

PRESS RELEASE

25 February 2016

HS2 Committee backs calls to protect historic canals

The Canal & River Trust and The Inland Waterways Association have today [25 February] welcomed the Second Special Report by the HS2 Select Committee which includes improved protection for canals along the route of the new high speed rail line.

The report follows representations from many petitioners over the last few months, including a co-ordinated response from the Canal & River Trust, The Inland Waterways Association and canal societies to protect the use, attractiveness and historic character of the waterways. As a consequence there will be further work by HS2 to improve the design and alignment of bridge crossings along the route and “a presumption that the perspective of canal users will be strongly taken into account in the design of infrastructure”.

Richard Parry, Canal & River Trust chief executive, commented: “This report represents a considerable step forward and is a testament to the joint efforts and collaboration between the Trust, IWA and canal societies. We have now been able to resolve most of our issues with HS2. This has either been through direct negotiation or, where we couldn’t reach agreement, through the endorsement of the Select Committee. Importantly we have achieved recognition of the importance of high quality design around the historic waterways, a principle which bodes well for future phases of the scheme.”

IWA Navigation Committee Chairman, Gren Messham, who represented IWA at the Select Committee hearing, said: “Whilst the report’s findings do not give the level of assurance on noise mitigation that IWA was looking for, we are pleased to note that low-level noise mitigation will apply on all canal crossings. We are also pleased to see assurances that canals and boaters are to be protected at several locations specifically from the impacts of HS2, whether during construction or operation, and that there will be a presumption that the perspective of canal users will be strongly taken into account in the design of infrastructure.”

Other headlines from the report include:

- **Trent & Mersey Canal** – HS2 to review the alignment of Wood End Lane to move it way from the canal
- **Wyrley & Essington Canal** - HS2 to fund replacement accommodation for Lichfield Cruising Club
- **Birmingham & Fazeley Canal** – the Committee calls for a “positive architectural legacy” from the viaduct crossing the canal at Curdworth

- **Grand Union Canal, Wendover Arm** - expectation that HS2 will prioritise early investigation into the impact of the proposed railway on water supplies to the Arm and nearby Weston Turville Reservoir
- **Grand Union Canal, Slough Arm** – a commitment that HS2 will, if necessary, provide temporary accommodation for moorers affected by construction and will avoid any non-essential intrusion into the character of the canal area
- **Grand Union Canal, Colne Valley Viaduct** – needs of boat owners and other residents along the canal to be accommodated, and HS2 challenged to improve the design of the viaduct

A full copy of the report can be found on the Parliamentary website at

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cmhs2/129/129.pdf>

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