

GREAT SHELFORD PARISH COUNCIL

EAST WEST RAIL

What is it? – A railway between Oxford and Cambridge and then on the East Coast ports. It was set up by the government in 2017. It will be publicly funded and has been classified as a “Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project”. It is expected to join the main line from Cambridge to London near the yet to be built Cambridge South station.

What has happened so far? – On the Western Route the first phase between Oxford and Bicester Village opened in 2016 and the next phase will be between Oxford and Bedford with trains also running between Milton Keynes and Aylesbury, this is expected to be in service during 2024.

The Central Route, which affects Great Shelford, is between Bedford and Cambridge and East West Rail carried out a public consultation in February and March 2019 and in January 2020 have selected “Option E” as their preferred area for the route from Bedford to Cambridge. The area of “Option E” broadly runs from Toft in the north west and then goes south east through the Eversdens, Harlton, Haslingfield, Harston, skirting round Newton and Little Shelford towards Great Shelford, following the M11 to Barton and Comberton and then back to Toft.

What will happen? – East West Rail will decide on the route options in October 2020, go out to public consultation in January 2021 and then decide on the preferred option in early 2021. A detailed design will be submitted to the public in 2022 and between 2022 and 2024 they will secure development consent with construction beginning in 2025.

What has the Parish Council been doing about this? – A discussion group has been set up by parish councillors and others, mainly from Haslingfield and Harston, and is called Cambridge Approaches (www.cambridgeapproaches.org). Great Shelford Parish Council along with other affected Parish Councils in “Option E” area have been trying to come up with some possible routes that do the least potential damage to our villages, the existing infrastructure and the environment. We are also talking to Anthony Browne, our local MP.

What will the Parish Council do? – Once we know the proposed route we will be asking the views of our residents about the proposal and lobbying for change if Great Shelford is adversely affected.

Chair Councillor Malcolm Watson
Great Shelford Parish Council