

# DENHAM AGAINST HS2

Newsletter 3

Summer 2012

## WELCOME TO OUR SUMMER NEWSLETTER

...bringing you up to date with the latest moves in our campaign to prevent the construction of Britain's most expensive capital project for a generation: the proposed high-speed railway line between London, Birmingham and the north. Work is due to start in less than five years' time, and unless we and the thousands of other STOP HS2 campaigners around the country can persuade the government to change its mind, many parts of Denham and the Colne Valley Country Park, as well as a 140-mile corridor between Euston and Birmingham, will be changed out of all recognition. Once a slice of green land has been removed and replaced by a lump of concrete, it can never be put back.



Since we were last in touch, there have been all kinds of fascinating developments, both at local and national level. In fact, things have been moving so fast it's often difficult to keep up. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep you abreast of all the important developments so far, and alert you to the key dates that lie ahead between now and the HS2 Bill being presented to Parliament, possibly in 2014.

The national campaign against HS2 (to which our group is affiliated) have punched numerous holes in the government's case for the new line, which shaves

just 25 minutes off the existing journey between Euston and Birmingham. HS2's supporters claim that a new line is needed because the network is nearing full capacity. We've found that this is *not* the case, by standing on station platforms counting the number of commuters who travel inter-city. With the exception of a few peak-period services, services are nowhere near full, and the carriages could easily be reconfigured to create extra capacity. It's also been revealed that Euston is London's *second least busy* station, yet the government wants to spend billions redeveloping the site to accommodate the new trains, destroying historic parts of the Borough of Camden in the process.

We've also uncovered internal government reports that have been kept secret for years. If they'd been released before, rather than several months after HS2 was given the go-ahead in January, the business case in favour of ultra-high-speed rail in the UK would have been shown to be flimsy at best; economically disastrous at worst. There's more on this elsewhere in the newsletter.

Much of the information that's come our way is the result of the constant banging on official doors by stropky campaigners. We deluge HS2 Ltd with letters, emails and phone enquiries, and we urge you to do the same to share your concerns about the possible effects on your neighbourhood, livelihood, children and grandchildren. Our own MP, Dominic Grieve, is a supporter of high-speed rail in principle, but remains to be convinced that this £33 billion scheme is the answer. Many other MPs and peers are wavering too, especially now that the Major Projects Authority, which monitors large government initiatives of this kind, has given HS2 an amber/red rating, which means it's doubtful that the railway can be delivered successfully. If the lamentable performance of the first high-speed line (HS1) through Kent to the Channel Tunnel is anything to go by, the UK will be saddled with yet another multi-billion pound debt for decades to come.

I hope you'll find a way of helping us keep the local campaign going. We'll tell you how later in the newsletter. Enjoy the summer – when it comes!

**Frank Partridge, Denham Against HS2**

# WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON?

Many thanks to the hundreds of people who visited our stall and information point at the annual Denham Village Fayre on Bank Holiday Monday. And an even bigger thank you if you bought a STOP HS2 T-shirt or mug, or made a donation to our fighting fund.



**Denham Village Fayre, 4 June**

Overnight the village green had magically sprouted a new flagpole, and our 'Save Denham' banner draped across Village Road will have impressed on the thousands of visitors that Denham – not so much the village itself, but the surrounding district and the Country Park – is in danger of losing its character and charm if HS2 comes knocking. And who will bother to come to the Village Fayre in 2017, with all the noise, disruption and pollution that the construction of the railway will bring? The clock is ticking ...

We're grateful to Dominic Grieve MP for spending time at our stall and chatting to visitors about their concerns. The Attorney General has access to areas that local campaigners can't reach. He's been left in no doubt about our key message: we're less interested in compensation and mitigation than getting the whole misguided project scrapped.

## Curry & quiz night, 15 June

Where were you?!? It was without doubt Denham's social event of the year so far, with the function room at the excellent Lumbini's Nepalese restaurant in New Denham ([www.lumbini-restaurant.co.uk](http://www.lumbini-restaurant.co.uk); 01895 230059) full to bursting with supporters, who were served with good food, quizzed within an inch of their lives, and entertained by the Bucks-based folk/rock band, Dirty Mavis, who shot to fame last Christmas when their anti-HS2 anthem, 'The Oak Tree Lament', rose to the top of various indie charts. Lead singer Martin Davis composed the song on a drive through the Chilterns shortly after hearing that a

high-speed railway was going to be built through southern England's loveliest range of hills. CDs of this stirring song, including both studio and live versions, and a bonus track entitled 'I wanna be a Cowboy' (which doesn't interest us quite so much!) can be purchased for £5 at all our public displays, or by contacting Norman Dennis on 01895-834385. All proceeds will go towards our fighting fund.

