




THE TALE OF
TWO CITIES!

A scenic view of a canal with a high-speed train on a bridge in the background. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The water in the canal is calm, reflecting the sky and the surrounding greenery. A grassy bank is visible on the right side of the canal.

Once upon a time, in a land not so far away (about 64 miles along the M6) was a magical land called called Stoke-on-Trent. It was known across the land for producing marvellous pottery, being the birthplace of Robbie Williams and being a notoriously tough place to play football on a cold, rainy Tuesday night.

This particular tale concerns the arrival of some high speed carriages, imaginatively called High Speed 2, capable of reaching 250 miles per hour (that's like, a lot of horses) and whether it would grace the beautiful land of Stoke with it's magical ability to transform local economies like the best magic wand ever.

Do you feel Stoke-on-Trent has
been led down the right track in
regards to HS2?

Have you lost your train of thought
as to how you even feel about HS2?

Do you instead think HS2's
presence has
de-railed Stoke-on-Trent?

THIS BOOK IS PACKED WITH POCKET-SIZED
STORIES WHICH EXPLORE THE IMPACTS OF
HS2 IF IT WAS CONSTRUCTED AND ROUTED
THROUGH STOKE-ON-TRENT.

Combining dry English wit and analysis of an assortment of sources, we have created this satire, a brief snapshot into the cacophony that is the debate surrounding HS2. This can be an all too sensitive topic which is exactly why this book has been created, HS2 is a prime example of the dichotomy between the individual and the corporation. No matter if you are a Rabbit or a politician you will be able to identify and get some comic relief from the issues we explore.

Barry the businessman is happy.
HS2 coming to Stoke means more
money.

He has refurbished his shop to make
it look more attractive.
On opening day he waits for his
customers.

The day passes and Barry does not
see anyone.

Everyone has taken the HS2 to
London for the premium city life
coffee.

Barry has to close down his shop.



Ronald the rabbit is unhappy.
HS2 has come to Stoke and now
he has to move.

His family all pack their suitcases
and leave for their new home.

They take one last look at the
beautiful countryside.

Ronald takes one big step for his
family and their move.

He is now part of the HS2 rail
line.



Darren commutes everyday to get to work.

Finally him and the 24 other people who commute from Stoke-on-Trent to London Euston are being prioritised and better connected than ever to the jobs they hate.

HS2 will ensure this service will be more frequent and less-crowded with as many as 1,100 seats per train.

Darren and the other commuters will have lots of space to spread out and put their feet up.

Darren does wish however that some of the £56 billion were invested in some sick bags as 250mph is a bit fast for Darren's liking.



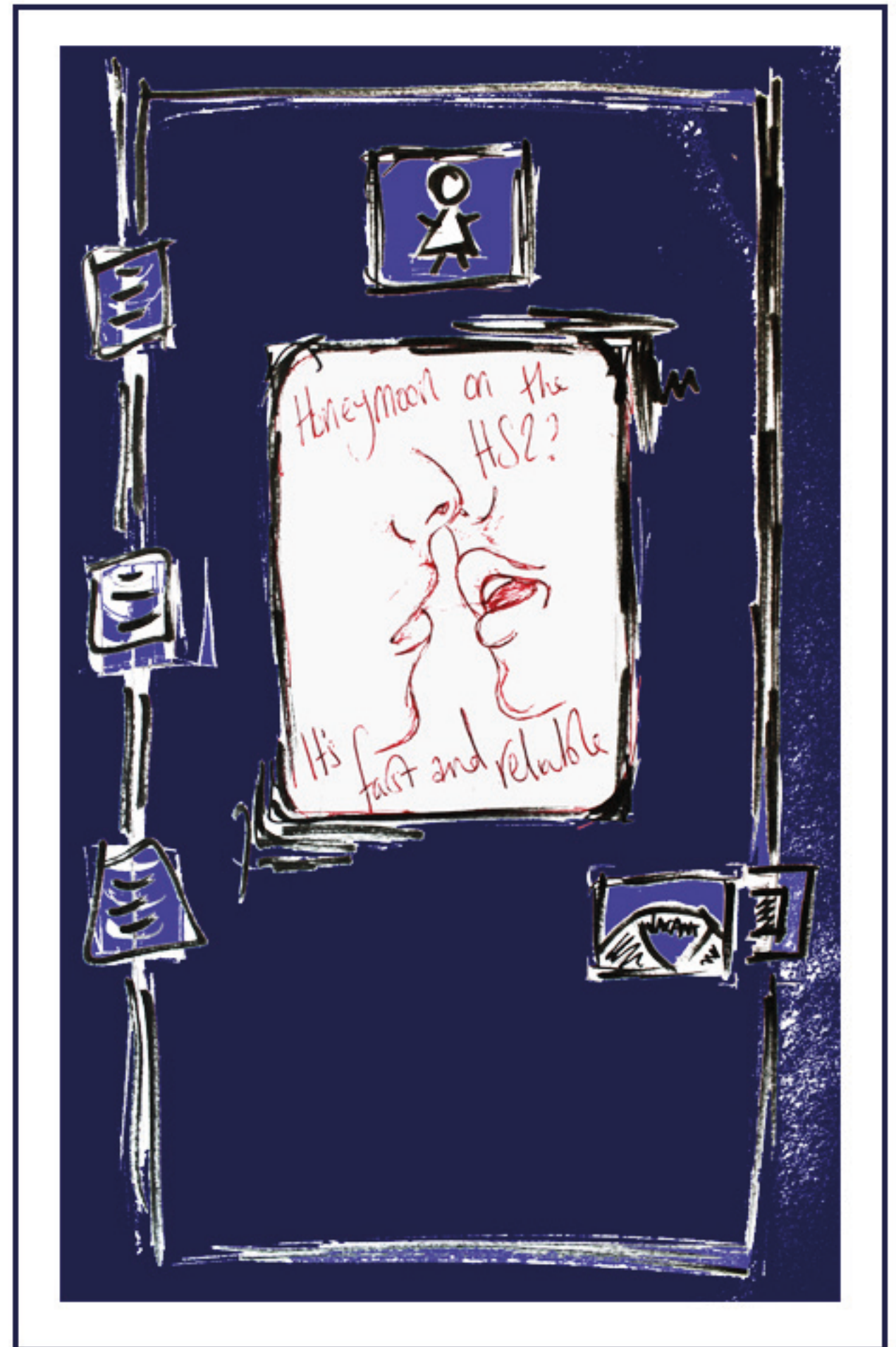
Elise and Richard are two newlyweds.

