



Environment Not Trams Newsletter

September 2002

- Meeting with NET
- Meeting with Rushcliffe Borough Council
- Forthcoming Events

Meeting with NET

Members of the ENT group held a meeting with NET on 7 August. As the readers of this Newsletter will be well aware, ENT have steadfastly presented the view that we are not anti-tram. Our position is that the Clifton via Wilford (CW) Route is unacceptable due to its environmental impact and the Clifton via Queen's Drive route is a more viable alternative.

ENT has consistently opposed the CW Route on the basis that the old railway alignment nature trail is an integral part of the Wilford/Compton Acres/Ruddington Lane environment. Building this line will destroy the nature trail, which has become an important native habitat and its destruction is opposed by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, English Nature and other respected environmental bodies.

We have stated these points repeatedly in these Newsletters and in our letters and discussions with NET. Yet, incredibly, at our meeting the Director of NET, Neil Bates, claimed he did not understand our objections to the CW Route!

Could we possibly have done more? Could we possibly have made our objections clearer? Has Mr Bates bothered to listen to, or read anything we have said or given to him?

NET still don't want to get the message, but MP and Councillors pledge support.

At this meeting we said that, according to our advice, the financial justification for the CW Route was fundamentally wrong. We asked if we could discuss these concerns directly with NET's consultants but this was flatly refused.

We also have concerns over the passenger figures claimed by NET. They assume that six trams per hour through the working day will carry an average of over 60 passengers. This seems very optimistic in the light of current buses running virtually empty.

We asked if we could part of the consultation process for the Environmental Impact assessment. This was refused.

The crucial point is that if NET is wrong, and CW is a financial failure, it will be too late: the nature trail will be gone, lives will be blighted and we will be left with the debris and, no doubt, the bill.

The key timetable points are:
Late 2002; Environmental impact assessment.

Early 2003: application for funding and approval from the County Council.

Mid 2003: Application for a Transport and Works Act Order. .
2003/4: Public Enquiry. A response will take 6-12 months. Construction could begin early 2005.

Your ENT Committee has sent a report to the Dept. for Transport detailing our economic and environmental concerns. We have asked for NET's refusal to provide specific data to ENT to be investigated.

Meeting with Rushcliffe Borough Council

A meeting was held on the 14th August with Mr Neil Clarke, Rushcliffe Borough Councillor and member of NET Development Board and Mr Jim Collinson, Borough Development Officer.

Messrs Clarke and Collinson said that RBC was committed to the minimisation of the impact of any route on the environment and on local residents and would make representation to the Public Enquiry if they considered this was necessary.

Forthcoming Events

And last but not least – at a recent 'surgery' meeting, Rushcliffe MP Kenneth Clarke continued to express support for our campaign. He has very kindly accepted an invitation to meet the local community at Compton Acres shopping precinct on Saturday 5th Oct. at 11 a.m. We will organise a letter signing event in which the Secretary of State for transport will be sent personalised letters opposing the CW route. More details soon.

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Netballs

"MPs have no influence with us at all. Politicians may huff and puff from time to time but they cannot influence the process."
N Bates