
HS2 Liaison Group – West Northants
Venue: Microsoft Teams
Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2026 at 10.30 am

Representatives from the following organisations were present:	
Cllr Richard Butler WNC (Chairman – Highways & Transport portfolio & Brackley ward member)	Philip Freer (<i>Friends of Boddington</i>)
Cllr Alison Eastwood WNC (<i>Rural South Northants ward member</i>)	Doug Brown (<i>Boddington PC</i>)
Cllr Rosie Herring WNC (<i>Middleton Cheney ward member</i>)	Nigel Galletly (<i>Chipping Warden PC</i>)
Cllr Rupert Frost WNC (<i>Woodford & Weedon ward member</i>)	Josephine Rowling (<i>Culworth PC</i>)
Cllr Stephen Clarke WNC (<i>shadow Highways & Transport lead</i>)	Maurice Cole (<i>Thorpe Mandeville PC</i>)
Cllr Anthony Bagot-Webb (<i>Brackley Town Council HS2 representative</i>)	Chris Weller (<i>Greatworth PC</i>)
	John Marchant (<i>Helmdon PC</i>)
	Andy Smith (<i>Radstone</i>)
	Hilary Walton (<i>Whitfield PM</i>)
	Cathy Ellis (<i>Evenley PC</i>)
	Clive Hockley (<i>Hinton-in-the-Hedges PM</i>)
	Colin Moore (<i>Syresham PC</i>)
In Attendance:	Apologies:
Simon Levell (<i>Kier Northants</i>)	Cllr Charlie Hastie WNC (<i>Woodford & Weedon ward member</i>)
Gary Pettit (<i>WNC</i>)	Cllr Fiona Baker WNC (<i>Brackley ward member</i>)
Nathan Lowde (<i>WNC</i>)	Alison Coomber (<i>Brackley TC</i>)
Chris James (<i>EKFB</i>)	Simon Matthews (<i>EKFB</i>)
Haidee Williams (<i>EKFB</i>)	
Dave Butcher (<i>EKFB</i>)	
William Lowe (<i>HS2</i>)	
Kimberley Birtwistle (<i>HS2</i>)	
Filippa St Aubin D’Ancey (<i>National Highways</i>)	
Mike Koefoed (<i>National Highways</i>)	

MINUTES

1. Welcome, Introductions, Minutes of last meeting (26.09.25) and Matters arising

Cllr Richard Butler welcomed everyone as Chairman and WNC portfolio holder for Highways & Transport.

The minutes from the previous meeting (26th September 2025) were agreed.

Cllr Butler explained that in general terms any other matters arising / questions on items scheme-wide would be dealt with in order as listed in the agenda under items **3a-3j** following the EKFB presentation on scheme update and related highway issues at item **2**.

All outstanding actions from the **previous** Liaison Group meeting were reported on during this section (highlighted with **ACTION POINT** after relevant item in the minutes) as below:

