

SE – 22 - 1029

Sarah Green MP

House of Commons,
London,
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10 August 2022

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for your letter of 27 July 2022 to Simon Matthews, Interface and Stakeholder Director, EKFB on behalf of your constituent Carol-Anne O’Callaghan. I have spoken to Simon about this issue and wanted to address Ms O’Callaghan’s concerns about her correspondence with Simon and the substantive issue of the oak tree on Leather Lane. We recognise the importance of the lone oak tree to Ms O’Callaghan and the wider community as well as its importance to the overall character of the area and I want to take this opportunity to assure you that the decision to remove the tree has not been taken lightly.

We have explored options that would allow us to save the tree, including forming a bund around it, however these options have not been workable and the tree will need to be removed to allow us to provide wider, long-term, mitigation. I know the loss of the tree will be felt immediately by the community but we are putting in significant measures to help mitigate this loss through the planting of a strong woodland belt, increasing the existing area of planting significantly, and providing an overall improvement in the biodiversity of the area. We are also exploring ways to re-use the felled timber to return it to the community.

With regards to Ms O’Callaghan’s complaint that Simon has not responded to her correspondence, I can confirm that Simon and his team have been in regular contact both by email and face-to-face. One of Ms O’Callaghan’s emails was dated 18 May, which she sent just before they met in person. The team have been working hard to keep Ms O’Callaghan and the wider community and stakeholders informed in recognition of the sensitivity of the matter and I know the final outcome will have been a disappointment to all. Ms O’Callaghan met with a member of Simon’s team on 29 July when she requested one final visit to collect some acorns which she would like to silver, to go with the leaves she has already had done, and the team have agreed to arrange this in September.

I hope this response has been of assistance to you and Ms O’Callaghan. If she has any further questions or comments, she can contact our HS2 Helpdesk team all day, every day of the year, on 08081 434 434 or hs2enquiries@org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Sutton', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Maddelyn Sutton

Head of Engagement, Phase One - South
High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd