

Reading residents' anger over further three years of overnight train noise

06:30, 20 JAN 2016 | BY JONATHAN LOW

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Some of the residents in Cardiff Road who have complained about constant overnight noise from the train depot. From left: Pat Murrant, Gutj Bahia, Barbara Kendall, Martin Treasure, David Neale

Homeowners in [Reading](#) town centre have expressed their dismay at being subjected to a potential further three years of overnight noise from Great Western Railway's train depot.

The Bell Tower Community Association, who represent people who live in Cardiff Road, says residents have been told GWR has done all it can to mitigate the problem.

But they face a further three years of noise having lived with it since the depot opened in July 2013.

Jonathan Dart, chairman of the association, said: "The noise starts at about midnight and can go on until about 4am or 5am.

"The core problem is Network Rail provided seriously flawed estimates for the planning of the depot. And the council didn't estimate it properly so it's been a nightmare for local residents.

"We've been banging on at GWR for appropriate measures and the council aren't interested because they've got tangled up by the Green Park issue."

Are the residents right to complain? Tell us in the comments

Residents were told in a letter from GWR that the operator had done all it could to mitigate the problem until electrification reduces the number of diesel units based there.

It said it hoped two thirds of the units will be replaced by March 2019.

James Davis, a spokesman for GWR, said: "We believe we have done everything we can practically do to improve the situation, and there are now no further measures that can be taken until approximately two thirds of the diesel fleet maintained at the depot are replaced by quieter electric trains.

"These new trains are due from this spring, with the vast majority of vehicles replaced by spring 2018."

One response

Oscar Mortali, spokesman for Reading Borough Council, said: "We know that GWR has recently written to residents outlining mitigation measures the company has already put in place to help address the issues raised. The council will now look at the content of GWR's response in detail.

"The council has been working with GWR to ensure adequate systems are in place by the company to manage residents' concerns and we will continue to monitor these."

He added: "A number of residents were written to in March 2015 to establish the extent of concerns about the noise issue.

"This resulted in one response, which the council responded to and carried out noise monitoring.

"Unfortunately, weather conditions impacted the outcome of the monitoring and therefore this data has not been shared. The council however will share its observations with residents."

Clarification

The Association says, however, it will not give up the fight to reduce further the level of noise emanating from the depot and the trains which go past.

It has written a letter to GWR business assurance director Joe Graham seeking clarification on three issues.

These are:

- Are you saying that at the two-thirds point the company will take further action? If so, what measures will it put in place?
- Is the full electrification target of March 2019 the point at which only one third of the units at the depot will be diesel?

- If not, when do you expect this figure to be reached and what will the total reduction be by March 2019? In 2014, Network Rail said it was assuming a reduction of 85 per cent by the time of full electrification. Has this changed and if so, why?



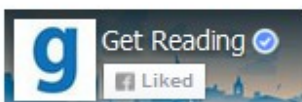
A train going past Cardiff Road

Mr Dart added: "The Bell Tower Community Association will continue to fight for residents' right not to be exposed to this level of nuisance, particularly at night.

"At the moment we are pursuing a promising-looking avenue for reducing the noise nuisance.

"In addition, we will continue to hold local and national politicians as well as Network Rail and Great Western to account over the depot and any undertakings made on it.

"This role is essential when it seems that so many of our politicians of all hues regard the voters' health and well-being as collateral damage in pursuit of their prestige projects."



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