

HARDWICK PARISH COUNCIL

(South Cambridgeshire District)

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History of the C2C Off Road Busway, the Impact on Hardwick and the Feedback on the Consultation Process

This is a summary of the concerns of Hardwick councillors and residents expressed to GCP through the LLF, our Village Plan and our Parish Council agreed by the Parish Council following Parish Council Meeting Item 3.1 on 9th March 2021

Attached at the end of the document are comments from some Hardwick residents that I have been asked to include. Email addresses and names removed for Parish Data Protection rules

Introduction

Hardwick Parish Council voted by a majority to oppose the construction of the GCP C2C Off Road Busway. We believe the correct decision is to pause C2C plans while reconsidering the facts and progress of the EWR, CAM, Cambridge PPF and Girton 4ways. Our reasons are clarified below. C2C Off Road is seen by Hardwick Parish Council as follows.

1. Very expensive – the overall cost of over £200m with a very poor Financial Case
2. Destructive for Hardwick – there is no reason to destroy St Neots Road, Hardwick to gain no time saving on a journey from Cambourne to Cambridge. Existing and foreseeable travel through St Neots Road, Hardwick adds no journey time to buses or cars.
3. Poorly consulted – the interpretation of the results and our reasoning are clarified below.
4. Environmentally very damaging – the destruction of our tree line for no good reason unnecessarily releases carbon to the atmosphere and takes out trees and greenery which provide air cleaning and carbon capture. We have serious doubts concerning the terrain and flooding
5. Unnecessary – The pandemic has shown that working from home is highly achievable. On our village main roads we are around 25% of pre-Covid traffic levels measured by MVAS. We need to pause to see whether this continues into normal times. The Cambourne to Cambridge journey time delay is recognised by all nearby villages as the lack of the Girton 4 ways resulting in congestion on the Madingley Hill and M11 junction at commute times. Simpler substantially less costly short-term measures were proposed in 2015 initial Consultation and are now being re-affirmed. We are expecting an objective consideration of the Schemes offered by Cambridge PPF for easing bus delays on Madingley Hill and M11 junction.
6. Damaging to Hardwick residents' peace of mind – not just environmentally but with the outlook of trees being replaced by endless views of tarmac, traffic and wooden fences
7. Incomplete – the route into and around the city is not fixed – Grange Road seems to be the current C2C terminus and unlikely to be the terminal for most passengers and will add to the journey time
8. Alternative ways to achieve shorter journey times
9. Less viable when more substantial alternatives are due to be firmed up very shortly – EWR, CAM are both designed to carry more passengers more quickly

10. Planning rules for large developments used to mandate that building could not go ahead without the supported infrastructure of public transport systems yet both Cambourne West and Bourn Airfield are cleared to go ahead without.

We believe large scale public transport schemes are essential for the wider Cambridge area in order to meet public transport needs but also to reduce car journeys but not through the deployment of buses nor using the specific C2C Off Road scheme currently on the design board. There is a good analysis by Bourn Parish Council to show the C2C Off Road is inadequate for the modal shift cars.

Point by point

1. Not just expensive but poor value for money

The Busway would be a £200m plus spend and by GCP own figures represents a very poor business case. The stated objective of C2C from the outset in 2014 is to address the congestion on Madingley Hill and M11 junction and shorten journey time between Cambourne and Cambridge. Hardwick supports the view that shorter journey times are best achieved by

- tackling the Madingley Hill and M11 junction congestion - which can be achieved with Bus Lane and traffic management between Madingley Mulch and M11 – LLF proposition
- A Girton/M11 connection which will avoid Madingley Hill and M11 junction being used as a slip road to M11 – good to hear Highways England are to reconsider this again
- Trains which move more people faster than buses – EWR route to Cambourne
- The CAM when the route has been verified.

“If the authorities had been doing their job properly years ago, we would have a multi-access junction at Girton”

Implementation of all or a combination of these measures, will ease the congestion on Madingley Hill and M11 junction and ensure the local bus service through Hardwick will not be held up by commuters. It will provide a “rapid, regular, reliable and safe public bus” into Cambridge and beyond especially with buses through Hardwick having direct access to any Bus Lane provision and management on Madingley Hill and M11 junction.

