

PRESS RELEASE

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Canal & River Trust and The Inland Waterways Association give evidence to HS2 Select Committee

The Canal & River Trust and The Inland Waterways Association yesterday [Thursday 4 February] gave evidence to the HS2 Select Committee in Parliament on the potential impact of the high speed rail link on the country's historic waterways.

Marcus Chaloner, the Trust's national design manager, and IWA's Gren Messham separately briefed the cross-bench committee of MPs on the organisations' concerns about HS2 Ltd's plans in the vicinity of the waterways, and improvements to protect the attractiveness and historic character of the canals. Issues raised by the organisations focused on the proposed canal crossing at Curdworth, the impact of HS2 generated noise and the noise and visual intrusion created by the proposed alignment of Wood End Lane on the Trent & Mersey Canal near Fradley.

At Curdworth the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal is an important link for boats cruising between the northern and southern canal networks, while its towpath is a popular right of way and an integral part of Sustrans' West Midlands Network cycleway. The Trust and IWA are calling on HS2 Ltd to modify its design of the proposed viaduct and surrounding infrastructure at Curdworth to protect the popular and historic canal location and better meet the Knight Architect's report *HS2 Design Principles for Waterway Crossings*.

On noise generally IWA is pressing for the special nature of the waterways to be protected by requesting that they are considered in the same way as residential areas with regard to noise mitigation.

At Fradley near Lichfield, the reduction in HS2's impact on the Trent & Mersey Canal by moving 3 of the 4 proposed rail crossings south of the canal has been offset by routing Wood End Lane much closer to the canal. IWA are asking the Select Committee to recommend that HS2 and the highway authority work with other petitioners to agree a better route for the road that runs south of the railways.

The Trust and IWA hope that the Select Committee will recommend that the requests of the two organisations are incorporated into the final design of the HS2 project.

Following completion of the current appearances by petitioners in front of the HS2 Select Committee, the next stage will be for any changes to be incorporated into the Bill before it moves into the House of Lords, with Royal Assent anticipated at the end of 2016. Works are due to start some time during 2017.

Since the High Speed Rail project was announced in 2012, the Canal & River Trust and The Inland Waterway Association have worked closely with canal societies, the Government and HS2 Ltd to protect the nation's historic waterways and improve the HS2 rail link. This has resulted in significant changes to the scheme, leading both to cost savings and environmental benefits. The decision in 2014 to realign the rail route to avoid the Fradley Junction area of the Trent & Mersey Canal was an example of this success.

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Notes for Editors

The **Canal & River Trust** is the guardian of 2,000 miles of canals, rivers and docks across England and Wales, caring for the nation's third largest collection of listed structures, as well as museums, archives, and hundreds of important wildlife sites. We believe that living waterways transform places and enrich lives and our role is to make sure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature.

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

The Inland Waterways Association (IWA), a registered charity, leads campaigns to conserve, maintain and restore Britain's network of canal and river waterways. With a membership of around 16,000, IWA provides a strong voice for waterways users, working with navigation authorities, local and national government and other organisations to keep all our waterways alive. www.waterways.org.uk