

YARNFIELD AND COLD MEECE PARISH COUNCIL
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday 14 July 2021
Yarnfield Park Conference Centre

Present (for all or part of the meeting): -

Councillors:

David Beeston	Stella Hughes
Frank Cromey	Sally Parkin (Chairperson)
Brian Eyre	

Also in attendance: Cllr Pert (SCC)

Officer in attendance: John Fraser, Clerk to the Parish Council

Public at the meeting: 0

Live on Facebook: 8

Apologies

21-389 Apologies were received from: Cllr M Beeston, Cllr Rushton, Cllr Nixon (SBC)

Declarations of Interest

21-390 Nil.

Public Question Time (30 minutes)

21-391 Two questions were raised about work being done to address the problem of the hedge surrounding the property opposite the junction of Yarnfield Lane and Highlows Lane.

Response

21-392 The owners of the property have made arrangements for the hedge to be cut back whilst the road is closed during the summer. At the same time arrangements have also been made to have the soil at the base of the hedge removed from the road. Hopefully, this work will be supported by volunteers from the parish.

21-393 It had been hoped to start this work sooner, however it has been necessary to wait until the end of July to avoid disturbing any birds nesting in the hedge. The owners recognise that this is a significant problem for residents and in recognition would like to make a donation towards the cost of a new defibrillator for the village.

Community Speed Watch

21-394 Community Speed Watch (CSW) has supported the police with operation lightning and in return police have attended 4 CSW exercises in Yarnfield.

21-395 CSW now has 6 volunteers and 2 new volunteers waiting to attend training courses.

21-396 Monitoring outside the village hall is now included in the CSW programme.

21-397 The presence of the CSW and police has had a positive impact on the average speed of vehicles in the village.

21-398 A copy of the Road Safety update report is attached at Appendix 1.

21-399 CSW has now extended their partnership to include Swynnerton and are sharing data and best practice.

21-400 Staffordshire Police have been asked to undertake risk assessments on Yarnfield Parkway, Brookvale Drive, and Meece Road and Swynnerton Road Cold Meece. Once completed this will then allow the CSW to operate on these roads.

Road safety improvements - Cold Meece village gates

21-401 A proposal was made to install village gates on each of the entrance roads to Cold Meece. Based on the work commissioned by the former parish council the gates would cost in the region of £900 - £1,200 each if sourced from Glasdon UK Ltd.

21-402 Further work is needed to identify the location for the siting of the gates. It is hoped this work will be coordinated with the change in speed limit in Cold Meece at will happen later this year.

21-403 **Resolution:** It was resolved that more prices are obtained to allow the Council to reach a decision on the feasibility of the proposal.

Reports from Borough and County Councillors

21-404 Cllr Pert, Staffordshire County Council:

- The Covid-19 R rate is rising in Staffordshire and across England, linked in part to venues and some sporting events. The R rate is however only part of the story. The level of hospitalisation is low, this however is increasing but is still low compared with the peak levels last year. As restrictions are eased social distancing, mask wearing, and vaccination are still vital to manage the spread of the disease.
- Cllr Pert has spoken to the new Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Commission about the use of the Community Safety Partnership camera vehicles and has encouraged him to make sure these are better used. Speed of vehicles is not an issue specific to Yarnfield and the use of these camera vehicles is an important part of the approach to tackling this problem. The Commissioner will be consulting on his plans for his term of office which will include speeding as a key issue. There will be an opportunity to comment on his proposals when they are published.

Update on HS2

Update on the work of the Stone Rail Head Crisis Group

21-405 The Group continue to work on the campaign to move the location of the railhead.

21-406 It is hoped that a public meeting will be held in September, provide Covid-19 restrictions on such meetings allow.

Funding bids - next steps

21-407 A request has been made for residents to come forward with ideas about what projects they think should be incorporated in a bid.

- £6.8m has been made available across the length of the HS2 Phase 2A scheme to pay for road safety issues. This will be administered by Staffordshire County Council. The suggestion that a cycle route along Yarnfield Lane could benefit from this funding is something that will need to be put to the County Council.

Ways and Means Committee response on Hybrid Bill Process

- 21-408 The Government has launched a public consultation on Hybrid Bill procedure and practice. The Hybrid bill procedure was used to secure parliamentary approval for the HS2 project. By granting itself the power to follow this procedure Government avoided the need to secure consent under the planning process.
- 21-409 The Parish Council, together with Stone Town Council and Chebsey Parish Council have been critical of the Hybrid Bill procedure and have prepared a joint response to the consultation. A copy of the response, set out in Appendix 2, was provided to councillors before the meeting.
- 21-410 **Resolution:** It was resolved that the Parish Council:
- i. approve the consultation response set out in Appendix 2;
 - ii. together with Stone Town Council and Chebsey Parish Council submit the consultation response in line with the document set out in Appendix 2.

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 23 June 2021 – To approve the draft minutes and to consider any matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

- 21-411 **Resolution:** It was resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 23 June 2021 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

Matters arising from the minutes of 23 June 2021

- 21-412 **Minute 21-303:** Provision of gates at the entrance to Cold Meece. Further work is needed to find the best way of providing gates and the cost of this work.
- 21-413 **Minute 21-320:** Visibility at the junctions of South Road and Meece Road. A site visit has been carried out to assess the problem of visibility at the junction. The county council has cut the grass verge and the homeowners have cut the hedge next to the junction which has helped to improve visibility.
- 21-414 **Minute 21-235:** Motocross event, Cold Meece. A letter has been sent to Stafford Borough Council seeking clarification on the use of the site.
- 21-415 **Minute 21-328:** Eccleshall Parish Council footpath clearance between Eccleshall and Cold Meece. Continue to monitor progress and provide an update report to a future meeting.
- 21-416 **Minute 21-329:** use of Yarnfield Lane by HGVs. Letters have been sent to the companies in Cold Meece, reminding them of the weight limit on Yarnfield Lane and asking that they work with their suppliers and other contractors to ensure the lane is not used by HGVs traveling to, or from, Cold Meece.
- 21-417 **Minute 21-334:** Footpath training - details of a training company who could provide this work have been supplied by the County Council footpaths officer. This may be something that could be delivered in conjunction with other parish councils in Staffordshire.

- 21-418 **Minute 21-336:** Repair of the village green. Arrangements will be made for Cllr Eyre and Cllr D Beeston to meet the contractor from Trent Ground Maintenance to agree the start date for the repair work.
- 21-419 **Minute 21-351:** BT phone box consultation. No information on the outcome of the consultation has been received.
- 21-420 **Minute 21-358:** Barratts West Midland have accepted responsibility for the grass verge opposite Springfields School. The issue of the location of litter bins on Yarnfield Park is yet to be resolved with Barratts.
- 21-421 **Minute 21-369:** Drake Hall Prison, community work. Two locations have been identified for the supervised work by women from the prison. This work will start in July. It is hoped this will be the start of a long term relationship with the prison.
- Minutes of the Community Action Group 29 June 2021 - to receive an update report on the work of the committee**
- 21-422 Cllr Mrs Hughes, Chairperson for the Community Action Group, provided an overview of the inaugural meeting held on 29th June 2021, highlighting the areas of interest to the Parish Council. A copy of the minutes of the Group are attached at Appendix 3.
- Village Green Project - to agree next steps**
- 21-423 Since the last meeting councillors have visited the Derrington Millennium Green and held a meeting with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. These events provided useful ideas that would help to develop the proposals for the village green project.
- 21-424 Last year's consultation exercise provided a valuable insight into how residents use the village green and what they would want to be included in the project.
- 21-425 The scheme being developed will take account of the consultation and recognise the variety of uses for the village green. The September meeting of the Parish Council will receive a report setting out the final proposals for the project.
- Yarnfield Park; to agree details of the public meeting for residents.**
- 21-426 A meeting has been arranged for residents of Yarnfield Park on 15 July 2021. The meeting will provide the first opportunity to explain the work the Parish Council has been doing to deal with the concerns about the enforcement of the planning approval conditions for the site.
- Queen's Platinum Jubilee (2 - 5 June 2022) - planning for next year's celebration event**
- 21-427 The ambition is that the parish council works with other groups in the parish to organise events in the parish to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
- 21-428 **Resolution:** It was resolved that the groups and organisations in the parish are contacted to explore what plans they may have and to arrange a meeting to develop these ideas.
- Neighbourhood Plan - update on actions taken and to agree next steps**
- 21-429 Stafford Borough Council are considering an application by the Parish Council to designate the whole parish as a neighbourhood planning area. A decision on this will be made on 5 August 2021.

21-430 The successful development of the neighbourhood plan will require a significant level of community involvement in the preparation of the plan. Once the green light is received from the Borough Council an invitation will go out to residents to be involved with this process.

21-431 Resolution: It was resolved that:

- i. An invitation is made to residents to get involved in the development of the neighbourhood plan.
- ii. A draft delivery timetable for the neighbourhood plan is prepare for the next meeting of the Parish Council.
- iii. That the neighbourhood plan is a standing item on future agendas.

Summer picnic - to agree arrangements for the summer picnic

21-432 The picnic will be held on 14 August 2021, with a reserve date of 21 August in the event of bad weather. The picnic is being organised in conjunction with St Marys Church, Messy Church.

Parish Clerk's report:

Budget

21-433 The Parish Council's bank reconciliation balance on 14 July 2021 was £13,026.68

21-434 Schedule of Payments since the last meeting = £1,981.77

21-435 **Resolution:** It was resolved that the schedule of payments in Appendix 4 was approved.

