

Great Missenden Businesses and the Impact of HS2

Updated 17 April 2012

1. Great Missenden is not simply a pretty village in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is one of the few examples of a village with a living High Street in the face of competition from Tesco, Waitrose, Morrisons and Sainsbury's superstores less than 4 miles away.
2. There are 75 businesses with retail premises in Great Missenden village (Tables 1 and 2). Only one business premises is unoccupied.
The village is virtually the only centre of economic activity on this scale in the AONB.
3. Many of these businesses are nonetheless fragile and any significant alteration in the status quo – such as reduced footfall – will threaten their existence.
4. Blight on the village's growing tourist trade, and perceived and actual inconvenience to shoppers from beyond Great Missenden are seen as the main reasons for the likely loss of business should HS2 go ahead.
There will be a permanent impact from HS2 on Great Missenden's businesses that are dependent on tourism.
5. For more than three quarters of the total 75 businesses, Great Missenden is the location of the sole premises of the business (Tables 1 and 2). Should trade suffer, there is no other venue available for the vast majority of businesses to tide them over a lean period.
6. The opening of the Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre in 2006, the development of the village as a cycling and walking centre and the presence of these businesses have all contributed to Great Missenden's success.
7. Workshops in the village include: joinery, wood turning, hand-painted furniture, jewellery design, bookbinding, floral displays, specialist horticulture, motor and cycle repairs and textile/craft design in addition to the 12 restaurants/cafes/pubs.
8. The village has a population of some 2,000.¹ Given this relatively small population, the majority of businesses serve a wider community than Great Missenden itself. It is estimated that up to 80% of businesses are dependent on trade from outside the village (Table 3). Of the remaining 20%, trade from outside the village is also important.
9. The amount of trade provided by the village community itself is unlikely to increase in the future: there are building restrictions in the AONB and Green Belt which limit Great Missenden's population.

¹ Openly Local, Chiltern District Council, Great Missenden Ward <http://openlylocal.com/wards/2510-Great-Missenden>

10. The opportunities to further develop tourism in Great Missenden are currently being considered by Great Missenden Parish Council. There is the potential: the village lies in the geographic centre of the AONB, it benefits from good communications by road and rail, it lies within easy reach of large populations and it already draws significant – and growing – numbers of tourists and trippers. Developing trade from browsing tourists is seen as an important area which could be lost due to HS2.
11. There are some 140 businesses not operating from business premises in HP16. It is expected that many of these will also be impacted by HS2.
12. National Planning Policy Framework (Replaced Planning Policy Statement 7 - March 27 2012)
- a) The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states AONBs have the highest status of protection. Major development should not take place except under exceptional circumstances and where the development is in the public interest.²
 - b) The National Planning Policy Framework says applications for all such developments affecting AONBs should be subject to three tests. The tests remain unchanged from those stipulated in Planning Policy Statement 7.
 - c) Natural England advises that the tests were not applied in the HS2 Appraisal of Sustainability which means the requirements of PPS7 / the NPPF have not been fulfilled.³
 - d) One of the tests includes an assessment of the impact of the development on the local economy in the AONB. The developer apparently believes this test is not required⁴, but is this responsible long-term planning?
HS2 Ltd's stance does not appear to be in line with the Government's commitment to take full account of HS2's impact on communities (see item 14 below).
 - e) This Government clearly considers an assessment of the impact of major infrastructure on AONBs' local economy is important. As noted, the need for such an assessment is included in the Government's own recently published National Planning Policy Framework.
Why, therefore, has this assessment been omitted from work on HS2?
 - f) HS2 Ltd's literature tells us its proposals comply with Strategic Environment Assessment Directive principles⁵. However, HS2 Ltd would be expected to state the relationship of its

² National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 115 and 116)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf>

³ Natural England Response to HS2 Consultation London to West Midlands

http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/NE%20response%20-%20HS2%20consultation%20V11a%20140711_tcm6-27635.pdf

⁴ Review of HS2 London to West Midlands Appraisal of Sustainability paragraph 6.5.7

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/hs2-review-of-appraisal-of-sustainability/>

proposals with planning policies, such as PPS 7 or the NPPF, if HS2 were complying with SEA Directive Requirements⁶.

13. HS2 is a transport corridor like no other in the UK. Normally local businesses and residents indirectly impacted by a transport corridor suffer during its construction. However, during its operation they benefit from being able to access the new infrastructure. In contrast, businesses and residents impacted by HS2 will not be able to access the route locally. Rather than boosting trade, many businesses will never recover from the indirect impact of the Government's favoured route because they are dependent on their proximity to rural environment for their trade. This includes farmers, and businesses dependent on tourism such as those in the AONB.

