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Dear Mr Paterson,

I am writing to you on behalf Woore Parish Council (WPC) to outline our concerns about the continuing lack of progress in agreeing mitigations with HS2 and Shropshire Council (SC) in relation to removing or reducing the physical impact to the Parish infrastructure during the HS2 Phase 2a construction period, in particular, the next phase of preliminary preparations.

We provide this information in sections for ease of presentation.

### **Introduction**

Woore Parish Council continues to be appalled by HS2 and SC behaving in an arrogant and highhanded manner.

### **Safety of our children attending and leaving Woore Primary School**

A vivid exemplar would be the fact that HS2 and SC continue to ignore the proposal made to employ a Traffic Warden outside the Woore Primary School during the period of construction to provide an essential additional layer of safety for our school children and their parents/carers delivering and collecting them from the school grounds.

This proposal has now been made by two Select Committees. The first-time following WPC Petition to the House of Commons (HoC) submitted in July 2017 and it has now been repeated following the WPC Petition to the House of Lords (HoL). The HoL Select Committee members were incredulous that SC had deemed not to follow the previous HoC Select Committee provision based on the spurious grounds that 'SC do not supply Traffic Wardens outside schools as a matter of Policy' and seemed proud that only two were still in existence. One member of the House of Lords select Committee commented during the hearing that he was also a local Councillor in Cumbria where they fund Traffic Wardens for all their primary schools.

To provide you with further insight as to why this has become even more worrying I refer you to information supplied since the appointment of Mr Andrew Moreton by SC to liaise with both the WPC and HS2 in relation to the mitigations. Mr Moreton has, on behalf of SC and HS2, said quite categorically, that the width of the footpath from the Falcon Public House to the school entrance is not sufficiently wide enough to accommodate any kind of pedestrian railing or the low level buffers commonly seen at the side of roads to avoid pedestrians inadvertently stepping into the road and to stop lorries, vans and cars overhanging the path and potentially hitting pedestrians.

It beggars belief that HS2's response is to propose putting a pedestrian railing in place on the '**opposite side of the road**' and two more '**south of the Pelican Crossing**' where the pavement is wide enough to allow passage of persons and prams in both directions due to the safety measures put in place jointly by Shropshire Council and Woore Parish Council in 1998.

WPC believe HS2 and SC have not learned anything from the Grenfell Enquiry. HS2 and SC representatives have actually been heard to say, when challenged, that should a lorry driver be involved in an accident in the village it would be the responsibility of the driver and/or the contractor. Such a

cavalier and unprofessional attitude is not what we expect from an organisation established and contracted by Her Majesty's Government. Surely, potential 'pre-meditated corporate manslaughter charges' are not the kind of publicity the Government would want to invite. Our safety concerns for our children and Parishioners of Woore are recorded in our evidence to the HoL Select Committee.

### **Challenge to no alternative options**

HS2 continue to insist that the A51 and A525 are the only routes possibly open to them to take their construction vehicles. This is not the case as we showed in our Petition to the HoL (and also demonstrated by our neighbouring Councils Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council, Stone Town Council and Chebsey Parish Council), where we requested the HoL to instruct HS2 to revisit the option of using the Keele services exit from the M6 motorway and connect immediately onto the old railway line towards Market Drayton which could be made into a haul route. HS2 continue to hide behind not allowing Additional Provisions (APs) to the HS2 Hybrid Bill. Our proposal to use this route does not require an AP. It would be covered under the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAo) 1991 provision. Both the HS2 Hybrid Bill and the TWAo fall under the ultimate powers of the Minister for Transport and therefore we believe would not cause delays in the misleading way it was presented to HoL Select Committee by HS2 witnesses.

### **Passing places on the A525 to accommodate HS2 HGV vehicles**

In order to make the A525 wide enough for the HGVs to pass safely, HS2 need 13 passing places along the A525. Nine (9) of these will be in the Shropshire boundary between Woore village going east to the boundary with Onneley, a distance of one and half miles. HS2 will have everyone believe they will be minor layby passing spots. This is misleading to the point of deception. The length of road needed to reduce speed, stop, and regain speed for an HGV that size is significant. We fear, that the winding rural road that describe the A525 in that section, lined with ancient hedging, and natural fauna will be ripped out and straightened with a bulldozer, never to be reclaimed and turning this rural area into an urbanised and blighted space. Not to mention the damage to businesses which rely on inviting customers in, like the fruit farm and the restaurant as well as the Parish's Larger Employer (TT Pumps) which lie on that route within that one and a half mile stretch.