- Chris James (*EKFB*) – had met with Boddington residents, in response to concerns from Cllr Alison Eastwood (*WNC*) regarding signage associated with the “Southern Link” temporary road layout: a drive through had taken place, and it was demonstrated that signage was compliant in this respect.
- Cllr Butler – had raised with EKFB the concerns of Andy Smith (*Radstone*) in relation to the permanent speed limit on Radstone Road when it re-opens, this would be kept under review via the Road Safety Audit process.
- Chris James – had attended to the matter of maintaining access to the Greatfield Nursery off the B4525 east of Greatworth, following an enquiry by Cllr Eastwood.
- Cllr Butler – had met with Chris James & Cllr Eastwood regarding damage to the carriageway of Banbury Lane (between Thorpe Mandeville & Culworth) although it was agreed that any reactive repairs would be pointless at the current time, it being better to wait until the works are done, HGV traffic reduces and the road re-opens.
- Cllr Eastwood – further requested that Cllr Butler speak to Culworth Parish Council on the issue, with Cllr Rosie Herring (*WNC*) also requesting attendance as ward member.
- Chris James – had attended to reporting back to Michael Powell (*Sulgrave PC*) who had raised the matter of soil storage near Magpie Farm at the last meeting.
- Cllr Butler – had also followed-up the concerns of Nigel Galletly (*Chipping Warden PC*) regarding damage caused to the Culworth Road & Welsh Road near the village.
- Colin Moore (*Syresham PC*) – asked how quickly a meeting with National Highways & WNC could be arranged to discuss provision for a cycleway on the A43 Bridge, as the one scheduled for 21st October 2025 had not happened, being cancelled by National Highways: Mike Koefoed (*NH*) – was not aware the meeting had been cancelled, and undertook to discuss internally, sort this out, re-convene the meeting to close-out the matter, and come back with a meeting date by 23rd January. Filippa St.AubinD’Ancey (*NH*) – sought to re-assure all that this matter would be dealt with. **ACTION POINT – NATIONAL HIGHWAYS to facilitate meeting with SNATRA & WNC**
- Cllr Eastwood – indicated that NH needed to resolve this matter before the next Liaison Group; Colin Moore – additionally asked when the A43 carriageway would be diverted over the new bridge (reported on later in item **2**. EKFB presentation).

2. EKFB scheme update including future road closure plans & phasing

Chris James of EKFB gave a comprehensive update including an informative and illustrated slide presentation on the route of HS2 starting at the Warwickshire border, right through West Northants, and just beyond into Bucks/Oxon, travelling along the trace from north to south. Questions were left until item **3**.

***Note:** Highlights of the presentation are given below; other details, photographs of scheme progress and key phasing dates may be obtained by reference to the presentation slides appended to – and distributed with – these minutes.*

Overall Progress

Some ‘big picture’ statistics were given to illustrate overall progress on HS2 – these were:

- 75% completion of main civils works;

- 7 bridges & 13 road realignments complete across HS2 trace within EKFB works area;
- 2025 had been a peak busy year for HS2 construction;
- 2026 would be similar in terms of intensity of construction works;
- 2027 would see a 'ramping down' of civils activity by EKFB;
- 2028 would see handover of sites to rail systems installation contractors.

Boddington

The highway works in this area straddling the Warwickshire border (*Wormleighton Road, diverted Claydon Road, Warwick Road and Banbury Road*) were opened on their final alignments on 22nd September 2025, improving local connectivity. Delays in opening Banbury Road bridge itself owing to ongoing repair works means a short temporary road known as the "Southern Link" connects diverted Claydon Road with Banbury Road across the HS2 corridor to locally bypass the bridge. There have been concerns over the multiple sets of traffic lights in the area and EKFB are currently reviewing if one set of these may be removed. **ACTION POINT – EKFB** *Post-meeting note: the temporary traffic signals at Warwick Road/Banbury Road (opposite Hill Farm, Boddington) have now been removed & traffic is flowing freely.*

Meanwhile, that section of Boddington Road leading south from Spella Works (*a.k.a. diverted Claydon Road*) across the HS2 trace will be permanently closed from late February to enable utility works, with the next 'milestone' being completing the link of this diverted road into the already-completed network of roads in the area. EKFB will give a definitive update to both Friends of Boddington and Boddington Parish Council on details and timescales in due course, including repairs to Banbury Road bridge which are expected to re-commence in Spring and continue through to Q3 of 2026. **ACTION POINT – EKFB to update Friends of Boddington & Boddington PC**

Claydon Road

The bridge structure and road over it (*Lower Boddington to Claydon*) have now been open to public traffic for around 6 months – the first public road on the Northants section of HS2 to be re-opened and in use on a new alignment over the railway corridor. There is to be a full weekend closure, however, between 30th January and 2nd February, to enable connection of a temporary access road to nearby Cedars Farm, to maintain farm connectivity until the permanent accommodation bridge and access over the HS2 trace is complete and useable.

