

Written representation from Jean Ritchie to the A14 Examining Authority.

15th June 2015

1. The present situation

At present the A14 passes through Huntingdon and it is not possible to join or leave it in Huntingdon.

Traffic from Godmanchester and from other settlements to the South and East of Huntingdon going to the station, or to Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, or to Hinchingsbrooke school, or to the Stukeley Road retail park, or onwards to the A1, has to use the ring road. Traffic from the North of Huntingdon also uses the ring road to reach the school, the hospital, and the station. This results in traffic jams on the ring road.

2. Brampton Road junction and Railway Station roundabout will remove traffic from South and East

The proposed junction at the Brampton Road and roundabout at the railway station will remove from the ring road the traffic originating from Godmanchester and surround areas and bound for the station, the hospital, the school, the Stukely Road retail park, or the A1.

3. Traffic from the North of Huntingdon

Traffic originating from the North side of Huntingdon at present has to travel past the Godmanchester bridge, then through Mill Common on the ring road in order to reach the station, the hospital and the school. If the ring road were made bi-directional then this traffic could reach its destination without having to go all the way round the town.

4. Linking Huntingdon to Cambridge

Traffic from any part of Huntingdon wishing to go to Cambridge at present has to cross the old bridge into Godmanchester, then out to Cambridge. If the ring road was two-way then traffic from the north of the town could turn right as it meets the ring road, get to the Brampton Road junction quickly, and on to Cambridge. Some might use the new Eddison Bell way to get to this junction. Residents from the South side of the town might continue to use the Godmanchester bridge, but this is the smallest part of Huntingdon and would not create much volume of traffic.

5. Protecting the medieval bridge

Heavy vehicles would have no need to use the Godmanchester bridge, and a height restriction barrier could ensure that no lorries would use the medieval bridge.

Much of the traffic continuing to use the Godmanchester bridge would be residents of Godmanchester itself, visiting Huntingdon town centre. Little traffic from further out would want to use this route.

6. Damage caused by Pathfinder Link

The proposed 'Pathfinder Link' would spoil one of the last stretches of Common land in Huntingdon, and would wreck the environment on the South side of Huntingdon. Walkers from the town centre to the much loved and used Port Holme, at present much used by families and dog walkers, would have to negotiate slip roads. The walk from Huntingdon Town centre to Port Holme would lose its pleasant view of Mill Common which would finally have been destroyed. The houses on The Walks would have their view ruined, the houses in Castle Hill would lose their pleasant outlook. Mill Common has a lot of archaeological content which it would be wrong to damage unnecessarily. Mill Common is at the heart of Huntingdon's conservation area.

7. Remove Pathfinder Link from current plans

The proposed Pathfinder link would be barely 500 yards from the station junction. I suggest that it would be better to create the new Brampton Road junction and Station roundabout as planned, and then wait to see whether there really is a need for a further junction at Mill Common. Remove the Pathfinder Link from the plans for now, since it is going to cause much destruction and detriment to the conservation area. Only build a second new junction in Huntingdon if, after the de-trunked A14 is in use, there really is seen to be a need for a further junction. Explore the possibilities of making the existing ring road two-way. Once Mill Common is spoiled the town will lose its attractiveness to tourists and to people wanting to make a home in Huntingdon. The residents on the south side of Huntingdon do not want to see their environment so seriously degraded.

8. Maps and pictures

The image below (Cambridge Community Archive) shows the station with the A14 flying over; this is where the new Brampton Road junction and station roundabout will be. The proposed Pathfinder link would be towards the top left of this image. The large extent of Port Holme meadow can be seen at the top of the picture. It is still a pleasant and easy walk from Huntingdon Town centre to Port Holme meadow.



Below is another aerial picture which shows the extent of Port Holme, the largest water meadow in England. The A14 can be seen to the bottom L of the picture, with Godmanchester on the far side of Port Holme.



Below is a picture of Port Holme meadow, showing the spire of St Mary's church through the trees. Port Holme, the largest water meadow in England, is quite near the town centre and families and dog walkers like to walk along Mill Common to reach Port Holme.



9. Let's not spoil Huntingdon

The Huntingdon.gov.uk website tells us that 'The Mill Common is a defining element of the town historically and spatially. It contains a number of elements of importance. Clearly its great extent provides an outstanding setting for the town to the east. It is now bisected by the A14 that sadly reduces its visual quality. The old County Hospital is a 19th century landmark to social reform. There are ancient earthworks on the Common, notably the pre- conquest rampart and ditch, and some good ridge and furrow.'

Note that the existing A14 'sadly reduces [Mill Common's] visual quality'. Let's not reduce that quality still further by putting a roundabout on what is left.