Elise is excited as Richard has promised to take her to London for their honeymoon since it is only approximately 55 minutes away now.

Elise is a romantic girl.

She looks Richard deep in the eyes and exclaims, 'honey, let's fly on the wings of love to London'.

Richard, being his stern self replies, 'No! Let's take the HS2 since it's faster and more "reliable".'



Olivia, Billy and Susan are friends.

“My mother says Susan’s got involved with a bad crowd” said Olivia who is currently working to complete her FutureRail Engineering apprenticeship.

“I saw her selling her hopes and dreams to the venture capitalists behind McDonalds” said Billy, studying at The National College for High Speed Rail.

Susan sits quietly on the HS2 train into London, contemplating her new life as a pawn in the economic games of the Capital.

Olivia, Billy and Susan don’t hang out anymore. The park they used to get high in at night was shoddily relocated 50 miles away.

Nothing gets in the way of HS2.

Not even friendship.



Margaret must give up her home to make way for the HS2 track.

Margaret has to move into her son's cramped apartment with his wife and kids.

Margaret is devastated.

She gets down on her knees and pleads the mayor of Stoke on Trent to let her be run down by the HS2, claiming she cannot bear to live without her riches.

The real reason Margaret wants to be rundown by the HS2 is because she can't bear to live with her vexatious daughter in law and eat her distasteful peas and gravy everyday.

Wait, she won't even be allowed to drink her beer collection in front of the kids.

So much for retirement life!



George is a Farmer.

He has been informed via letter that parts of his land will be compulsorily repurchased for the construction of HS2.

George doesn't know what he is going to do with these small unworkable pockets of land that he now owns.

George has been put in touch with an agricultural liaison officer who is contactable by telephone 24/7 for any questions he has concerning agricultural issues.