Dirty Mavis do excellent covers of 'Mustang Sally', 'Hotel California' and many other classic songs, and we're hoping they'll come back to Denham on Sunday, 30 September for the annual Colne Valley Food and Music Festival in the Country Park. We'll keep you posted in our next Newsletter.

*'When there's no more oil and you're in the soil  
And the breeze whispers to you ...  
Did you fight to save this England,  
Did you stop the HS2?'*

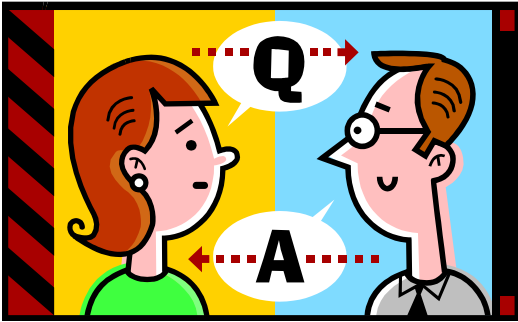
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## National Day of Action, 16 July

On the eve of their summer recess, MPs and MEPs were given a raucous reminder of the STOP HS2 message when more than 300 campaigners braved torrential rain to demonstrate outside the Houses of Parliament. Denham Against HS2 was well represented: pictured is local campaigner Sally Cooper with Nigel Farage, leader of UKIP and one of south-east England's MEPs. Mr Farage has been an outspoken critic of the planned railway network since it was announced in 2010. He travels frequently from Birmingham to London, making use of the free Wi-fi and the excellent mobile phone reception. "Often I arrive at Euston and wish the journey was an hour longer, so I could finish my work," he says.



# THE STRANGE CASE OF THE DISAPPEARING TUNNEL



Every two or three months, HS2 Ltd are obliged to hold Community Forums to meet selected local officials and interest groups and explain the preparatory work they're doing in the Colne Valley and other areas along the route of the proposed line. In mid-June, at our second Forum, they told us that the planned 'spur' from the mainline to Heathrow Airport (to be built in the second phase of construction, starting around 2025) would be tunnelled under Denham.

Among several other options they'd been considering was an overground route through the village, which would have run directly across the aerodrome, sliced through a sizeable part of Denham Golf Club, before passing uncomfortably close to Higher Denham. Based on current estimates, a tunnel would cost about £600m more than the overground line.

The HS2 team produced a map to show the approximate point where the 'Heathrow spur' would disappear underground, shortly after the mainline crosses the M25 on its way into London. Their spokesman said the tunnel entrance would be situated "as close as possible" to the motorway. They were unable to reveal where the tunnel would re-emerge into daylight, but we believe this would be some miles south of Denham, possibly around Iver where a new station is being considered.

We weren't exactly dancing in the street about this, but at least there was some relief for aviators, golfers and the residents of Higher Denham. A Site of Special Scientific Interest would also be spared from the bulldozers. We alerted the local media, and HS2 confirmed the decision to them.

But when HS2 released their minutes of the Forum two weeks later, the tunnel announcement was not mentioned. The only minuted references to a tunnel were two supplementary questions we asked about it, and the section ends by explaining that a decision on the spur will be made in the autumn. Our own minutes look very different, and we've asked HS2 to explain this mystifying omission from their record. Last year, maps appeared on their website in connection with the Heathrow spur, only to disappear a few hours later without explanation. Did their team leader speak out of turn at the Forum? Do they intend to build a tunnel or not? The next Colne

Valley Forum will be held in early September. We will tackle them hard on this, and report back in full.

