

# Residents' anger at depot's night noises

A THUD as 'loud as a jack hammer' is keeping residents awake at night, community campaigners say.

The Bell Tower Community Association has slammed Great Western Rail after Reading's train care depot moved across the tracks near to Cardiff Road in 2013, to make way for a viaduct to separate freight from passenger services.

Residents say trains enter the depot late at night for cleaning and servicing, leaving the depot to form the first train services from Reading Station.

Jonathan Dart, chairman of the association, covering 600 homes in Reading, including Cardiff Road, Addison Road and Randolph Road, said: "The residents of Cardiff Road have been let down badly by all concerned.

"Residents have had to suffer from noise behind their houses, which is at times almost as loud as a jack hammer.

"Measures need to be taken now either to end or reduce the noise and pollution from the depot to an acceptable level. This becomes even more pressing if electrification is delayed."

Mr Dart said residents were told that the noisy disturbances would reduce once Network Rail's electrification project is completed.

It is due to finish by 2019 but delays to other areas around Reading could last up to 10 years, it was revealed last month.

Network Rail are still adamant, however, that the task is on schedule.

Residents joined the community group in lobbying the depot's operator, Great Western Rail, as well as Network Rail and Reading Borough Council in a series of meetings.

But they claim their efforts were to no avail and that nothing has been done by either party to solve their concerns.

Mr Dart added: "To add insult to injury, after a series of meetings with these



Exterior picture of the new depot

parties at which evidence of noise nuisance was produced by Network Rail, the residents affected assumed the problem had been recognised and was being addressed.

"They therefore stopped complaining on a regular basis, only for this to be turned against them by arguing the problem had been solved because people had stopped complaining."

A spokesman for Network Rail said: "We can confirm that electrification through the Reading area will be delivered in our current control period i.e. 2014-2019. The new trains are quieter and greener."

A spokesman for Great Western Rail said they have put in a number of measures like electric buggies and acoustic barriers to reduce the level of noise.

The spokesman added: "We obviously aim to be good neighbours.

"We have also changed the way we maintain trains on site to make sure we are operating as quietly as possible."