

Angela Macpherson

“Thank you madam chairman I rise to second Charlie Clare’s notice of motion. Everything we’ve heard reflects the level of concern dismay, anger and frankly the anxiety and depression many of our residents that are affected by this vanity project are experiencing

I welcome the opportunity to second this motion.

Now that the enabling works have started in earnest along the track we’re seeing at first hand the illogical and questionable way that HS2 are proceeding. As you’ve heard in my own ward around Calvert, devegation of large areas of land is taking place as we speak, hedgerows ripped out and all this in bird nesting season at extortionate cost. I heard last evening that the dodgers hall lodge is threatened with compulsory purchase in June for enabling works again premature.

At grass roots level we are doing everything we can to halt the process at the very least until after nesting season and achieve a delay to protect our wildlife.

Residents and councillors are actively campaigning to achieve this. A petition of over 2500 signatures has been presented to HS2 head office (but have had no response) national and local media are highlighting our efforts and I have written to both of our MPs and the CEO of HS2

We now hear that there is a six month delay to the Notice to Proceed to release the next tranche of funding taking us to the end of the year. So surely it makes sense to at the very least postpone this local environmental destruction until that point.

Encouragingly there is renewed debate in government circles about the viability of the scheme with huge question marks over the spiralling costs and the already shaky business case,. Liz Truss is asking for a zero based capital review and ex treasury minister Lord Macpherson is on record saying HS2 would fail a cost benefit analysis and warns the technology is likely to be outdated by the time it becomes fully operational!
We can but hope that government will come to its senses and recognise priorities of far greater national importance.

The specific point in this notice of motion about improved engagement is critical

Let’s look at HS2’s published community commitments:

I Quote:

Our aspiration is to be a good neighbour every single day by respecting the people and communities we impact and being sensitive to their needs earning our social licence to operate.

In order to build the railway we must earn the trust and credibility to do so. We need to demonstrate that we understand local concerns and that we have taken all reasonable steps to address issues that have been raised whilst continually looking to lessen the impacts of the project.

Come on HS2 that is not what our communities are experiencing

Whilst I recognise that our representations may fall on deaf or disinterested ears, I firmly believe we must keep on helping our residents and communities the best we can.

So I second this motion”.