14. The Government's 10 January Command paper states:

"If a new high speed network is to be taken forward, it is absolutely crucial to take a full and proper account, not only of its significant benefits, but also its impacts on the environment and on communities".⁷

Despite this commitment, there is no evidence that there are any plans to assess the indirect impact of HS2 on local businesses along the route (Parliamentary Written Answer to Andrea Leadsom MP 100513).⁸

What are the Secretary of State's plans to assess the short and long term indirect impacts of the new high speed network on local businesses in areas which will not benefit from a local HS2 station? In order to capture the social impact of the route, it is suggested the assessment should include the proportion of local trade that would be lost, the proportion of local businesses which would survive, and the percentage of local jobs that would be lost as a result of HS2.

The Government says the EIA will look at HS2's impact on agricultural land classification, but will the EIA examine severance and isolation of farms and other impacts on farming businesses from HS2 (ref. 7 below)?

⁵ Review of HS2 London to West Midlands Appraisal of Sustainability paragraphs 3.1.3, 3.1.5
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/hs2-review-of-appraisal-of-sustainability/>

⁶ A Practical Guidance to the Strategic Environmental Assessment
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/practicalguidesea.pdf> Figure 1 and Appendix 2

⁷ High Speed Rail Investing in Britain's Future – Decisions and Next Steps (page 29 paragraph 66, page 104 paragraph 6.36) <http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/hs2-decisions-and-next-steps/>

⁸ <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2012-03-27a.100513.h> (Holding answer 20 March 2012).

Conclusion

1. Great Missenden is a living example of the kind of village community that successive governments have sought to encourage.
2. It offers an object lesson in small private enterprises developed to serve the surrounding community (encapsulating Tory-Lib Dem principles).
3. These businesses survive, not only through the commitment of their owners but because:
 - a) They are in the centre of an AONB which offers a pleasant day out.
 - b) There is a developing tourist industry associated with the Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre.
 - c) Great Missenden is accessible by road and rail.
4. Despoliation of the AONB and perceived or actual disruption in accessibility – such as the construction of HS2 over a number of years – would result in reduced footfall and the likely closure of many of these businesses. Permanent despoliation of the AONB is likely to result in Great Missenden being less attractive to tourists.
5. It is difficult to come to any conclusion other than it seems likely that HS2 could kill off virtually the only centre of economic activity in the Chilterns AONB.
6. There is no evidence that any assessment will be made of businesses that will be negatively indirectly impacted by HS2 despite Government's commitment to take full account of HS2's impact on communities.
7. The only certain way to protect the economy of Great Missenden is to scrap HS2 altogether. However, if HS2 goes ahead the difficulties facing Great Missenden and nearby Wendover could be overcome by a fully bored tunnel through the length of the AONB.
8. In boring the tunnel, there would be the need for an assessment for an emergency escape facility⁹. It would be necessary to ensure that the facility was located in such a position that there were no negative operational impacts on Great Missenden's environment and businesses.

⁹ TSI Relating to 'Safety in Railway Tunnels' in the Trans-European Conventional and High-Speed Rail System 2008/163/EC, paragraph 1.1.2

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:064:0001:0071:EN:PDF>

9. It is noted that two reports have just been published on HS2 tunnels in the AONB.^{10 11} When we have considered the reports we will comment in due course.

Should the Transport Secretary wish to visit Great Missenden privately she would be welcome to visit its workshops, retail outlets and restaurants.

¹⁰ 'Options for additional tunnelling through the Chilterns' A Report to Government by HS2 Ltd
<http://www.hs2.org.uk/assets/x/85362>

¹¹ 'High Speed 2 London to West Midlands: Chilterns Long Tunnel Options Review' Arup
<http://www.hs2.org.uk/assets/x/85353>

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Table 1. Businesses Where Great Missenden is the Sole Premises

	Name of Premises	Location	Goods/Services
1	Village Dental Practice	Station Approach	Dental Practice
2	Samways	Station Approach	Tobacconist, Confectionery and Newsagent
3	Finishing Touches	Station Approach	Soft Furnishing and Wallpaper
4	Selina James	Station Approach	Ladies Fashions
5	Cromer Carpets	Station Approach	Carpets, Floor Coverings
6	Station Garage	Station Approach	Used Cars
7	Station Newsagent	Station	Newsagents
8	Kingshill Courier	Station Approach	Mini cab Hire
9	The Flower Room	High Street	Flowers/Flower Display
10	Ho Ho Restaurant	High Street	Restaurant (Chinese)
11	Fleur	High Street	Lingerie and Swim Wear
12	Cross Keys Inn	High Street	Pub and Restaurant
13	Elizabeth Wintgens	High Street	Gifts, Clothes, Gallery
14	Healthy Balance	High Street	Health
15	Kinton Pharmacy	High Street	Chemists
16	Suko-Thai Restaurant	High Street	Restaurant (Thai)
17	Origins/The White Lion	High Street	Restaurant (Tapas), Guest Accommodation
18	The Jeweller's Bench	High Street	Jewellery and Jewellery Design
19	The George Inn	High Street	Pub, Restaurant and Inn
20	Café Toria	High Street	Cafe
21	Amanda Slope	High Street	Bookbinder