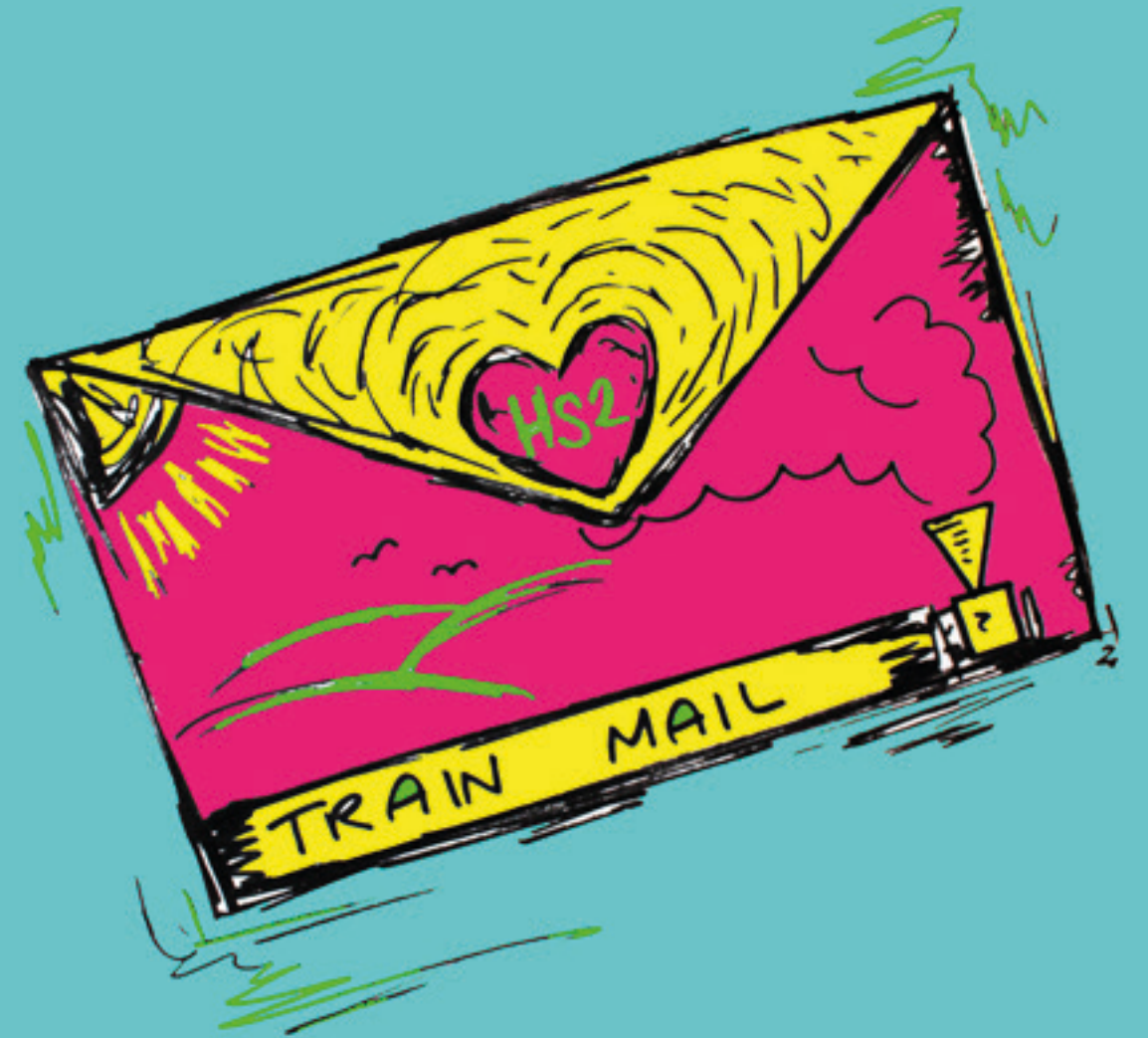
That doesn't matter to George.

He would rather talk to the CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) helpline.

George also no longer needs to worry about his unworkable land, HS2 Ltd is now going to convert it into a biodiversity offsetting area.

Trees will be planted and balancing ponds will be created to meet HS2's environmental habitat targets.

George of course is elated that Ronald the Rabbit and Barry the Bee will now have a home, but is scratching his head as to where he will live.



Gareth Snell must travel into London for his role as MP for Stoke-on-Trent.

As the only person living in Stoke-on-Trent who needs to use the HS2 train, Gareth feels very alone.

Gareth silently eats his cucumber sandwiches.

He must finish them before the train speeds in to London.

Every morning Gareth enters parliament with indigestion.



This is the mayor.

The mayor is happy because he ran a successful bid to have a HS2 station in the city.

He says to everyone he is happy because the economy is booming, they have better transport links to London and more people have jobs now.

Secretly, the real reason he is happy because they gave him a bigger necklace because he did so well.



Barry is a bee.

Barry is happy that HS2 has arrived.

It means that the honey he produces gets to London 32 minutes quicker.

This means that John the hipster in London is more likely to get his honey infused choc-vanilla latte from his favourite coffee shop.

A honey infused choc-vanilla latte has a lot of sugar in it.

John will probably have diabetes by the time he is 35.

Barry also likes HS2 because he likes fast trains...ZOOM...Barry forgot how fast HS2 was...ZOOM...Barry is now on the windscreen of HS2, at least he does not have to pay extortionate prices!



Do you sense that HS2 ltd had a locomotive when HS2 was re-routed to Crewe?

Have you even lost your train of thought as to how you even feel about HS2?

Are you a-freight for the people of the Potteries now that HS2 is destined for other lands?

THIS BOOK IS PACKED WITH POCKET-SIZED STORIES WHICH EXPLORE THE IMPACTS OF HS2 IF IT WAS NOT ROUTED THROUGH STOKE-ON-TRENT.