### **Impact on our community**

Increase in health and safety dangers from walking through the village and negotiating already busy roads carrying an extra indicated (possibly more) 250 lorries per day at peak and 200 per day thereafter cannot be brushed away. Residents must be able to walk in the village and to crossroads safely. The failure of HS2 to see the potential dangers to pedestrians and cyclists is demonstrated in the refusal to consider any mitigation to providing new and/or widened footpaths or to provide another road crossing to residents in Pipe Gate who need to cross the A51 road three times to reach the Village Store and a majority of the Parish amenities.

### **Potential loss of the Village Store and Post Office**

During the first Pandemic lockdown, the amenity of the village store and post office facility was shown to be a proven lifeline to residents in the village. This facility will be wiped out under HS2 plans to alter the junction to accommodate their HGVs because there will be an inability to park and access the shop safely. The inevitable waiting traffic at the junction will block access to the parking entrance and exits as happened recently when four-way traffic lights were used at the junction to accommodate the removal of tall trees that were dangerous.

HS2 have not addressed the provision of safe parking to use the village store despite that being an outcome of the HoC Select Committee provisions and will actually be decreasing the existing number of parking spaces to force their proposed changes at the junction. (See copy of HS2 plans showing changes to the junction).

### **Indirect harms**

It is clear that HS2 as an organisation to not possess one iota of Emotional Intelligence when pressing their tunnel vision purpose on local communities.

Aspects of harm caused by HS2 will not be recognised immediately as being a direct effect of the decimating of our village. These harms include the effects on the mental health and physical health of our Parishioners. One need only look to the evidence of the Covid 19 first lockdown period to see the

damage to mental and physical health when people cannot move freely about their daily lives, take exercise, socialise and feel safe. When Woore village is colonised by constant fleets of huge heavy vehicles, six days a week for 7 -10 years it will be like living under siege from an invading army, in a constant state of alertness, agitation and anxiety. These types of response experienced on a psychological level, over a period of time, have a high probability of also manifesting in physical health conditions. HS2 are not interested in the human cost.

### **HS2 Priorities**

HS2 will only focus on mitigations at the junction of the A51 and the A525, at the Square. They are only interested in how they will make the junction wide enough to allow their trucks to pass through and how they will widen the roads to allow their vehicles to move regardless of the impact on the Parish Community.

The Parish of Woore is made up of seven (7) communities. All of whom will be affected by these traffic flows. The noise, the dirt, the imposition, the vibration and air quality will all be impinged upon. No residents will escape the effects to their physical health, mental health and general well-being.

### **Role of Shropshire Council**

Shropshire Council has been spectacular in their abandonment of responsibilities towards the residents of this Parish. Shropshire County could still make a difference to this awful situation. They are the Highways Authority required to give permission for all these changes to take place and for the volume of traffic to travel these roads. They could also just refuse access to HS2 HGV's via this route under Schedule 17 and support our request for an alternative route. What you may ask have they done? They have offered themselves as a consultee to Staffordshire Council to represent them with HS2 provisions affecting our Staffordshire neighbours in equally appalling provisions if not worse. Staffordshire County will return the favour for Shropshire. This is neither a transparent nor wholesome foundation on which to protect the residents in these two counties from such damaging events and impositions in building HS2.

### **In summary,**

Woore Parish Council believes that Shropshire Council has lost its focus of who they represent as Councillors and the Communities they should be working for as a priority.

Our village has a history dating back to the Domesday Book. Shropshire County are effectively allowing this devastation to happen - we believe for the price of a Puffin Crossing and a school traffic road sign - are washing their hands on the way out as well as not supporting many of our other Traffic Mitigations/Interventions.

We look forward with anticipation to the hearings next week in the House of Lords to try to effect an amendment to consider the impact of HS2 on communities along the construction line.

We hope you find these details helpful.

Yours sincerely,

*Mike Cowey*

Chairman of Woore Parish Council

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