

1. Petitioner information

In the box below, give the name and address of each individual, business or organisation submitting the petition. Please note that addresses here will be provided to the Bill's promoter, but will be redacted in the version of the petition published on the Parliamentary Website.

The Woodland Trust of Kempton Way, Grantham, NG31 6LL (registered charity number: 294344)

In the box below, give a description of the petitioners. For example, "We are the owners/tenants of the addresses above"; "My company has offices at the address above"; "Our organisation represents the interests of..."; "We are the parish council of...".

1. The Woodland Trust ('the Trust') is the largest woodland conservation charity in the UK and a leading voice in bringing the state of the UK's trees and woodland to the attention of government, land owners and the general public. The Trust champions and delivers the solutions to protect and revitalise our natural environment – the recreation of wooded landscapes on a national scale.
2. The Trust campaigns to ensure that laws governing environmental protection are enforced and that the government is held to account on environmental pledges. The Trust also campaigns with the support of local communities, to prevent any further destruction of ancient woods and veteran trees.
3. To further protect the UK's natural environment, the Trust has built up an estate of its own managed woodland. The Trust owns and manages over 1,000 sites across the UK, covering over 30,000 hectares, a large proportion of which is irreplaceable ancient woodland. With a supporter base of half a million the Trust was the first, and remain the most significant contributor to woodland protection, restoration and creation in the UK. The Trust has expertise in protecting and managing this vital natural resource and irreplaceable part of our heritage.

2. Objections to the Second Additional Provision to the Bill

In the box below, write your objections to the Second Additional Provision to the Bill and why your property or other interests are **directly and specially affected**. Please number each paragraph.

Only objections outlined in this petition can be presented when giving evidence to the Committee. You will not be entitled to be heard by the Committee on new matters not included in your written petition.

1. The Woodland Trust works to protect the UK's ancient woods and ancient and veteran trees from direct loss and damage. As such the Woodland Trust's charitable aims are adversely affected by the Bill.
2. This Petition is supplemental to the Petition your Petitioners deposited against the Bill in 2022 (referred to as the original petition throughout this objection). In addition to the adverse impacts of the Bill as deposited, your Petitioners are further directly and specially affected by Additional Provision 2.
3. Additional Provision 2 proposes a number of changes to the Bill including amendments altering proposed works and acquisition or use of land for the purposes of the Bill which directly or indirectly affect areas of ancient woodland.

Direct Impacts on ancient woodland

4. Ancient woodland is defined in England as land that has been continuously wooded since 1600AD. It is an irreplaceable resource – with significant biodiversity and cultural value, and, as a result, has strong protection from development in planning policy.
5. The Woodland Trust welcomes the fact that it seems HS2 Ltd. have taken on board some of the Woodland Trust's design suggestions tabled in our original petition.
6. As a result of these changes, we cautiously welcome what appears to be a reduced impact on a limited number of ancient woodlands, with the overall loss of irreplaceable ancient woodland reduced from 5.1ha to 4.5ha (a 12% decrease), as noted in Volume 3 of the Environment Statement, and as suggested by the individual changes noted in Table 1. However, we note with concern a discrepancy in the figures in the Environment Statement and urge HS2 Ltd. to clarify their figures: the Non-technical summary suggests that the loss has actually increased from 5.1ha to 5.4 ha (a 6% increase).
7. Even with a reduction, if confirmed, HS2 phase 2b still represents a significant negative impact on ancient woodland, and despite the low area to be lost, the number of ancient woodland sites impacted remains a significant concern.
8. At the point of drafting this petition, the petitioner has not had a recent update on progress on our other suggested route changes to minimise loss of ancient woodland further.

9. The petitioner reiterates the asks in our original petition –
- a. a commitment that no irreplaceable habitat will be lost as a result of temporary land take for the proposed scheme.
 - b. a commitment that where HS2 Ltd. considers that any of the Trust's proposed design changes in our original petition would be unfeasible, it should be required to provide clear evidence and its reasons for so concluding.
 - c. A commitment to follow best practice in protecting irreplaceable ancient woodland

Table 1: changes in the direct loss of ancient woodland inventory sites by the proposed scheme. All sites are in Community MA06.

