and villages, we have the infrastructure. We have a secondary school, two primary schools, we have a doctors', we have a pharmacy, we have a dentist and we have all of the local shops the people use in the surrounding areas. The reason that is very important is when we look at the transport implications of people travelling to and

from the village. The majority of the inhabitants of Madeley actually commute out. There's very little employment within the locality so they rely upon the transport to actually get out to their place of work. Predominantly within our area it is mainly agricultural, so dairy production predominantly. When we look at Madeley itself, and you've seen how tranquil and historic Whitmore is, Madeley is just as much so. So, we have a Grade I listed church which dates back to 1100. We have a Grade II* listed building and we have 23 further Grade II listed buildings, all within our parish. When we move on to A29(3) which is on your screen, you'll just see some of the photographs of our buildings. To the left is our church, All Saints; top right is the main feature which is a very large pond which is at the centre of our village with a mill in the background; bottom right is our 19th century Victorian school that was built and behind that is a more modern primary school.

136. So, if we move on to A29(5), we now start to talk a little of the road and the transport implications. To the bottom of that screen is a satellite image and that is predominantly where we are going to talk today. That is where the West Coast Main Line is to the right-hand side of that screen, the area of Baa Hill, Manor Road and the surrounding areas we will go to in more depth. Manor Road overbridge is planned to be one kilometre long and 30 metres high. There will be significant traffic management which would cause disruption to the parishioners on a day to day basis. Let's just look at that in a little more detail.

137. So, if we move on to A29(7), this is Manor Road and one of our colleagues is going to speak in more detail about this later but I'd like to reference a particular part of our community which is going to be significantly impacted and that's Madeley White Star Football Club. Let's just look at some of the key facts around this. It has 95 players ranging from the under 8s to the under 21s. There's nine teams in total use these facilities. Five football pitches, typically on a Sunday, up to 500 people will be present, both playing and watching their teams. They will travel from Baldwins Gate on Manor Road, the A525 from Woore and the A525 through Madeley from the surrounding areas. You can see that I've outlined White Star Football Club on the diagram to the left and you can see quite clearly that it is surrounded by the disruption that is going to ensure, particularly during the construction works. And I've spoken to the teams and to the football manager there and, at the moment, they are actively saying, can we continue to

operate during this prolonged period? Can we actually get the people, the players, the visitors to our site, given the amount of disruption that is going to happen? That's why we flag it up.

138. THE CHAIR: What's the proposed solution if we didn't tunnel? Are you looking for mitigation or re-siting or compensation?

139. MR WHITE: Well, the proposed tunnel is what we're petitioning for, sir, and that is the longer tunnel.

140. THE CHAIR: But if the proposed tunnel didn't happen, are there any other solutions?

141. MR WHITE: The only one would be a relocation funded separately to allow the club to continue to operate, sir.

142. THE CHAIR: Okay, thank you.

143. MR HABTESLASIE: Could we have A29(6)?

144. MR MOULD QC (DfT): The system's gone down.

145. THE CHAIR: Would it be convenient to have a short break?

146. MR MARTIN: We've got everything on paper anyway.

147. THE CHAIR: Are you happy to carry on, on paper?

148. MR HABTESLASIE: Yes.

149. MR WHITE: Yes, absolutely.

150. THE CHAIR: Mr Mould, are you happy as well?

151. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Of course.

152. THE CHAIR: Let's carry on, on paper. Thank you very much.

153. MR WHITE: Okay, so we're on A29(6) at the moment so we've just gone back one slide and that's to talk about the other businesses that will be affected by the

significant disruption to the transport infrastructure. So, when we moved from the village of Madeley up to Woore, there is a very narrow cutting which goes through a narrow rock face at the top of Baa Hill. That's part of Madeley ancient clay farmlands. There are proposals to actually widen that as part of the requirement of the project. Now, given the extent of amount of vehicles that will go up this particular road, we have a number of business, and I've listed them, I'm not going to read them out individually, but you can see for yourself that they're a combination of farms, golf clubs, cricket clubs, restaurants, so it is a substantial impact on our local area.

154. MR HABTESLASIE: Mr White, can we turn to the impact once the line has been built? Can we go to A29(8) please? Now, you mentioned Madeley cemetery and there are construction impacts and impacts once the line has been built. Can you take the Committee through those?

155. MR WHITE: Absolutely. This is of real importance to us. It was touched on very briefly during the county presentation yesterday. What this is, is our local cemetery and it is isolated between the West Coast Main Line on one side and the proposed HS2 line on the other. As a result, the burials just cannot be conducted in respect and dignity due to the amount of disruption, particularly after the works are completed because, as you will see from the bottom picture on the right hand side, that is taken from HS2's own volume and that shows Manor Road overbridge which is directly adjacent to the cemetery and underneath the overbridge is the actual HS2 rail line itself. So, you can imagine trying to go along both for a funeral with all of that noise taking place and also to pay your respects to your loved ones. Those photographs very clearly show as well that this is a very well cared for cemetery. Our constituents actually visit there on a regular basis and it has a lifespan of over 100 plus years yet, still to proceed. If we move forward to A29(9) then I've taken this off the fly through and I've outlined in red where the cemetery is located. Now, as you can see, it has the overbridge going across and then the HS2 line going to the side so, once this project is built in its current scenario then this is going to have a significant ongoing issue to the operation of this cemetery in a peaceful manner. I will then reference A29(10) because this is important to note during the construction phase as well because you've seen I've starred the cemetery and you can see the land take during the construction phase outlined in the various colours and you can see that Madeley cemetery is very clearly encapsulated.

156. MR HABTESLASIE: Mr White, also another impact you mention as to when the line is built is on the community in Baa Hill. Can we have A29(15) please?

157. MR WHITE: Okay, so this shows graphically, and again it's taken from the volume 2, and what I'd like to do here is use the mouse just to demonstrate to you. So, where I'm pointing is actually all of the residences of Baa Hill, all the way down this A525. Now, what you can see both to the rear and to the frontage in brown and in orange is HS2's current proposals for compounds, which will be storage compounds, and also satellite construction compounds. The satellite construction are in orange, the storage compounds are in brown. Now, it should be, I think, very clear to you committee members that these residents are going to be significantly impacted by this for a duration of time which when we relate back to the actual ES volume 2 will be in the region of four and a half years and this is so important because Baa Hill in itself has 51 properties. There are 104 residents live on Baa Hill. Not only have they got the impact of these compounds, they also have the impact of the A525 being rediverted. That will be also, to create the overbridge, the 525 will have a gradient which will actually mean that the cars will be looking at bedroom height into some of the properties. During the construction period there will also be a roundabout which will be put in place and you put all of that together, I ask you sirs, would you actually want to live in one of those properties yourselves because that's what these residents will have to put up with?

158. If we move on to A29(16) then what I'm showing here is actually the satellite image of the area I've just taken you through. So, you can see the houses down the middle, you can see the 525, you can see that I've actually starred where the compounds will be in place and you can see that the red line is the centre line of where the current railway proposal will go through. A29(17), and this is the last slide in this particular part of Baa Hill, shows you to the left the fly through and in the middle of that where the access road is actually stated, where I'm pointing now, that is Baa Hill residence, together with the overbridge, and the two pictures to the right hand side are the actual houses themselves taken from either end of the 525.

159. MR HABTESLASIE: Can we have A29(19)? And what's the point with Baa Hill Farm, Mr White?

160. MR WHITE: The point with Baa Hill Farm, and they will be petitioning separately so I'll be very brief on this, is that this is a local community farm which has a farm shop. It's actual agricultural land is split in two by the current proposal and the Baa Hill owners –

161. THE CHAIR: Sorry, you said they will be petitioning later on?

162. MR WHITE: Separately, yes. I just bring this up as part of the Baa Hill impact overall, sir. They are petitioning on a separate day, not today.

163. MRS MURRAY: They've submitted a petition?

164. MR WHITE: They have.

165. MR MARTIN: Chair, I'm assuming that their petition will be one of the ones that will be heard later on if we do not decide to go for the single tunnel. So, their petition will not be heard prior to us deciding whether or not –

166. THE CHAIR: That's why I'm slightly confused. So, it does make sense to hear this now?

167. MR MARTIN: Is what I'm saying.

168. MR WHITE: Okay.

169. THE CHAIR: That makes sense. So, take an appropriate amount of time to do this now. Don't rush through it.

170. MR WHITE: Thank you for your guidance on that, sir. The Baa Hill Farm, if I put it into perspective, it's an 80-acre farm which is all grass. It is used for sheep and lamb enterprise which are sold directly through their own farm shop. Their farm shop is actually situated half way up the Baa Hill itself, prior to the cutting area which the rock face is in that I explained earlier. It's been in existence since 2001 as a farm shop. The local community use it substantially and not only are they impacted because the current rail line will go directly through their agricultural land, but also they are majorly impacted because they are one of the businesses within the previous slide where they have the compounds, the redirection of the A525 and so they are currently, and I'll use the word despair because that's what they say to me, they are currently in despair as to

their future.

