

ASHTON

Village News

Issue 68
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Special Issue

**After months of dirt and disruption by
Railway Contractors on Roade Hill, with no end to the
work in sight, many Ashton Residents
have had enough!!!**

A SPECIAL EMERGENCY MEETING for

ALL ASHTON RESIDENTS

has been called at

ASHTON SCHOOL

Wednesday 19th February at 6.30pm

Those who have agreed to attend:-

Three representatives of Network Rail.

Tony Clark MP for South Northamptonshire.

County Councillor Derek Batten.

Simon Lee from South Northants Council.

Susan Mills from Northampton County Council Highways.

A representative from South Northamptonshire Police Force.

**If you care about the deteriorating conditions
at the entrance to our village,
- please support us - by attending the meeting**

NETWORK RAIL - SPECIAL MEETING

Below are a few extracts of letters from Ashton Residents concerned with the growing problem from Railway Contractors working on Roade Hill.

..... This access in Ashton was created a few years ago, by installing a small gate which was needed in order to gain access to the rail line. This was later enlarged to now allow vehicles to gain access to the site. This gate was subsequently enlarged to a double width gate and a parking area was created. This was promoted to the residents of Ashton as a benefit and improvement. The site would now have off road parking and therefore would eliminate any vehicles parking on the road while work was being done on the site.

Now, this so called parking area has turned into what is essentially a storage yard. As the site is typically full, we have had as many as 24 vehicles of all sizes including construction equipment, parked on both sides of the road outside the site. This makes it extremely hazardous to negotiate Roade Hill, especially as they typically arrive as its going dark and work at night. We have flat bed loaders trying to negotiate the small roads in Ashton bringing equipment to and from the site.

We live in what is still classed as a conservation village, but it is being destroyed. It has reached the stage where the only solution is to close this site and re-locate it elsewhere.

Iris Welch

We live in a cottage next to the railway on Roade Hill. The last 2 / 3 years our outlook and peaceful life has changed completely. We now look to the top of our garden and see a large mound of earth / roadstone at least 10 feet high that has been created by hundreds of tons of hardcore and roadstone to create this holding depot / car park, This was once a wooded copse, that came right down to our garden. Now all the water run off from the railway site runs over our drive and down Roade Hill.

Listed below are some of the problems we have on a regular basis:-

- (1) Railway Contractors using our drive as a parking lot and as a turning point, resulting in deep ruts and damage to the verge.
- (2) Constant Litter.
- (3) Blinding lights shining into our house and driveway.
- (4) Heavy goods vehicles and vans park both sides of the road making the approach to the village and our property very dangerous.
- (5) Crash Barriers have been added and now the approach to our village has been completely destroyed.
- (6) Bad language and shouting throughout the Day and night.

Most of the problems above affect the whole village. We should all as a community demand that the site be returned to its original state. Quote from a recent visitor to the village "**GOOD GOD WHAT'S HAPPENED, IT LOOKS LIKE AN INDUSTRIAL SITE**"

Lesley & Albert Godfrey

NETWORK RAIL - SPECIAL MEETING

I am a resident of High View House. I built the property in 1991 knowing that the railway was there, but it was screened off by trees, which was acceptable to me at the time. Approximately 7-8 years ago Railtrack cut the fence and put a small gate in, removing some of the trees to gain access to the railway. Although I was not informed of this until after the event, I accepted it. After this had been done there would occasionally be a van parked outside, presumably for maintenance works.

Then a couple of years ago I received a letter stating that essential works were going to be carried out, although it did not explain exactly what would be happening. Following this, I left for work one day and returned at night to find the Spinney and all the trees opposite my property had been bulldozed and a yard had been created. On enquiry, I was informed that this was a parking area for Railtrack vehicles used for essential maintenance, so that they would be kept off the road which is narrow on approach to the village. This again we accepted (a case of having to as the parking area had already been created!).

I understand that maintenance works have to be done, but I feel we have been misled as this area has not been used, as suggested, to keep vehicles off the road, it has been used as a storage area and plant yard, meaning that more vehicles actually use the area to collect items and we now have up to 25 vehicles parked on the road and verges at the weekends! This obviously creates concern as there is a safety hazard. Saturday nights are the worst, when I often cannot get into my own driveway when I get home late at night as there are vehicles parked in or across my drive. Also on cold evenings diesel engine vehicles are left running all night (presumably to keep workers warm) which can be heard in all the front rooms of the house. The following morning there will usually be a lot of litter left on the verges and at the end of the driveway (one morning in particular 3 bin loads were collected after the workers had left!).

On numerous occasions I have been called home to stop heavy plant being used in my driveway to unload artic lorries parked on the highway (as they cannot get into the purpose-built parking area as it is full of materials). Ashton is a quiet village with a single road in and out with no footpaths on Road Hill. I am therefore becoming increasingly concerned for the safety of my own, and other, children walking to school when heavy plant is constantly unloading/loading during the week ready for the weekend's work. I have contacted Railtrack on many occasions and been 'promised the earth' but to date nothing has changed.

Ashton Resident

..... I live on Roade Hill close to the sharp corner. When we have heavy rain the mud and silt from the Railway working washes down the hill and collects in the drain close to my drive. The silt is now only 3" from the top of the drain. I have noticed that there is now even more silt, mud and damage to the grass bank corner since the Railway workers have been there.

Betty Fevyer

NETWORK RAIL - SPECIAL MEETING

In the 1830's the railway came to Ashton dividing the village into two. The railway construction demolished Ashton cottages, claimed the lives of local people, set fire to roofs of houses and generally being at times a nuisance. **SO WHATS NEW?**

One hundred and seventy years later the railway workers are still here creating aggravation up on Roade Hill and down to Crown Corner. One cannot miss the unsightly turmoil of the verge which is now just tyre ruts and the new crash barrier.

Gone is our wildlife that once lived up where the railway have now made for themselves an unsightly dumping ground (made on the pretext by the railway, that the site has to be used for off road parking). The portaloo really doesn't lend itself into being a village feature.

The railway workers have no cares or thoughts for Ashton village and this is proved by their attitude, ie... dropping litter and rubbish onto the ground, parking in other peoples entrances, parking up to 20 odd cars at a time on the once grass verge, using bad language and making no attempt to change when approached by concerned people of Ashton.

The village is faced on an almost daily basis of low-loaders with heavy vehicles, not only poisoning the outskirts of the village, but attempting to manouver their large trailers down into the village, past the infant school, where cars are parked and children cross the road. They then attempt to use the village cross roads (Crown Corner) to reverse their lorries and trailers so as to leave the village from the way they came in. In doing so, any cars using our roads are stacked up waiting for the lorries to vacate the cross roads.

In general the Railway workers and authorities are desecrating Ashton village and show no signs of stopping this annihilation of our rural village life.

As a resident of Ashton, my own personal request to the railway workers and the rail authorities is to 'PLEASE GO AWAY'

AN ASHTON RESIDENT

Useful Contacts

Parish Council Chairman - Bernard Day 862383 Community Policeman - PC Goddard 01327 303209
Parish Council Clerk - Stephanie Fowler 862904 Towcester Police Station Western Area 01327 303245
Footpath Warden - Peter Coulson 864214 Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator - David Farrand 863225
Ashton District Councillor - Martin Wilson 864254 Village Internet Site - www.ashtonvillage.co.uk

Letters or Articles for A.V.N. to David & Delia Farrand, 20 Hartwell Road Telephone 863225
Whilst every care is taken regarding the issue of this newsletter, the Editors accept no liability for the accuracy of the contributions