

## Calvert, Steeple Claydon, Twyford and Chetwode

### **TWYFORD**

HS2 references: Area CFA13 - Unique IDs: CAL043, CAL0565 and CAL057

#### **Summary:**

We are pleased to note that as a result of route changes after the 2011 consultation, the HS2 high-speed line will now be further away from Twyford village and Portway Farm - but we are concerned that the Environmental Statement underestimates the value of the setting of Heritage assets, and as a result the impact that the line will have, both in construction and in operation.

Mitigation measures such as bunds (protective earth banks) and planting are likely to destroy archaeological features which are on the borders of the village, in the fields close to the planned rail line. Archaeological investigation of these features should be programmed-in well before construction.

#### **Assessment:**

In 2011, after the initial announcement of HS2 plans, the Society conducted surveys in Twyford with a view to assessing the likely impact of the line. Four reports were published, on Twyford Village, St Mary's House, Portway Farm and the old village earthworks in nearby fields. Copies of all these reports were provided to HS2 Limited, and all may be downloaded from the Society's website (see [www.bucksas.org.uk/hbgprojects/hs2twyford.html](http://www.bucksas.org.uk/hbgprojects/hs2twyford.html)).

At Portway Farm (CAL 043) we concluded that one of the 19th-century barns was of listable quality. As was characteristic of farms of that date, Portway was set away from the village in the midst of its fields.

Portway remains a working farm whose land will be divided by the HS2 rail line. In the circumstances we believe its setting is integral to its heritage value and so do not agree with the statement in the gazetteer that its setting does not contribute to its value. The farm will surely be impacted by the operation of the line as well as during construction.

St Mary's House (CAL 056) contains the oak frames of two open halls, both dating from the 15th century. We believe that an application to upgrade the building to Grade II\* would be justified. The tranquil setting of the house on the edge of the village at the end of a cul-de-sac is one of its key characteristics.

Inevitably there will be a noise impact on the building from HS2, which will be around 200 metres from the line, and there must be fears of vibration effects with a timber-framed building of this age.

The HS2 construction and final operation impacts are assessed in the Environmental Statement as being moderate or medium, but this seems optimistic. Whilst creation of bunds (protective earth banks) may reduce the noise impact, concerns remain over potential vibration effects.

St Mary's Church (CAL 057) is next to St. Mary's House, the former rectory, and for the Environmental Statement to describe its setting as only 'relatively peaceful' is, we believe, an understatement.

**Our Concerns:**

Twyford is a somewhat isolated village, with little traffic. The village streets that are away from Portway Farm and Bicester Road are cul-de-sacs and tranquillity is an important characteristic of this rural settlement.

Closest to the line of HS2 are the Grade I listed St Mary's Church, the Grade II listed St Mary's House (which could be Grade 2\*) and the earthbanks that indicate the former extent of the medieval village. Together they form a historic setting. All will be affected by noise, vibration and the disturbance of construction – and the Environmental Statement's assessment that the impact will be only medium or moderate is clearly too low.

We also note that no undesignated heritage assets have been identified within the boundary of Twyford settlement. From our research we believe this to be highly unlikely.