2. Destructive for Hardwick

2.1 We don't cause the delay

Hardwick does not cause any delays to the journeys between Cambourne and Cambridge but we seem to be getting the major share of the desecration. We have provided over 1000 signatures against removal of our tree line. Our Village petition to Save our Trees has reached over 730 verifiable signatures on Change.org [Petition · Protect Hardwick's environment and ecological diversity by stopping the destruction · Change.org](#) and 319 signatures for the less internet savvy residents. Hardwick is a village of around 1200 homes and growing – the petitions are not just the views of those who live on St Neots Road. Desecrating our village road to improve journey times for residents to the west of Hardwick would appear to be like throwing your rubbish over your neighbour's fence.

2.2. Retention and Improvement of existing Services.

Whereas with appropriate “congestion busting” measures we see no need for C2C Off road busway, we need reassurance that the local bus service or equivalent will be retained and improved.

“Currently Hardwick local bus service on Neots Road serves 4 stops. We believe with appropriate measures to remove congestion on Madingley Hill and at the M11, we shall see an increase in popularity in bus travel versus car use. See points 8 and 9 page 7 and 8.”

“We also need reassurance that the mixed-use Footpath upgrade due to be implemented under funds from two different developments to our west is not going to be withdrawn when the plans for the busway are withdrawn. This is a well-used route to Cambridge by many.”

“Hardwick residents should have the opportunity to share in the benefits offered by Public buses unhindered by congestion between Hardwick and Cambridge without losses to the belt of trees along St Neots Road which would be removed for an off-road C2C Busway.”

3. Consultation Results not understood

3.1. First Consultation on the route 2015

The original Consultation on the route – north, south or central of the A428/A1303 corridor - ignored the input from Hardwick. In fact is also dismissed the overall support for just easing the congestion on the Madingley Road.

Consultation result.

GCP Consultation Report Feb 2016 Page 36 - Overall Majority 66.8% wanted supported or strongly supported Area 1 Central – Just a Bus lane on Madingley road - £18m.

Hardwick Village Plan result

- Hardwick Village Plan survey (surveyed 2016/17 but published December 2018)
- Hardwick votes North of A428 – 62% for
- Hardwick votes against being on St Neots Road - 54% against

3.2. Second consultation on the route through Hardwick – GCP Phase 2

The Parish Council held a public meeting (whole village invited) 12th March 2019 then held its Parish Council Meeting on 26th March 2019 to ensure the Village views were properly understood.

As a result, the Parish Council sent a letter to the GCP Consultation dated 28th March 2019 which **objected to all Options**. It stated that Hardwick Parish Council does not support any of the Options 1-3 for Phase 2 but of the three considers Option 1 to be the “least worst” Option.

This is very different from regarding Hardwick as supporting the C2C Off-Road Option.

Hardwick Result

Results were presented with updated plans at two public meetings in July 2019 and then to Parish Council on 23rd July 2019. There was much debate driven by GCP Powerpoint presentation which referred to the Hardwick Village Plan but misrepresented the residents survey results especially that the Busway had been highlighted as important to the village.

For example, the Hardwick Village Plan lists many issues that are important to the village including the Busway, Parking on the pavement and dog fouling. It does not mean we were in favour of them.

Only 104 Residents completed the Phase 2 survey of which

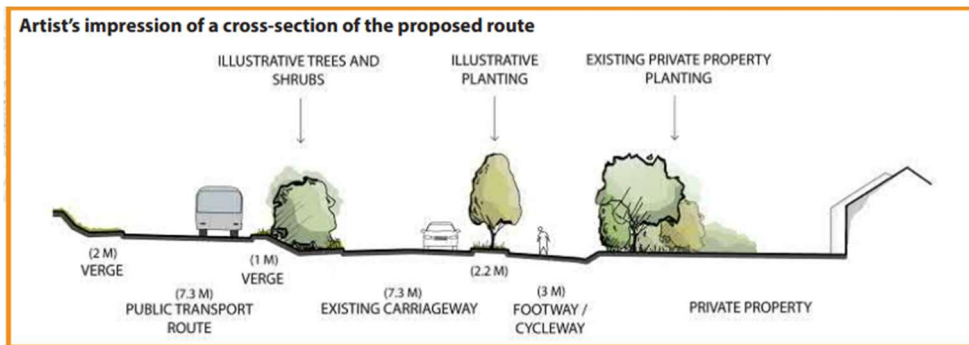
- 40 voted Option 1 – (assuming trees were substantially retained or planted)
- 64 didn't

Decision voiced by the GCP was that majority voted for Option 1 off-road – see below