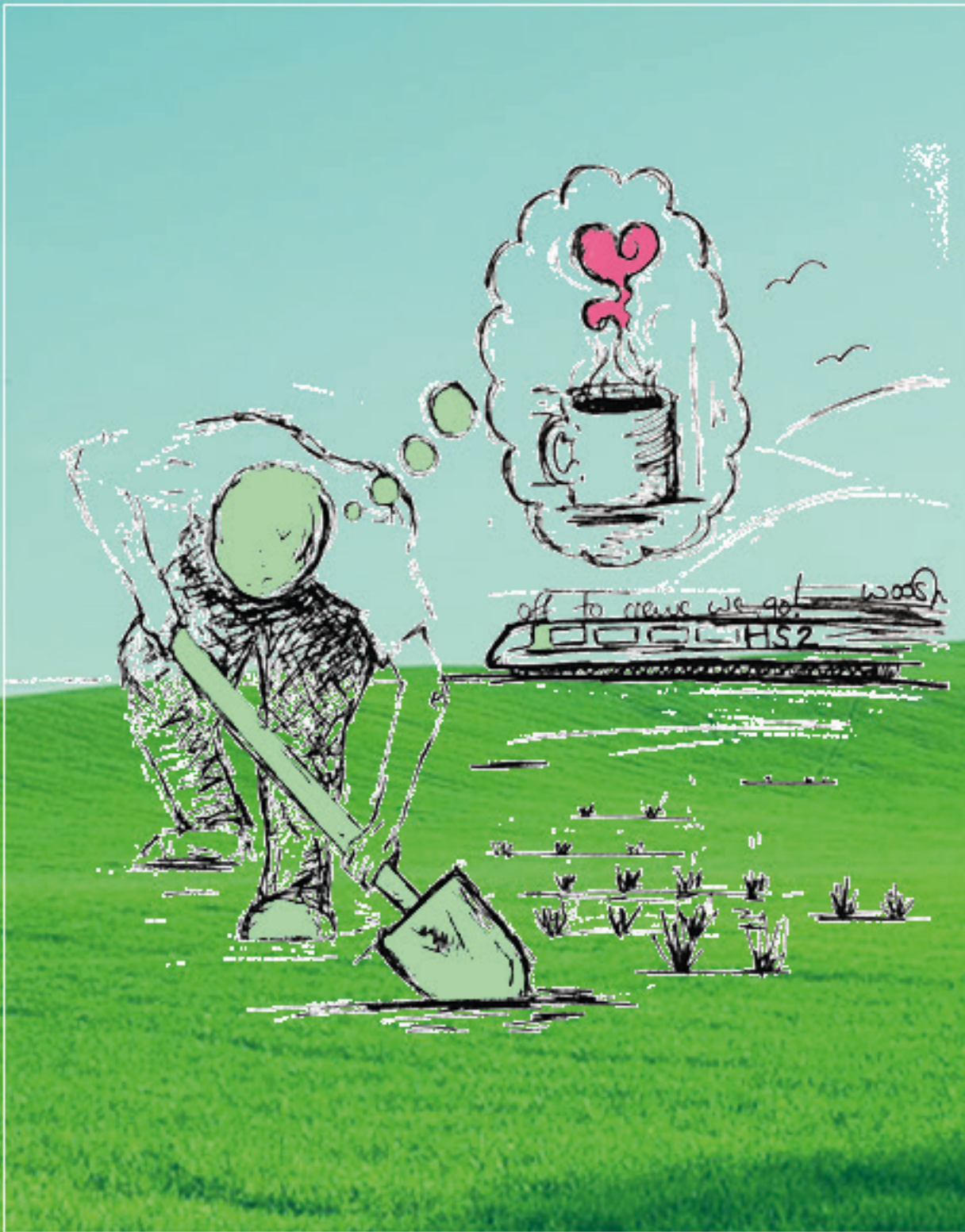
Combining dry English wit and analysis of an assortment of sources, we have created this satire; a brief snapshot into the cacophony that is the debate surrounding HS2. This can be an all too sensitive topic which is exactly why this book has been created, HS2 is a prime example of the dichotomy between the individual and the corporation. No matter if you are a Rabbit or a politician, you will be able to identify and get some comic relief from the issues we explore.

Ben the businessman owns a coffee shop in Stoke.

He is sad that HS2 is not coming to Stoke.

Now he will not get extra business as no city centre station is being built anymore.

He may lose his job and have to start digging carrots.





Ronald the rabbit is happy
HS2 is not coming to
Stoke.

His home will not be
destroyed and his children
can play on the grass.

He can continue with his
work and go about his
BUSINESS.

Darren commutes everyday to get to work.

