

16<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Unique Ref - 20028435

Mr & Mrs D. A. J. Field

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FAO – Planning Inspectorate

A417 Missing Link Project – Objections and Concerns

Firstly, we would like to make it clear that we are in favour of the project going ahead and we are fully supportive, but just not to the detriment of our home. The objections and concerns we have for our property are listed below. These have all been raised on numerous occasions with the Highways England team, but as yet, we still do not have any confirmations or answers to raised issues. We are still awaiting the confirmation from the Statement of Intentions, sent to HE on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

### **Pipeline**

Since the original plans, it has been agreed at numerous meetings that there are better options for all parties to use HE land as much as possible along the South side for the pipeline and only access our property on the furthest East/West side corner for minimal impact. Many comments have been discussed regarding the pipework and the effects on our home and services. We mentioned at that time that we could not see any reason why the pipeline could not run along the whole of the South side of the property on HE's land and only enter our property after the last manhole on HE side of the boundary, then in a direct line to the main manhole for the drainage water collection. This would cut out the need for more angles and reduce the number of manholes required on our land. The drainage would therefore run in a straight line approximately along the current boundary area on our West side. We accept that the pipeline along the West side of the property will be on our land once it is returned to us, (please see next item), but this way it will be more direct and less invasive. HE's position was that the present route was going to go in the DCO as planned, but that it will seek agreement for the more practical route straightening out the alignment. Frustratingly we still have not had any confirmation on the above discussions, despite Simon Owen agreeing that this could be investigated as an option.

### **West Boundary Land**

In 1990s when the first development of the A417 was carried out, HE wrongly took our land and we require this land to be returned to us and restored to its original state – HE have confirmed the land is ours and acknowledged it was wrongly taken on the first development in previous meetings. We have requested on several occasions that this matter be addressed sooner, rather than the end of the project as HE have already taken and kept the land for nearly 20 years, implementing mass planting on the land and not maintaining it in spite of agreements when the original planting was carried out.

The second aspect to this is that the agreement we have reached with HE must be formalized, specifically that all of the trees will be cut down and left at the property and all roots will be removed by HE and the land will be put back to grassland to match the rest of the field to the front of our property. The fence line will be reinstated along the correct line of the boundary. HE have verbally agreed that this work will be carried out as part of the enabling works at the start of the project. At the last meeting it was agreed that as this is our land and we received verbal agreement that we can access the area as it is in fact our property. However, yet again HE have failed to commit to print any of the agreements made in meetings, thereby requiring us to spend time making these representations.

### **Small additional Land Area U00275d**

Ownership of this small parcel of unregistered land has been split between ourselves and Gloucestershire County Council. We have agreed to the offer of this tiny area, but we request that when the fence line is replaced that it

does not include the area that GCC are responsible for, since it is a well-known fact that they do not maintain the borders or hedgerows in this area. We do not want to be responsible for any land not registered to us, no matter how small. However, if both small sections of land were to be placed under our ownership, we would be more than happy to care and maintain it, along with all of the other HE/County Council land that we have maintained for over 20 years due to lack of care by those responsible for it.

### **Layby – South Side**

HE has confirmed at early meetings that this is NOT a compulsory requirement, and we feel strongly that the layby proposal will be of detriment to our home and cause security issues for us. HE owns land next to ours that could be used instead. HE do not need to compulsory purchase our land and put our home at risk and blemish what is now a beautiful green open space. We therefore do not in any way accept plans to take a large amount of our home to place the layby on the boundary of our home. The many reasons have already been stated by us on many occasions, including, drugs, prostitution, litter, security, overnight parking, loud refrigeration units running and of course human waste from members of the public using the layby as a toilet, as well as concern for the welfare of any livestock we have on our land at any given time. It was agreed at previous meetings that this would be investigated since it is not compulsory. HE own land further up the road, next to ours, which could be used for this without the disruption to all concerned, the major security issues and blight to our property. We requested a defined timescale for a decision on this single issue and yet again no meeting notes or communication since.

### **Secure Boundary**

The boundary of our property on the South aspect is an issue that is yet to be resolved as we are only meters from what is the current A417. The South side of the property will be disrupted during these works and the replacement of the fencing and security of our property is a concern. After recent meetings and discussions, we are looking to have security in the form of a Cotswold Stone Wall or Caged Bund, to a height of approx. 2.5metres high, and we request written clarification on this issue. We currently have damage to our fences due to HE's lack of care of the hedge and trees along the South boundary. We are therefore looking to seek confirmation of a more secure boundary to our home as HE will be removing the current one during their works.

