

# The Beeston EXPRESS



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COVERING BEESTON, CHILWELL,  
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## Inquiry into A453 route starts by the Editor

IN *The Beeston Express* of October 9, the Highways Agency published its scheme proposals and alternatives for widening the A453 between J24 of the M1 and the A52.

Objectors to the published preferred scheme put forward twelve alternative route 'alignments' and these were also published.

However, one of the alternatives had already been the subject of a Public Inquiry in 1996 – the notorious 'Green Route' which would have that epitome of a quiet back lane, the A453, cross the weir field at Beeston Rylands on an

embankment or viaduct.

Beestonians held their breath back in 1996 as they waited for the outcome of the Inquiry. They believed the proposal to have the A453 cross the River Trent between Beeston and Clifton, crossing the weir field either on an earth embankment or stilts and running across the green fields this side of the river (generally known as a 'flood plain') before tying into the existing Queens Drive junction on the A52, nothing short of bonkers.

Dafter things have happened, though, and there was a collective sigh

of relief locally when the Green Route was dismissed, along with the Grey Route, which just followed a slightly different alignment to the Green Route.

Local residents will now be pleased to learn that the inspector appointed to the current public inquiry, which began at the Rutland Hotel, Nottingham, on November 10, 2009, took a walk across the weir field on Thursday, November 19. We can only hope that he was simply checking for himself that the resurrected Green Route was an absolute non-starter, and that he wasn't there to look

at what benefits the route might hold over any of the alternatives.

All of the reasons for the 1996 dismissal of the Green Route remain valid 13 years later. These include cost (now estimated at a conservative £573 million, as opposed to £146 million for the preferred route), building on a flood plain, and cutting through nature reserves and SSSIs.

In 2009, we can add the Environment Agency's flood defences, construction of which has just started and which, when completed, will change the flow of

flood water along the Trent valley hereabouts. Secondly, there's the government's own recently granted approval for NET Phase Two and its tram line extensions to Beeston and Clifton.

Cllr Steve Barber, ward councillor for Beeston Rylands, attended the opening of the latest inquiry to present the case against resurrecting the Green Route. He said: "Very few people turned up at the Inquiry and it was essential to make the points, otherwise the inspector, who can only act on the evidence before him, may have been persuaded

wrongly.

"I understand that he is to visit the Rylands to see for himself."

Subsequent to his report to the inquiry on November 10, Cllr Barber agreed to accompany the inspector on the site visit planned for November 19.

## Pure quackers...

TWELVE day-old mallard ducklings were found in the wildlife garden behind the Attenborough Nature Centre last weekend, the warm temperatures in October obviously having deceived them into thinking that spring had arrived early.

A member of staff arriving for work at the Centre on Saturday, November 14, was astonished to see the clutch of

ducklings scratching around at their mother's feet.

The breeding season of a mallard is from March to July, when they will normally have one or two clutches. Incubation is around 30 days and it will be a further 50-60 days before the ducklings fledge, so it is very unusual to see twelve tiny ducklings in mid-November.

Assistant Centre Manager

Tim Sexton refused to believe what he was being told at first. He said: "Whilst it's usual to see the male and female mallards pairing up in October and November, they don't start to nest until the following March.

"The very mild and warm weather we had in October has obviously triggered the breeding cycle of this pair into believing that spring is

just around the corner.

"Twelve is about an average clutch size for mallards, but this female is going to have to work overtime over the next few weeks to keep these ducklings warm. Whilst they can already feed themselves, they need to find out from their mother what is or isn't edible, and it will be another two to three weeks before

they are totally independent."

"We thought that Alena, the Centre employee who found the ducklings in the first instance, had gone a little crazy when she came to tell us!"

**STOP PRESS:** Staff at the Nature Centre report that the cold November nights are already taking their toll of the vulnerable ducklings, and some have already died.

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