Quarter 1 budget Review

21-436 Current Account

Opening account balance on 01/04/21	£7,245
Q1 - receipts	£17,657
Q1 - payments made	£9,356
Future income (precept and concurrent grant payment)	£13,440
Existing approved commitments (salary, ground maintenance, village green repair, SCC buffer zone and Cold Meece)	£13,500

21-437 Deposit account

Balance a 30 June 2021	£4,001
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Walking webinar

21-438 Stafford Borough Council are to hold a webinar on Wednesday 21st July at 3pm, "Connecting Communities through Walking" which is open to all councillors.

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Walking Group

- 21-439 Work with Stafford Borough Council and the Stone Ramblers Association has identified people living in the parish who are prepared to support the formation of a new walking group.
- 21-440 A meeting is to be arranged to develop the new walking group which it is hoped will start later this year.

Telecommunication site off Highlows Lane, Yarnfield

- 21-441 Telefónica UK Ltd has entered into an agreement with Vodafone Ltd to undertake work on the telecommunication mast on Highlows Lane. The work will result in improved and updated mobile communications services including 5G.

Lengthsman Agreement

- 21-442 Concerns have been raised about the standard of maintenance of grass verges in the parish which have resulted in several issues being raised with Staffordshire Highways. The County Council is prepared to enter into an agreement with parish councils to put in place a Lengthsman Agreement by which the parishes assume responsibility for this work.
- 21-443 **Resolution:** It was resolved that enquiries are made about the costs, benefits and legal issues associated with the Parish Council entering into a Lengthsman Agreement.

Reports from Parish Councillors on meetings/courses attended

Stafford Borough - Covid-19 Webinar

- 21-444 Cllr Eyre, who attended the Borough Council webinar, provided an update on the situation within Staffordshire and Stafford Borough.

HS2 Ltd meeting with Parish Councillors

- 21-445 The meeting took the form of a 1 to 1 with the Chairperson and Clerk. Prepared questions had to be submitted before the meeting. The focus of the discussion centred on securing guarantees from HS2 Ltd about work, the lines that they would not cross in relation to the impact of the development on residents and who would be held accountable for the work.
- 21-446 A copy of the questions and answer are set out in Appendix 5.

Western Power Project

- 21-447 Cllr Parkin and the Clerk had a very constructive meeting with representatives from Western Power and Network Plus to discuss the impact of the project. Agreement has now been reached with Western Power and Network Pus to install the defibrillator at the top of Mitchell Rise.
- 21-448 During the time the Yarnfield Lane is closed it will be possible for other utility companies or the County Council to use this time to undertake work on the lane. An approach has been made to Cllr Pert asking that Staffordshire Highways use this time to repair the potholes and footpaths.

Planning - to consider any planning applications in the parish

21-449 No planning applications to be considered.

Date and time of next meeting

21-450 15 September 2021 at 7.30pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sally Puri', written in a cursive style.

Signed

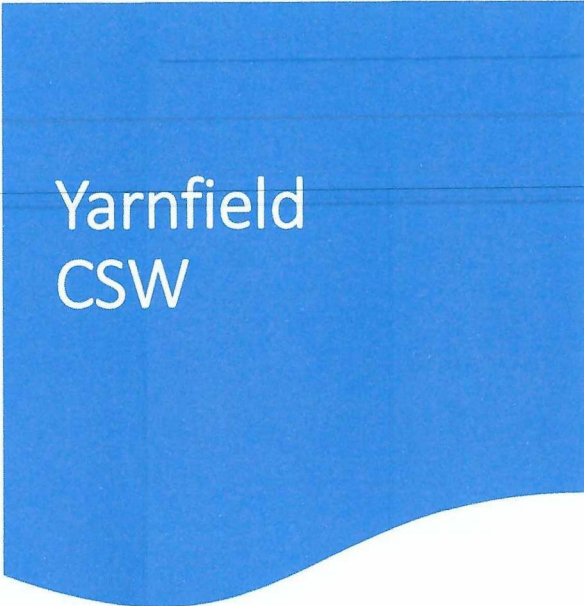
Chairperson of the Parish Council

Yarnfield and Cold Meece
Parish Council
June 2021

Yarnfield
& Cold Meece
Parish Council

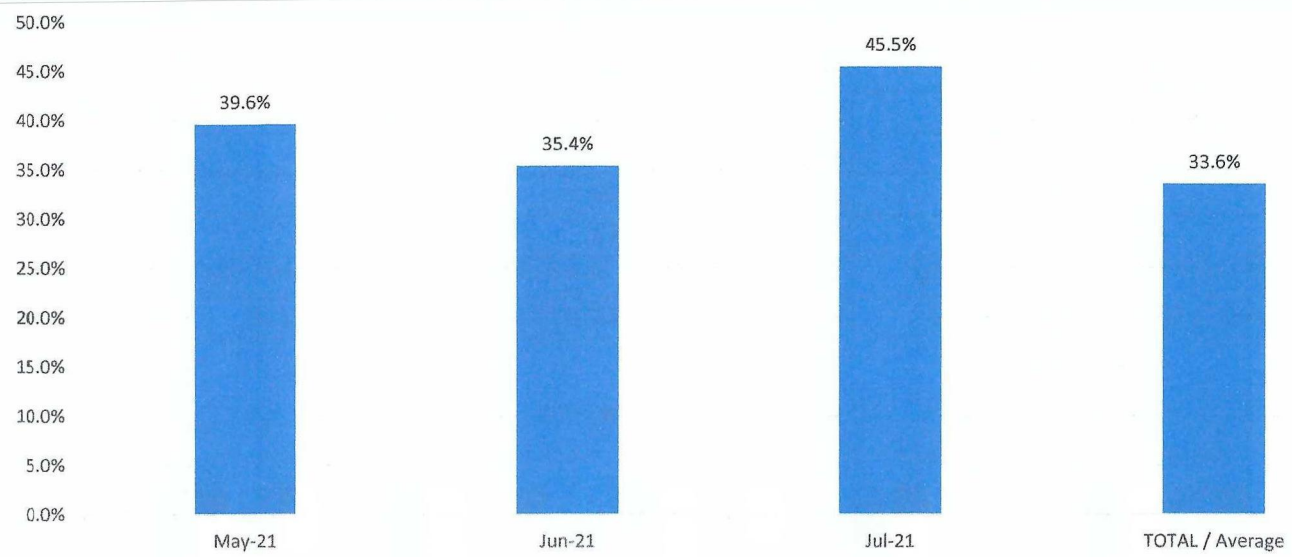


Yarnfield
& Mace
Parish



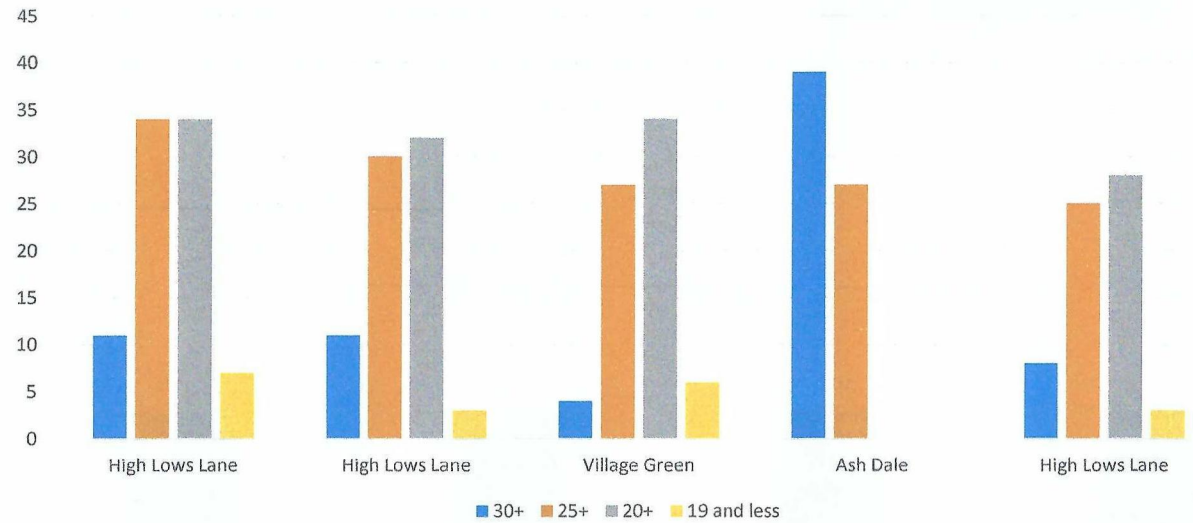
- **Headlines**
- Number of trained volunteers 6
- Number of active volunteers 4
- Number of volunteers awaiting training 2

