

A380 South Devon Link Road (Kingskerswell Bypass)

PUBLIC INQUIRY

Proof of evidence: Councillor Mike Haines BSc.

My name is Michael John Haines, I am a Teignbridge District Councillor. I am currently a member of Teignbridge Council's Executive, and Portfolio Holder for Planning. I am attending this Public Inquiry in my capacity as Ward Councillor for Kerswell with Coombe, which includes Kingskerswell.

I have been a Kingskerswell Parish Councillor since 1983, and a Teignbridge District Councillor representing Kingskerswell since 1987. I have followed the history of the Bypass since I attended a packed Public Meeting in January 1973, when the preferred route for the Bypass at Kingskerswell was changed from the previous route, which ran adjacent to the Torquay railway line on its eastern side, to the present route. I have stated my support for a bypass in my leaflet at each District Council election since 1987.

My own property is in Kingskerswell, and I have always considered that I would be affected no more than the majority of Kingskerswell residents. Upon examination of the Environmental Statement (ES) accompanying the bypass planning application, I concluded that the effect on my property was neutral. This view was confirmed by the findings of the Standards Board for England following complaints about me by a former Vice Chair of the Kingskerswell Alliance.

Need for the bypass

When I attended the public meeting in January 1973, I was not sure that a bypass was necessary, you only had to use the back roads on a Saturday during the summer to avoid the traffic jams on the main road. By the end of the 70s, with traffic growth the need had become much more apparent, and the Newton Abbot bypass and part of the Torbay ring road had been opened. I believe that the bypass should have been built following the public consultation in 1977. During renewed public consultation in 1988 even one of the main objectors to the bypass was quoted in a newspaper as saying that Kingskerswell needed a bypass, (although he wanted it shifted to the other side of the village). Following that consultation the Government had agreed to trunk the road, demonstrating its importance.

The Halcrow Fox Report (A380 Corridor Study) in 2000 considered a total of 34 possible solutions and concluded that, **on balance, however, we see no choice but to build a new bypass if overall conditions along the A380 corridor are to be improved.**

Benefits

Safety: Paragraph 2.2.6 of the Environmental Statement (ES) highlights the safety issue, with the existing road effectively bisecting Kingskerswell and there being 31 other public highways, 8 footpaths & 141 private drives or field gates having direct access onto the road. This situation produces a large number of pedestrians and vehicle turning movements, and it is no surprise that the accident rate on the A380 between Penn Inn & Kerswell Gardens is more than double that on dual carriageways beyond. Table 2.0 in the ES shows a predicted saving of at least 8 fatal casualties and 109 serious casualties in the first 30 years of the scheme opening.

Air Quality: The ES shows a net benefit to air quality. Since the ES was published, an air quality management zone has been established, affecting properties adjacent to the current main road. The bypass will have the beneficial effect of greatly reducing pollution along the main axis of the settlement of Kingskerswell. Many children who currently walk to the primary school have to endure the high pollution along the main road, and the safety risks associated with such traffic.

Reduced 'rat running': The daily traffic flows in the ES show a significant reduction of traffic on Yon Street / Huxnor Road route, although there is no data for others such as Fore Street / Fluder Hill. It is clear that 'rat run' traffic will be greatly reduced through the village, bringing further safety and environmental improvements.

Economic: At the planning stage, the South West of England Regional Development Agency [SWRDA] supported the application. It commented that the A380 provides an important transportation link in between the principle urban area of Torbay with the main motorway and trunk road network. It considered that the development proposed for the A380 will improve the accessibility and economic function of Torbay with consequential beneficial economic impact on the region as a whole.

Policy

The proposed route of the Bypass has been protected in the Structure Plans and Teignbridge Local Plans for many years. (This information has been easily available to people moving to property near the route. Indeed I checked on the route when moving to my present property in 1980.)

The RSS currently requires 8000 new dwellings in the Newton Abbot growth point area up to 2026. Torbay is also a growth point, with a figure of 15000 new dwellings required. These levels of growth cannot be achieved without additional infrastructure, and the bypass is key to this.

Public opinion

The Devon County Council Executive agenda of 25th June 2002 has a report detailing the outcome of the public consultation in Spring 2002. It included the following:

2799 (68%) returns indicated that the proposals were acceptable, with 616 (15%) finding them acceptable with some changes, giving a total of 83% accepting a bypass strategy. When this is analysed to determine the views of the residents of Kingskerswell and the Aller Park, Milber and Buckland area there is still a clear level of acceptance for the principle of a bypass strategy.