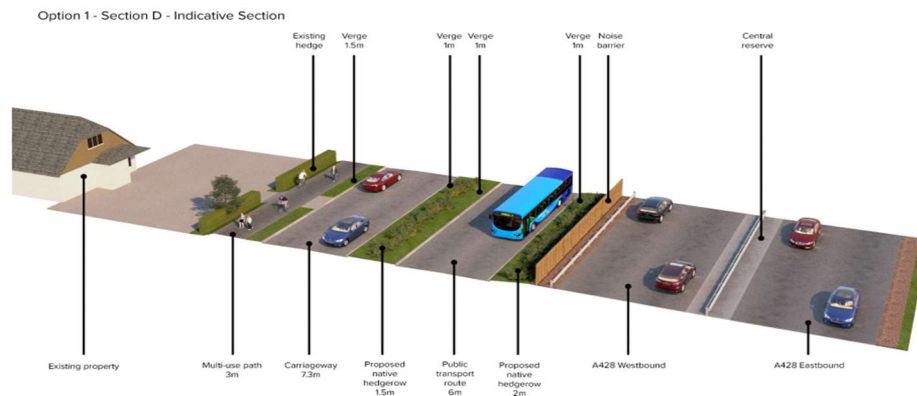
3.3. The guiding images

Respondents and those who didn't bother to respond were taken in by the images presented before the consultation. The consultation document clearly states **trees and shrubs** as a barrier

Before Consultation



After Consultation without trees



The 8 lanes of tarmac plus a wide cycle path right in front of residents' properties would have a severe social impact, too. Clearly states "**Native Hedgerow**" no mention of trees.

The announcement from GCP Management, at GCP Joint Assembly Meeting on 30th of January 2020 was misleading and inaccurate. It was stated (recorded on video and confirmed in writing by the GCP Communications Manager) that, "*Hardwick for example supports an off-road route.*" This is not correct if the evidence is examined – see above vote statistics.

4. Environmentally very Damaging

A full report is being sent to the Auditor by the Hardwick Climate Action Group which will amplify these remarks.

"The thousands of trees that are in line for removal would release tons of carbon into the environment at the same time denying the air cleaning and carbon capturing function they have at the moment."

"We are also very concerned about the storm water. The tree line is grown in a deep ditch metres wide. If a busway is built over it then flooding on St Neots Road becomes inevitable" Many properties are below the level of the St Neots Road and east of Millers Way there is no balancing pond that prevents flood water raining on to the A428.

"The flora and fauna found in the tree line would be lost as would the natural screen, much more pleasing on the eye and provides peace of mind that we still live in a village". Far more so than lanes of tarmac, traffic and wooden fences.

"We would like to draw attention to the proposed P&R at Scotland Farm . If this goes ahead, it will cause light pollution, 2000 cars will cause noise and air pollution and we are very concerned that vehicles aiming at this P&R from the south of Hardwick will be using our Village as a rat run. Our proposal would be to site this P&R as an interchange by the Girton 4way."

4.1. Change.org

Our argument of wide village support is evidenced by the Village Petition. In October 2019, a resident in Hardwick Village (not resident on St Neots Road) initiated an on-line survey through www.change.org to save the line of trees and hedges of nearly 2 miles length along St Neots Road that would be removed by the latest C2C Off Road plans. Replanting of saplings will make no contribution to this for probably 50 years or more.

This was presented to GCP Management November 2019 along with a paper based petition (for those less internet savvy) against removal of the Trees from 319 residents.

At present that survey (which ensures it can reference participants) [Petition · Protect Hardwick's environment and ecological diversity by stopping the destruction · Change.org](https://www.change.org/p/petition-protect-hardwicks-environment-and-ecological-diversity-by-stopping-the-destruction) stands at 730 signatures at time of writing

4.2. Terrain

Hardwick residents are very aware of the terrain that lies between the St Neots Road and A428. The trees are mostly growing in a wide ditch, 1m or so deep that acts as a drain for surface water from St Neots Road. The St Neots Road also undulates. In locations along St Neots Road the A428 is above or level with the premises along St Neots Road. Replacing the trees with tarmac, and depending upon elevation “could have a dramatic affect and present high risk of water flooding into residents’ properties”. The current noise barrier is entirely ineffective, particularly when the wheels of the lorries on the A428 can be seen above the barrier. It is a wholly unsuitable place to put Mass public transport.

The C2C Off Road is designed to require 12.5m between the edge of St Neots Road and the soundproof barrier. Measurements show that east of the Village Entrance the required 12.5 m reduces to barely 4m at Long Road Comberton. If the intention was to rely upon the A428 embankment then that clearly drops away quite steeply towards Long Road. There are also multiple utilities in the current verge including telecommunications.

