

# Train noise row in Reading: Council wants to work with community, despite residents' fears over delays

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Meeting planned for Wednesday, February 17 between the council and residents



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Diesel trains are slowly being phased out

Tony Page says Reading Borough Council is determined to establish a close link with members of the Bell Tower Community Association in [Reading](#) to tackle nuisance noise from the train depot.

The council and the association - which represents those who live in Cardiff Road - are due to hold a meeting on Wednesday, February 17 to address the issue, which has been highlighted recently [after a letter from Great Western Railway revealed noise from the depot could last for a further three years](#).

The council conducted a test in the area last March to determine the level of noise, but did not produce the results as the tests were carried out in adverse weather conditions.

The residents felt the delays were 'stalling and obstruction' while the now-released report includes descriptions of a low frequency hum, train engine noise, brakes hissing and the whistling of engines.

One paragraph says the low frequency "hit you like walking into a wall" when the officer walked into the Cardiff Mews communal space, similar to being backstage at Reading Festival.

Cllr Page, the lead member for strategic environment, planning and transport, has defended the council, saying it was relying on Great Western Railway for a report.

And he has called for a closer co-operation to confront the problem, starting with the meeting later this month.

"I can make a commitment there will be further monitoring but some of that requires the co-operation of local residents and that's one of things we will be looking to get sorted at the meeting," he said.

"We are going to discuss the letter they have received from GWR to get their feedback and discuss arrangements for some additional monitoring that I want to see the council undertake.

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"This will in some cases require permission for some residents to have monitoring done inside their houses. So we need to get their approval and we will be discussing any other points they have in response to the letter.

"It's not just a case of what the council can do though, it's down to GWR and Network Rail too."



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

The association's chairman and leader of the campaign, Jonathan Dart has welcomed the council's offer of holding a meeting.

However, he urged it to make sure action would be taken as soon as possible.

Mr Dart said: "I'm very pleased the reporting of the depot issue in the local media has pressured the council into re-engaging with residents.

"However, this must lead to concrete action on the council's part not further stalling and obstruction.

"To this end I have suggested in my acceptance of the invitation that the council take the golden opportunity the period between now and the meeting offers to start meaningful noise and pollution measurements.

"This might help dispel some of the deep distrust of the council among local residents.

"The council has replied that this is not possible because although it is keen to see more monitoring it would need access to residents' properties and the monitoring would need to be done over an appropriate period of time."

Cllr Page said this was part of a wider issue, involving the electrification of the lines across the south west and the introduction of electric trains to replace diesel ones.

"It's not only about noise," he said.

"The issue of air pollution is as serious and the government's decision to delay electrification and to go along with the delays in it means there will be more diesel trains around than there should be.

"But every electric train which replaces a diesel one is good news not only in terms of noise but particulate pollution.

"That is something we will be discussing and is high on the agenda. The air pollution side is something we are very conscious of."