Within Kingskerswell and the Aller Park, Milber and Buckland estate area there was a 45.2% response accepting the plans as shown with a further 22.4% calling for some changes to the detail, giving a total of 67.6% acceptance of the principle of a bypass.

The consultation showed a majority of Kingskerswell residents who responded to be in favour. This is consistent with the Kingskerswell Parish Council election results in 2003 & 2007 (appendix 1 & 2), when Kingskerswell Alliance candidates received about a third of the vote on each occasion, demonstrating that they represent a minority view.

The Kingskerswell Alliance is a vocal pressure group, particularly consisting of those who live near to the proposed route, many having moved there since the route has been known (ie since 1973). The Alliance does not speak for a majority of Kingskerswell residents.

The Alliance makes reference to alternatives, but these were rejected by Halcrow Fox. An example is the 'tidal flow' model, with 3 lanes on the existing main road. Essentially there is no tide, and this suggestion would make road safety on the existing main road much worse. The Alliance has previously given the examples of 'tidal flow' at Cardiff and west Plymouth in press statements. In those cases there is indeed a tidal flow, more traffic flows into the urban areas in the morning, and more traffic flows out in the evening. However, the situation along the A380 through Kingskerswell is not like that, there is no direction with a higher flow level due to the 2 way movement to Torbay to the south and Newton Abbot / Exeter to the north. Thus a tidal flow arrangement would not work in this case as there is no tide. Even if there were a tide, road safety and air quality would be good reasons not to pursue three-lane tidal flow.

Conclusion

The bypass is desperately needed. It will bring significant benefits to the area, particularly to road safety and the economy. It is necessary if we are to achieve the growth levels required in the RSS, and all surveys of public opinion show that it is supported by the large majority in South Devon.

Appendix 1 Kingskerswell Parish Council Elections 2003

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes*
BRIGHT, Paul Gerald	Kingskerswell Alliance	502 Elected
COOK, Sheila Mary		844 Elected
COOPER, Norman Scales		486 Elected
CORNEY, David John	Liberal Democrats	538 Elected
HAINES, Michael John		883 Elected
HARTLEY, John Thirkell		504 Elected
MASON, Kevin Robert		258
MERTENS, Charlotte Luise		501 Elected
MILLER, Derek John		622 Elected
NEWLYN, John Anthony		452 Elected
RAWLE, Gillian Anne	Kingskerswell Alliance	518 Elected
SHARP, John Bernard	Retired Surveyor	418
VERBRUGGE, Edony Dorothy		222

* If elected the word 'Elected' appears against the number of votes.

The number of ballot papers rejected was as follows:	Number of ballot papers
A want of an official mark	0
B voting for more Candidates than voter was entitled to	1
C writing or mark by which voter could be identified	0
D being unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty	22
E rejected in part	0
Total	23

Vacant Seats: 10

Electorate: 3917

Ballot Papers Issued: 1519

Turnout: 38.77%

Alliance votes	518 (or 502)
Ballot Papers Issued	1519
Alliance percentage of votes	34.1%

Taken from Teignbridge Council website, original may be viewed at: http://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1721&p=0

Appendix 2 Kingskerswell Parish Council Elections 2007

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes*
AINSWORTH, Alison Mary	Kingskerswell Alliance	549 Elected
BALLINGER, Anthony Reginald	Conservative Party Candidate	574 Elected
COOK, Sheila Mary		737 Elected
COOPER, Norman Scales	Independent	547 Elected
CORNEY-WALKER, David John	Liberal Democrats	524 Elected
DURSTON, Carole Ann	Independent	451
HAINES, Michael John		864 Elected
HARTLEY, Andrew	Independent	577 Elected
HARTLEY, Patricia Ann	Independent	527 Elected
HEWITT, Mike	Independent	577 Elected
MERTENS, Charlotte	Independent	452
NEWLYN, John Anthony		483
RAWLE, Gill	Kingskerswell Alliance	549 Elected
WHEATLEY, Susan		504

* If elected the word 'Elected' appears against the number of votes.

The number of ballot papers rejected was as follows:	Number of ballot papers
A want of an official mark	0
B voting for more Candidates than voter was entitled to	0
C writing or mark by which voter could be identified	0
D being unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty	0
E rejected in part	0
Total	0

Vacant Seats: 10

Electorate: 3966

Ballot Papers Issued: 1629

Turnout: 41.07%

Alliance votes	549
Ballot Papers Issued	1629
Alliance percentage of votes 33.7%	

Taken from Teignbridge Council website, original may be viewed at:
<http://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=10447&p=0>