Chipping Warden Green Tunnel

Installation of concrete sections for the green tunnel is now almost 90% complete which represents over 2.2km of the final 2.5km length. There is now a 'gap' of only 250m to connect the north & south sections of the tunnel, both of which have completed portal structures and work progressing on the portal buildings. Meanwhile, the new realignment of the A361 over the green tunnel opened as scheduled to public traffic on 6th October 2025 (*effectively phase 2 of Chipping Warden Relief Road*).

Edgcote Viaduct

In terms of this multiple-span structure over the River Cherwell, deck concreting works and placement of parapets are advancing well. Wardington Road (*leading from Trafford Bridge to Edgcote*) passes under the viaduct and is currently closed, but once highway works on this are complete and the viaduct overhead sufficiently progressed, Wardington Road will be re-opened – anticipated Spring 2026 – while Culworth Road near Chipping Warden will be permanently closed (*as per the HS2 Act*) later in 2026.

Lower Thorpe Viaduct

Works on concreting the deck for this structure are underway, using a travelling formwork structure slowly progressing from north to south. The original plan to have periodic short-term closures of Banbury Lane (*between Thorpe Mandeville and Culworth*) to safely facilitate deck concreting and associated works overhead – i.e. 'bite sized' chunks of time – has now been replaced by a continuous long closure between 5th February and 24th April.

Greatworth Temporary Road & Green Tunnel

Also known as the "Greatworth Tee", the second phase of this temporary road linking the existing first phase with the B4525 west opened in Autumn 2025, helping maintain connectivity in the area. An upcoming weekend closure will however be required to enable a vertically-improved tie-in with the existing B4525 at the east end of the temporary road. Meanwhile, Greatworth Green Tunnel in its final form will be 2.7km long, with approximately 1km of tunnel sections having now been installed, while waterproofing and backfilling works are following on in succession. It has been a good year for progress on the green tunnel, with work on advancing the 'south front' of the tunnel towards its Helmdon Road end having commenced during the Autumn.

Radstone Road

The originally-intended opening to traffic for just before Christmas has had to be significantly delayed, as whilst the utilities works and bridge structure were largely complete, several outstanding and unresolved issues remained in terms of the roadworks which – collectively – amounted to it not being possible to open the road in a safe condition. The intention is to address these issues over the next 2-3 months, including a re-design of the southern tie-in with Radstone Road (*on the Brackley side*) with a view to opening to the public by April.

AX16 Bridleway Accommodation Overbridge

At this point, the presentation included a photograph of the AX16 Bridleway Accommodation Overbridge under construction, located between Radstone Road and the A43: This indicated the progress on Rights-of-Way structures such as these (*currently bridge piers being constructed*), and how seeded railway cutting earthworks slopes are starting to 'green over'.

A43 Progress

The concrete deck of the A43 overbridge is now complete, as are the parapet installation works. It is anticipated that the highway tie-ins at either end will be completed around mid-to-late Summer, involving some weekend road closures, with the A43 diverted onto its new alignment over the bridge shortly afterwards, following which the temporary alignments will be removed.

Turweston Viaduct

Beams are all in place on Turweston Viaduct which spans the River Great Ouse on the Northants/Bucks border; deck concreting works are now progressing.

A422 (Bucks)

A422 between Brackley and Westbury is currently diverted on a temporary 'bailey bridge' while the new bridge structure progresses, with installation of parapets now ongoing; there will be some weekend road closures in late February / early March to prepare tie-in works,

and the road should be diverted over the new bridge and opened late Spring / early Summer. Meanwhile, nearby cutting slopes have been seeded and are 'greening up' well.

A421 Overbridge (Oxon)

The structure is now complete, with the A421 highway itself (*linking with the A43 south of Evenley*) now diverted over the new bridge on its new alignment. Some weekend closures still to come for finishing tie-in works during February, and removal of the old road alignment.

Engagement Events & Community Support

The presentation concluded with a number of examples of recent or imminent engagement events which EKFB are providing, including a number of drop-in events for local communities, site visits & talks, together with community support being given to a wide range of local initiatives and projects in the West Northants area.