171. MR HABTESLASIE: Now, before we move on to Mr Smith, you've addressed the Committee, Mr White, on construction impacts and impacts once the line is built, is there anything that you feel you need to add to assist the Committee with making the cost benefit analysis as to which option is preferable?

172. MR WHITE: Yes, I would. Clearly, we went through the county council presentation yesterday. We sat in on that and we listened to it. I've got to say that Mr Webb and myself were absolutely shocked to hear two conflicting experts talk about the overall cost of the single tunnel. That is so important, obviously to your decision-making, which is going to have such an impact on the communities that we represent. Mr Webb and myself are representing 6,000 plus inhabitants, which will have a major impact on this. Your decision will basically tailor the way for generations to come. So what I would like to request of you, and I'm sure you're doing this anyway, is that you take the time to understand what is the true cost of that single tunnel because at the moment we've got two diametrically opposed views. Certainly our view is that we didn't go into enough detail yesterday to warrant the answer to that question.

173. MR HABTESLASIE: Thank you. That concludes Mr White's evidence. Now Mr Smith will just be making a few points to amplify the evidence on the human impact.

174. THE CHAIR: On the what impact?

175. MR HABTESLASIE: On the human impact.

176. THE CHAIR: The human impact.

177. MR HABTESLASIE: If I may call Mr Smith?

178. MR WHITE: Are there any questions for myself before I leave the table?

179. THE CHAIR: No.

180. MRS MURRAY: I don't think I've got anything.

181. THE CHAIR: No, no questions. Thank you very much, Mr White. Mr Smith is who, sorry, for the record.

182. MR HABTESLASIE: Mr Smith is of the Whitmore2Madeley Action Group and will be presenting as to the human impact, not repeating anything, just amplifying a few points about the human impact.

183. MR WHITE: Just to be clear, we are calling him as a witness just to go through those particular elements.

184. THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. We're relatively early on in our process so understanding the process is helpful.

Whitmore2Madeley Action Group

Evidence of Mr Smith

185. MR HABTESLASIE: Now, Mr Smith you've heard the evidence that's already been given. What are the key points you want to make to the Committee about the human impact of the proposed two-tunnel scheme?

186. MR SMITH: Good morning, Committee members, Chairman. Can we put my slide presentation?

187. MR HABTESLASIE: If we can go to A29(21)?

188. MR SMITH: Let me introduce myself firstly. Yes, my name is Frederick Smith of the Whitmore2Madeley Action Group. I've been asked to give evidence by Madeley Parish Council on the humanistic aspects of this proposed scheme. Sorry, your question was, sir?

189. MR HABTESLASIE: What are the key points that you're making?

190. MR SMITH: The key points I think is to stress the impact it's had on people's lives over the last five years. One very big point, first of all, what I was going to start on with my presentation was that an initial observation is the fact that so much of this is related to a process that we are all unfamiliar with. We didn't know about it when we started it. We are grateful to our local MP, Sir Bill Cash, who came along to explain what a hybrid Bill was. Most of us didn't know about that at the outset. The concept of locus standi was completely new to us until relatively recently. But I've been involved in the action group since 2013 and I have spoken to many members of the community.

I've listened to them. I've held public meetings. I've attended meetings with HS2 and the parish councils. And generally, one of the things I'd like you to bear in mind is that the age profile of the local residents is such that many of them have not got involved as they should have done probably in the computer age. Also, when HS2 talk about it being five-year construction phase and at the same time say that is a temporary effect. I would say to you that for a man in his 70s, five years is a long time. It's a possible lifetime. Now moving on in terms of the key points. I do have a presentation. Can I not refer to the presentation?

191. MR HABTESLASIE: Of course.

192. MR SMITH: Can we bring it up on here?

193. MR WHITE: Sorry you're still on Madeley main presentation –

194. MR SMITH: It's A30(4) please.

195. MR HABTESLASIE: Sorry about this, Committee.

196. THE CHAIR: That's okay.

197. MR HABTESLASIE: Sorry A30(4).

198. THE CHAIR: It's important that...

199. MR SMITH: Yes, I'm just going to talk very succinctly and I'll move on as quickly as I can for fear of repeating things. But you know, the reaction over the last five years has been one of disbelief, anger, confusion, stress and frustration. We've had people saying, 'It will never go ahead,' but we all know it is now. And I have to say that as well as the fear and despair that I've seen there's been a lot of apathy I'm afraid. People think that somebody else is going to do the job. Can I forward this to the next slide?

200. MR HABTESLASIE: Next slide please.

201. MR SMITH: But as an active chair of the local action group, we obviously did get everybody, as many people, to get involved in this process. As you can see and probably you've now seen this already, we had a good response to the consultation

phase of the Bill last September. If we move on, how do I move it on?

202. MR HABTESLASIE: Next slide.

203. MR SMITH: You can see here there were 16,768 responses to the whole Bill. If we move on again, 95% of those responses, 15,863, related to the Whitmore to Madeley section. This shows you just what people are caring about. If we move on again?

204. MRS MURRAY: Can I just ask, were those specifically from the surrounding area?

205. MR SMITH: That's a very good question. Obviously if we've got 6,000 people in our community.

206. MRS MURRAY: That's why I asked the question.

207. MR SMITH: Exactly, very good point. A lot related to the Woodland Trust. I think you'll have a petition from the Woodland Trust about the significance on the woodland.

208. MR MOULD QC (DfT): If I may say so you'll find the answer to that on the screen in front of you.

209. MRS MURRAY: Yes, I do know, apologies.

210. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Over 15,000 in the form of a campaign initiated by the Woodland Trust raising concerns about proposals for Whitmore Wood.

211. MRS MURRAY: Thank you very much. Apologies.

212. MR SMITH: Thank you. Also in this report it does flat up the fact that the Whitmore to Madeley tunnel would effectively eliminate the negative impact of the project on the community of Whitmore and Madeley. If we could move on?

213. What we're saying here is yes, we've got clear evidence of concern for the environmental damage from the general public in the community and further afield that care about the woodland's effect. Also they've been flagging up as the report says about the potential traffic chaos. If you'd like to move on? So really, in the previous slide, sorry, there was reference to the fact that a number of people flagged up the fact

that there had been no reference to the local white hart deer in the HS2 reports. If we just move back a slide if you read further down, 'Some also raised concerns that the white deer seen locally at Whitmore Wood were not mentioned in the environmental statement.' White deer is a rare form of deer. I can assure you they are present as you'll see in a few minutes. If you'd like to move on? I'm talking about moving on to the map book now because the reason I'm saying this is that I feel that whilst I have been involved in this process and come across numerous articles and tried to keep pace with the amount and volume of material that I'm expected to read for a fulltime working business man is a big ask. But you pick up on these things and what I'm saying here is that HS2 referred to significantly affected resources in their map book. We understand that approach but in the local community the human impacts of course go far beyond what you're seeing on these map books. If we can just move on please? What I'm saying here, this is taken from the map book but 36 properties are affected according to this map book. We would argue, well I would say, if I could use this pointer here that the residents of Whitmore and Baldwins Gate will be badly affected by this scheme. Baldwins Gate being down here and Whitmore up here. Because of the noise, the dust and the congestion that this is going to create through this construction traffic. If we move on please?

214. Again, I don't want to repeat myself too much here but we are getting into this area of, you know, it doesn't really show another picture. Can we just move to slide A30(20) please? What I'm really trying to get onto here is to stress onto you what I have been told recently by members of the community because whilst I learnt that as an action group we couldn't petition directly on the basis of the House of Lords decision but I was given the opportunity, I'm very grateful for the Madeley Parish Council to be able to give evidence to you today about what people have told me. You've heard about the Baa Hill Farm Shop. If we go to the next slide? I spoke to Tina Williams the other day and I said to Tina, 'Look, could you give me a quote and also send me a picture of yourself so that we can put a human face to this problem?' Unfortunately she wasn't online. She doesn't do the computer thing, which is unfortunate but I was able to get this picture off Google. So it's a bit of a promotional picture so the big smile on her face is a little bit misleading as to how she actually feels but I can assure you when I spoke to her she is in total despair. As you can imagine her livelihood, what she's created, has been completely devastated. She's had five years of stress and turmoil that

has compounded problems that she already had with her family, with illness in her family. It is extremely wearing for somebody like her. If you'd like to move on?