Yarnfield CSW
% of Speeding Vehicles



CSW Data Analysis

Traffic speed by location



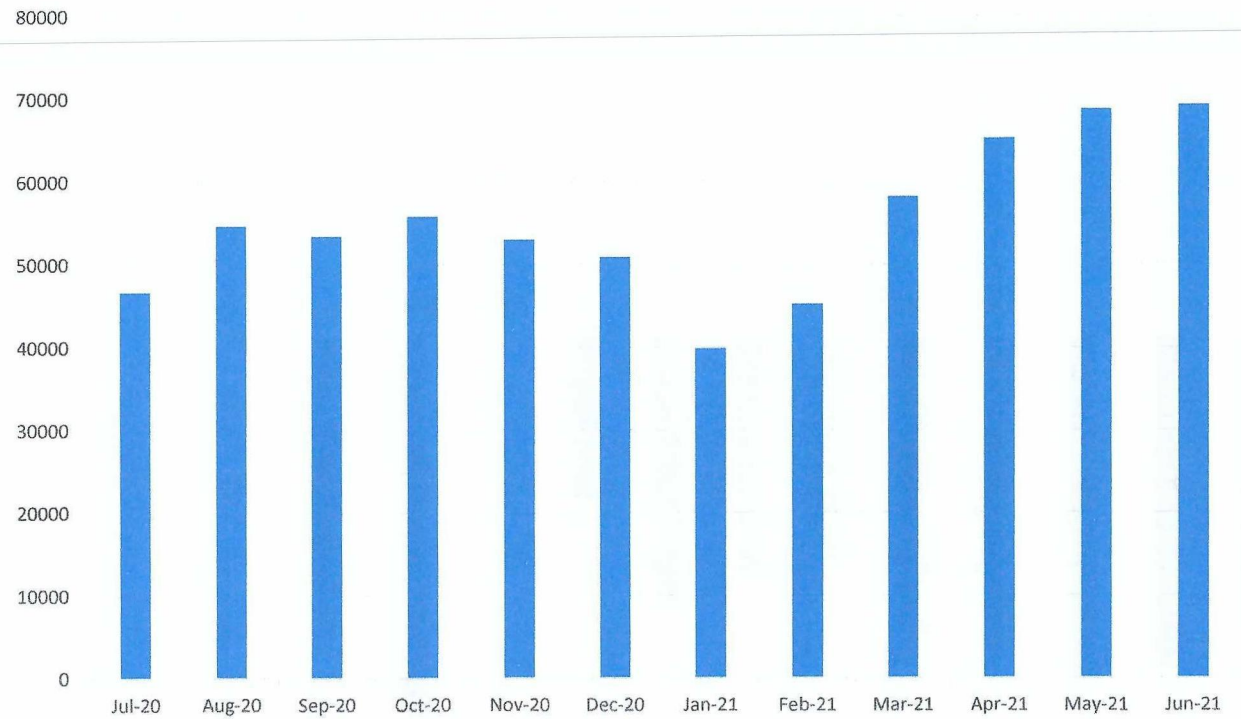
Date	26/05/2021	29/05/2021	29/05/2021	29/05/2021	01/07/2021
Location	High Lows Lane	High Lows Lane	Village Green	Ash Dale	High Lows Lane
30+	11	11	4	39	8
25+	34	30	27	27	25
20+	34	32	34		28
19 and less	7	3	6		3
TOTAL	86	76	71	66	64

