Hybrid Bill Petition

House of Commons
Session 2017-19
High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Bill

Do not include any images or graphics in your petition. There will be an opportunity to present these later if you give evidence to the committee.
Your bill petition does not need to be signed.
Expand the size of the text boxes as you need.

1. Petitioner information

In the box below, give the name and address of each individual, business or organisation(s) submitting the petition.

Ingestre Park Golf Club, Ingestre, Stafford, ST18 0RE.

Ingestre Park Golf Club is the trading name of Kingston Hill Golf Club and Kingston Hill Golf Club is a company limited by shares which operates the golf club. In 2012, a new company – Ingestre Park Golf Club Limited – was incorporated. This is a company limited by guarantee and is the parent company of Kingston Hill Golf Club and owns all of the shares. Upon payment of fees, each member is granted membership of Ingestre Park Golf Club Limited. In any event, the golf club is commonly known as Ingestre Park Golf Club.

In the box below, give a description of the petitioners. For example, “we are the owners/tenants of the addresses above”; “my company has offices at the address above”; “our organisation represents the interests of…”; “we are the parish council of…”.

The petitioners are Ingestre Park Golf Club (“the Club”). The Club is located in the village of Ingestre, Staffordshire. It is a private members’ club with approximately 700 members.

2. Objections to the Bill

In the box below, write your objections to the Bill and why your property or other interests are specially and directly affected. Please number each paragraph.

Only objections outlined in this petition can be presented when giving evidence to the committee. You will not be entitled to be heard on new matters.
**Background**

1. If the Bill is passed, it will authorise the compulsory acquisition in the Club’s land. The land is numbered plots 20, 24, 30, 32, 33 and 38 in the parish of Ingestre in the borough of Stafford. Under the Bill, it is proposed that the Club’s land will be used for the Trent North embankment, Brancote South cutting and associated landscaping.

2. The golf course is rated as one of the best in the county and is a popular venue for county competitions, in 2016 hosting the prestigious Staffordshire Amateur Championship and England Golf Championship Qualifier. It has 18 holes and is currently a 70/72-par course (men/women). The course is tree-lined and located in the heart of the Staffordshire countryside in a peaceful, scenic and beautifully manicured landscape. Although a private members’ club, it is open to visitors and societies throughout the year. The course is built on undulating clay soils in the shadow of a Capability Brown landscape, near Ingestre Hall and a Christopher Wren designed church. In addition to the course, there is a club house that includes a bar, restaurant, snooker room and changing facilities. There is a pro-shop in a separate building. The club house facilities are used for a variety of social and recreational events and can cater for up to 200 people.

3. The course’s landscape rivals some of the country’s finest golf courses. The tranquility of the golf club is its most striking feature with no traffic noise due to its secluded position away from major roads and infrastructure. The Club also has superb practice facilities which include a practice area, first-class chipping and bunker practice areas and one large putting green.

4. In 2013 the Club gained the GolfMark accreditation which demonstrates that it provides the right environment which ensures the welfare of members and encourages everyone to enjoy sport and stay involved throughout their lives. An accredited club is recognised as a safe, rewarding and fulfilling place for participants of all ages as well as helping parents and carers know that they’re choosing the right club for their young people.

5. The Club employs 15 persons and the on-site franchise caterer also employs 15 staff. Moreover, there is a self-employed professional golfer and assistant professional golfer. So, the Club is effectively responsible for the jobs of 32 individuals. In addition, the Club uses the services of around 60 local contractors and suppliers. The positive effects on jobs and employment which can be attributable to the Club are therefore obvious.
6. If the Bill is passed in its current form, the Club’s rights, interests and property will be injuriously and prejudicially affected. The Club therefore objects to the Bill for the reasons set out in this petition.

The Bill’s proposals and effects

7. The effects of the Bill’s proposals on the Club are described in the Environmental Statement (“ES”) at paragraphs 6.4.28 in Volume 2 Community Area report, CA2: Colwich to Yarlet which states –

“Trent North embankment, Brancote South cutting and associated landscaping will require a total of approximately 24.5ha (approximately 47%) of Ingestre Park Golf Club to be either lost or severed from the club house during construction. This will result in the loss of seven holes of the course. There are alternative golf clubs in easy travelling distance, although there are no alternatives that will have similar qualities and characteristics in terms of the landscape and heritage value. The club house facilities are used for a variety of social and recreational events, including the local bridge club, and can cater for up to 200 people. This loss of land will mean that the club will be unable to function in its current arrangement. If the club closes, this will result in a major adverse effect, which is significant”.