215. I tried to gather as much evidence for you on the humanistic side. This is Slater family. I went to see Brenda Slater and of course they're still totally confused. There's been a lack of information at times for them. They found it very, very difficult. They're all down at Snape Hall Farm. If I can just move back a section, can I move back? I'd like to just explain another point I wanted to raise with you. I will go on more about the human side of things but if we can go back to A30(15) please? This picture which I came across the other day gives you a montage of what it's going to be like. But this is a picture that shows what the walker using the footpath might see looking back at the Slater's farm. As you can see, I can't see a great deal of difference according to this. Yes, there is on the bottom here. The lead south embankment, yes, I can see a little bit of this but you might think, 'Well what's the big issue?' But if you go to the next slide, on this slide you will see the lead in to the Slater's farm. This is Snape Hall Road. I don't know whether you've seen this picture but you can see on this picture there are many properties well in the £1 million bracket. People whose lives are devastated at the moment. They are in their latter stages, in their 70s and they are just left in turmoil here. There doesn't seem to be any photomontages that shows the road that leads in to Snape Hill Farm. This will be turned into a two lane service road that will be designed to support the HGV traffic and earth moving vehicles. So from a tranquil, very stylish road it's going to be devastating.

216. But coming back to the human side of it, if we can just move to the next slide? This here is an image which I think gives you a better indication of what we can expect. Here we have the northern portal. Can I move this? Here we go. The northern portal that comes out of the back of Whitmore Heath. My friend Bill Coddington, who I know is petitioning separately, at the moment he's living here just below the words 'HS2 pump station'. He'll be looking at a massive great big chunk of concrete. At the moment if you read his petition he still doesn't know how the hell he's going to get out of his house.

217. THE CHAIR: That was Bill?

218. MR SMITH: Bill Coddington.

219. THE CHAIR: Coddington. Thank you very much.
220. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Could we possibly have his address?
221. MR SMITH: Yes, I can give you that now, Fox Dene.
222. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Fox Dene. Thank you.
223. MR SMITH: I think that will be Snape Hall.
224. MR MOULD QC (DfT): That's right, thank you.
225. MR SMITH: So this picture gives you a better idea of what we're facing. If we can move to the next slide. So here we have for five years this is what we're going to be looking at. This is taken from the construction of HS1. Now five years for somebody in his 70s to have to cope with this day in, day out is a massive impact. So if you go back to page...
226. MR WIGGIN: Sorry, just on that point, the tunnel people would still have to see that if they were digging a tunnel.
227. MR SMITH: I beg your pardon, sir?
228. MR WIGGIN: The earthworks that you showed us the photograph of would still apply but just in a different place wouldn't they? So that's not going to change.
229. MR SMITH: In respect of the single tunnel the people on the heath and the people between Whitmore Heath, Madeley Park Wood, Madeley would not see that.
230. MR WIGGIN: But somebody else will.
231. MR SMITH: We're not saying we want to move it to somebody else's back yard.
232. MR WIGGIN: But if you dig a longer tunnel you have to take the soil out and you get that simply somewhere else, don't you?
233. MR SMITH: There will be less people somewhere else.
234. THE CHAIR: No, sorry, no-one else. Just a second, feel free to pass a note to the person giving evidence. We're going to Sheryll and then come back.

235. MRS MURRAY: Just on because as there are going to be vent shafts as I understand it, have you looked at the implications on the vent shafts?

236. MR SMITH: Vent shafts?

237. MRS MURRAY: Yes. The reason I ask that is with the longer tunnel there are two vent shafts that would be proposed and I understood from yesterday that some of the excavation may come out through those shafts. Am I right?

238. MR SMITH: Vent shafts, I don't know that term.

239. MR HABTESLASIE: A vent shaft.

240. MRS MURRAY: And so they could be in the same location or a similar location and they could have an impact on the residents around them. Maybe I should look at Mr Mould to ask him?

241. THE CHAIR: Feel free to answer, Mr Mould.

242. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Certainly, there are two possible arrangements for constructing a single tunnel. The report that we have published and which you have copies, proceeds on the assumption as you know from earlier things I've said that the single tunnel would be constructed from a main construction facility to the south of the A53.

243. MRS MURRAY: Yes.

244. MR MOULD QC (DfT): In order to construct the vent shafts it would be necessary still both to make use of Snape Hall Road for construction vehicles in order to get to the southern vent shaft site for construction. It would also be necessary to construct the temporary haul route to the eastern side of Whitmore Health which you may have seen on the plans, which is a feature of the construction arrangements we propose to relieve the density of construction traffic on Snape Hall Road itself. So we proposed a construction haul road to the other side of the hill so as to reduce the amount of use that Snape Hall Road would have to endure for the purposes of HS2. Those elements are common to both the construction of the twin tunnel scheme and the single-tunnel scheme.

245. MRS MURRAY: And there would be disruption even with the single tunnel?

246. MR MOULD QC (DfT): For the reasons I've just set out.

247. MRS MURRAY: Maybe not as bad but there would be disruption.

248. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Yes. In fairness to the county council, the county council yesterday suggested to you using the words of their witness the possibility of an alternative construction regime which would involve reconnecting the out of use railway line to the West Coast Main Line, creating a construction facility at the midpoint between the twin tunnels where the West Coast Main Line crosses the HS2 line. Then, having set up that facility, using rail based importation and exportation of materials to construct the tunnels through the vent shafts. We hadn't said anything to you about that yet. We may not need to say anything to you about it. That's obviously something you'll want to consider. Our current position is that we believe that the more realistic assumption is the assumption we have made which is that the single tunnel, if it were to be superimposed into the scheme, would be constructed from a construction facility to the south of the A53 Newcastle Road.

249. MRS MURRAY: Thank you very much, Mr Mould. I'm so sorry to interrupt your presentation.

250. MR SMITH: No, it's fine.

251. THE CHAIR: Do you want to continue?

252. MR SMITH: Yes, please. Well, obviously we are not party to the detailed engineering issues. A lot of this information is changing dramatically as it goes about. We've had recently obviously the movement of the southern portal, which until yesterday I didn't know anything about. It doesn't seem to be, we don't get a great deal of information at times from HS2. We have a change of personnel all the time. One minute you're dealing with one gentleman who says he's the engineer and he's trying to make it happen for you. These are people's lives. They're on hold. They're in their 70s and 80s. They don't know what to do. They would rather stay here. They'd rather stay in the house they've lived in for so many years and we wonder whether or not HS2 is minimising the damage here. You can see this picture here. You hear options from

David Hindle yesterday where they can take the spoil out through the tunnel. That would make a massive impact to this project.

253. If you can move on again please? I did mention earlier about the white deer. I put this in the presentation, please excuse me if I am repeating here. They do exist. That was taken ten days ago. That is where the southern portal is in the right-hand shot. The deer in the other shot on the left was taken on my drive. They are about. They're beautiful animals of course and we would like to help them. So if we can turn back to A30(23) please? This is a local company that is along Manor Road called Unreal Paintball. I went to see them a few days ago and talked to them, the proprietor John Green. He explained how devastating the whole thing will be to his business and effectively, I don't know whether he will have to close down or relocate but he can't work. If we can move on a slide? Adjacent to Mr Green's operation is Mr Furnival, John Furnival of Manor Farm. John gave me a quote saying that, 'Our family have farmed here for 90 years and we're hoping our children and their children will have had a chance of succession. HS2 is taking 40% of our farm and impacts massively both on ourselves, our employees and their families. A longer, deeper tunnel would be a giant leap forward.'

254. If we move on, the Vaughn family, home of 42 years and the lives of tens of thousands of people living locally will be severely affected by the proposed route for HS2. This is a quote I'm taking straight off what they've given me. 'The construction of major works such as a rail viaduct and road flyover will cause travel chaos on the A53 and take up to an hour each day from the lives of 15,000-20,000 motorists who use it. The environmental cost to flora, fauna and the people can be avoided with a longer, deeper tunnel. Costs amortised over 50 years would be such that future generations will wonder why we hesitated.' They're from Birch Tree Lane just above Snape Hall Road.

255. If we just move on? Vicky and Robbie from High Trees, Parkwood Drive, Baldwins Gate. Their quote to me was, 'We both work fulltime and the proposed works will dramatically affect our commute into work and our quality of life will be unusually affected by the environmental damage.' If we move on please? Bill Murray, I think you might have met Mr Murray before, Birch Tree Lane, just above Whitmore Heath.