Hardwick PC explained the lack of space to the GCP consultants at the LLF meeting June 2019 and were reassured there was even room to put a busway behind our tree line. There isn’t.

5. The C2C Off Road Busway is unnecessary

The Off Road Busway is independent from the Bus service provider. We know nothing about the Service providers plans or the ambitions should there be a Scotland Road P&R as the consultation so far has concentrated completely on tarmac e.g. What route do P&R buses take into Cambridge?

The Combined Authority Mayor responsible for Transport Strategy in our Region has shown by facilitating the direct, non-stop, reliable, fast Service 905 from Cambourne to Cambridge via the Science Park into Cambridge - a reworking of the X5 bus from Bedford. Scaling this up to other locations would provide Cambourne and Bourn residents the fast transport required in the very short term until a better solution using EWR and CAM are available.

6. Peace of Mind

Hardwick residents do not want to be looking out over 8 lanes of tarmac, even more traffic and wooden fences. A line of trees gives a more tranquil outlook and we would not want to see peace of mind trivialised in any audit of the potential C2C Off Road busway.

7. Incomplete Route

Whereas the potential route from Cambourne to Grange Road Cambridge appears to have been drawn, there seems to be no real plan for what happens should this route be accepted and reach the outer City – currently Grange Road.

If passengers are asked for a destination, we suggest Grange Road may not be the first place in the City that comes to mind?

8. Other simple ways of achieving the shorter journey time.

8.1 If all buses towards Hardwick are to be routed via a potential Park and Ride site at Scotland Road, crossing two sets of roundabouts in and out plus traffic management at the Park and Ride, this will cause delay. If the objective is to shorten journey times, trailing around roundabouts and traffic lights would make these buses slower than the current 905.

8.2 Bus priority links from A428 to Madingley Mulch roundabout would facilitate access to buses from Cambourne and beyond that rely on the Madingley Hill and M11 junction route into and beyond Cambridge.

9. More substantial alternatives due to be settled soon

9.1 Girton 4 ways

“The implementation of Girton 4 ways in the view of many goes a long way to solving congestion on Madingley Hill and M11 junction at commute times. We see this as absolutely necessary but on past performance maybe some years off. It must be part of the plan to take cars off the Madingley Road and fully support the plan by Highways England to consider it.”

9.2 The CAM

The CAM operation however should be available medium term. It is designed to provide fast, reliable, urban transport with underground connectivity that solves the current congestion problems of cars and buses congestion problems. The CAM operation has repeatedly claimed that it will replace the C2C Off Road and run on C2C tarmac and although the CAM plans seem insufficiently developed, this would represent Cambridge’s answer to a modern “MRT”.

However, route selection for any proposed bus way will be paramount as the CAM has been promoted as a 24/7 service and would therefore be entirely inappropriate to run close to village homes in Hardwick or Coton unless it was tunnelled.

We envisage the CAM as a “Metropolitan Line” or “District Line” in terms of the London Underground Network which might get more support if we knew more about it, especially in respect of how it will replace the C2C or require C2C tarmac for its operation. How is this short-term usefulness of C2C factored into the C2C Business case?

9.3 EWR – East West Rail

EWR will provide substantial passenger numbers into and around the Cambridge area. Although still at the route selection for the Stage into Cambridge is still fluid and is unlikely to go to Government until 2024, it is already under construction to the west. With a station at Cambourne North, this has the attractive capacity for delivering commuters to Cambridge South Central and North and beyond to the East. We very much favour this option is considered against C2C Off-road Busway

10. Large developments require good public transport

Whereas both Cambourne West and Bourn Airfield developments were designed to require good Public Transport, both developments are going ahead without. We don’t

believe this is sensible but we do believe that the CAM and maybe EWR may provide better alternatives to a bus-based transport system.

Rail and CAM are designed to carry more passengers, more reliably and in shorter time than buses. But we rely on local buses to keep cars off our roads.

Prepared by Councillor Alan Everitt , with input from all Hardwick Parish Councillors a.everitt@hardwick-cambs.org.uk

Below are some residents' comments, email addresses and names removed for Parish data protection rules

Resident 1

Subject: Busway meeting

Hi

I am unable to attend the meeting regarding the busway impact on St Neots road, but I would like to register my comments regarding this proposal.