3. Questions following presentation in item 2. above:

Cllr Alison Eastwood (*WNC*) – stressed there needs to be better and more co-ordinated communications within EKFB, in terms of the multiple, often conflicting and often changing notices of road closures in the West Northants area and as between T2G & G2S sections; Chris James acknowledged that this is an area that needs further input, and would seek to address in conjunction with Dave Butcher (*T2G*) & Haidee Williams (*G2S*).

3a. Northants diversions re: Stoneton Lane (nr Boddington) closure

The closure of Stoneton Lane, just into Warwickshire, involves a local diversion via Priors Marston towards Byfield and back to Boddington, or vice-versa, making use of higher quality, wider roads, rather than the shorter but unsuitable route direct from Priors Hardwick along Welsh Road to Upper Boddington; this seems to be working well and no issues were raised.

3b. Warwick Rd/Banbury Rd (Boddington) – timescales for bridge remedial works, review of operation of Southern Link, temporary traffic signals & one-way traffic order (northbound) on 'Spella Link'

No further questions were raised on this item, Chris James having covered and explained the key issues in the EKFB scheme update presentation at item 2. above, including the proposals for dealing with them in this area.

3c. Experience since Claydon Road was re-opened to public

Philip Freer (*Friends of Boddington*) – whilst noting it was good to have through connectivity since the road was re-opened, he challenged WNC to take advantage of the forthcoming closure of Claydon Road, Lower Boddington, to deal with addressing and rectifying the poor surface condition of the road.

Gary Pettit (*WNC*) – responded that details had previously been passed both to WNC Commissioning & Contract Management (*Sam Simons*) and Kier Maintenance, encouraging them to investigate what could be achieved via a site visit, which Philip Freer asked to join.

ACTION POINT - WNC Portfolio Holder to liaise with C&CM in respect of both Winter Maintenance & deterioration to local highway network

3d. A361 Chipping Warden area – Operational experience since opening Phase 2 of Relief Road to public

Nigel Galletly (*Chipping Warden PC*) – the re-routed A361 was working well, albeit there were concerns about intermittent closures to facilitate various additional and remedial works.

Such closures – as with the two-week closure of the A361 just north of the village associated with the tie-in works for the new section of highway back in September/October – caused excessive traffic on nearby Culworth Road & Welsh Road, with associated damage to the carriageway surface and verges.

3e. Wardington Road & Culworth Road - updated closure phasing

Nigel Galletly – further expressed concern over greater clarity on dates for the re-opening of Wardington Road (*near Edgcote*) and the consequential permanent closure of Culworth Road i.e. when this would likely be during Q3 of 2026? **ACTION POINT – EKFB to inform Chipping Warden PC**

3f. Banbury Road (Thorpe Mandeville) & Banbury Lane (Lower Thorpe) closure phasing & 'rat running' issues including Bulls Lane

Doug Brown (*Thorpe Mandeville PC*) – stated that there needed to be more debate about the extended closure of Banbury Lane between Culworth and Thorpe Mandeville, and furthermore that it would have been courteous for EKFB to have approached the Parish Council sooner to discuss the implications, particularly in respect of the signage strategy. The signage needs to reflect (*coming from B4525*) that there is “access to Thorpe Mandeville village only”, so that businesses e.g. the Three Conies pub can still be accessed, but also positioned so drivers seeking a (*non-available*) through route to Culworth don't turn round at inappropriate locations – something which with some forethought and consultation by EKFB could have been avoided.

Chris James – indicated that he & Haidee Williams (*EKFB*) are discussing a revised signing strategy with the EKFB traffic team which will hopefully lead to improved signage in the area. **ACTION POINT - EKFB to review traffic signage at Thorpe Mandeville**

Cllr Herring – said improved signage would help, but added that it was also important that the only route in and out of the village remained gritted, as that did not appear to be happening at the moment.