256. THE CHAIR: We have indeed.

257. MR SMITH: I believe he's petitioning. His quote to me was, 'The vast majority of people on Whitmore Heath are well over 60. Nine people have died on Whitmore Heath since the route was announced in 2013. One person has died on Snape Hall Road, a total of ten. A death rate far in excess of that of any five years previous to the announcement. We all feel trapped.' If we can move on? Heidi Evans, 'We feel for our health and safety during the considerable disruption of the construction period. We'll lose access to our only local safe cycle route forever.' If we can move on? Finally, I'd just like to touch on the issue of traffic chaos. I know that it has been mentioned before by both the Madeley Parish petition and the Whitmore Parish petition. But this is a photograph I took across the M6 at this Whitmore Road, I think it might be referred to as Trentham Road, which we are very, very concerned about that leads on to junction 15. On a normal day it often backs up. If we can just go to the next slide please? What you have to remember, it's right next to an Eddie Stobart HGV distribution centre. There are lorries turning onto that junction day in, day out. It is often chaos. Certainly on the lead in down on to junction 15 that is what you're going to see.

258. Now I know that Mr Webb mentioned the Travis Baker report. But we were talking about it and if you look at the figures and think about the impact of the delay of people waiting in traffic each day. If they're delayed by an average of ten minutes on each journey, which I think is a modest figure to put in potentially for this. That will mean a total delay of 2, 284 hours of work each day. At an average take home pay rate of between £10-£15, which again is what they're taking home. It's not a figure we brought in for potential opportunity cost but the total cost of this time delay over the period of the two year construction period will be in the order of about £15 million. This doesn't take into account other extra day in and day out costs that would be incurred. I concede that would be what I talk about as opportunity costs. But thank you for listening, ladies and gentleman, Committee members. If you have any questions?

259. THE CHAIR: Sandy?

260. MR MARTIN: It's not actually a question for Mr Smith, it's a question for Mr Mould but it relates to what Mr Smith has just said. Are there any plans for improvement of junction 15 on the M6?

261. MR MOULD QC (DfT): There are no plans for improvement of that junction but there are, the need to ensure that the impact on this junction is limited as far as reasonable practicable is absolutely at the top of both our list of priorities and also the list of priorities of Highways England in relation to this scheme. One of the things that work continues to focus on is the issue of the presence of the Eddie Stobart facility and the particular layout of junction 15, which you don't need to know about in detail now but which will no doubt come up later on. Suffice to say that nobody on my side is in any doubt of the need to ensure that that junction is able to operate as efficiently as possible during the construction of the railway. What I would say, of course, the point I made to you already, that on our assumptions as to the construction of a single tunnel the duration of HS2 construction traffic going through this junction would actually increase as a result of the greater amount of duration of the construction facility to the south of the Newcastle Road. Because the majority of that traffic, that construction traffic, would come along from the east and to the east of the A53 at Whitmore.

262. MR MARTIN: The duration would increase but the level of peak would also reduce.

263. MR MOULD QC (DfT): The absolute peak would go down. Not by much as you saw on that slide I showed you earlier. But to suggest that there's any material difference in terms of the impact through this junction, whether you have the twin tunnel scheme or the single-tunnel scheme I suggest is at least questionable.

264. THE CHAIR: Thank you very much.

265. MR SMITH: Could I make a point?

266. THE CHAIR: Yes.

267. MR SMITH: It is assumed that the traffic has to go on that route through to the M6. As I know the area very well I do know that the A51, if I was going to build the track and do it, that's a far better route in at the Darlaston. You've got a far better entry. At the moment there are 600 vehicles a day using that junction, junction 15 where the Eddie Stobart is. I think HS2 figures say that it will increase to 1,800 a day.

268. THE CHAIR: Correct. During the peak hours.

269. MR SMITH: Is that per day?

270. THE CHAIR: Actually just to account, we're going to come back to this issue potentially in the future so I'm going to cut you off those to focus on the issue of the tunnel at this stage.

271. MR SMITH: Sorry.

272. THE CHAIR: So I think we've concluded. Mr Mould, do you want to say anything at this stage?

273. MR MOULD QC (DfT): I don't have any questions to ask this witness. I was proposing to try and wrap up on the various points raised during the course of the morning when we come to respond this afternoon if that's convenient?

274. THE CHAIR: That makes sense. Shall we get the next witness in?

275. MR HABTESLASIE: May I make a few concluding remarks.

276. THE CHAIR: Yes, sorry.

277. MR HABTESLASIE: I'll be very short indeed.

278. THE CHAIR: One minute maybe.

279. MR HABTESLASIE: Yes, if that.

280. THE CHAIR: Brilliant.

281. MR HABTESLASIE: The headline point is the qualitative impact and how they weigh in the cost benefit analysis. That's really where we've tried to focus and to assist the Committee. From our point of view a couple of points that we would flag is that as the Committee has already heard the benefits of the single tunnel as against the two tunnel proposal, there's mostly agreement between the petitioners and HS2. On cost, we don't have the expertise to make substantive comments on that. It's really a matter for the expertise of the Committee. We would just invite the Committee to take, I won't use the word 'sceptical' but certainly a robust approach to the cost differential. We would say that HS2 has shown that where it really applies its mind it is able to come up with solutions and to reduce costs. We would say that's realistically a factor that the

Committee should take into account going forward. Thank you very much.

282. THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. Thank you for your time. Thank you to all of the witnesses. If we have a break we'll come back at 11.25.

Sitting suspended.

On resuming—

283. THE CHAIR: Mr Hutton?

Graham Hutton

Submissions by Mr Hutton

284. MR HUTTON: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman and Honourable Members. I'm going to dispense with the evidence because I put it in writing. Mr Croxall has written to me. I received that yesterday and he's also given me an email regarding procurement and the fact that his written assurance that he's given me will be put into all the subcontractors' contracts. However I would like this Committee to press HS2 Ltd for an undertaking which is a legal obligation where HS2 has to come back to Parliament rather than the Department for Transport regarding not using Manor Road for construction traffic. The Madeley Park community and the houses on Manor Road, we will face construction traffic at either end of our road. The only way in and out for the 150-odd houses is Manor Road. I accept that an assurance can be put into subcontractors' contracts. However it's still not a legal undertaking in definition of undertaking and assurances.

285. The second thing I would like to, what I'm saying is HS2 have conceded that they will not use Manor Road or the southern part of Manor Road for construction traffic. But the residents, I can only get around 238 plus my wife, who's 240 in a week. I've got another 30 that would have loved to have been part of this. What they argue is HS2 have given assurances before and they've taken them away. They took them away when they put a detailed traffic plan into Parliament, which they have now said was a mistake. But a detailed traffic plan showing all the traffic in 188 haul trucks a day go up and down our part of Manor Road, we would argue is quite a hefty mistake. So if HS2 has made an assurance and taken assurance away and then re-given us an assurance verbally

and since we petitioned Parliament, in writing, could they not just lift that to an undertaking? Then the people who live there would say, 'Yes, Parliament has spoken and listened to us.'

286. THE CHAIR: Can I just clarify, sir, if you get the undertaking you're happy?

287. MR HUTTON: Yes.

288. THE CHAIR: There are no further points or there are a series of other points?

289. MR HUTTON: No, we would like the Committee to recommend to the county council lowering the speed limit – the 40 limit down to 30 and the rest of it down to 40 during the construction phase only.

290. THE CHAIR: Okay.

291. MR HUTTON: Because if there's going to be 50% of non-HGV traffic, which we expect from workers coming and going and most of those are bound to be in rush hours, morning and evening. It would be far safer if we had a lowering the speed limit for that period. It would be up to the county council after but a recommendation from this Committee to the county council we believe would carry enormous weight. That's it.

292. THE CHAIR: Thank you for your brevity. Mr Mould, make us happy.

Response by Mr Mould

293. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Well, I can make you and indeed I hope Mr Hutton happy but perhaps not in the way he expects because actually it's an assurance which if it's breached falls within the jurisdiction of Parliament. That is the effect of the undertaking that I gave on behalf of the Secretary of State when I made my opening speech to you a few weeks ago. An undertaking would be enforced by Her Majesty's Courts. As I understand it, the petitioner would like Parliament to be the ultimate arbiter of whether the commitment not to use the southern part of Manor Road has been complied with. As I say it is an assurance rather than an undertaking that gives him that ultimate right.

