

Sent to Align jv

cc: Bucks councillors & HS2 staff, Sarah Green MP, Woodland Trust, HS2 community engagement

Subject: URGENT - Ilona, the Lone Oak at Leather Lane

Further to our letter to you dated 11th October and copied to you on the 22nd, we are writing with regards the particular matter of Ilona, as set out in paragraph 9 of that letter.

We are concerned that Align may not be aware of the full circumstances regarding the local and wider community's involvement in the campaign to save this tree and the commitments made by EKFB and HS2 to review her plight.

We feel we need to bring to your attention the level of effort and commitment that has gone into preserving and retaining Ilona with the previous contractor, EKFB, because if she is felled by Align, it would immediately cause a negative impact amongst the local community and all interested parties.

And so, we respectfully ask that you read the following statement with consideration. We hope that Align will see the positive message that making a commitment to Save Ilona would give the public; both locally and nationally. What a positive news story it would make for HS2 for a change! Indeed, Ilona was the focal point of the Guardian photograph in July last year, when the Leather Lane Conservation Group was featured for the work carried out to protect the bats at Leather Lane.

Ilona

1. The local community in and around Great Missenden, South Heath, Ballinger and The Lee have named this oak tree Ilona because of the familiarity and love they have for her. An iconic oak tree that stands approximately 150 metres South of Leather Lane (Easting 89 602.00/Northing 3,051.00), she is connected to the lane by a semi-ancient hedgerow. She was originally labelled with tree tag number 144 but renumbered by the HS2 tree report May2021 (attached below) with 'unique tree Id no. T014'. She is 19 metres in height and 3.61 metres in girth. Ilona is a Category A tree. She is older than the trees planted in Leather Lane, making her nearly 250 years old. Because she has grown in isolation, Ilona's tree top has been able to grow freely into the full round shape of a majestic oak tree and she has stood at the brow of a hill, overlooking the Misbourne valley below. Ilona is fully visible from Potter Row and Leather Lane and has been fully accessible to residents throughout her lifetime. In testament to that, many photographs have been taken and collected by local residents of Ilona over the years; in all weathers and particularly in silhouette against the magnificent sunsets that can be viewed from that vantage point.