

My name is Jacqueline Barter.
I am a Bexley resident.

I live in Lodge Hill on the border of Bexley and Greenwich and enjoy being close to the River Thames.

I am involved as a volunteer in conservation projects in Lesnes Woods and also at Woodlands Farm on Shooters Hill.

I want to speak briefly about four points of concern.

Firstly, I have always lived close to the River Thames and I would like to see the riparian boroughs celebrate what has been called our proud maritime heritage by maintaining it as a fully working river not just a pretty view from a luxury apartment or a riverside path. Nor do I want it to be regarded only as an inconvenient barrier to be crossed.

If this bridge goes ahead, it is my understanding that the height would limit the size of ships traversing any part of the Thames upstream of it.

The Port of London Authority is an objector to the bridge, perhaps this is one of the reasons.

Secondly, if the Thames Gateway Bridge is built, I foresee that there will be, in addition to increased air and noise pollution, tremendous congestion on my local roads caused by traffic travelling between the bridge and the A2.

I fully support Action Group Against the Bridge (AGAB), St Michael's Residents Association (SMRA) and People Against the River Crossing (PARC) in their protest and refer you to the evidence given by them on these matters.

I commend and thank them for the work they have put into their research for this objection at great personal cost in time and money.

Thirdly, through my involvement with Lesnes Abbey Conservation Volunteers (LACV), who help Bexley to care for Lesnes Woods, I am aware of the potential damage that would be caused to this valued public amenity by the greater volume of traffic using Knee Hill and New Road.

Apart from the problem of air pollution, these roads will become dangerous and difficult to cross making public access from one part of the woods to another hazardous.

We also fear that mitigation measures such as road widening could encroach upon this Green Belt land. Though I am sure there are no plans, as yet, so to do.



As you can see from this photograph, taken in June this year, Knee Hill is only wide enough for one lane of traffic in each direction. Any vehicles higher or wider than a single decker bus would make the road very dangerous for local road users, including pedestrians, who want to get to and from Abbey Wood station as I often do.

Lastly, although there are at present no plans to build a road connecting the Thames Gateway Bridge with the A2, it is my belief that the residents of Bexley will be put under so much pressure from increased traffic and road congestion, that such plans will ultimately reappear.

The original plans for such a road went through, one of our few remaining areas of ancient woodland, Oxleas Wood and Woodlands Farm, which straddles the boundary between Bexley and Greenwich. The farm is a greatly valued community asset welcoming educational visits from many local schools as well as daily family visitors and had over 5,000 visitors at the open day in May this year.

To conclude, I, and many other Bexley residents, have been told repeatedly that the vast majority of vehicles crossing the bridge from the north will be headed for the M25.

Why on Earth would they do that when they could just travel along the nice new A13 to the Dartford crossing?

Some years ago the East London River Crossing was proposed specifically in order to provide a road link between the M11/A406 North Circular and the A2. It is my belief that the present proposal is what you might call the East London River Crossing by the back door.

But this time there would be additional suffering and damage to Lesnes Woods and the residential roads of Bexley.