294. The reason why the promoter does not favour giving undertakings, that is to say entering into a contract, because that's what an undertaking is, entering in a contract in

relation to this sort of thing is because as you've heard there are many, many people who essentially want to have the benefit of the commitment not to use the southern part of Manor Road. If we were to enter into a contract we'd have to enter into that contract with each and every one of those people. So we'd face the prospect of perhaps hundreds of people on Manor Road each being able to say that contract hasn't been complied with. If we do that for this issue we'll set a precedent that we'll find it difficult to resist for literally thousands or tens of thousands of people along HS2 as a whole. That is never the way in which it's been done in relation to schemes of this kind, which have been brought forward by hybrid Bill. I would suggest it's not a sensible precedent to set.

295. As Mr Hutton told you he has been informed by email a few days ago, very grateful to him for raising this because he's absolutely right the assurance will be given contractual force but it will be given contractual force in a way that actually makes sense. That is to say it will be written in to any of the contracts and subcontracts which relate to the construction of HS2 works and relate to the use of any part of Manor Road for those purposes. So each and every contract of that kind will say to the contractor, 'You are not allowed to use the southern part of Manor Road unless firstly, there is a genuine emergency. Or secondly, the Highway Authority in the exercise of their statutory powers under schedule 17 to what will then be the HS2 Phase Two Act, unless the Highway Authority require the use of that road for the purposes of HS2.' We don't believe that they will. There's nothing in what they've said to us or to you so far that suggests that they will but we cannot prevent the Highway Authority from exercising their statutory powers under the Act. Subject to those two caveats this assurance will be binding on each and every contractor and subcontractor and if it's not complied with and the other routes to securing compliance do not secure compliance, then the ultimate arbiter will be Parliament who will hold the Secretary of State to account at the despatch box in the House of Commons. So Mr Hutton gets what he wants from an assurance. He doesn't get it from an undertaking.

296. THE CHAIR: Sandy?

297. MR MARTIN: Yes. Mr Mould, can you remind us of the difference between the northern part of Manor Road and the southern part of Manor Road?

298. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Yes, if we put up please CT05232, I think. Yes, this is exactly the slide, thank you. Here is Manor Road. The northern part of Manor Road which runs from the A525, which is just off screen to the left and this alignment here which is the existing route. For the purposes of this Bill the northern part stops at this point here.

299. MR MARTIN: Right.

300. MR MOULD QC (DfT): And we require access along that route in order to gain access to this construction site here, this work site. And also to enable the works to be carried out for the off-line diversion of Manor Road by way of an over bridge over the railway, which is the work that you see here. The area that was, by mistake, shown on the plan as published, as you can see, is from this point here southwards. That's the point that it extends obviously off the plan. That's the mistake that you've been told about. It was a mapping error.

301. MR MARTIN: Okay so there's no intention of having works vehicles using the hump back bridge at all.

302. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Absolutely no. It was a pure mapping error. Mr Hutton was completely right to raise it with us in order to provide reassurance for those who he represents today. We've given that reassurance in the form of the assurance that he has raised with you. That so far as my case is concerned, that provides the protection that he requires. I can tell you, perhaps I've answered his petition but just while we have it on the screen because a point was raised earlier about Manor Road. It was suggested to you by an earlier petitioner that there would be a significant risk of closure of Manor Road whilst the HS2 works were being carried out which might affect people's ability to get to and from Madeley from Whitmore to the south. That was focused as I understand it on the period which was required to construct this new over bridge to carry Manor Road over the HS2 railway that's being shown on the screen in front of you. That will be an offline diversion, which as you know means we'll do that construction whilst the existing route remains open. There will be a very brief period of closure, perhaps over a weekend, whilst we tie in each end of that new route. But subject to that very brief period of closure Manor Road will remain open for through traffic throughout the construction of HS2.

303. MR MARTIN: That is interesting. I mean that in itself produces quite a serious engineering challenge in that the whole point about the Manor Road diversion is that it needs to go up and over the top of a quite steep embankment. I must admit I find it hard to see how you can build the embankment without destroying the present road and build the new road without having the embankment there already.

304. MR MOULD QC (DfT): My understanding of the programme is that in order to ensure that everything in place so as to minimise disruption to through traffic in the way that I've described is that you carry out the construction of the over bridge carrying the new road, the diverted section. You construct that early in the programme so that you can make the tie in as seamlessly as possible. But whilst, as a layperson, I share your mystification sometimes as to how engineers are able to do these things, I am always told by those behind me who are specialists in the engineering profession that whilst these things might seem difficult to us they are absolutely bread and butter stuff to engineers. If you'd like more than that rather flippant response I can ask Mr Smart at an appropriate point to come in and explain it to you.

305. MR MARTIN: I'm not an engineer.

306. THE CHAIR: If we need more we'll come back to you. Mr Hutton, it strikes me there's two options for you now, to accept what Mr Mould has said and say you're happy or let us go away. We've got independent legal counsel, which we can talk to about the differences between assurances and undertakings and we can make a decision in terms of what we would recommend. Either option is available to you.

307. MR HUTTON: Well, Mr Chairman, I would put myself in your hands. You have the power and you have the access to the expertise. It might well be that what Mr Mould has said is the answer and if that's so, then I accept it. However I'll leave it with you.

308. THE CHAIR: I suspect Mr Mould is correct. But rather than agreeing with him let us go away and check that and then come to some conclusion.

309. MR HUTTON: And if you could also recommend to the county council who are the Highways Authority that they look at the speed limit.

310. THE CHAIR: At the limit. We will.

311. MR HUTTON: Thank you very much.

312. THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Hutton.

313. MR MOULD QC (DfT): In the event that you receive advice that suggests that I may not be correct, and obviously I try and claim on this as much as I can but I have to accept that sometimes even I might make a mistake, then I would simply say it would be very helpful to know on what point you're being told things may be different. Because I would obviously wish to be able to assist you further on that in that event.

314. THE CHAIR: Message understood and we will speak to you if we've got a slightly more radical view than that which you were asserting.

315. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Thank you very much.

316. THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Hutton. As we're getting the next witness I think in error I should have called you very early on, Mr Mould, I believe you had some news about a tree?

317. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Yes. I know that there's a great deal of interest, both amongst members of the Committee and also locally about the fate of Noddy's oak and you raised that, I think, with one of those on the site visit and also we discussed it briefly during one of your earlier meetings. What I am able to say to you is that Noddy's oak will be retained. We will ensure that Noddy's oak is not cut down as part of the HS2 works and an assurance in appropriate terms will be given to Staffordshire County Council and Lichfield District Council just to make good on that commitment.

318. THE CHAIR: How old was that tree?

319. MR MOULD QC (DfT): There, I'm afraid I'm immediately displaying the fact that I'm not omniscient, I can't remember precisely how old it is, but it's certainly one of those classed as an ancient tree, or a veteran tree.

320. THE CHAIR: Something like 800.

321. THE CHAIR: Good news, thank you very much. So we're now coming to the

Woodland Trust. Mr Taylor?

The Woodland Trust

Evidence of Mrs Ryan

322. MR TAYLOR QC: Good morning, Chair. I'm here representing the Woodland Trust, to my right, I have Mrs Luci Ryan and if we could have the slide A32(2), I'll introduce Mrs Ryan and then I'm going to ask her to give you short presentation. Hopefully, that will assist you.

323. You are Mrs Luci Ryan, is that correct?

324. MRS RYAN: Yes, that's correct.

325. MR TAYLOR QC: And you're employed by the Woodland Trust as an environmental impact assessor, is that correct?

326. MRS RYAN: Yes.

327. MR TAYLOR QC: You have an honours degree in ecology and a Masters of research in the science of the environment.

328. MRS RYAN: Yes, I do.

329. MR TAYLOR QC: The rest of your experience, I think, is set out in the documentation the Committee has at A31(3), paragraphs 2.1-2.3. Right, I'm going to ask you to give your presentation please.

330. MRS RYAN: Good morning. I just want to say thank you about Noddy's oak, that's very good news. So, as we were saying I am Luci Ryan, I work for the Woodland Trust. The Woodland Trust is the UK's largest woodland conservation charity and we own and manage over a thousand sites across the whole of the UK. All those sites are free to access. We have 500,000 members and supporters, and we're widely viewed as a national authority on woods and trees, and in particular, ancient woodland, which is why I'm here to talk to you today.

331. The Trust's vision is a UK rich in native woods and trees, both for people and animals, and supporting this aim is our conservation approach of no further loss of

irreplaceable ancient woodland. If we move onto the next slide, A32(3) please. Thank you.