Yerfield
&
Cold Meece
Associates

Y&CM PC ElanCity Radar – Traffic Count

June 2021 = 69,275
Average over 12 months = 55,076

TOTAL Traffic Count From Cold Meece



Yarnfield
&
Cold Mince
Parish
Council

Y&CM PC ElanCity Radar – Speed incoming

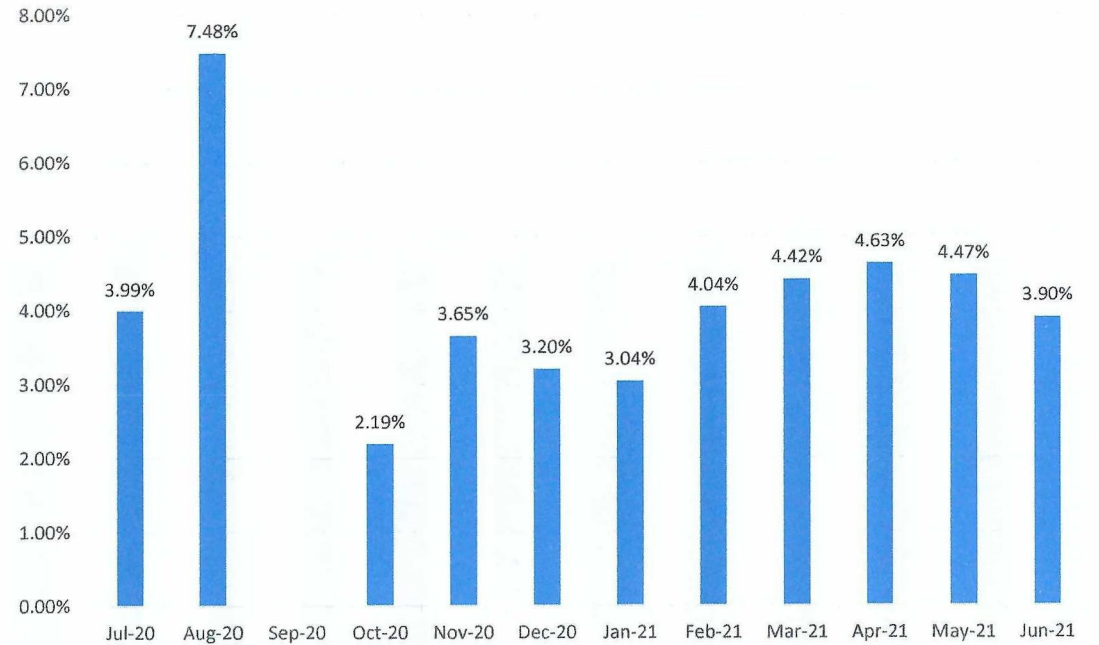
Headlines

V85%, V50 reduced by 1mph

V30 now stable

Drop in speeding for the second month running

% of Incoming Traffic speeding





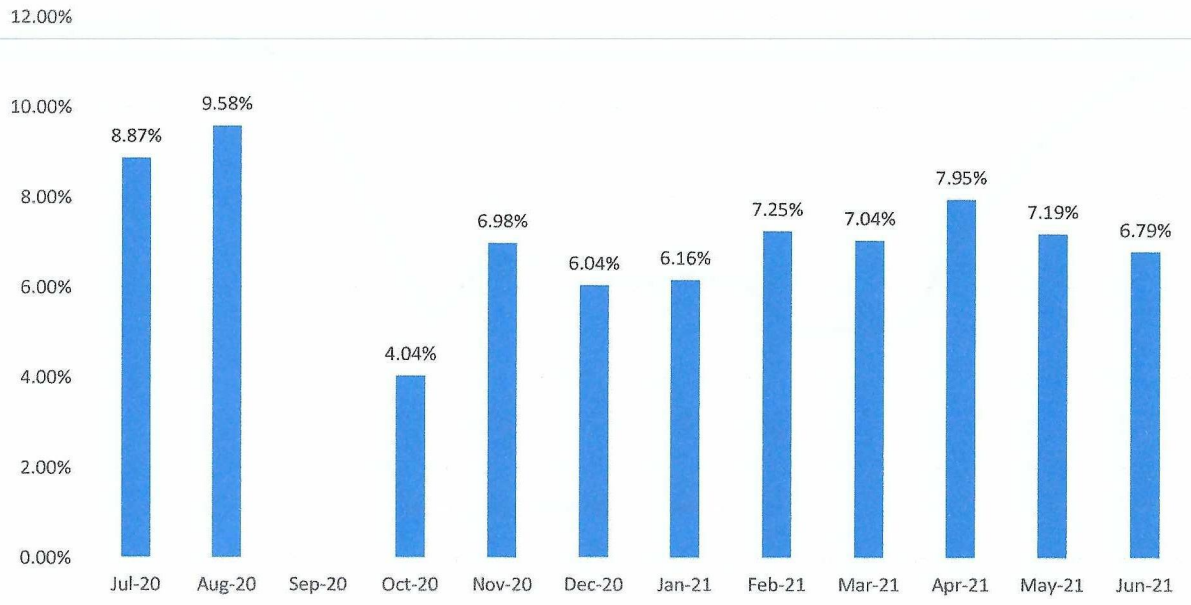
Y&CM
ElanCity
Radar

Y&CM PC ElanCity Radar – Speed outgoing

Headlines

Number of speeding vehicles is reducing
Percentiles now stable but not reducing

% of Outgoing Traffic speeding

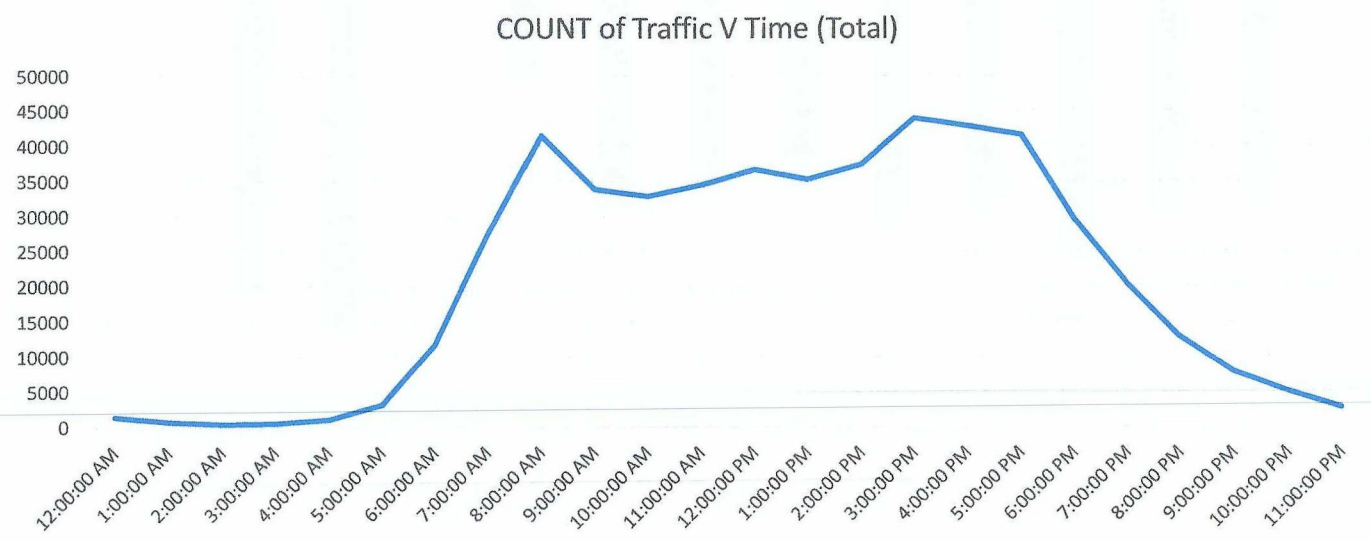
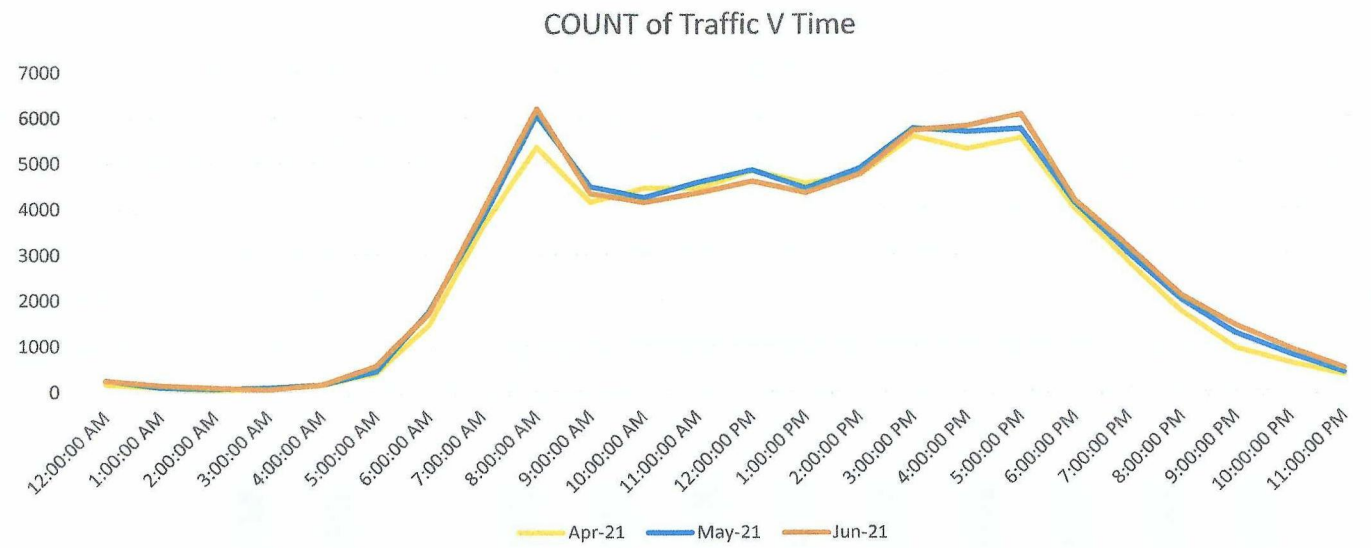




Y&CM PC ElanCity Radar – Traffic Count V Time

Headlines

- MoM increase for five months
- 8am
- 3pm
- On average busiest times



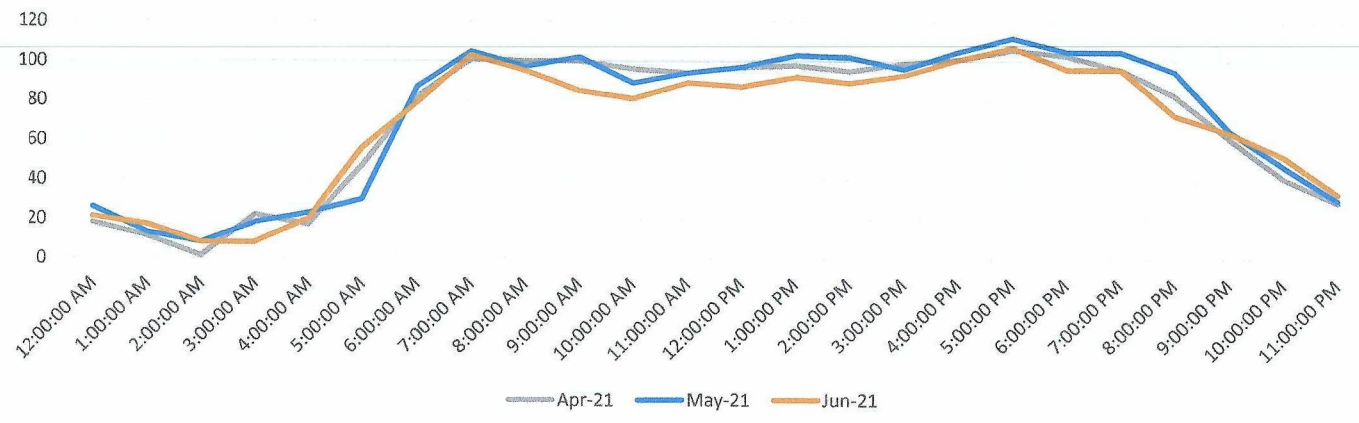


Y&CM PC ElanCity Radar – Speed over 31mph V Time

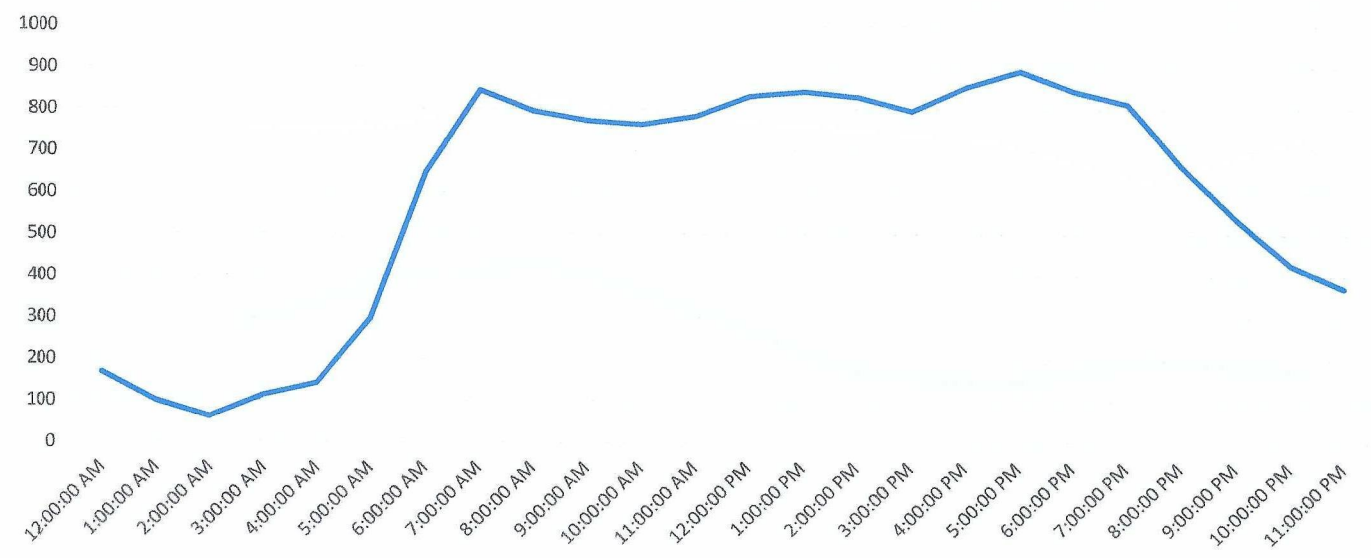
Headlines

- 7am
- 1pm
- 5pm
- On average most amount of speeders

COUNT of speed over 31mph v TIME by Month



COUNT of Speed above 31mph V Time (SUM Total)



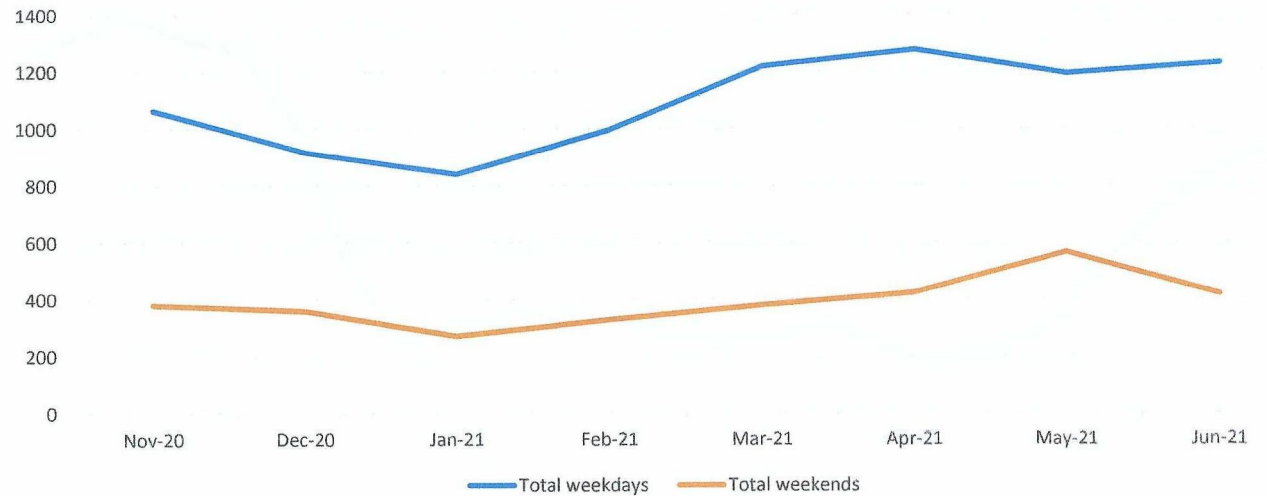
Yorkefield
&
Coldcliffe
Parish
Council

Y&CM PC ElanCity Radar – Speed over 31mph V Day

Headlines

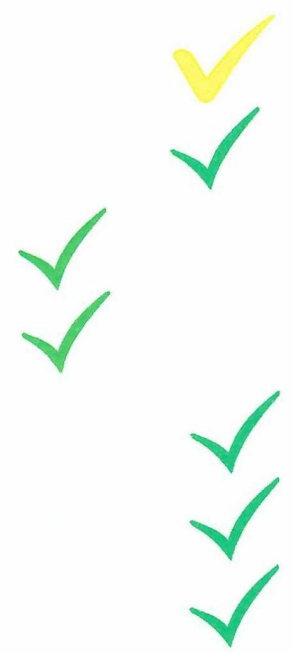
Consistently higher than previous months