8. While it is true that there are other golf clubs in the area, the Club is more affordable than the others and the Club considers it might be prohibitively expensive for many of its members to join the other clubs. It should also be noted that Club has a strong social side which caters to the wider local community. For example, it provides golf for the disabled, a strong junior system which allows youngsters to play golf, and has a history of encouraging blind golf on its course. The club itself is widely used by the local community and hosts a wide variety of events, including weddings, wakes and other social functions.

9. The ES goes on to describe certain of impacts which might arise in the event that the club house closes –

“In the event that construction of the Proposed Scheme leads to the loss of Ingestre Park Golf Club clubhouse as a facility available for use for local community meetings, clubs and societies, the loss of that facility may lead to a reduction in social capital. In that event, and in the event that no suitable alternative facility is made available, the consequence may be an adverse effect on wellbeing in the local community. (Paragraph 9.4.35).

10. These underestimate the Bill’s effects on the Club. The construction of the proposed railway would result in the following –

a) the bisecting of the golf course;
b) the complete removal of the 5th, 7th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 14th and 18th holes, certain greens and fairways;  
c) the loss of 39 acres of land which is required for mitigation planting;  
d) the inability of the club house to function as such; and  
e) the loss of access to the greenkeeper’s compound.

11. Put simply, the Bill’s proposals will render the golf course unplayable and this would have a disastrous impact on the Club. The Club objects to this.

12. The cumulative effect will be significant damage to a valuable community facility for around 700 members and the thousands of others who play the course as guests or visitors.

13. In addition, the 32 people whose livelihoods depends on the Club would find it difficult to obtain alternative employment in the event of closure, and there is a separate golf shop business located next to the club house which would also be lost. The owner of the shop fully supports the Club in its proposals as set out in this petition.

14. Any remedy to these problems will need to achieve two goals, and failure to achieve either would result in closure of the Club. The goals are –

- first, to maintain at all times, both during and after construction, 18 holes of golf in play of sufficient standard to permit players to maintain active competition handicaps; and
- secondly, to maintain a fully functioning club house at all times in order to maintain revenue streams from bar, catering and visitors.

The Club’s proposed remedy

15. The Club have considered a number of options as to how to achieve these goals and have shared their options with the Promoter. For instance, these included the extinguishment of the Club, the Club continuing as a 9-hole course after the Promoter acquires its land, the Club acquiring nearby land and continuing as a “cut and carve” course, and the Promoter acquiring all of the Club’s land in return for a new replacement 18-hole course and club house. Specialists were instructed to advise on each option and the options were then discussed at a meeting which was attended by over 150 members, as well as our local Member of Parliament, Jeremy Lefroy. Aside from one option, namely complete relocation of the Club, each option is completely unviable. The Club have actively sought alternative sites for the new golf course and have identified a preferred site. The Promoter is fully aware of these developments and has been kept informed of them at every stage of the process. A brief summary of the Club’s discussions with the Promoter is set out at the end of this petition.
16. Complete relocation would see the Promoter acquiring the entire golf course in return for, amongst other things, a new replacement 18-hole golf course and club house, offices, pro-shop, changing rooms, green keeper’s shed, catering facilities, driving range, practice area, putting green and parking for the same number of vehicles as can currently be accommodated. Clearly, the required services (including water, electricity, LPG gas or pipeline gas, sewerage and telephone lines) would also have to be provided.

17. The Club hopes that an agreement for complete relocation can be reached with the Promoter; however, if that is not possible, the Club request that the Select Committee require the Promoter to relocate the Club and to provide those items mentioned in paragraph 16.

18. The Club would stress that implementation of this option would require early agreement in order to meet the required construction timetable for the new golf course to ensure that the 2 goals identified in paragraph 14 are met before construction of the works under the Bill begins in earnest.

19. In any event, the Club, the caterer, and the owner of the golf shop business should be properly compensated for any losses incurred because of the works being carried out. The National Compensation Code, as applied by the Bill, does not provide an adequate remedy in terms of the amount or in terms of the timing of any payments. The Club fears that it may well cease to exist. In that eventuality the Promoter should, in accordance with the equivalent reinstatement rule, pay full compensation to the Club and the golf shop business based on the full cost of replacing the facilities being lost. In any event, the payment of advance compensation and the early release of the balance, and the advancement of negotiations at a very early stage for the acquisition of the land required for the new course is vital to facilitate the construction of the replacement facilities prior to land take.

