



It has been a little while since we last provided you with an update on what has been going on, so here goes....

### **Regular Meetings with Alec Shelbrooke**

We have established monthly meetings with Alec Shelbrooke MP to discuss developments in our campaign and also Alec's proposal for an alternative route; so far we have met twice. As part of his work on this, he has arranged for engineers from HS2 Ltd to visit the area so they can be shown the geography of where they are proposing to build whopping great viaducts. Representatives from SOWHAT will be joining the visit. We will keep you informed of the outcome(s).

### **Swillington Organic Farm Open Day – SOWHAT Attending**

**This Sunday**, 9<sup>th</sup> June, Swillington Organic Farm will be holding their annual open day with plenty to do for all the family (lots of baby animals to keep the kids entertained). Ed has had a great idea for illustrating how the train line will carve through the farm and the scale of the viaducts – worth coming along for alone! SOWHAT will be having an information stall at the event, so please come down, between 11am and 4pm, to lend your support to both us and the farm.

### **Rothwell May Day Fair – SOWHAT Stall**

SOWHAT had a stall at the Rothwell May Day Fair. Lots of people were very interested in hearing about the proposed route and its impact on the local community and environment. It was heartening so many support our efforts and believe the whole project should be scrapped. We will be having another stall at the Rothwell Carnival on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July, so make sure you pay us a visit at Springhead Park.

### **HS2 Debate in Leeds**

On Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June Leeds Metropolitan University's Rosebowl is playing host to an event entitled 'HS2 Debate: The fast train south is a strain not a gain'. The debate starts at 6.30pm and is open to anyone to attend, with advanced purchase of a ticket (£10). For more information please go to: <http://hs2debate.eventbrite.co.uk/#>

### **Campaign Funds**

A huge 'thank you' to those of you who have donated to the SOWHAT campaign, so far we have raised over £900 which includes a very generous single donation of £500 from Appleyard Arbor Homes Ltd. The funds raised so far have enabled us, amongst other things, to produce leaflets and large format maps of the route, and pay for speakers from national anti HS2 organisations. We have also contributed £200 to HS2AA's high court appeal fund, more on which below.



## **Political Opposition to HS2 in West Yorkshire Grows**

You may have seen in the media over the last couple of weeks that a number of regional politicians have spoken out against HS2. Firstly, Barry Sheerman MP for Huddersfield has told Radio Leeds about how he was “conned by HS2 spin but changed my mind when I studied the evidence”. You can listen to the interview here [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UptzzlC3\\_yA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UptzzlC3_yA) . Following this both Cllrs Peter Box and David Green, leaders of Wakefield and Bradford Councils respectively, have expressed their concerns. Cllr Box has stated “At this time, I do not believe an economic case for HS2 has been made. We have to consider the environmental impact on the region and represent existing train provision and we have to ask the question – does this investment give residents the best deal? The cost per mile of HS2 has been identified as between £130m and £160m per mile, with 11.4 miles going through our district. At a minimum, this would be a massive £1.48bn that could, if invested in Wakefield make a real difference to the district, for example bringing our highways up to scratch and building new infrastructure.”

Cllr Green has said “I have misgivings about the way in which it is currently promulgated. I think it is a one club approach. Without investment in regional infrastructure at the same time you have to question whether it will develop the economy.”

Unfortunately there has been no such questioning from Leeds City Council as of yet.

## **National News**

It has been a good few weeks nationally, following on from two Newsnight reports into fair compensation and the business case which highlighted significant issues with both, we have had the publication of the National Audit Office report into the robustness of the business case for HS2 and also the Government’s Major Project Authority has classified HS2 as ‘amber red: success in doubt’.

The NAO ‘has expressed reservations about the Department’s business case. In particular, in presenting its case for investment in the project, the Department is said to have poorly articulated the strategic need for a transformation in rail capacity and how High Speed 2 will help generate regional economic growth.’ The full report can be found via the following link:

<http://www.nao.org.uk/report/high-speed-2-a-review-of-early-programme-preparation/>

## **HS2 Action Alliance Return to Court**

Back in March HS2 Action Alliance was given leave to appeal the judicial review decision on the environmental case. The ability to lodge the appeal was entirely dependent on £100,000 being raised by the end of May. Through a huge effort, including the raising of £20,000 over the last May bank holiday, the target was achieved and it is now all systems go for an appeal hearing in the near future. We’ll keep you updated on the outcome.



### **Exceptional Hardship Scheme Consultation Closes**

As you will all be aware the Exceptional Hardship Scheme consultation closed on 20<sup>th</sup> May. Hopefully it won't be too long before HS2 Ltd publish the findings/results. A big thank you to everyone who submitted a response. We will post our group response on the website very soon.

### **National STOPHS2 Convention – 29<sup>th</sup> June**

Stop HS2 are holding a national convention on 29<sup>th</sup> June at Stafford County Showground, bringing together groups from across phase 1 and 2. A couple of representatives will be attending and we'll provide an update after the event.

That's it for now, thanks for reading.