Now that HS2's route stops elsewhere in the country, the number of west coast trains calling at Stoke-on-Trent's station has been reduced from 30 to three a day during peak times.

Darren has decided uprooting his family and moving to London would be the more convenient option.

Darren's mother-in-law is not best pleased.





Richard is devastated.

HS2 is not coming to Stoke despite the mayor's huge bids and promises.

Richard can no longer enrol himself in the National College for High Speed Rail to train engineers.

He can no longer relive his college days.

All Richard does now is watch snapchat stories of his friends down from Crewe, training as professional engineers by day and having a 'sesh' by night.

Elise, on the other hand, can no longer bear to look at her husband lounging on the couch all day with his sorry face.

She can't even take the HS2 to Birmingham to meet Jake the tattoo artist.

Jake used to make her life oh so adventurous!

Julie runs the Pottery Alevel in Stoke-on-Trent.

"Now everybody," says Julie "Crewe might have an HS2 hub station, but we have Emma Bridgewater."

Emma Bridgewater is helping save the town after the Major spent everything on the HS2 bid with her prosperous pottery business.

Emma Bridgewater is now a powerful overlord of Stoke-on-Trent.

The teenagers must hone their clay work abilities to survive on these new ceramic streets.

Sally is allergic to clay.

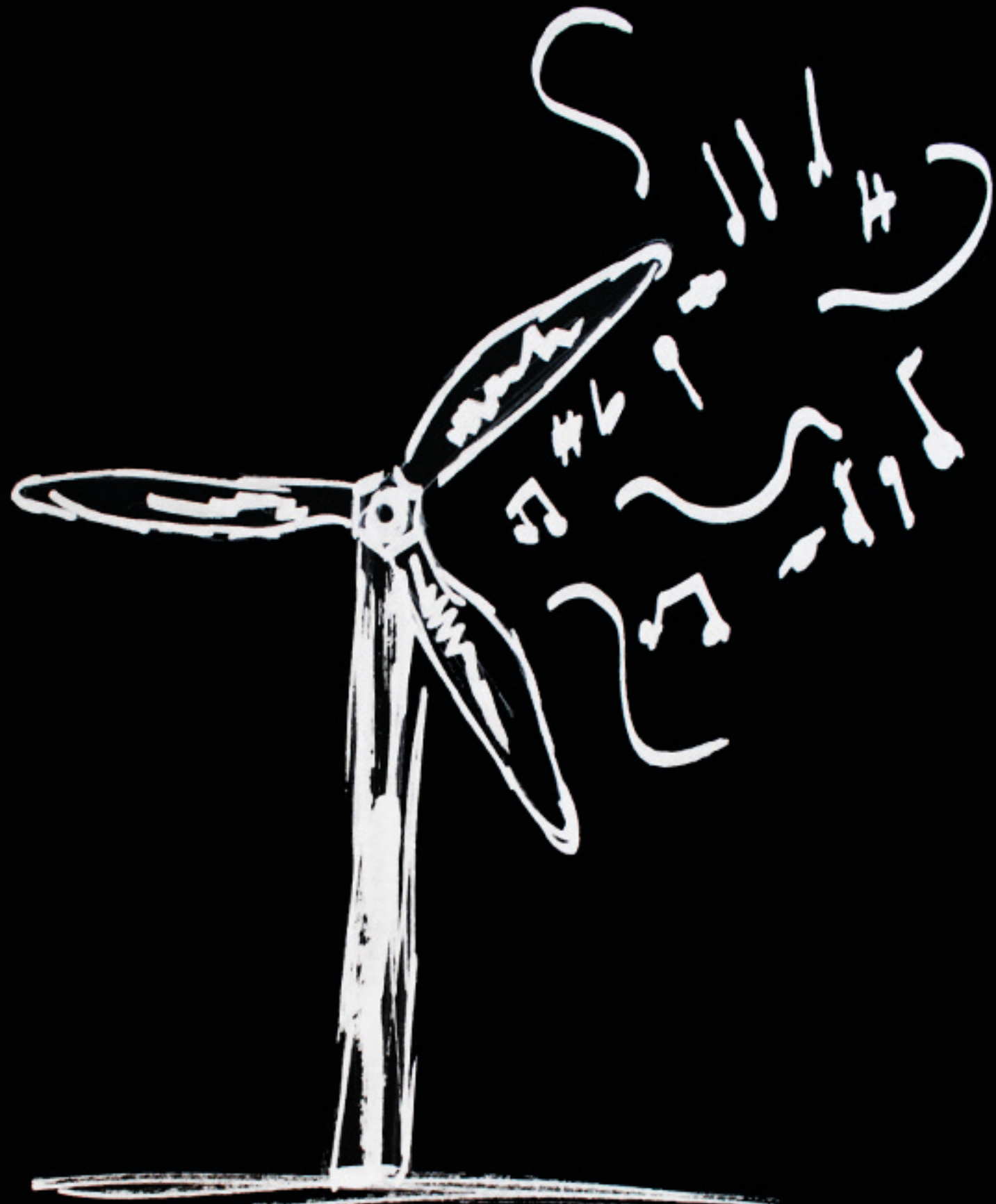
She cannot work in the Potteries.