### **Planting**

In the 1990s when planting was done for the original scheme it was not carried out as agreed in meetings with David's now deceased father. The trees have never been maintained and the uncontrolled growth has now taken over our property and surrounded us with giant trees, such that we no longer have a view or outlook. The South side has now had some work after many years of asking HE to take responsibility, but further work is outstanding. They have agreed verbally that they have failed in the care of this area. It has been discussed and agreed that all future planting post project will be of low level shrubbery planting and will NOT be allowed to grow any higher than 3 metres high at full maximum growth. We request a written confirmation document to clarify and commit that this will be the case and that all maintenance work will be undertaken on a regular basis. This is so that we are not in the same position of 20 years passing and nothing ever being done again, as in the early 90's. All of these matters were discussed with the planners for the original project, and it was verbally agreed that the planting would be no higher than a double decker bus (The bus being used as a scale) and it would always be maintained. This has not been the case and it has destroyed any views we had and enclosed our property on 3 sides with a wall of trees higher than the house.

### **East Side Land & Trees**

The triangle of land on the east of our property currently belongs to HE. If there is any intention of this land being sold off, we request first refusal. However, our preference is that you use this land for your layby, which would solve issues on all sides. This request is obviously dependant on the points raised in item 4. The second issue regarding this land is like the other boundaries of our property the trees have never been maintained and are now way over sized and have blocked the views totally from the property. We have requested clarification on this issue but received no written communication.

## **Bottom Ground Map ref 845/1**

Our bottom ground has an access slab; HE wants to compulsory purchase this slab but in doing so we lose total control over our access to our field. Under our current ownership we have control over access to the livestock in the field, but if HE owns the slab, we lose control over access and parking. This has already been an issue in the area and will only get worse if we do not have the power over our own access to the livestock. It is not necessary for HE to own this land.

We do not wish to give up rights to our access to the bottom ground. This has been in place for many years, and we cannot see a valid reason why HE should now wish to purchase and own this small access plot. If HE insist on purchasing this land, we would be happy to look at alternative options for access to our land, however, once the driveway is changed and the traffic flow increases on that section of the drive, the access to the field will only become more of a problem. We already encounter vans, bikers, tippers, walkers etc just parking in the gateway and leaving vehicles unattended, so if HE own the section, we have no control of it and it will only become a bigger problem. As the field is used for livestock this has caused issues in the past. If we continue to own the slab then we have full control over access to our own property.

### **Communication and minutes from meetings**

This has not been forthcoming as the project has developed. Particularly the lack of Minutes of Meetings to confirm representations made. There has also been issue with promises during numerous meetings that different people will investigate points raised and let us have information and this never happens. Apart from communications with Oliver KIRKHAM and Simon OWEN, we have not heard from anyone with updates of items discussed. So, I am requesting this yet again and in writing that we would like copies of all the minutes from the dates of meetings listed below.

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018 – Star Centre – 4.00pm

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020 – Star Centre – 11.45am

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 – Online – 11.00am

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021 – Online – 1.30pm (Only received draft)

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 – Online – 11.30am

No copies of notes or minutes taken in face to face meetings on site have ever been received either.

### **Closing Statement**

Again, we would like to mention that Holly Brae is not just a house to us. It's been a family home for many years and will be for many years to come. The property will be passed to our children and then to their children. Therefore, we are very protective and passionate about it. Our parents' wishes were to have their ashes scattered on the peak to the rear of the property to always be near.

We are in favour of the road being done and wish to support the project in any way we can, but not at the cost of everything being taken from us with no compromise. We know it's for the long term and future generations etc, but our children and grandchildren are those future generations, and we want to protect that future and their future home.

We understand that we are not the only people affected by all of this, but it appears from speaking to people that we feel we are expected to do a lot more giving/compromising than many others affected by the project, and it has left us with a very uneasy feeling.

The detail in the plans and communication from the project has so far been completely unacceptable and is becoming increasingly frustrating. Without greater detail it is difficult to fully understand the proposals that have the potential to cause severe disturbance to our home. All we have ever requested is open communication and detailed information and copies of all minutes of meetings, but as already stated, this has been far from the case. There is a

big history of communications and being let down by HE, not just on these talks for the A417 project but also back in the 1990's when the first project was done. Everything that was agreed and promised did not come to fruition and the fact that our parents were abused and had land wrongly taken, gives us serious concerns over dealing with HE as an organisation.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

David & Lisa Field