Number of Vehicles above 31mph by weekday and weekend



CSW Strategy 2021

- Highways - Is the road classification correct?
- If so, what methods can be used to ensure PRN is correctly used?
- Education -> improved signage for road users
- Education -> for residents
- Engagement -> CSW recruitment
- Engagement -> Improved communication
- Enforcement -> Staffordshire Police
- Enforcement -> CSW
- Enforcement -> Create an extended CSW partnership





St. Mary's Parish Council

Written Evidence to the Chairman of Ways and Means regarding Hybrid Bill Consultation

Executive Summary

This evidence has been prepared by the Stone Railhead Crisis Group (SRCG) and submitted on behalf of Stone Town Council, Yarnfield & Cold Meece Parish Council and Chebsey Parish Council, who it represented in four parliamentary hearings as part of the High-Speed Rail (West Midlands to Crewe) hybrid bill process.

The parish councils believe that the hybrid bill process is flawed and not fit for purpose. It therefore either needs substantial overhaul or to be replaced by the Development Consent Order process for the purposes of providing planning approval to major infrastructure projects.

The evidence provided in this report provides our response to each of the ten questions posed as part of this consultation. In summary we recommend that:

1. Everyone that could be affected by a hybrid bill development, regardless of the linear distance from it, is effectively notified as part of the consultation process and that rights to petition are no longer reliant on the need to achieve locus standi.
2. Grant funding should be available to petitioners to cover their costs, including that of legal representation to at least partially reduce the huge current imbalance in available resources.
3. The procedures from Planning Inquiries should be adopted for the hybrid bill process and this should include the appointment of Planning Inspectors to chair and manage the proceedings; the proper enforcement of the rules regarding the examination/ cross examination of witnesses; and accurate reporting that includes a detailed explanation for the conclusions reached.
4. The adoption of the DCO process and/or procedures would improve the quality of documentation produced by the Promoter and increase the likelihood of negotiating fair agreements with petitioners to the benefit of schemes and those impacted by them.
5. Remote meetings should continue to occur if the relevant parties (Promoter and petitioners) agree.
6. The petitioning fee be scrapped.
7. The right to be heard should be widened to include people adversely affected by the hybrid bill development.
8. An Additional Provision be permitted in the second House.
9. Parliament tightens up on the use of vague language and caveated terminology that is being used by Promoters in the written undertakings and assurances given to Select Committees and stakeholders to weaken their commitments to the environment and local people.

1. Introduction

1.1 Stone Railhead Crisis Group

1.1.1 This evidence has been prepared by the Stone Railhead Crisis Group (SRCG), which is a non-political community group, which does not oppose the principles of High-Speed Rail. Its objective is to seek the best environmental and economic outcomes from the HS2 project for the population of Staffordshire.

1.1.2 SRCG has wide support from local people and its technical team has represented, and given evidence on behalf of, Stone Town Council, together with Yarnfield & Cold Meece and Chebsey Parish Councils throughout the Phase 2a hybrid bill parliamentary process.

1.2 Reasons for submitting evidence

1.2.1 The evidence presented in this report is based on extensive experience that has been gained by the councils' witnesses from preparing petitions and giving evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on three occasions between April 2018 and July 2019 and to the House of Lords Select Committee in September 2020.

1.2.2 We are sharing our experiences with the Chairman of Ways and Means, as well as the Government in the public interest, to improve the planning process governing projects such as HS2.

1.2.3 Our evidence is structured according to the ten specific questions. Given our experience we will also focus on the Phase 2a Hybrid Bill although we understand that the process could be used for other, linear projects, such as major railway and tunnel schemes.

2. General Questions

2.1 Question 1

What should Parliament do to ensure that those who are directly and specially affected by a hybrid bill (that is, potential petitioners) know how to use the petitioning process effectively?

2.1.1 At the present time, too much reliance is placed on the promoter to communicate whether local people located near to the proposed development are affected by it.

2.1.2 In respect of HS2 Phase 2a, this resulted in the company deciding who to consult based on what appeared to be a relatively arbitrary criteria based on linear distance from the railway. However, this is a crude and unreliable approach, as residents can be severely adversely affected at varying distances from the railway, especially in terms of environmental impacts from issues such as construction traffic.

2.1.3 Parliament needs to find a way of ensuring that the promoter undertakes meaningful consultation with everyone that could potentially be affected by the development and as part of this process, ensure that the rules around petitioning are clearly and simply explained.

2.1.4 The requirement to attain locus standi effectively prevents anyone other than directly impacted landowners and local authorities from having their petitions heard and giving evidence to a hybrid bill Select Committee. This approach effectively means that individuals and representative community groups are excluded from petitioning, unless they persuade local authorities to take up the issues of concern on their behalf.

2.1.5 Such limitations do not apply to Town & Country Planning Act (TCPA) or Development Consent Order (DCO) applications for major infrastructure developments. They should therefore not apply for hybrid bill applications if Parliament does not want it to appear that the

process is designed to simply facilitate the Government awarding itself planning permission without proper scrutiny.

2.2 Question 2

Is there an imbalance in the roles and resources of the promoters and the petitioners that creates problems of unfairness and, if so, is there anything that Parliament should do to remedy it?

- 2.2.1 Yes, there is a huge imbalance in the resources available to the promoter and petitioners, especially private individuals or parish councils who have limited funds.
- 2.2.2 It is also very unfair that promoters like HS2 Ltd are allowed to use the services of multiple barristers when petitioners do not have the resources to be represented in the same way. At the Phase 2a hearings HS2 Ltd was represented by one or more of a team of barristers and was able to call upon unlimited technical, administrative and legal resources, all at a huge cost to taxpayers.
- 2.2.3 In contrast, our technical witnesses prepared and gave evidence on an unpaid basis and in doing so expended thousands of hours of their own time, which including taking annual leave from their professional jobs.
- 2.2.4 Although we did receive some limited financial support from Staffordshire County Council's Community Fund to cover some expenses, this could not be used to cover costs such as the engagement of a planning barrister to examine our three technical witnesses during the first hearing on 25th April 2018. To supplement our resources, we therefore had to raise money through community crowdfunding.
- 2.2.5 Given that it would be very difficult in practice to limit the resources expended by Promoters, the only way to reduce the huge disparity between the resources available to the promoter and petitioners would be to make financial grants available to petitioners to assist with their reasonable costs.
- 2.2.6 Rather than be on an adhoc basis, such grant funding should be managed by an independent committee based on a set of transparent rules to ensure fairness of allocation, with complex technical cases taking several days to hear receiving the most funding.

2.3 Question 3

Are there procedures and practices used in other systems for determining planning applications, such as planning inquiries for major construction projects, which could usefully be applied to the hybrid bill procedure when dealing with works bills?

- 2.3.1 Although we believe that there is a very strong case for the hybrid bill process to be scrapped in its entirety in favour of the use of the Development Consent Order process that now governs the planning process for most major infrastructure developments, we do agree that, as a minimum, the procedures for planning inquiries (PIs) should be adopted for hybrid bill hearings.
- 2.3.2 The first change should be to have the proceedings presided over by experienced, technically qualified and impartial Planning Inspectors, rather than technically unqualified MPs or Lords, who may have pre-determined views regarding the proposed development or who might be susceptible to political pressure to take a certain position or view.
- 2.3.3 We would also like to see the rules regarding the giving of evidence properly enforced.
- 2.3.4 Although the issued guidance¹ claimed that the process at Parliament would be quasi-judicial, it did not replicate the approach taken in PIs. Furthermore, with respect to the Phase 2a

¹ Preparing for House of Commons Select Committee Hearings - A Guide for Petitioners

hearings, the rules were not adhered to by HS2 Ltd or enforced by the Chair of the House of Commons Select Committee.