In short, I believe the existing infrastructure of St Neots road in Hardwick is entirely adequate. I use it regularly for both driving and cycling - there is no real need to change it. Buses already use this route and do not impede the normal flow of traffic. Cycling provision is both adequate and safe, although an extension to on-road cycle lanes at the Eastern end would be useful. There is no need to dispose of much loved green space, trees and so on to make way for additional lanes. St Neots road is NOT the bottleneck when it comes to travel to and from Cambridge. This is even more true since Covid reduced the overall traffic load, but was still the case even before that.

The real bottleneck arises from the access to Madingley road P+R. This is the true problem. Either the P+R needs to be moved, or else access must be improved - for example by a slip road from the M11 southbound, or reorganising Madingley road itself. Improving access to the existing P+R would be my preference.

Even if new P+R provisions are made at either end of the Hardwick section of St Neots road, I do not believe the additional bus traffic necessitates any extra lanes. A few extra buses up and down there will make little difference. Hardwick itself is a rural village, and needs to retain its nature as such. We have already seen too much development in recent years and there are a significant number of residents who think enough is enough - we moved here because we like it as it is.

Kind regards

Resident 2

Subject: Busway Concerns

Dear Parish Council Clerk,

Please accept my apologies for not being able to attend the EGM on the 9th March. In my absence I would like to register my concerns relating to the proposed busway project. I do hope this is an appropriate format.

The following is a synopsis of the concerns I have shared via email with the Mayor, Anthony Browne MP, and members of the C2C project. Details omitted for brevity however I would welcome any opportunity to offer clarification and detail.

- **Destruction of natural habitat** is not in keeping with the eco friendly aims of the project and contradicts attempts at a green rebuild post-covid.
- **Lack of coordination with other infrastructure projects** such as East-West rail, proposed vehicle restrictions on St Neots Rd (<https://www.camcycle.org.uk/blog/2020/06/county-council-approves-bold-plan-to-help-more-people-cycle-and-walk-safely-during-the-pandemic-recovery/>). I would suggest that the C2C project goals could be better served by diverting effort to consider projects to improve A428/A14 links with the M11 as discussed in this article by Smarter Cambridge Transport <https://www.smartertransport.uk/will-politics-or-economics-sink-the-cambourne-busway-project/>. This would ease traffic on the A1303 heading southbound. This would improve existing transport links and make existing routes a viable alternative to car travel. Any of the above could make a busway obsolete.
- **Assumptions of the C2C project based on outdated data.** Decisions that can have huge ramifications should be made using a data-driven approach. In particular existing assumptions should be challenged based on changes in travel patterns. The data used is almost a decade old and does not reflect the times we live in or indeed hope to live in.
- **C2C route not fit for purpose.** It assumes that travel to the City Centre is an end destination. If the route does not serve key sites of employment such as the science park then the journey times would prohibit it being a viable alternative to commuting by car.
- Furthermore I do not believe that the C2C project is able to meet its aim of providing high quality public transport with reduced journey times and easing congestion. An off-road route through Hardwick will not reduce journey times. **Bottlenecks for the on-road route through Cambourne and its new development will likely increase journey times.** New build estates offer an unsuitable route for any bus due to parked cars and narrow roads. The same could be said of the City Centre where the roads are unsuitable for bus traffic.
- In light of these factors, **the assumption that bus travel is the solution must be challenged.** In its current format it is unlikely to be compatible with other projects such as the CAM metro. This would make a bus way the first step to an ecological disaster in the area.
- In researching this topic I found no evidence supporting an additional park and ride serving the same route as Madingley park and ride. This is either redundant or suspicious of a conflict of interest that involvement of key C2C stakeholders have earmarked the Madingley P&R for future development.

For these reasons in my opinion the C2C project will prove to be a financially and ecologically expensive mistake that should be avoided in light of alternatives that may address root causes. I would hope any decision is data driven and not political.

Best regards,

Resident 3

Subject: Guided busway

Hi

If I get the chance I will attend the meeting today as I have another zoom meeting at a similar time.

I have several concerns about the busway, but my main one is that in order to save about one minute in the travelling time into Cambridge a large swathe of green land has to be lost.

Even with increased traffic along the St Neots Road the journey time would not increase dramatically. Hold up spots going into Cambridge are immediately after the Dry Drayton roundabout, Hardwick village entrance and Long Road. All of these could be addressed by cosmetically increasing the road at that point to allow a right hand turn area. On the return journey which I see as the least problematic with only the Hardwick village entrance being an issue and at most times it is not that busy.