332. So, ancient woodland; I've been listening to what other people have had to say and I've been really pleased to say that lots of people have mentioned ancient woodland but I thought it might be useful for the Committee if I do a quick overview of what ancient woodland is. There's more details in my written evidence which I think you've got in your packs in front of you.

333. So, ancient woodland is woodland that, in England, has existed since at least 1600, although some of those woods may date back as far as the last ice age, which might be 10,000 years ago. There's sometimes a little bit of woodland and ancient and veteran trees. It's perfectly possible to have an ancient woodland without a single ancient or veteran tree within it, and this is purely because woods are dynamic places – well, lots of tree species don't live 400 years, so you won't get 400 year old birch tree. So, trees come, trees go through management practices or through natural processes. So, an ancient woodland doesn't have to have any ancient or veteran trees in. They often do, but they don't have to.

334. Ancient woodland is the country's richest terrestrial habitat with over 256 species of conservation concern having been recorded within them, but unfortunately, ancient woodland is very much in decline, with less than 3% of England surface area covered with ancient woodland at present. I know from the work that I do, it's very much under threat on a daily basis; we're aware of around about 740 ancient woodlands around the UK at the moment that are under threat from various developments.

335. It's an irreplaceable habitat, so it's impossible to recreate, it doesn't matter how many trees you plant, you will never be able to recreate what's been lost, and this is purely because ancient woodland is formed over such long time periods under climate conditions that don't exist any more, under management practices that don't exist any more; you just can't recreate what's gone before.

336. So ancient woodland makes a huge contribution to our natural heritage, but it also makes a huge contribution to our historic heritage, because it hasn't existed on its own, it often contains relics of past management practices that give glimpses into past historic activity within Britain.

337. They are wonderful places and I think they should be valued in the same way that we value the built environment, so our castles and our stately homes, I think they're up there with them. Can we have A43(4) please?

338. So this leads me on to Government ambitions. The good news is ancient woodland does have some – sorry?

339. THE CHAIR: Can you just clarify, there's lots of talk about transportation of soil, but I'm unclear the depth, where the soil is different, what's different about the soil in an ancient woodland?

340. MRS RYAN: It's undisturbed, so the fact it hasn't been dug up, or it hasn't been subjected to farming practices, modern farming practices and the sort of inherent pesticides and things like that. So, you've got to think of it holistically; it's the entire community of plants and animals there and just the lack of disturbance is what makes these places special and lots of species that live in ancient woodlands can't tolerate disturbance.

341. THE CHAIR: So is it pointless taking the soil and putting it somewhere else? Or is there some marginal benefit?

342. MRS RYAN: That's a very good question. I actually wrote a paper, back in 2013 on this. I reviewed every single piece of evidence I could find on translocation of ancient woodland soils because it's not done, it's not a common practice, a) because there's not a lot of ancient woodland and it's quite a modern technique. There's very few examples of it ever having been done. What's really interesting is, if it has been done and it's failed, nobody ever publishes the work on it, so when you do see published work on it, it always tends to be where they're talking about, yes, we started to get bluebells coming back, or wood anemones or whatever. But what happens, it's done with diggers, it's not done with trowels or spades, the trees will all be removed. They might move some coppice stools, so typically hazel coppice stools, where a tree's been cut down as part of its management practice. There are examples that being moved, but generally trees aren't moved, unless they're moved as dead wood habitat, once they've been cut down. So, the wood goes, you've lost the ancient woodland.

343. THE CHAIR: And how much soil is taken in that?

344. MRS RYAN: It depends, it varies from site to site, depending on the soil and each translocation site has to be site specific, there isn't a one size fits all with this, but I think the important point to make is, this is such a new process, and the only – well, the longest example of this being monitored is the A2/M2 link which I think has been mentioned previously, and that was only monitored for 10 years which just isn't long enough to prove that this is a successful process.

345. THE CHAIR: Sure.

346. MRS MURRAY: Can you just explain to me; you said the soil is undisturbed, but a lot of examples that I've seen, there has been planting of conifers.

347. MRS RYAN: Yes.

348. MRS MURRAY: And so surely, if you're planting conifers, then you're disturbing soil?

349. MRS RYAN: Yes, it's not on a scale that you would see. Say, if you dug the soil up and moved it elsewhere and then planted something on it, it's not on that sort of scale. And it's known, so plantation on ancient woodland, which is a form of ancient woodland and Whitmore Wood, which we're talking about later, half of that is plantation. That is classed as a replaceable habitat as well because it can be restored back to native broadleaf habitat cover. So, it's a different sort of disturbance. But it's accepted, it's not just me saying that.

350. THE CHAIR: So sorry, I think we've got a few more questions and then we will get back to your presentation; I started at a tangent. I think it's worthwhile, Sandy then Bill.

351. MR MARTIN: At the risk of putting words into your mouth Mrs Ryan, is it right to say that soil is not just a substance; it's also got a structure to it?

352. MRS RYAN: Yes.

353. MR MARTIN: And that if you move it, it's likely the structure will be destroyed?

354. MRS RYAN: Yes, and also lots of plants. So, for example, bluebells translocate quite well and they're often the ones that, because they're bulbs, they're often the ones

that people say, 'Oh, the bluebells have come back', but that's because bluebell bulbs do translocate relatively easily, but lots of other plant species within ancient woodland don't translocate easily.

355. What you find in sites where there has been translocation taking place, you'll see in the first few years, you might see typical ancient woodland plant species reappearing, but because the soil's been disturbed, there's lots of plant species that actually like to grow in disturbed soil and they will suddenly come up and start out-competing the woodland species, so by year 10, you might actually start to see woodland species dropping out because other species, more generalist species are out-competing other species because the soil's been dug up and moved.

356. The other point I'd like to make about translocated soils; if you translocate soil and put it somewhere else, and I know it is proposed all the way through on all phases of High Speed Two, those woodlands that are planted have got no protection at all. They're not marked on maps as being translocated ancient woodlands, they are just there and I know the A2/M2, a prime example, there was translocation done on that.

357. Now, some of the woods that were moved, for want of a better word, and other woods weren't moved, the new woods that were planted on translocated soils, actually came under threat from the new proposed Lower Thames crossing and Highways England weren't aware, until we pointed it out, that one of the schemes was going through two woodlands that had been planted as part of a translocation as a result of the A2/M2. So you end up with this insidious loss of ancient woodland. So, I think that's something that needs to be borne in mind. The only thing you're guaranteed if you're translocating an ancient woodland is that one's been lost.

358. THE CHAIR: Bill.

359. MR WIGGIN: Yes. Of the 256 species of conservation concern, how many suffer if you move the soil?

360. MRS RYAN: I'm afraid I don't know the answer.

361. MR WIGGIN: But you're the expert on this subject and if we were to move this soil, what are we really putting at risk?

362. MRS RYAN: Well, the ancient woodland because what you've –
363. MR WIGGIN: No, no, you've already ruled out the tree bit as not being relevant, it's the soil?
364. MRS RYAN: No, but the ancient woodland is not just the trees, that's the point, it's everything and ancient woodland is a sum of its complex...
365. MR WIGGIN: So that's why I asked you exactly what species would be at risk.
366. MRS RYAN: Well I can't give you a number, I'm afraid, out of 256.
367. MR WIGGIN: But you said that there were 256 species of conservation concern; how many of those don't like the soil being moved?
368. MRS RYAN: I'm afraid I don't know the answer to that.
369. MR WIGGIN: You don't know that. Sorry, I'll leave it there.
370. MR MARTIN: Not all facts are known are they, I suppose.
371. MR WIGGIN: I'm the species champion of the spreading bellflower which is a woodland flower that likes the soil being disturbed and needs to be disturbed in order to succeed and it's exceptionally endangered, so that's why I'm curious as to exactly what you're trying to preserve here.
372. MRS RYAN: Right, okay.
373. MR WIGGIN: Because it isn't the trees, is it?
374. MRS RYAN: Well it's a combination and I think the point I'm trying to make is that all species that thrive in ancient woodland – so those 256 species, you won't get all of those in one wood. But species thrive in ancient woodland, typically don't like disturbance of any sort, so they don't like noise increases, they don't like changes to light, they don't like changes to wind speed, they don't like soil being dug up, because they are designed to live in undisturbed systems which is what an ancient wood traditionally be. So, if you start disturbing it by either increasing the edges on the ancient woodland because you're putting a railway down the side of it, or whatever, those species, that habitat is no longer suitable and viable for them. Because ancient

woodland is so fragmented across the landscape, they often can't move to another area because there isn't another area for them to move to.