Sally must move out of Stoke-on-Trent.

Sally would be sad but Sally is moving to Crewe.

Sally can finally fulfil her dreams of being an overworked and depressed employee of Goldman Sachs.





Mr and Mrs Maxwell arrive at the mayor's office to get updated on the HS2 plans.

The mayor brushes his big old chin feeling like the little boy Santa forgot and sighs in distress.

Stoke on Trent is officially not getting HS2.

Mrs and Mrs Maxwell are thrilled.

They don't have to sell their home or live next to the immense pollution the train would have caused.

Really though, they are happy because life can return to the conventional ways.

They can keep hunting down the rabbits and hedgehogs and make feasts at night.

Now all that's left to do is lobby against the 'real' noise making technology- THE WIND TURBINES.



George is a farmer.

Now that HS2 has been constructed and is no longer going through Stoke-on-Trent he can relax.

His land is safe.

It's shame about the other 1,730ha of agricultural land that was required for use in the construction of HS2 though.



Tristram Hunt, former MP for Stoke on Trent, waits for transport into London to act in his new role as the director of London's Victoria and Albert Museum, but sadly to raise the £800,000 spent on a failed grovel for HS2 Stoke-on-Trent had to sell their trains, their tracks and their ticket booth.

Tristram must wait for the horse and cart.

It will take him three days to get there.

Tristram is scared.

Gareth Snell, the new MP for Stoke on Trent, decides that without HS2 it will be easier to Facetime into parliament, yet no one is paying attention to his 'Plan for the Potteries'.

Gareth is sad.

Gareth has his thumb covering the microphone.



The mayor is sad because he ran an unsuccessful bid to have a HS2 station in the city.

Everyone says it is the mayor's fault Stoke did not get a HS2 station.

Making a bid for a HS2 station takes a lot of time.

The mayor's wife now lives with Jeff from down the road.

The mayor should have focused on keeping his marriage together rather than spending £800,000 and all his time on a project which has questionable economic benefits.

The mayor is not too sad though, he has his big chain to keep him company at night, though he has to take the chain to Cash4Gold in the morning because he bankrupted the council.

Boris is a bee.

Boris is sad because HS2 is not coming to Stoke.

At least Boris has his family, unlike his French cousin Francois, who was hit by the TGV.

Boris hopes that Francois' family does not come to stay.

Boris does not like French bees, he says they smell funny.

Boris is a bigoted bee.



THE END

When we were first challenged to work on a project on the topic of HS2, our biggest hurdle was creating a project that was not an essay or a presentation but something more creative. We liked the idea of a social exploration of HS2 in a sustainable development context. We began to discuss different ideas about the effect HS2 would have on those who live where its construction was planned. We liked this idea but also wanted to represent those who HS2 was still going to impact even though it was not routed through their area. We thought about HS2 in this way; it is as if the subject HS2 is a photograph, but every photograph can be reversed and put into its negative form. Light areas appear dark and vice versa, we wanted to explore this inverted side of the story too. We chose to study Stoke-on-Trent as they had made a real bid for HS2 and had failed. Was this failure beneficial for them? Or would not having HS2 seriously impact various aspects of life for Stoke's people.

At the moment the HS2 project is still supported by Theresa May and she will not be removing it from the conservative manifesto for the general election. In a recent interview with the Yorkshire Post, May is quoted: "We remain absolutely committed to HS2. It is a very important infrastructure project for the country. It is important that we increase capacity on this mainline and I believe that HS2 is the right way to do that (Guardian, 2017).

STOKE-ON-TRENT WITH HS2

Businessman

In the event that HS2 had gone through Stoke rather than Crewe, a hub station was planned to be built between Stoke railway station and Etruria Valley and this would be finished with officially existing railroad lines that interface with Manchester (The Sentinel, 2014). Furthermore, HS2 passing through Stoke could be extremely advantageous for the territorial economy with the likelihood of creating at least £200m (BBC, 2014). Thus, this goes to show that the HS2 would have delivered paramount benefits for businessmen in Stoke by improving the economy and reducing train times to big cities such as London and Birmingham.

Rabbit

Corrigan (2014) illustrated that if HS2 were to go through Stoke-on-Trent, the line would require realigning the West Coast Mainline and Trent and Mersey Canal. Consequently, this would result in the demolishing of 'environmental protection' land; nearby habitats would be destroyed and the animals would be displaced.