Gary Pettit – advised Cllr Herring to set out her concerns about winter gritting in Thorpe Mandeville in an email to him so he could forward to the relevant teams within WNC/Kier. **ACTION POINT – CLLR. HERRING to set out concerns in writing to Gary Pettit at WNC, to convey to Assistant Director (Highways) & Highway Network Manager**

3g. Greatworth Tee (Phase 2) – User experience since opening

There were no further questions or observations raised over the operation of Greatworth Tee (Phase 2) since it opened in the Autumn.

Chris Weller (*Greatworth PC*) – commented that if Helmdon Road (*route east of village towards B4525*) was re-opened to traffic sooner, then there would be less traffic disruption to Greatworth, with more available route options out of the village. He also commented that an

inspection of the condition of the road towards Marston St. Lawrence would be advisable, as this is a useful exit route from the village, yet the carriageway is in poor condition.

Chris James – responded by reminding Greatworth PC that the Helmdon Road cannot be re-opened until the Greatworth Green Tunnel is completed, the soil replaced and the road reinstated over the tunnel, which is still a considerable way off time-wise.

3h. Radstone Road – circumstances & issues associated with failure to open in December, including revised timescale for opening road to public & aspects which still need to be addressed

Cllr Tony Bagot-Webb (*Brackley TC*) – questioned why there was so much of a delay in opening Radstone Road, citing it being as much as 12 weeks more than first envisaged.

Chris James (*EKFB*) – responded that the reality was a section of highway had to be completely re-designed and approved at the south tie-in, which inevitably takes time.

Andy Smith (*Radstone*) – acknowledged and concurred with the points made by Cllr Bagot-Webb, adding that inconvenience to the local community around Radstone & Helmdon was serious: The road is a vital lifeline, and he reminded the meeting that when the HS2 Act was being formalised, the then government minister had indicated that – apart from necessary tie-in works - Radstone Road would not be closed throughout the works; the prolonged closure was having serious impact and there was no consistent message being communicated by HS2.

Chris James – indicated that Cllr Butler had already raised with him the situation at Radstone, but agreed that the points made by Cllr Bagot-Webb & Andy Smith be taken offline for further discussion. **ACTION POINT – EKFB to discuss with councillors / community**

Cllr Herring – expressed concerns about multiple confusion associated with whether the section of road from Helmdon crossroads to Radstone village road turn was being gritted, the uncertainty over deliveries to Radstone village in terms of the extent of the Radstone Road closure, plus the inadequacy and misleading nature of the temporary signage. She also re-iterated safety concerns expressed at the last Liaison Group over road users emerging from the village road onto the new Radstone Road alignment once it re-opens, and requested if the local community could have a 'trial run' prior to full opening to familiarise themselves with the new layout. In addition, she raised issues about the diabolical state of the Whitfield Road from Radstone towards the A43 – the only other exit from the village – and the need for repairs to it.

Cllr Bagot-Webb – re-iterated that the condition of Radstone Road outside HS2 limits is seriously degraded, and asked if anything could be done to make it 'fit for purpose'.

Gary Pettit – stated that the matter of Radstone Road has been previously raised on more than one occasion with Kier Maintenance and also with Commissioning & Contract Management at WNC (*Sam Simons*). He advised that Cllr Butler take the matter up with Sam Simons, along with other locations in West Northants where opportunities present themselves to do reactive repairs whilst sections of road are closed by EKFB/HS2, *others mentioned during the course of this meeting being at Boddington, Chipping Warden, Culworth, Thorpe Mandeville and near Greatworth, as well as around Helmdon/Radstone.*

ACTION POINT – WNC Portfolio Holder to liaise with C&CM in respect of both Winter Maintenance & deterioration to local highway network – applies to items 3c, 3f, 3h & 5

3i. Space for future shared use cycleway on A43 bridge – what was outcome of discussion between SNATRA, National Highways & WNC ACTION from last two Liaison Groups (13th June & 26th September) – National Highways to advise & explain position

This matter had been discussed under item 1. Actions, and reported there, however it still remains an **ACTION POINT FOR NATIONAL HIGHWAYS** from this meeting, the expectation being that National Highways would re-convene a meeting with SNATRA & WNC to resolve the issue without further delay, and notify in this respect by 23rd January.