375. MR WIGGIN: Okay.

376. THE CHAIR: My fault for the diversion, that's useful. Government's ambition.

377. MRS RYAN: So, Government ambition – and you've got full notes on this in my written evidence in front of you. I thought I'd just give you a brief overview. So, as I've said, ancient woodland is irreplaceable and ancient woodland does have some protection, but that's through planning law, it doesn't have statutory protection at present.

378. The good news is that, over the last few years, there's been a definite movement towards improving protection of the environment, and in particular, improving protection of ancient woodland because it's recognised that despite it being irreplaceable, we're still seeing losses of ancient woodland on a daily basis.

379. So, in January this year, the Prime Minister launched the 25-year plan for the environment and she said that our goal is a healthy and beautiful natural environment which we can all enjoy and which we can be proud to pass onto the next generation. Within the 25-year plan, it recognises that ancient woodland is irreplaceable. So, in conjunction with this, we've got the national planning and policy framework which is currently being revised and is out for consultation at the moment, the re-wording of it. The new draft wording states that any development impacting on ancient woodland should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons for its removal, and that use of wholly exceptional actually will bring the collection of ancient woodland in line with Grade I listed buildings, that's the wording that's used for them, at the moment.

380. So, what's proposed at the moment between Whitmore and Madeley appears to be out of kilter with the Government's state of direction of travel on the protection of the environment, and in particular, ancient woodland. Can I have slide A43(5) please?

381. So the impacts of HS2 near Whitmore. Now, I think you've heard from lots of petitioners over the last few days about this. So, I'm going to use the same terminology that High Speed 2 have used to avoid confusion, because I know there's lots of different

ways that the tunnel's been described, so if I say the proposed scheme, I mean the two tunnel option, and if I say the single tunnel option, I mean the single tunnel that runs from Whitmore to Madeley.

382. So, the proposed scheme, just in this area will cause the loss of around 6.7 hectares of ancient woodland. Now, when you compare this to Phase One which I've also been involved in, if you look at it per kilometre of track being laid, and take into account there's 64 kilometres of track being laid on Phase 2A, the damage done by Phase 2A is actually 23% greater than the damage done by Phase One when you're talking about ancient woodland.

383. By adopting the single tunnel option, that would save 6.4 hectares of ancient woodland, which would mean that the impact of the scheme on ancient woodland for Phase 2A would be instantly reduced by 60%. And it would actually have 62% less impact per kilometre than Phase One. So, the Trust consider that the single tunnel should be adopted to avoid this huge single loss of ancient woodland from just one location. Can I have slide A42(6) please?

384. So, Whitmore Wood itself. I was lucky enough to be out there last Thursday, on the hottest day of the year, it was lovely. So, Whitmore Wood is beautiful woodland and I don't know if you had a chance to visit it when you were out and about a couple of weeks ago. So, when I was there last week, the bluebells were just starting to come into flower and I heard and saw a woodpecker. It is a really lovely wood and I think the point that was raised about plantation, Whitmore's a very good example of this because part of Whitmore is what's known as ancient semi natural woodland, which is classic broadleaf, what people think of when they think of ancient woodland, and part of it is plantation, mostly larch. But the ground flora between the two is almost indistinguishable because bluebells carpet the whole lot.

385. So, it's an area of 19 hectares and Phase 2A will remove six hectares of this. The woodland is also a site of biological importance which is a county level designation and I don't know if Staffordshire County Council mentioned this yesterday when they were giving evidence. Different counties use different terminology, but in Staffordshire's case, it's a way of demonstrating those high value sites which really contribute to the nature of conservation resource for a county, so Whitmore's a really special place and

losing six hectares, I mean, that's a huge area to lose from a single woodland. It would be better if a single tunnel went underneath it. Can I have slide A32(7) please?

386. So, in summary, we'd like the Committee to direct High Speed 2 to adopt the proposed single tunnel option for the reasons that I've laid out, because it would save 6.4 hectares of ancient woodland and reduce the impact of Phase 2A by 60% and also mean the impact of Phase 2A is less than the impact of Phase One. As you've heard from lots of other petitioners, the single tunnel option would provide many other benefits for the local community and economy; the reason for the tunnel isn't purely to save the ancient woodland, as you are well aware because you've heard it from other people, there are lots of other reasons that people want this tunnel.

387. We consider that the adoption of the single tunnel option would confirm the Government's commitment to protect the environment which has recently been re-stated with the 25 year plan for the environment and we don't consider that the circumstances around the proposed tunnel option, i.e. the tunnel and Whitmore and the tunnel at Madeley, meet the definition of wholly exceptional because we know that there is another engineering solution to this. It's just it costs more. So, we consider that the additional cost is worth the single tunnel option in the benefits it will give.

388. MR WIGGIN: How much do you think that additional cost per hectare is?

389. MRS RYAN: I don't know per hectare. I know the additional cost is a hundred...

390. MR WIGGIN: It is £25 million per hectare. Roughly.

391. MRS RYAN: Yes.

392. MR WIGGIN: And you think that's worth it?

393. MRS RYAN: Ancient woodlands are irreplaceable, so you can't put a price on it.

394. MR WIGGIN: Can you think of a single listed building after Buckingham Palace at £25 million a hectare?

395. MRS RYAN: I'm afraid I don't know.

396. MR WIGGIN: I don't think so either. No, that's fine, thank you.

397. MR TAYLOR QC: Thank you. That concludes our presentation this morning. Unless there's anything else we can assist the Committee with.

398. THE CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Mould, whilst the witnesses are here, have you got anything?

Response by Mr Mould

399. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Thank you. I wasn't proposing to ask any questions, I was going to just draw attention as a point of information, to the question of protection of new planting and translocated soils in the medium to long term. The witness raised that and I thought if I just drew your attention to the reference now, if she wants to say anything more about that, then she can do so.

400. THE CHAIR: Seems sensible.

401. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Is that okay? So, first of all, if I put up – it's information paper E2, which is the information paper that that deals with ecology and ecological matters. This is a table on page 12 and you'll see, if we just go to the heading, it deals with a variety of habitat types and it gives an indication of the duration of monitoring, management and maintenance during establishment, and of monitoring intervals and then comments about those habitat types.

402. If we go down to woodland, we'll see that the period for monitoring, management and maintenance is 10-50 years after establishment. So if you think about an area of newly planted woodland using translocated soils from ancient woodland disturbed by the railway, 10-50 years. And the intervals for monitoring, you see set out, six months, and then those years set out in the table.

403. You'll see it says something about ancient woodland in the second bullet point on the right hand side. 'Up to 50 years during establishment for those areas that are created specifically for ecological mitigation compensation, 50 year period would be provided for all locations where the translocation of ancient woodland soils is proposed'.

404. And then the following paragraphs show you briefly the range of techniques. Basically, there are three arrangements that might be deployed in order to secure maintenance, monitoring and protection of this kind of translocation, new planting. The

first is the land goes back to the landowner, subject to an agreement by the landowner to undertake those activities. Secondly, it goes to an appropriate non-governmental organisation, such as the local wildlife trust, or indeed, the Woodland Trust. Thirdly, it remains with the Secretary of State and he or she appoints an appropriate person to manage, maintain and monitor.

405. The final point is that Clause 48 of the Bill that is before you, which is headed, 'Enforcement of environmental covenants', provides a bespoke regime, both to ensure that appropriate obligations are placed on whichever of those three categories of persons as charged with the job of being custodian of this kind of mitigation facility, and secondly, to prohibit, restrict that person using the land in question for any purpose which might jeopardise the monitoring, maintenance and protection of the woodland.

406. One of the reasons why that clause is there is to ensure there can be no doubt under the general law about whether these covenants would pass on a transmission of title to the land in question. The effect of that clause, if brought into law, would be to make sure that there are legal teeth to the monitoring, protection and management arrangements that I have shown you in the table in information paper E2.

407. So, I understand that the witness was saying – when she said, 'There's no protection at all following translocation', she means that the translocated soils cease to enjoy the protection that designation of ancient woodland gives in policy terms, but I'm focusing on the practicalities. In the case of HS2, there's comprehensive protection both in terms of the process of translocation, monitoring and managing and there is comprehensive legal protection to ensure that what is created will continue to be protected throughout the lifetime of the railway.

408. THE CHAIR: Bill Wiggin.

409. MR WIGGIN: So how much have you allocated in your budget to do this part of the work? Not the legal part, the actual practical part?

410. MR MOULD QC (DfT): I can't give you a figure off the top of my head in relation to the cost, but I can certainly give you an indication of the land budget that is proposed. I can show you a slide which gives you that information. Can we just put up, please, slide P39(4)?