22	La Petite Auberge	High Street	Restaurant (French)
23	Hawkins Eades Assoc.	High Street	Architectural Design
24	Assured Future	High Street	Financial Services
25	Wrights Funeral Services	High Street	Funeral Directors
26	TC Joinery	High Street	Joiners
27	Vintage Rose	High Street	Vintage Fashion Clothing
28	Michael Moore Life and Pensions	High Street	Insurance, Pensions, Investment
29	New Akash	High Street	Restaurant (Indian)
30	St Andrew's Bookshop	High Street	Specialist Bookshop
31	Big Sky	High Street	Interior Design and Gifts
32	Alphabet Soup	High Street	Art, Furniture, Gifts
33	Oasis Beauty Spas	High Street	Beauty
34	Fair Lilly	High Street	Hand-Painted Furniture, Hand-Painting Courses
35	Jeremy Swan Estate Agents	High Street	Estate Agents
36	Tompson Design	High Street	Interior Space Design
37	Chiltern Opticians	High Street	Opticians
38	Salon 92	High Street	Hair Styling and Beauty
39	Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre	High Street	Museum and Cafe
40	The Pears	High Street	Ladies Fashions
41	Papillon Boutique	High Street	Ladies Fashions
42	Rainbow Silks	High Street	Craft Materials, Courses in Crafts
43	Bijou Beauty Therapy	High Street	Beauty
44	Eighty 9 Ltd	High Street	Accessories
45	Carina Haslam Art Gallery	High Street	Original Sculpture and Paintings

46	Araminta Fizzackerly	High Street	Specialist Sweetshop
47	Wainwright Direct	High Street	Builders' Materials
48	Focus Hairdressing	High Street	Hair Styling
49	Kenneth Brown Chartered Architect	Church Street	Architect
50	One Church Street Gallery	Church Street	Original Sculpture/ Paintings and Wood Turners
51	Great Missenden Garage	Rignall Road	Motor Repairs
52	The Bicycle Workshop	Rignall Road	Cycle Repairs
53	Screenfix	Rignall Road	Windscreen Repairs
54	Cyclefleet	Frith Hill	Cycle Purchase, Repairs and Hire
55	Black Horse	Aylesbury Road	Pub and Restaurant
56	Missenden Abbey Management Centre	London Road	Conference/Weddings venue/Hotel (57 bed)
57	The Plant Specialist	Whitefield Lane	Horticulture, Garden Design and Landscaping

Notes:

1. The businesses included in Tables 1, 2 and 3 are those business with premises in Great Missenden Ward (Chiltern District Council).¹²
2. Great Missenden Library is to be run as a community library probably sharing library space with a business or other organisation.

¹² Openly Local, Chiltern District Council, Great Missenden Ward <http://openlylocal.com/wards/2510-Great-Missenden>

Table 2. Businesses Where Great Missenden Is Not the Sole Premises

	Name of Premises	Location	Goods/Services
1	The Co-operative Food	Station Approach	Food
2	Blue Dragon Dry Cleaning	Station Approach	Dry Cleaning
3	Thomas Cook	Station Approach	Travel Agents
4	Barnado's	Station Approach	Children's Charity
5	Christopher Pallet Estate Agent	Station Approach	Recently closed after trading for 35 years in the village, HS2 being the apparent main cause. The premises is being re-let.
6	The Barber Shop Group	Station Approach	Barbers
7	Barclays	High Street	Bank
8	Wynyard-Wright & Ellis	High Street	Estate Agent (second shop in nearby Prestwood)
9	Lloyds TSB	High Street	Bank
10	Hamptons	High Street	Estate Agent
11	Drew's Family Bakers	High Street	Bakers and Cafe
12	Simon Carter	High Street	Men's Clothing
13	Post Office	High Street	Post Office and Stationery
14	Amelie	High Street	Ladies Fashions
15	The Nags Head	London Road	Restaurant and Inn
16	BMI The Chiltern Hospital	London Road	BMI Hospital
17	Agripower	Rignall Road	Groundwork and Drainage
18	Annie Bailey's	Chesham Road	Restaurant and Pub

Table 3 Types of Businesses Trading from Retail Premises in Great Missenden

Business Type	No. of Businesses	Percent of Total Businesses
Museum and Story Centre	1	1.3%
Conference/Wedding Venue	1	1.3%
Restaurants, Pubs, Cafes, Hotels	12	16%
Arts, Interior Design, Gifts, Floral	9	12%
Ladies and Men's Fashion	9	12%
Hair and Beauty	5	6.7%
Building Design and Materials	6	8%
Estate Agents	4	5.3%
Motor Repair	2	2.7%
Cycle Shops	2	2.7%
Finance	2	2.7%
Bookbinder	1	1.3%
Specialist Bookshop	1	1.3%
Specialist Sweetshop	1	1.3%
Specialist Horticulture	1	1.3%
Used Cars	1	1.3%
Mini Cab Hire	1	1.3%
BMI Hospital	1	1.3%
Banks	2	2.7%
Other Business Premises	12	16%
Charity Shop	1	1.3%
Total	75 businesses	100%
Empty Shop	1	