Commuter

Gov.uk (2011) highlighted the possibility of more trains and increased frequency of journeys if HS2 came to Stoke; the new high speed network was planned to free up spaces on the current railway. This would have allowed people who use the current lines to use less congested trains as there are more trains which individuals can take. BBC News (2016) further supports this claim stating that as many as 1,100 seats will be available per train allowing a high capacity of people to travel in each journey. The train will also be the fastest in Europe, providing up to 14 journeys per hour in each direction, making it easier for people to reach their destination without any delays (BBC News, 2016). BBC News (2016) indicated that this new train would cost £56bn and it is therefore questioned whether the benefits are worth the cost; only 24 people commute from Stoke-on-Trent to Camden (Neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk, 2011).

Young couple

Many young and skilled people and couples are extremely excited to aid in the construction and delivering the first phase of the high speed rail (RTM, 2017). Thus, this goes to show that they look forward to using this new technology frequently. As for Stoke, the high speed rail would have meant travelling to London in only approximately 55 minutes (The Sentinel, 2014), hence many young and energetic couples could have taken up this opportunity to make leisure or business trips to the heart of the country or other cities such as Birmingham.

Teenager

National College for High Speed Rail (2017) outlines the 36 month apprenticeship program which is available for individuals who want to combine 'on-the-job' with studying. Individuals will be able to specialise in an area after the first 12 week core module, enabling them to advance their knowledge in areas they are keen learn (National College for High Speed Rail, 2017). Getting our People Ready for HS2 (2017) states how their scheme will provide new job opportunities by delivering education and training, employ the local workforce and re-train those who have outdated qualifications.

Elderly people

Many pensioners like Maragaret Robinson are forcefully being made to leave their homes in order for the high speed rail to be constructed (The Sentinel, 2016). This is leading to the houses of elderly people who have lived in their houses for 30 years being bought by the government (The Sentinel, 2016). Hence, this goes to show that old people will have to move out and either shift in with their relatives or have no place to go just to make way for the highly anticipated HS2.

Farmer

Guide for Farmers and Growers (2016) demonstrated that those who will need to give up possession of land in order for HS2 to commence will be notified via letter of which part of their land they will need to give us as well as the date possession will be taken. 51m.co.uk (2016)

highlights the point that of these farmers, family farmers who have been farming throughout the generations will have to leave their homes. The land which they once used for agriculture, will no longer be used for that purpose and will likely not be used again as HS2 will create small unworkable pockets, resulting in land going to waste (51m.co.uk, 2016). In order to aid farmers with any difficulties regarding the move from their land, HS2 Ltd is providing an agricultural liaison officer who can be contacted at any time (Guide for Farmers and Growers, 2016). However, it is argued that is not sufficient as it is still unclear the compensation that farmers will receive for the trouble the move will cause and whether it will be enough to compensate for the emotional strain it puts on them (Ralphs, 2014). (51m.co.uk, 2017) argues that although farmers will be moved, HS2's environmental habitat targets will be met as arable farmland will be taken to plant trees and create balancing ponds, partially offsetting the impacts of HS2 on the environment.

Politician

The Mayor

Cocks (2016) exemplify the benefits Stoke could have experienced as a result of the superhub had they won the bid for the HS2 station. The hub is predicted to create more than 120,000 jobs and 100,000 new homes over 25 years which will lead to a boost in the regional economy by £10bn a year by 2040 Cocks (2016).

Bee

BBC News (2016) illustrated that the train will be the fastest in Europe and is predicted to be 32 minutes faster than current trains.

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STOKE-ON-TRENT WITHOUT HIGH SPEED RAIL

Commuter

Stoke on Trent not getting the high speed rail will lead to very negative economic consequences for the city. By looking at the current plans for the HS2, it is clear that along with conveying no monetary advantages to North Staffordshire, it will also convey a more awful rail network for workers (51m, 2016) By then, the quantity of West Coast trains calling at Stoke station could be diminished from 30 to three a day amid peak times (51m, 2016). Hence, this will lead to negative consequences for people in Stoke who commute regularly to other cities such as London for business or personal reasons and can even result in them wanting to move out of Stoke.

Farmer

Following an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), in Phase 2a of the construction of the high speed rail, approximately 1730ha of agricultural land will be needed to construct the route (Davies, 2016). Thus, it means that farms that fall directly in this route which is to cross the West Midlands to Crewe will have to be sabotaged which will negatively effect the farmers in this area as their land will be taken away which is a source of livelihood for them.

