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Item for Steeple Aston Newsletter High Speed 2

In a recent issue James McNamara referred to the Governments proposals for a High Speed rail line (HS2).

In discussion with James, it became clear that certain incorrect information about the possible effect of HS2 on Chiltern Railways services is circulating. The following is intended to set out the facts:

“In view of the controversy surrounding the Government’s proposal for a new high-speed rail route from London to the Midlands and the North, I thought it would be useful to set out Chiltern Railways’ position, and also my own thoughts based on over 40 years experience in the rail industry.

Railways are a major British success story. Nationally, rail traffic has grown by over 70% in the past 15 years, and this growth has continued despite the recession. Additional rail network capacity is now needed to cope with future growth, and to help transfer more passengers and freight from our overcrowded roads. Experience in other countries shows that high-speed rail can help drive economic development, and by aiding our international competitiveness it will make Britain a more attractive location for business and jobs.

I therefore believe that the overall case for high-speed rail is positive
However, my main concern is the interests of Chiltern Railways and our passengers, and I would like to reassure you that the claims being made in some quarters that we will be adversely affected by HS2 are wholly untrue.

The preferred route for HS2 crosses or runs parallel to the Chiltern line at seven different locations, in London, Buckinghamshire and Birmingham. We have therefore

worked closely with HS2 Ltd. to ensure that the layout of the new route will have no impact on our future operations, and that there will be minimal disruption to Chiltern Railways' train services during the construction period. In particular the detailed alignment of the HS2 line has been revised to take account of the Chiltern "Evergreen 3" route enhancement project that is now under way , and claims that HS2 invalidates the Evergreen 3 work are erroneous. This project will, from Sept 5th this year, mean that journey times for most Chiltern Stations (including Bicester and Banbury) to London will reduce by around 20%.

Likewise, HS2 will have no impact on our future timetable. Contrary to the claims that are currently circulating, I can emphatically state that Chiltern Railways will not be reducing train services as a result of HS2, and neither will we be reducing the frequency of train calls at intermediate stations. The same applies to fares; we will not be increasing our fares as a result of HS2.

Chiltern Railways are committed to providing a fast, frequent and affordable service for all customers. This will continue to be the case whether or not HS2 proceeds, and thus our ongoing investment in trains, track and stations bears witness to this."

Adrian Shooter CBE
Chairman