2.3.5 For example, the order of proceedings set out on page 9 of the guidance¹ summarises (via a series of bullet points) the order of hearing petitions. In respect to the giving of evidence it states:

- *“Evidence from any Petitioner(s) witnesses, such as experts on engineering etc:*
 - *Petitioner(s) examines own witnesses first. Leading questions should be avoided as much as possible*
 - *Promoters cross-examine witnesses*
 - *Petitioner(s) re-examines on points arising from cross-examination*
- *Evidence from Promoters’ witnesses:*
 - *Promoters examine own witnesses first. Leading questions should be avoided as much as possible*
 - *Petitioner(s) cross-examine*
 - *Promoters re-examine on points arising from cross-examination.”*

2.3.6 However, whilst HS2 Ltd’s barrister was afforded time to cross-examine petitioners should he/she so wish, the same courtesy was not afforded to petitioners or their representatives. This one-sided approach enabled the Promoter and HS2 Ltd’s witnesses to make potentially false and inaccurate statements and claims without fear of proper challenge or scrutiny.

2.3.7 In our experience, the situation was made worse by inconsistent approach to time allocation from the Committee Chair. Petitioner’s witnesses were constantly hurried along, whilst the Promoter’s barrister was allowed to interrupt with impunity even when petitioner’s witnesses were under examination from their own QC.

2.3.8 A further problem was that, despite not being technically qualified, HS2 Ltd’s barrister was permitted by the Committee Chair to give evidence himself. However, no opportunity was afforded to petitioners to cross-examine this evidence and this enabled inaccurate statements to go unchallenged.

2.3.9 The amount of time afforded to petitioners and their witnesses to make their case is also inadequate and bears no resemblance to the approach taken at a PI.

2.3.10 For a technical case as complex as the one that we presented to Parliament, where we had three expert witnesses who submitted detailed proofs of evidence to set out the case, a Planning Inquiry would have scheduled a minimum of 2-3 days’ time (or longer) to hear the evidence and facilitate cross-examination of witnesses from both sides. However, at our first hearing at the Select Committee on 25th April we were only scheduled a single day, and we had to argue a strong case to achieve even that inadequate time allocation.

2.3.11 The situation was made even more difficult at our second hearing in front of the House of Commons Select Committee, when we were abruptly and unreasonably told that we had just 30 minutes to make our case, despite being the only petitioner to appear on the day and four hours of time being available.

2.3.12 For most other petitioners the time allocation was much less and we know that they believe the process was both unfair and heavily distorted in favour of the Promoter.

2.3.13 The process of reporting is also severely flawed. Despite having access to video recordings and Hansard transcripts, the ‘*Special Reports*’ issued by the Hybrid Bill Select Committees lacked detail and did not accurately reflect what had taken place during the proceedings.

2.3.14 By comparison, Planning Inspectors produce detailed reports that provide explanation for their judgement conclusions and such an approach should be replicated by Hybrid Bill Select Committees.

2.4 Question 4

Are there procedural, or any other, changes that could be made to promote negotiation between the promoters and petitioners (or potential petitioners) so that agreement might be reached at an earlier stage and in advance of committee hearings?

2.4.1 Yes, and once again the Development Consent Order (DCO) process is an example of how this could be achieved.

2.4.2 The DCO process is administered and overseen by the Planning Inspectorate. It requires extensive pre-application consultation between applicants and stakeholders and a staged and monitored approach of the process. It also requires submitted documentation to achieve an appropriate level of detail and standard and affords sufficient time to enable substantive changes and improvements to development proposals to be discussed and agreed with stakeholders.

2.4.3 As well as having to demonstrate that appropriate consultation is occurring throughout the DCO process, applicants must produce Preliminary Environmental Information Reports (PEIRs).

2.4.4 PEIRs effectively represent draft Environmental Statements that are produced at key stages of the design development process, with the final one normally based on a sufficiently advanced development design to enable the potential environmental effects of the proposals to be accurately identified prior to the final DCO submission.

2.4.5 Because of this, PEIRs also need to adopt robust assessment methodologies for all the environmental subjects that need to be assessed to ensure that the requirements of the EIA regulations are met. The approach should also include a robust assessment of the alternatives, which again is a requirement of the EIA process.

2.4.6 Because a successful outcome for the application from the DCO process is not guaranteed, it encourages applicants to consult effectively with stakeholders and reach agreement prior to the final submission to the Planning Inspectorate.

2.4.7 The problem with the HS2 project is that the Promoter already knows that the development is guaranteed to proceed from the outset and that any changes imposed by Select Committees will require only minimal change. This breeds complacency, which then undermines the Promoter's willingness to listen to alternative views from local people, however well-intentioned or well-founded. Significant benefits to the project and the people impacted by it have subsequently been overlooked and ignored.

2.4.8 Our experience in trying to negotiate with HS2 Ltd over its proposals to construct and operate a Railhead/IMB-R at Stone in Staffordshire is a classic example of the problem outlined above.

2.4.9 It started with the Design Refinement Consultation (DRC) for the Stone Railhead/ IMB-R that HS2 Ltd launched in September 2016 following its failure to secure the land it required for a similar facility on brownfield land at Basford Sidings near Crewe.

2.4.10 Unlike a consultation exercise that would have taken place under the DCO process, the proposals outlined at the DRC were insufficiently advanced, especially in terms of the proposed Stone Railhead/IMB-R for which only very scant information was provided.

2.4.11 Worse still, the basis for selecting the site was not well explained, with no appropriate discussion of the alternatives. Indeed, although HS2 Ltd claimed that seven alternative options to the Crewe site had been appraised, the report containing the options appraisal was not made available at the time of the DRC. All attempts by local people to be provided with a

copy were denied by HS2 Ltd with questionable reference to the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004.

- 2.4.12 Undaunted by HS2 Ltd's uncompromising attitude towards the release of the options appraisal, SRCG identified a more suitable alternative Railhead/IMB-R site and presented it to HS2 Ltd with a detailed comparative assessment of the relative engineering and environmental merits of the two sites in January 2017.
- 2.4.13 Rather than engage in a timely fashion, HS2 Ltd prevaricated, delaying a meeting for nearly four months, by which time it had advanced its Phase 2a Environmental Statement to comply with the apparently Government imposed hybrid bill submission deadline of 17th July 2017.
- 2.4.14 Although HS2 Ltd went through the motions by holding some further meetings with SRCG, it was clear that it was only paying lip-service to consultation and had no interest in changing its proposals. It reinforced this approach by producing its own comparative report containing multiple false and unsubstantiated claims about the two sites, which subsequently became the focus of the evidence exchanged at the first Select Committee hearing in April 2018.
- 2.4.15 In conclusion, SRCG considers that the replacement of hybrid bill procedures with something more aligned to the DCO process would have achieved the following:
- Improved the detail and quality of the HS2 documentation presented as part of the DRC process.
 - Allowed more time for the proper communication and consideration of third-party proposals of alternatives to the Phase 2a scheme.
 - Removed the foregone conclusion that HS2 Ltd is guaranteed to get its proposals approved regardless of whether or not they represent the best engineering, environmental and economic solutions.
 - Increased the likelihood of reaching negotiated agreement both in advance of the Select Committee hearings and prior to receiving Royal Assent.
 - Achieved the best outcome for local residents, HS2 Ltd and the taxpayer.

3. Specific procedural questions

3.1 Question 5

Should parties to hybrid bill proceedings (whether promoters, petitioners, witnesses, or Members of the hybrid bill select committee) be able to appear at and participate in meetings remotely?

- 3.1.1 Remote meetings have taken place during the House of Lords proceedings because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst this has been an important and welcomed opportunity to enable the proceedings to continue, it was our parish council's preference to give evidence in person. However, the opportunity to meet remotely should continue if both parties agree.

3.2 Question 6

Should the £20 petitioner's fee be retained? What are the arguments for and against its retention? If it is retained, what should govern the level of the fee?

- 3.2.1 It is presumed that the £20 fee is designed as a disincentive to frivolous petitions. However, we do not consider this to be a strong argument given the cost of petitioning and recommend that the fee be scrapped.

3.3 Question 7

What further guidance might assist potential petitioners in understanding the concept of “right to be heard”?

- 3.3.1 SRCG studied the rules regarding the petitioning process and engaged with our parish/town councils at an early stage in order to achieve locus standi. SRCG and our councils had the common goal of representing the best interests of local people and we continue to work closely together.
- 3.3.2 Staffordshire County Council also engaged with its parish councils and local people in advance of the petitioning process via a series of locally held meetings and offered advice about the petitioning process.
- 3.3.3 Unfortunately, we are aware that some local groups and individuals did not achieve locus standi with the result that they were not permitted to give evidence in front of the House of Commons Select Committee. It may therefore be helpful for Parliament to review its information communication procedures and/or to extend the access to other potential petitioners.

3.4 Question 8

Should promoters be able to propose Additional Provision in either House? What would be the consequences of allowing Additional Provision in the second House?

- 3.4.1 We strongly believe that Additional Provision should be permitted in the second House.
- 3.4.2 Part of the role of the House of Lords is to scrutinise decisions made in the House of Commons and, as appropriate, make amendments to legislation where it believes changes are required and would be beneficial. There should therefore be no impediment to Additional Provisions being proposed in the House of Lords.
- 3.4.3 Unfortunately, this has been disallowed in respect of the HS2 project on the apparent basis of historical precedence. However, it is evident that the real reason is a reluctance for the second House to be permitted to make changes because of the perceived delay this could cause to achieving Royal Assent, requiring as it may, a redesign of part of the scheme and an assessment of alternative proposals.
- 3.4.4 This is not a good enough reason in our opinion, especially where the proposed Additional Provision would improve the project and save the project time and money in the long run.
- 3.4.5 Notwithstanding the above, we understood that precedence prevented an Additional Provision being considered in the second House. Our petition therefore proposed that the House of Lords Select Committee recommend that the alternative Phase 2a Railhead/IMB-R be implemented by the Secretary of State for Transport via the use of an order under the Transport & Works Act 1992.
- 3.4.6 Such an approach was reasonable and would have enabled the alternative scheme to be implemented during the detailed design stage of Phase 2a following Royal Assent; thereby avoiding the risk of delay to the project programme, as well as saving the expenditure of further wasteful and unnecessary investigation and detailed design costs in respect of the Stone proposal. Any Transport & Works Act Order (T&WAO) would also be subject to the normal scrutiny and consultation requirements of a planning application.