3j. General planning & development issues associated with HS2

Philip Freer – was conscious of what the future legacy of HS2 would be in the area, something which Malcolm Stewart (*Boddington PC*) had raised at the previous Liaison Group: Looking to the future, Boddington was wishing to firm-up details of its Village Plan, and there were concerns about pockets of land associated with the HS2 works, and whether these will be retained by HS2 for their purposes, handed back to third parties, or what other use they could be put to. He also wished to have clarity on the future of the HS2 site access road through the site. In summary, Boddington would like to see a speedier resolution of these matters locally by HS2.

Cllr Butler & Chris James – would get together to discuss the implications for Boddington, and more generally for other HS2-affected parishes in West Northants, although Chris James did say that 'landscape design' plans would be issued to local communities in the foreseeable future, likely Spring 2026. **ACTION POINT – EKFB & CLLR. BUTLER**

4. National Highways questions re: diversions etc as raised including upcoming events affecting A43

There were no further specific questions, all issues pertaining to the A43 and National Highways interfaces having been dealt with in preceding discussions and questions earlier in the agenda.

5. AOB

John Marchant (*Helmdon PC*) – indicated that he had spoken with the Community Liaison Officer (*Helen Howard*) at WNC re: attending to the condition of the Radstone Road near Helmdon, including the drainage gullies; Cllr Eastwood added that money also needed spending on the B4525 in the vicinity, including ensuring both Radstone Road & B4525 were routinely gritted. **ACTION POINT - WNC Portfolio Holder to liaise with C&CM in respect of both Winter Maintenance & deterioration to local highway network**

Cllr Herring – was concerned about the future potential for graffiti on highway structures over HS2 – such as Radstone Road bridge – and whether an anti-graffiti treatment had been applied to structures?

Chris James – responded that anti-graffiti coating to structures had not been done, albeit it was EKFB responsibility to remove any graffiti that does appear during the construction phase and 12 month maintenance period after opening. However, longer-term, he indicated that a specialist anti-graffiti contractor would be appointed by HS2 to deal with the issue thereafter.

Cllr Rosie Herring (*WNC*) – raised the matter of the B4525 and damage to the carriageway surface at the Thorpe Mandeville turn; Cllr Butler offered to have a look at this issue and report back to Cllr Herring. **ACTION POINT – WNC Portfolio Holder to liaise with C&CM in respect of both Winter Maintenance & deterioration to local highway network**

Cathy Ellis (*Evenley PC*) – mentioned that two large ‘craters/potholes’ were present on the A43 roundabout near Evenley / south of Brackley, and that these posed a danger to road users: Cllr Butler – asked that National Highways note this with some urgency.

Filippa St.AubinD’Ancey (*NH*) – responded that NH were aware of the situation, and reassured the meeting that someone from NH would look at it again. **ACTION POINT – NATIONAL HIGHWAYS**

Cathy Ellis – also expressed thanks to HS2 Community Fund for recent works at Evenley.

Colin Moore – mentioned issues of road condition along the A422 near Turweston turn; Cllr Butler offered to mention to Buckinghamshire Council (*as outside WNC area*).

Clive Hockley (*Hinton-in-the-Hedges PM*) – asked whether all the funds being used towards repairs to local roads in the “HS2 zone” was depleting funds intended for road repairs in other villages and communities away from the HS2 area? Cllr Butler – responded that NO, this was NOT the case. Gary Pettit went on to further reassure Clive Hockley – and all – that WNC’s “Fix My Street” service is still there for reporting such matters, and all repairs are categorised and prioritised for intervention, irrespective of whether they are located in the “HS2 sphere of influence” or not.

Chris James – added that where damage to local highways is clearly down to intensification of use by HS2-related traffic, then there is a process for compensation to local highway authorities which is distinct from WNC’s maintenance budgets, therefore the local authority funds should not be depleted in this way.

Cllr Richard Butler then closed the meeting.

Date of next meeting: TBC