

HS2 Liaison Group Meeting Update – June 2026

Report by Cllr Danny Moody, Chair of Helmdon Parish Council

As a representative of Helmdon Parish Council, I attended the West Northamptonshire HS2 Liaison Group meeting held online on Tuesday 9 June 2026. This forum allows local representatives to directly engage with HS2, the main contractor EKFB, National Highways, and West Northamptonshire Council (WNC). Several updates are of interest to Helmdon residents regarding the surrounding road networks and local infrastructure.

1. A43 Overbridge & Old Great Central Disused Railway Line Green Bridge

- **Permanent Alignment Switchover:** Major construction on the A43 overbridge is nearing completion. Traffic is scheduled to permanently switch onto the new lanes by the end of July 2026.
- **Upcoming Weekend Closures:** To facilitate this traffic diversion, full weekend closures (from 8:00 PM Friday to 7:00 AM Sunday) are scheduled for July. The **Southbound closure** is confirmed for **Friday 10 July to Sunday 12 July 2026**, with the Northbound closure the following weekend. Both may be subject to delay, and the contingency weekends are 24 – 26 July (southbound) and 31 July – 2 August (northbound). These dates have been planned around the Silverstone Grand Prix to minimise impact. Long-distance diversions will utilise the M40 and A5 to prevent heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) from swamping local villages.
- **Signage Clarification:** Residents may have noticed National Highways billboards on the A43 stating a completion date of "Spring 2027." EKFB clarified that this date relates to off-road work—specifically the dismantling of the temporary lanes, excavation, and landscaping adjacent to the highway. It **will not** cause further traffic flow disruptions.
- **Old Great Central Disused Railway Line:** Work is progressing well on a wide, dedicated "Green Bridge" built over the historic Old Great Central disused railway line (near Radstone, just north of the A43 bridge). This structure will be fully greened with vegetation to preserve wildlife connectivity and accommodate local public footpath diversions.

2. Radstone Road Overbridge – Safety Concerns & Speed Review

- **Speeding and Safety Hazards:** Since the bridge opened in April 2026, it has reverted to the 60mph national speed limit. Serious concerns were raised regarding vehicles using it as a night racetrack and an "acceleration lane effect" where drivers coming from the Helmdon direction rapidly accelerate upon seeing the open bridge structure.
- **Junction and Structural Risks:** The T-junction into Radstone village (Whitfield Road) remains unmarked, hidden, and frequently obscured by overgrown vegetation. Furthermore, the new pedestrian and cycle track across the bridge is entirely sign-less, resulting in cyclists traveling slowly up the steep main road incline and forcing cars into dangerous overtaking manoeuvres on the blind bend.
- **Action Taken:** WNC and EKFB have actioned an urgent, multi-agency site meeting to implement safety improvements, better signage, and look into reducing the link road speed limit to 40mph. A broader review of local weight limits and HGV access is also underway.

- **Future Closures (2027):** Essential Anglian Water main works across the Radstone Road bridge have been intentionally deferred to **early 2027** to give local communities a break from disruption. However, please be aware this will require a full road closure for several weeks when it commences.

3. B4525 Greatworth T & Green Tunnel

- **Utility Work Completed:** The highly disruptive Anglian Water utility works at the Greatworth T crossing have finally concluded, which should bring an end to the recent temporary traffic light delays.
- **Dust Mitigation Enforcement:** Following severe complaints from local commuters regarding zero-visibility dust clouds caused by heavy earth-moving machinery during recent dry spells, EKFB was strictly tasked with ensuring water bowsers are active and consistently dampening down the site tracks.
- **Tunnel Progress:** Earthworks and backfilling are continuing from the southern portal (the old Helmdon Road closure) up to the northern end at Thorpe Mandeville.

4. Village Success: New Playgroup Fencing

On a positive note, I extended formal thanks to the HS2 Community Team for funding and installing the new fencing around the **Acorns Playgroup** in Helmdon. It provides an aesthetic and safety upgrade for the young children and has been highly praised by staff and parents alike.

It was agreed that the HS2 Liaison meetings would move from quarterly to six-monthly, so the next one will be in early December 2026, date to be confirmed.

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