- 3.4.7 Rather than accept the validity of such an approach, HS2 Ltd decided to oppose it and asked the House of Lords Select Committee to “give a ruling about additional provisions for the guidance of all parties appearing before it in these proceedings.”²
- 3.4.8 In addition to confirming the precedence regarding the second House’s ability to propose an Additional Provision, the Lords’ Committee was persuaded to go further and unfairly, in our opinion, ruled out evidence being given at all in respect of our alternative proposal.
- 3.4.9 Paragraph 8 of the ruling states:
- “We are aware that certain petitioners have suggested that changes similar to those that might be made by additional provision might instead be effected through an Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992. That would involve a process which is separate from the parliamentary process on this Bill, and it is highly unlikely that we could be persuaded that there was any recommendation we should or could make in respect of such an Order.”*
- 3.4.10 Not content with persuading the Select Committee to take this stance, HS2 Ltd’s barrister then spent the first half an hour of valuable hearing time trying to persuade the Chairman not to hear any of our parish councils’ evidence. Although our lead witness managed to overcome such objections and present the case regarding the unfeasibility of HS2 Ltd’s Stone Railhead/IMB-R proposals, together with road safety concerns in the locality, the parish councils’ witnesses were prevented from presenting their prepared evidence in respect of the alternative site at Aldersey’s Rough.
- 3.4.11 In conclusion we consider HS2 Ltd’s conduct to be both unacceptable and an abuse of its position as promoter under the hybrid bill process. We also believe that its abuse of the hybrid bill process is the best reason for an alternative approach to be adopted when Phase 2b of the HS2 project is taken forward.

3.5 Question 9

Where promoters make undertakings to a hybrid bill select committee, or give assurances, how can Parliament most effectively ensure that they fulfil those obligations?

- 3.5.1 Sadly, it is clear from our extensive experience of the HS2 project that the undertakings given to hybrid bill select committees and assurances given to petitioners are so full of caveats as to be virtually worthless.
- 3.5.2 The reason for this is partly due to the careful language used in such documents, but the main reason is the fact that Royal Assent has been awarded based on a Phase 2a scheme that has not been subject to sufficiently detailed engineering design to ensure its deliverability.
- 3.5.3 This means that the environmental effects of the HS2 development are not only understated but will actually be very different from those effects claimed throughout the hybrid bill process. This is particularly in terms of the ‘*magnitude of environmental change*’ that will be experienced by receptors once the civil engineering work commences.
- 3.5.4 Unfortunately, the lack of understanding of the EIA process by key decision makers has enabled HS2 Ltd to successfully circumnavigate this problem and mislead stakeholders about the real value of the assurances that it has agreed with them.
- 3.5.5 The most obvious example of this relates to HS2 Ltd’s assessment of its effects on road users and local communities from construction traffic, which the SRCG has substantive evidence to demonstrate will result in increased traffic levels that will be far greater than HS2 Ltd has so far acknowledged or assessed.

² Quote taken from the September petitioners information document issued by the Chairman of the House of Lords Select Committee on 29th July 2020.

3.5.6 Despite multiple requests to substantiate its predictions of HGV traffic to each of its Phase 2a construction sites, HS2 Ltd has repeatedly refused to do so. Instead, it has chosen to refer to the supposedly reassuring commitments contained in its *'Environmental Minimum Requirements'* (EMRs) and the accompanying *'Code of Construction Practice'* (CoCP), together with the *Local Traffic Management Plans* (LTMPs) that will subsequently be produced by its contractors during the detailed design phase.

3.5.7 When challenged about the accuracy of its predictions, HS2 Ltd's response to local parish councils³ is to state that:

"Should the contractor LTMP assume different routes for Large Goods Vehicles or flows which are higher than assessed in the Environmental Statement, then the contractor is required to confirm that no new significant adverse effects are forecast to arise, where they are within the control of the HS2 programme."

3.5.8 This approach is derived from paragraph 1.1.3 of the Phase 2a *'Environmental Minimum Requirements: General Principles'* document, dated February 2021, which states:

"The controls contained in the EMRs, along with powers contained in the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Act (the Act) and the Undertakings given by the Secretary of State, will ensure that impacts which have been assessed in the ES will not be exceeded, unless any new impact or impacts in excess of those assessed in the ES:

- *results from a change in circumstances which was not likely at the time of the ES²; or*
- *would not be likely to be environmentally significant³; or*
- *results from a change or extension to the project, where that change or extension does not itself require environmental impact assessment (EIA) under either (i) article 4(1) of and paragraph 24 of Annex 1 to the EIA Directive⁴; or (ii) article 4(2) of and paragraph 13 of Annex 2 to the EIA Directive⁵; or*
- *would be considered as part of a separate consent process (and therefore further EIA if required).*

Footnotes:

2: *i.e. a situation that could not reasonably have been anticipated at the time of the Environmental Statement.*

3: *This covers all effects (both positive and adverse) where those effects are simply of no environmental significance.*

4: *EIA Directive 2011 (2011/92/EU) as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU.*

3.5.9 Whilst at first glance this seems a reasonable position to take, it actually represents a completely hollow and meaningless assurance. This is because in EIA, environmental effects are either *'significant'* or *'not significant'* and there is no provision to become *'more significant'*.

3.5.10 Since HS2 Ltd has already predicted that that *'significant adverse effects'* would occur on many of its intended Phase 2a construction routes, it is not possible for new significant adverse effects to arise. This means that regardless of how many more HGV movements HS2 Ltd's contractors might predict will occur in practice, no one, including the local highway's authorities, will have any power to do anything about it.

3.5.11 The only way to address this problem is for the obligations to parliament and assurances to petitioners to be tightened up.

3.5.12 The first step to doing this is to replace the reference to the creation of new significant impacts or effects in the EMRs and any supporting documentation, with a reference to *"an increase in the magnitude of environment change⁴"*. This would mean that contractors must either

³ Notes of the Annual Extraordinary Meeting of the Phase 2a Highways Sub-Group on 26th November 2020

⁴ The term *'magnitude of environmental change'* is one of the two criteria that is used in EIA to determine whether the environmental effects resulting from the development are *'significant'* or *'not significant'*. The other criteria is the importance or value of the receptor, which is impacted by the development.

achieve the magnitudes of environmental change predicted by HS2 Ltd in its Environmental Statements or admit that they cannot. If the latter is confirmed then the contractors would need to seek approval for not doing so from the relevant local authority and agree design changes or further controls to provide additional mitigation to minimise the effects on receptors.

- 3.5.13 Such an approach would effectively replicate the system that already exists in other planning regimes and will give appropriate power for monitoring and enforcement to the local authorities.
- 3.5.14 The second benefit from this approach would be to encourage HS2 Ltd and other Promoters to undertake more robust and accurate assessments as part of the hybrid bill process. In the example of road traffic impacts, this would mean that HS2 Ltd would have to substantiate its predictions of HGV construction traffic with evidence that explains the basis of its assumptions.
- 3.5.15 Since SRCG has considerable evidence that HS2 Ltd has grossly understated the number of its HGV movements on the local road network affected by Phase 2a it is evident that, had such an approach been available for Phase 2a this would have led to far greater transparency and much more robust and deliverable undertakings and assurances.
- 3.5.16 The lack of any ultimate accountability, for promoters such as HS2 Ltd, leads to a cavalier attitude, as the company, its staff and consultants know they are immune from any consequence. Unfortunately, the current hybrid bill process encourages this attitude to the detriment of democracy and the expense of the best outcomes for the UK.

4. Final Question

4.1 Question 10

Are there any other changes to hybrid bill procedure and practice that are needed, or would be desirable, in order to promote the overall purpose of the review?

- 4.1.1 We believe that we have covered the key issues where change to the hybrid bill procedure would be beneficial. However, we remain of the view that the hybrid bill process is not the best means to achieve planning approval for major infrastructure development and recommend that all such development, including railway projects, should be subject to the Development Consent Order process instead.

Stone Railhead Crisis Group

On behalf of Stone Town Council and Yarnfield & Cold Meece and Chebsey Parish Councils

July 2021

YARNFIELD AND COLD MEECE PARISH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE

29th JUNE 2021 AT 7:30p.m.

Present for all or part of the meeting.

Councillor Stella Hughes, Chairperson.

Councillor Malcolm Beeston

Also in attendance: Mrs Margaret Broader, Ms Karen Chapman, Mr John Smee, Mrs Giuliana Brownsword, Mr Stan Collins & Mrs Tina Collins.

CAG 21- 1 Apologies were received from:

John Fraser, Linda Eyre, Frank Cromey

(Brief Introduction: Stella gave Malcolm Beeston a brief history of the Forum.)

CAG 21-2 No declarations of interest.

CAG 21-3 Defibrillators

Resolution: It was resolved that Stan would continue to monitor the defibrillators weekly.

Resolution: It was resolved that new pads would need to be purchased for the Village Hall defibrillator before they expire before the end of August.

The village is awaiting an electricity supply for third defibrillator to be sited in Ashdale Park.