*Other considerations – pipeline works*

20. The Club understands that, in order to construct the proposed works on the Club’s current land, it will be necessary to divert an existing gas and fuel pipeline which run through the centre of the existing golf course. The Club –

- consider any works relating to the diversions must be carried out early in the construction programme and certainly in advance of any other works
- consider that works required for diversion would require a host of works including digging substantial trenches, stripping sub soils, moving soils, laying new pipes, connections etc. and could entail significant holes being
dug across and beyond the Club’s land, probably a minimum 15 metre strip through the course

• understand the duration for these and related works could be for as long as 18 months. (The Club are aware the recent Stafford Water main works from Tixall Road to Milford took more than a year); and
• consider that disruption to the course is inevitable during these works and whether it be for 6 or 18 months, the works effectively would take out all the holes (and possibly more) that the railway will take out.

21. In the first instance, the Club request that the Promoter confirm the position in respect of the diversion works to the gas and fuel pipeline. While the Club’s request in how to best proceed in the light of the diversion works cannot be crystallised until it has received this information from the Promoter, it seems obvious to the Club that an agreement for the complete relocation of the golf club must be settled shortly and that steps must be taken expeditiously to bring that relocation into effect.

22. The Club also seeks an undertaking that these works will not commence until the new golf course is operational and will not take place while the current course is operational.

*Other considerations – roadworks*

23. The Club understands that Bill scheme roadworks could have an impact on access to the course. The Club requires 24/7 access in order to maintain viability. For instance, green-keeping staff start work at 6am when they get the course ready for play and the Club regularly hosts evening functions in the club house till midnight.

24. The Club therefore seeks an undertaking from the Promoter that its current access arrangements will not be altered by the Bill proposals.

*Jeremy Lefroy MP*

25. The Club is grateful for the assistance it has received from its local MP, Jeremy Lefroy who fully supports the Club’s relocation request and who will be referring to that request in his own petition against the Bill.

*The Club’s discussions with the Promoter*

26. In or around May 2017, Club directors met with HS2 Ltd. to discuss the Club’s requirements. At that meeting, the Club explained it had identified its preferred site for the new golf course and that, until it gets any agreement from HS2 Ltd. or the Secretary of State to fund the purchase of that land, the Club does not have the resources to take its proposal forward.
27. Time is of the essence here. For instance, a newly constructed golf course requires an estimated 5 year lead-in time to complete: two years to identify and secure the site and obtain planning permission and 3 years for construction. In addition, it is essential that the new golf course is constructed and ready to operate before play ceases at the Club’s present site. The Club cannot afford to be in a position where there is any delay between the end of play at the current site and start of play at the next one. It should be remembered that the Club is open every day of the year, including Christmas. That is the standard of access our members expect and our members, understandably, would not countenance remaining at a club where they were unable to play golf.

28. We therefore request that the Promoter undertakes that it will not take steps to acquire the Club’s land until the new course is constructed and ready for play.

29. In addition, in the event that the Club loses members as a result of any delay caused by HS2 Ltd., the Club will seek compensation for those losses.

30. Unfortunately, since that meeting 9 months or so ago, and despite regular chasing by the Club, HS2 Ltd. have not progressed this matter. It is essential that meaningful discussions begin now and the Club requests that the Promoter arranges a meeting with Club directors at which a timetable for the next steps to be taken can be agreed.

3. What do you want to be done in response?

In the box below, tell us what you think should be done in response to your objections. You do not have to complete this box if you do not want to.

The committee cannot reject the Bill outright or propose amendments which conflict with the principle of the Bill. But it can require changes to the Government’s plans in response to petitioners’ concerns, which can take the form of amendments to the Bill or commitments by HS2 Ltd.

You can include this information in your response to section two ‘Objections to the Bill’ if you prefer. Please number each paragraph.

Please see the “Objections to the Bill” section above and the requests set out in it.

Next steps
Once you have completed your petition template, save it and either email it to prbohoc@parliament.uk, post to Hybrid Bills Office, Houses of Parliament, London, SW1A 0AA, or call 020 7219 3250 to arrange a time to deliver it in person.