The Mayor

Unfortunately, the Stoke City Council ended up spending a staggering 800,000 pounds from the money of the tax payers in an unsuccessful bid to get an HS2 station in Stoke (Corrigan, 2015). Hence, this led Stoke to lose thousands of pounds of the taxpayers money and indeed made the mayor get a bad reputation. As for the mayor's chains, it is evident that they are of very high value and indeed the chains of the mayor of Bury cost a shocking 200,000 pounds (The Bolton News, 2014). Thus, the mayor himself in possession of his chain still has sound financial assets while the public suffers after so much of their money spent on this

unsuccessful bid led to Stoke still being devoid of the high speed rail.

Elderly people

Stoke and its people have felt like “the little boy who Santa forgot” when they got to know that the HS2 will not be passing through Stoke and instead would be passing through Crewe (Woodhouse67, 2016). However, for elderly people this was good news because all over the UK people fear that the HS2 will result in the deaths of a lot of old people because they would have to move their houses and settle elsewhere and the environmental and visual impacts of HS2 will also create negative outcomes for them (Fitzgerald, 2013). Hence, not getting the HS2 can result in happier and longer lives for the elderly in Stoke. Furthermore, old people are more likely to keep on protesting against wind power because over 55s are usually in strong retaliation for any plans concerning the building of wind turbines (Jowit, 2010). Since Stoke has old people and wind power and the city is not getting the HS2, hence this can result in them protesting against the turbines and being thankful that they are not being bestowed with more noise pollution.

Young Couple

The national College for High Speed Rail is to open up in Birmingham this coming September and it aims to thoroughly train skilled professionals for the high speed rail network along with creating paramount amount of jobs and apprenticeships (Whinyates, 2017). Hence, since Stoke is not getting the HS2 the young and talented engineers cannot benefit from this college since their city has been sidelined and to get job in the high speed rail sector they will have to move out of Stoke.

Politician

Tristan Hunt was in the position of power as the MP for Stoke-on-Trent since 2012 and in 2017 he was appointed as the new Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum (Hawes, 2017). This took place after

he spent 560 thousand pounds on a bid for an HS2 station in Stoke (Corrigan, 2014). Furthermore, Gareth Snell who became the new MP for Stoke on Trent proposed a 'Plan for the Potteries'. In it he has proposed strict action on jobs, investment and building houses in the constituency and along with that he provided an outline of what he intends to achieve in his first 100 days as the MP (Snell, 2017). Hence, without the HS2 in Stoke it will be harder and more time consuming for politicians like Gareth to convey their initiatives and future plans to the Parliament in London.

Businessman

In the event that HS2 had gone through Stoke rather than Crewe, a centre point station would have been created between Stoke railroad station and Etruria Valley and this would be finished with officially existing railroad lines that interface with Manchester (The Sentinel, 2014). Furthermore, HS2 passing through Stoke could be extremely advantageous for the territorial economy with the likelihood of creating at least £200m (BBC, 2014). Thus, this goes to show that the HS2 would have delivered paramount benefits for businessmen in Stoke by improving the economy and reducing train times to big cities such as London and Birmingham.

Teenager

Emma Bridgewater is a company which started in 1985 and is currently run by Emma and her husband Mathew Rice (Bridgewater, 2017). They are a completely British company based in Stoke on Trent which is the cultural home for British pottery and they are committed to making different kinds of everyday pottery items like mugs and bowls (Bridgewater, 2017). Its one of the most famous businesses in Stoke and the mayor is a big fan of this business (Snell, 2017). Emma Bridgewater has provided thousands of jobs to the local people especially after striking a fabulous deal with Starbucks in 2012 to sell thousands of the Emma Bridgewater's mugs (The Sentinel, 2012). However, despite this business many people especially youngsters are moving to Crewe. This is because Crewe is getting an HS2 station and this connection between Crewe and Manchester was confirmed on the 15th of November 2016

(Ellams, 2016). Hence, this shows that the HS2 would have been a great investment for young people like teenagers as it would increase opportunities for them by commuting to bigger cities faster and easily.

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“When Mike [Pence] handed me the book, I was worried because it was the biggest book I’ve ever read. However, it is literally THE best book I’ve ever read about HS2. Fact. Anyone who tells you otherwise is fake news. Real bad guys. I can’t wait to grab Melania right by the purse to buy the next edition. I still think we should build a wall around Stoke and get them to pay for it.” - Donald Trump.

“Like the prodigal son, I hope this book comes back.” - Iron Man

“This is a strong and stable book, just like my government will be. Strong and stable, strong and stable, strong and stable.” - Theresa May

“Somebody once told me, this book was going to roll me, I ain’t the fastest train in the shed.” - Smashmouth

“This book is amazing, just like me. Did I say I was great?” - Kanye West

“Scrap girls running the world, these authors should.” - Beyonce