411. You can see in the top right hand corner, ‘Area of direct loss of ancient woodland at Whitmore Wood, six hectares. Area of receptor site for ancient woodland soil, six hectares. Area of new planting to be provided in response to the loss of ancient woodland, including ancient woodland soil receptor area, 36 hectares. Area of enhancement of existing ancient woodland, 12.9 hectares’.

412. You can see the areas in question have been identified on the plan and they’re marked with the boxes. So you have the area of Whitmore Wood itself, you’ve got the area of direct loss which is covered by the red colouring, the column of land there. There are opportunities to enhance the area of Whitmore Wood which is not subject to loss to HS2. There are opportunities to translocate soils, to plant.

413. Peter Miller will explain this to you in more detail, but one of the points he will make is that we’ve taken the opportunity, as you can see on plan, to reinstate some of the connections between Whitmore Wood and other areas of ancient woodland in the vicinity, such as, for example, Hey Sprink, which is this broad area of ancient woodland here. That has two advantages. First of all, it helps to give something back in terms of woodland cover, but it also helps to provide corridors for wildlife, principally for bats that are the principle species in the ancient woodland affected by the route. Bats like to travel along habitat, vegetation corridors, and what we’re doing here is, we’re drawing the bats away from going across the railway line...

414. MR WIGGIN: I’m very fond of bats but I did ask you how much it cost. I gave Luci quite a hard time about the cost of this, so it’s not one you can dodge with a few bats, Mr Mould.

415. MR MOULD QC (DfT): I’ve given you the land budget, and I said to you at the start of this, I can’t give you a cost off the top of my head, but I will get a cost for you.

416. MR WIGGIN: Yes, come close, come close.

417. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Well, I’m not going to wait.

418. MR WIGGIN: I can wait, that’s fine.

419. THE CHAIR: Only until this afternoon. If that’s possible.

420. MR WIGGIN: Bat-gate.

421. MR MOULD QC (DfT): If you work on the basis that agricultural land costs £10,000 an acre and there are 2.2 hectares in an acre, acres in a hectare?

422. MR WIGGIN: Well you did struggle with the cost of moving the soil yesterday, and actually, you've got quite a lot of soil to move, so it's quite a big bill, if you're translocating soil. We'll wait till you've got your –

423. MR MOULD QC (DfT): I'm just surprised by what you've just said to me.

424. MR WIGGIN: Well there's earthworks to be done as well. It's not just a land value.

425. MR MOULD QC (DfT): You said 'struggle'; I was surprised by that, but there we are.

426. MR WIGGIN: I'm sorry?

427. MR MOULD QC (DfT): You said we struggled with it.

428. MR WIGGIN: Yes, you did. Because you had to take the cost over the whole project.

429. MR MOULD QC (DfT): I see what you mean.

430. MR WIGGIN: And you couldn't identify the individual costs.

431. MR MOULD QC (DfT): You're absolutely right about that.

432. MR WIGGIN: Which was fine yesterday, but it's not fine today. Okay?

433. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Understood, yes.

434. MR WIGGIN: Thank you.

435. THE CHAIR: Just two brief questions from me: who owns the wood at the moment?

436. MR MOULD QC (DfT): It's not owned by Snape Hall Farm. That's not the

answer to your question, but I will remind myself of who it is and give you that after lunch as well.

437. THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. The other one is just on Woodland Trust; just out of curiosity, what's your annual budget staffing numbers? This has raised a lot of points, some of your research of the inadequacies of the material out there, and I'm just wondering what resources you've got, longer term, and whether you're 100 people turning over £10 million, or half a million with three.

438. MRS RYAN: Well, to give you an idea, so I work within the campaigns team, and there's five of us and we're not all full time, so I'm not full time. One of my colleagues is full time, and we cover the whole of the UK and we're obviously funded by donations from the public, the campaign is entirely funded by donations by the public, so I don't know the actual budget that we have. But I do know that there's few of us to cover...

439. THE CHAIR: It would be helpful if you could just send in a note to contextualise the resource available to look at these issues on an ongoing basis.

440. MRS RYAN: Yeah. So obviously, we've been involved in the High Speed 2 issue. I've been involved in it for over five years and some colleagues have been involved slightly longer, so it takes an enormous amount of our resource.

441. THE CHAIR: Excellent.

442. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Whitmore Estate is the owner of Whitmore Wood.

443. MR WIGGIN: I've got one more question. Can I ask a question?

444. THE CHAIR: Yes.

445. MR WIGGIN: Thank you. I was very keen to save Noddy's oak but –

446. MRS RYAN: So was I.

447. MR WIGGIN: And I'm delighted with the news we've had, but I think it's very helpful to know exactly what the species losses are, which is why I pressed you earlier.

448. MRS RYAN: Right, okay.

449. MR WIGGIN: Because if you look at the map on the screen, A39(4), there's a big patch with a red line around it. But quite potentially, not all of that will be destroyed.

450. MRS RYAN: No.

451. MR WIGGIN: So actually, getting the real detail would help the Committee tremendously, rather than just a blanket, all woodland is good and all railways are bad.

452. MRS RYAN: Well it's not just all – obviously, all woodland is good, is in particular, all ancient woodland is good and it's not a fact for debate, that ancient woodland is irreplaceable; that's accepted by the Government, it's accepted by Natural England, it's accepted by High Speed 2, and it's widely accepted that any loss is irreplaceable. So, as I say, this is always tricky when you're talking about ancient woodland because people want you to come up with one sort of killer species, 'It contains a lesser spotted whatever', or – and quite often they don't, it's the combination of species in there may not be found anywhere else. I think that's the point that I'm trying to make but I know you're seeing Staffordshire Wildlife Trust who will be giving evidence later. I'm giving evidence on the wider impacts either side of Whitmore and maybe that is something that we can find out for you.

453. THE CHAIR: Sheryll?

454. MRS MURRAY: Can I just ask because we're only taking a small proportion of Whitmore Wood, and there is an area set aside for enhancements of the existing woodland, how – and I know you can't give me a direct answer to this, but would the species that are very precious to the ancient woodland, would they not overflow into the enhancement area, over time?

455. MRS RYAN: There's two issues here; lots of species that live in ancient woodland are very particular to ancient woodland because it's undisturbed and the trees structure, there tends to be lots of trees of lots of different ages. So, if you're a species that likes to live in a hole in a tree, like a woodpecker or some species of bat, newly planted woodlands don't provide trees like that for a very, very long time.

456. So, as you can see from the map, how fragmented the environment is there, there isn't really many other places they can move to. So you might find they might hang on

in the small bit that's left, but eventually, they can't, the breeding opportunities are not optimal and you start getting these local species extinctions. So, yes connecting up wider landscapes is great but not if that is compensation for the loss of a great habitat.

457. The other issue around Whitmore is because of the way the railway line runs through it, you're left with two pieces. Now, woodlands and woodland edges are not as good as the middle of a woodland. So, what you're doing here is you're creating lots more edges and those edges can be inhabited by more generalist species because the climate changes, there's different rainfall levels, there's different sunshine levels, different noise levels, and again, fussy ancient woodland species like nice quiet areas within the woodlands. So now you've got two pieces isolated from one another, so the piece to the west, the piece below the line is much smaller and so you might find you will see general degradation will go to the indirect effects as a result of the line being put through, but very hard to quantify because they happen over such long periods of time and I think this is the problem with ancient woodland.

458. MRS MURRAY: See I'm a bit confused with what you've said about bats, for instance.

459. MRS RYAN: Okay.

460. MRS MURRAY: Because I had a major bypass put through my constituency, very controversial issue; £150,000 each for bat bridges to cross the road and so if bats will transport across these artificially positioned bridges, why will they not use the corridors to go to other areas of woodland?

461. MRS RYAN: Well that's a very good question and I think there's actually some argument about how effective bat bridges are, and there are lots of published papers that show that they're not effective for all species of bat.

462. MRS MURRAY: Evidence from the Woodland Trust, amongst others, 20 years ago suggested that that money was spent on these bridges.

463. MRS RYAN: And it really does depend on the species of bat that they're designed for. There are some species of bat that won't use them because they don't like the environment there. Bats can be quite fussy, but it is species specific.

464. MRS MURRAY: You've seen my bat bridges.

465. MRS RYAN: Yes. So, some bat bridges do work, and like I said, there's lot s of published evidence out there that indicate for certain species, bat bridges don't work at all because they're not species appropriate.

466. MRS MURRAY: Thank you very much.

467. THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. I think we've come to a conclusion. We're coming back after lunch and hopefully, Mr Mould, and then the Committee have a very private session just so we can review what we've heard so far. Thank you very much.