The need to build such a busway which in 20 years time will be superceded by other means of transport. The maintenance of the structure will be high as we sit on a large proportion of Blue clay which expands and contracts and is not kind to concrete structures.

Resident 4

To Hardwick Parish Council: Re proposed busway St Neots Road, Hardwick.

As residents of St Neots Road, Hardwick we would like to express our extreme displeasure at the proposal for the removal of the trees along St Neots road, Hardwick to facilitate a busway. Removal of the trees would increase traffic pollution and noise levels from the A428 which would not be acceptable.

We feel with the proposed new rail link to Cambridge and the proposed improvements to the Girton interchange. Any busway from Cambourne should follow the A428 route to Cambridge.

Due to the proposed increase in population at Bourn airfield and Cambourne improved local travel is needed but not the tortuous route proposed for the C2C which ends up in Grange Road, Cambridge.

Grange Road is of limited use, especially to users with limited mobility.

Kind regards

Resident 5

Subject: *Tree removal along St Neots Road opposed*

Dear

Further to article in the Hardwick Happenings, I would like you to pass on my opinion as below to the decision makers on the proposed route of the Cambourne to Cambridge busway along St Neots Road, Hardwick.

Whilst we all agree that transport services in our area need improvement, we must also agree that everyone is entitled to breathe clean air. Pulling down the line of trees to make way for this busway on St Neots Road will directly expose the whole of the village of Hardwick to the pollution created by the heavy traffic running along the four lane A428. A traffic stream that includes a high percentage of container lorries on their way to the Port of Felixstowe. It is known that these diesel fuelled lorries release dangerous levels of Nitrogen Dioxide particulate pollution which easily enters the lungs and then progresses through the rest of the body.

Of note is that the playground of the Hardwick Primary school is situated a mere 500 yards away from the A428. Young lungs will daily be exposed to unnecessary pollution. At this point I would like to reference the case of Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah. A nine year old girl who died in 2013 following an asthma attack who became the first person in the UK to have air pollution listed as a cause of death. A landmark decision. Please don't let our legacy be the ill health of generations of children to come.

I beg you to please explore finding an alternative route to allow the trees to remain.

Kind regards

Resident 6

Subject: C2C busway along St. Neots Road

To whom it may concern,

- *Can the C2C busway along St Neots Road, Hardwick please be stopped, there are some trees of 100 years old along this street which should be protected. These trees provide a natural environmental screen and habitat for wildlife and water retention thus preventing flooding run-off into the homes along this street.*
- *The proposal for 2000 cars at Scotland Farm will have harmful traffic pollutants to our villages.*

There are other routes that the busway can take which has been proven in past meetings without the destruction of wildlife habitat. and our homes being harmed.

Kind regards,

Resident 7

As a result of this flyer a Resident has called this morning to send his apologies for the meeting this evening. He is opposed to the busway going down St Neots Road. He sees no point in the busway or benefit. With the proposed P&R at Scotland Farm traffic will use the A428 and is unlikely to use St Neots Road. Pedestrians can use the blue footbridge.

In 30 years living in the village doesn't recall any congestion along St Neots Road only along Madingley Rise.

Objects to any removal of landscaping that was planted to buffer noise when the A428 bypass was built.

He doesn't want St Neots Road to become like Highfields Caldecote with all the bumps and roundabouts

Resident 8

As a resident of St Neots Road I am asking the Parish Council of Hardwick to actively reconsider the overall plan for St Neots Road including the busway. It is a potential environmental disaster .

1) *No scheme which intends to destroy mature woodland should be an option in the 21st century. Especially when the woodland is a vital protection against pollutants of chemicals, gases, poor drainage, noise and visual nuisance.*

2) *Why is it that the GCP is so 'besotted' with this St Neots Road route? Is there a powerful group or body pressurizing the GCP thus demanding the St Neots Road route ? Are there indeed powerful vested interests insisting on the route ?*

It is time for clarity , High time . What exactly is going on?

3) *There are indeed better alternative routes.*

4) *It is absolutely necessary for residents to be considered, informed and fully consulted at an early stage on major issues of this kind.*

Yours sincerely

Resident 9

Subject: *Busway - PC meeting*

I would like to pass on my thoughts on the proposed busway.

I do not believe there is a need to make any changes to St Neots Road, in Hardwick.

The road is not congested or even busy. The green strip ought to be preserved as a wildlife habitat. The woodland strip provides a natural environmental sound barrier from traffic on the A428.

Kind regards,