## JUDICIAL REVIEWS

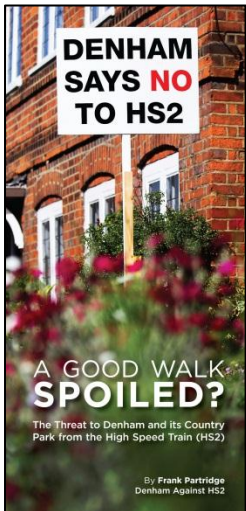
As reported in the last newsletter, opponents of HS2 – ranging from an association of County and District Councils (known as 51M) to a golf club in Aylesbury – have submitted no fewer than five applications for Judicial Reviews to challenge HS2 in the courts.

The applications are being considered by a judge who is deciding whether to hear all five together, or treat them individually. Since the various legal challenges differ widely in nature and content, we're hoping that he examines them one by one.

## COMPENSATION CONSULTATION

The government promised it in the spring, but it's been delayed until the autumn. The consultation on compensation for affected property-owners and landowners will happen six months later than scheduled, after MPs return from their summer recess. This means an extra six months of worry and uncertainty for the thousands of people whose properties lie near the proposed line.

At present, the plan is to compensate those who suffer blight from the construction ONE YEAR AFTER the line starts operating in 2026. So a child born on the day HS2 was announced would be studying for A-levels by the time its parents were eligible to make a claim. This is unacceptable, and national campaigners will continue to press for more immediate compensation by way of a Property Bond, when the consultation finally gets underway. You can find out more about the Property Bond scheme on this website: [www.hs2actionalliance.org](http://www.hs2actionalliance.org)



In case you missed our Colne Valley walk in the spring, or would like to do it again, we've published a 32-page walking guide to the circular route of about six miles, which starts and finishes at the [Colne Valley Park Information Centre](#). The guidebook includes a detailed map of the route and explains the history and significance of the lakes, woodlands, nature reserves and other irreplaceable amenities under threat. It's on sale at the Centre, price £3, or you can pick up a copy at one of our stalls or exhibitions.

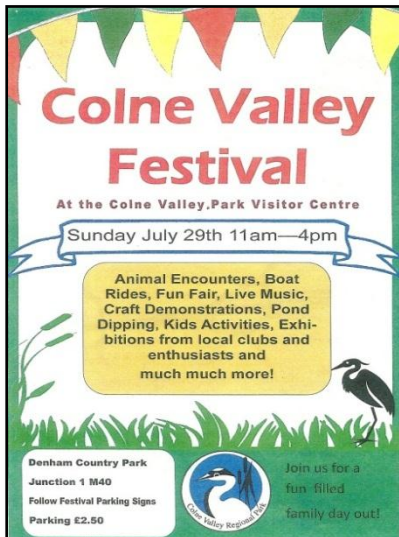
## OUR FIGHTING FUND

Denham Against HS2's fighting fund helps cover the many expenses involved in raising local awareness of the HS2 threat.

It enables us to:

- produce a newsletter!
- print leaflets, flyers and posters
- purchase and hire equipment for events
- assist with the national campaign's expenses as they carry the fight to Westminster

### COMING NEXT...



Come and visit us at the annual Colne Valley Festival at the Country Park on **Sunday 29 July**. It's an excellent day out for all the family, and Denham Against HS2 is setting up an information and merchandise stall at the

Festival for the first time. We're always looking for new volunteers to help with our campaign. Perhaps you've read this newsletter and feel inspired to devote a few hours every month to the fight to save our community from HS2? If you do, we'd love to have you on board. There's a lot of work to do.



We're sad to report that the campaign's much-loved white elephant, Ellie, is in poor condition after many high-profile appearances up and down the line, and we need to order a replacement urgently, otherwise she's likely to deflate just before a vital photocall. Her successor won't cost anything like as much as the white elephant that is HS2, but large inflatable beasts do cost an arm and a trunk, and we have to find the funds from somewhere.

If you're able to make a donation, however small, we would be extremely grateful. Every penny will be used for the campaign. Look out for our collecting boxes at local public events, or kindly make a cheque or bank transfer payable to:

**'Denham Against HS2'**  
**HSBC (Amersham-on-the-Hill branch)**  
**Sort Code: 40-08-41**  
**Account No: 6150518**

### PS:

Here's another date for your diary, at the same venue: the Colne Valley Food & Music Festival on **Sunday 30 September**: a great community event promoting the park, local food and local farmers. Our favourite band Dirty Mavis are hoping to be there, and we'll be there too, of course, to keep you updated on anything you might have missed during the summer holidays.