

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE MALVERN HILLS BILL [HL]**COMMITTEE'S DECISION ON STANDING 3 MARCH 2026**

We are now able to give reasons for the Committee's decision on the right to be heard of the petitioner that appeared before us on Tuesday 3 March 2026.

i. Malvern Environment Protection Group ("MEPG")

This is a local voluntary association which was founded in 2019. It has a constitution, adopted on 4 September 2019, which states that its aims are to have concern for and protect the natural aspect of the Malvern Hills and surrounding Commons. It operates through a committee and has a wider public membership of about 320 subscribers to its mailing list. It convenes public meetings as the need arises, at which there are between 100 and 200 attendees. It has received donations amounting to about £20,000, most within the past two years and mostly comprised of small donations from local people. That indicates that it is supported more widely across the local area than the number of those who attend its meetings might suggest. The group made a formal decision to oppose the Bill at a committee meeting on 11 December 2024, following months of engagement with what was then a proposed Bill. This included two public meetings, held on 11 May 2024, which were attended by about 200 local residents. We were told that it was made clear that those attending them supported the MEPG in petitioning against the Bill and that they relied on it to do so. We were referred to the Kings Cross Railways Bill, where the Camden Cycling Campaign, which had just over 200 members, was not granted locus standi. But that was a body which, unlike the MEPG, did not have a formal written constitution or rules. Also, as the promoter in that case pointed out, there were many other people in Camden than the 200 members of that body who rode bicycles. We decided that the MEPG is a body which sufficiently represents amenity and recreational interests affected by the Bill within the meaning of Standing Order 117(2) and that, having regard to the importance of the issues it raises and to the instructions which we were given at the Bill's second reading, we should exercise our discretion to enable it to develop its case against the Bill.

ii. Worcestershire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, Richard Percy and Richard Sarginson

We were told by counsel for MEPG that the co-petitioners to the MEPG petition were not appearing before the Committee and that they were happy for MEPG to advance the petition on their behalf and not because of a continuing lack of support for the petition.