Defibrillator Signage

Resolution: It was resolved that new signage was needed. Originally these notices were at the pub, the village shop, the hairdressers (now nail bar) where the sign has been removed, and on the noticeboards. This standard green sign can be downloaded from the British Heart Foundation website and will indicate where the nearest defibrillator is sited. Also residents need to know where the other defibrillators are sited.

Training

As part of our responsibility to our residents an annual training session on use of the defibrillators has been provided in the past. Stan Collins advised no training is taking place at the moment because of the Covid pandemic and that his training is now no longer valid.

Resolution: It was resolved that we run an outdoor demonstration session on September 19th, to reduce fear of using the defibrillator. If possible, this should coincide with new defibrillator being in situ on the Ashdale estate and take place at the site.

An invitation to attend a defibrillator training session has been sent out in the past, but has not succeeded in attracting many people to the training session. This was not huge expense but a lot of work distributing the information. It was felt that this was still worthwhile doing as people were encouraged to retain the information somewhere safe for future reference.

Resolution: It was resolved we produce a letter informing residents of the demonstration this Sept. It was also agreed to include basic instructions about what to do in a cardiac arrest emergency. (If possible combine with PC newsletter drop to save on workload.)

The purchase of more defibrillators was desirable as there were parts of the parish without a provision.

Resolution: It was resolved that we should research further into the purchase, loan or seek sponsorship for additional defibrillators.

We should consider purchasing a further defibrillator, expect a cost of £2090 initial outlay and running costs of approx. £100 per year, ZOL machine £1495 but have offer currently for £899. St John's Ambulance (a provider) tends to be more expensive. It is worth looking out for offers at the time we would want to purchase. Community Heartbeat Trust recommend that there is no need to provide for child as the risk of heart attack is low and one of our defibrillators already caters for a child. The Chair is continuing to research defibrillator options; Giuliana and Margaret to help with this research. It is possible to rent one, while there are also options regarding sponsorship deals with local businesses (8yr deal). CHT can help put us in touch with a local sponsor. The Parish Council might consider helping with purchase costs.

Resolution: Research whether we could obtain a grant to help with a purchase.

Resolution: Approach the Army to see if it is possible to share defibrillator provision with the community at Cold Meece.

CAG 21-4) Litter picking.

After considering the large amount of litter collected during the Village Spring Clean it was felt that this was an issue that should receive a higher profile.

Resolution: It was resolved to organise a monthly litter pick.

At the moment CAG does not have enough litter pickers and associated equipment to enable us to do this. Equipment could be loaned as before. After discussion it was felt that school children should be involved to educate them to take care of their school environment and village.

Resolution: It was resolved to approach the school to encourage children to be involved. (It was felt that as he is a governor of the school, Councillor Cromey would be the most appropriate person to discuss this with the school head/governors.)

It was thought that staff and children might want to take part in keeping the school grounds tidy. It is also clear that some families like to pick litter in family groups. This might appeal to

some families in the village. It would also build on the good work and interest created by the Village Spring Clean.

Resolution: It was resolved that we approach the Borough Council (StreetScene) initially for equipment - preferably donated, rather than loaned.

If the latter was not successful:

Resolution: It was also resolved that we then seek grants from one of the various businesses or local organisations such as Biffa.

We would need to obtain 15-20 adult pickers; 10 child size pickers; and 15-20 bag holders or trolleys and 15-20 Class 2 high visibility vests for adults and 10 Class 2 high visibility vests for children. The prices of each of the above were noted.

CAG 21-5 Dog fouling

A discussion was held on a source of irritation for some residents: the quantity of dog fouling in parts of the village; the failure to dispose of used bags and whether there was sufficient provision of bins, particularly on Yarnfield Park.

Resolution: It was resolved that we ask the village shop to stock bags provided by S.B.C.

After a detailed discussion regarding the responsibilities of dog owners a proposal to provide a bag dispenser was considered.

Resolution: It was resolved not to provide a bag dispenser unit and bags.

Resolution: Explore obtaining a bigger bin for lay-by on Yarnfield Lane towards Cold Meece

Resolution: Explore if the maintenance company at Yarnfield Park could increase the provision of bins.

Meanwhile we should ascertain if additional bin provision is needed in Yarnfield and Cold Meece.

CAG 21-6) Autumn village clean-up

After the success of the Spring Village Clean it was agreed that this would be beneficial for both the community and the village.

Resolution: It was agreed to set the date for Saturday 30th October for an Autumn Village Clean-up Day.

CAG 21-7) Strawberry Tea

After the success of the Strawberry Teas in the past it was agreed that it would be good way of bringing the community together after the isolation of the pandemic. However, it was

felt that a date should not be set at this juncture until there was greater clarity regarding the progress of the pandemic.

Resolution: To hold a Strawberry Tea as a community event. The date to be arranged later.

CAG 21- 8) Improvements to the appearance of village

It was the opinion of the committee that the provision of spring and summer plant displays was important in improving the appearance of the village and very much appreciated by residents of the parish and should, therefore, continue.

Resolution: It was resolved that bulbs and bedding plants for Yarnfield village and the traffic island in Cold Meece should be purchased. It was also resolved to establish if we would need to approach the maintenance company of Yarnfield Park to plant daffodils on the Y.P. roundabout. An enquiry could be made to see if they would consider part-funding this.

(£185 was spent last year on bulbs and plants in Yarnfield. Additional funding would be needed to cover Cold Meece.)

An eyesore at the moment is the garden on the wall opposite the Furlong.

Resolution It was resolved that the Chair should contact Mr Hood about the walled garden, fallen tree and broken fence opposite The Furlong.

CAG 21-9) Friday Morning Coffee Club

A small group of the original club are meeting informally on the Green. This has now been advertised to try to attract more of the residents who attended prior to the lockdown. It was felt that in September we would encourage the group to meet outside the village hall and eventually inside the village hall. Tina Collins would be willing to help organise the group's rota.

Resolution: We should continue to try to raise the profile of the group and provide some funding to help re-establish itself.

Meeting closed 9:30pm

CAG21 10. Date and time of next meeting - Tues 19th October at 7.30p.m.

Signed:

Chairperson of the Community Action Group

Date:

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council

Schedule of Payments - 14 July 2021

Date	Ref/Chq no	Payee	Description	NET	VAT	Payment
14-Jul-21		Trent Grounds Maintenance	Grass cutting contract	1,077.05	215.41	1,292.46
14-Jul-21		Clerk	Salary	530.40		530.40
14-Jul-21		HMRC	PAYE payment	132.60		132.60
				1,740.05	215.41	1,955.46



Chairperson:

Date:

14-Jul-21

HS2 Ltd 1 to 1 meeting with Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council

- 1. Will you guarantee that Yarnfield Lane will not be closed at any point during the construction of the Stone Railhead and the realignment of the road?**

It is not possible to guarantee that Yarnfield Lane will not be closed at any time as a result of works required to be undertaken by the project. For example, there are Undertakings and Assurances concerning signalisation works at its junction with the A34 and the possible need for delivery of works related to speed reduction measures.

The Environmental Statement noted that temporary road or lane closures and associated diversions will be required in a number of locations including Yarnfield Lane but that the expectation is that these will be restricted to short-term overnight and/or weekend closures.

Any closures will be discussed with the local highway authority in accordance with Schedule 4 of the HS2 Phase 2a Act and subject to any necessary consents. Public notification of any closure will be provided in accordance with the community engagement requirements in accordance with the project Code of Construction Practice and notification and signing to road users in accordance with the HS2 Phase One/2a Route-wide Traffic Management Plan (RTMP).

- 2. Are there any guarantees regarding restrictions or limits on HGV movements on Yarnfield Lane and if so, how will these be monitored and enforced?**

There are no specific Undertakings and Assurance regarding restricting the use of Yarnfield Lane by Heavy Goods vehicles (over 3.5t). However, the project is required to use reasonable endeavours to complete the construction and commissioning of the M6 Slip Roads as soon as reasonably practicable in the main civil engineering works construction programme for the Proposed Scheme.

Once the slip roads are open to HS2 construction traffic the project is required to use reasonable endeavours to maximise the use of the M6 Slip Roads by HS2 Large Goods Vehicle construction traffic (over 7.5t), so far as reasonably practicable, for access to and egress from the Stone railhead main compound so as to reduce so far as reasonably practicable the use of Yarnfield Lane.

All traffic flows and movements are required to comply with the General Principles that no new significant effects may arise beyond those set out in the Environmental Statement as set out in [Information Paper E3](#). How this will be managed is set out in [Information Paper E8](#) and additional details can be found in the RTMP.

- 3. Any improvements in speed or frequency of trains to and from Stafford, Stoke, Stone? Who will be accountable if these promises are broken?**

Regarding your query about the speed of, and frequency of train services, as I said this isn't one HS2 can directly address. I would suggest that representation

is made to the DFT regarding the specification of franchised passenger services. For many of the railway passenger services, the DFT controls the specification of those train services and would look to compete those services through contracts (for others, they are operated under an open access basis meaning no contract with government). The eventual operator is required to meet those specifications which are based on the demand for those by passengers. Of course the operator, and any interested party is able to propose changes to DFT, and the DFT is able to amend those contracts (of course subject to commercial and value for money principles).

With regard to the speed of train services, now this can be done by procuring faster rolling stock, or by upgrading the infrastructure to be capable of operating those train services at a faster speed. It is again not for HS2 to determine the upgrade of the conventional network, but this is done through the regulatory investment process with the DFT setting out what it wants, and the Office of Rail & Road (ORR) setting the boundaries within which Network Rail may deliver this.