Woodland name as per HS2 Phase 2b ES	Changes since initial petition noted by the updated Environment Statement
AWI sites with reduced impact	
Millington Clough Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) site	Loss of up to 0.5 ha of ancient woodland will now be avoided following new alignment of gas pipelines.
Ryecroft Covert Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) site	Loss of up to 0.23ha ancient seminatural woodland has been avoided due to rerouting of modifications to overhead powerlines
Sugar Brook Wood AW	Loss has been reduced to 0.05ha (450m ²). Given that the proposed works appear to be temporary, the construction boundary should be amended to exclude the ancient woodland.
Brickhill Wood Ancient Woodland	Loss of up to 0.01ha of PAWS has been avoided
Birkin Bridge Lodge AWI site	The removal of an area of 0.1ha was included within the land required for the construction of the original scheme. HS2 should confirm if this land is to no longer be developed.
AWI sites with increased impact	
Hancocks Bank North AWI	New permanent loss of 0.02ha (233m ²) for the revised overhead powerlines (linked to the avoided impacts at Ryecroft Covert)
Hancocks Bank South AWI	0.02ha (159m) of land is required. It will not be directly lost but could be indirectly impacted by overhead power line modification.
Arden House Wood AWI	In addition to permanent loss of up to 0.2ha a further 0.01 (105m ²) permanent loss is proposed for watercourse diversions

Hennersley Bank AWI	Additional permanent loss of 0.3ha, bringing total loss to 0.37ha as part of proposals to reconfigure the M56 junction 6.
Bollin Bank AWI	An additional permanent loss of 0.05ha (450m ²) – increase from 0.1 ha to 0.15ha as part of proposals to reconfigure the M56 junction 6.
Sunbank Wood AWI	A new permanent loss of 0.08ha as part of proposals to reconfigure the M56 junction 6.

Indirect Impacts on Ancient Woodland

10. In addition to the direct loss of ancient woodland, development can have several indirect impacts on nearby habitats. These can include noise, dust and vibration that impact the soils, flora and fauna of ancient woodland sites. These indirect impacts can be experienced at some distance away from a development site.
11. The promoter continues to exclude consideration of indirect impacts of the proposed scheme on ancient woodland, relying on the draft Code of Construction Practice to fully mitigate indirect impacts. As noted in our original petition, this would not be appropriate and is likely to mean that the area of ancient woodland affected by HS2 is far greater than the numbers reported by HS2 Ltd.
12. The petitioner reiterates our ask in our original petition:
 - a. HS2 Limited must continue to investigate alternative route, engineering and design solutions to reduce both direct and indirect impacts on ancient woodland
 - b. HS2 Limited should consider the possibility of designating any remaining areas of impact as Key Environmentally Sensitive Worksites so as to ensure that any remaining construction impacts on ancient woodland are avoided and minimised as far as possible.
 - c. a commitment that appropriate buffering is designated where any works take place on land adjacent to ancient woodland.

Impacts on ancient and veteran trees

13. The minimum number of irreplaceable veteran trees that are reported in the Environment Statement as being lost remains at 24 when compared to the original Environment Statement. This suggests that no survey work has been undertaken to establish the population of veteran trees in or near the proposed development.
14. The petitioner reiterates our ask in our original petition:
 - a. HS2 Ltd. are required to undertake a comprehensive survey of ancient and veteran trees prior to construction, and provide to the WT the results of the survey.
 - b. assurance to avoid loss and indirect impacts to ancient and veteran trees and follow best practice guidance in design to minimise harm.

Impacts on other woodland habitats

15. The Woodland Trust notes other impacts have also increased. Loss of semi-natural broadleaved woodland has increased by almost 60% from 20.7ha to 33ha and loss of hedgerow has increased from 245.9km to 250.7km
16. The petitioner reiterates our ask in our original petition:
 - a. HS2 Limited must continue to investigate alternative route, engineering and design solutions to reduce both direct and indirect impacts on priority woodland and hedgerow habitats

3. What do you want to be done in response?

In the box below, tell us what you think should be done in response to your objections to the Second Additional Provision to the Bill. You do not have to complete this box if you do not want to.

You can include this information in your response to section 3 'Objections to the Second Additional Provision to the Bill' if you prefer. Please number each paragraph.

See section 3 for asks. These do not replace any asks in the Woodland Trust's original petition.