

Proof of Evidence
Mark Dixon/Jude Plouviez

We have lived at 19 Willoughby Road, Ipswich, since the autumn of 1999. The property is situated on the corner of Willoughby Road and Burrell Road. It is about 200m from the sidings used by Freightliner for re-fuelling engines, with the multi-storey station car park in the intervening area. All the other property around us is residential, much of it consists of rented accommodation.

During 2003 Mark noticed an increase in fumes in the house, particularly during the evenings. By early 2004 he was frequently reacting to fumes by coughing and wheezing – he is not normally asthmatic but seemed to be having an asthmatic-like reaction, to fumes which were commonly occurring at night. On several occasions he went out to investigate what was causing this and saw that there were diesels with idling engines in the sidings at the station. In the spring of 2004 we contacted Anglia Railways (later One), who suggested that the problem was with Freightliner rather than them and said they had passed on the complaint. During the summer of 2004 the rail tunnel was closed and Mark was rarely affected but in the winter of that year he frequently woke up coughing and breathless, and when it was particularly bad he had to move to a room at the back of the house to sleep at all. At that time we contacted Ipswich Borough Council Environmental Health and we kept records over Christmas/New Year reporting the occurrences to them; eventually their response was that the fumes were not a statutory nuisance. We purchased an air purifier machine which now enables Mark to sleep, albeit with an electric fan running, on the nights when he starts to cough. Generally the smell occurs most often at night (between about 11pm and 4am) and most often in cold weather but we have noticed it at times throughout the day and in all seasons. It affects all the rooms on the west side of the house. At night the smell is accompanied by the distant but distinct roar of engines – during the day there is a high level of road traffic noise.

We are extremely concerned that the proposed rail improvement, which aims to increase the number of rail freight journeys by over 60%, will increase the number and frequency of Freightliner trains using the sidings and the refuelling point and will further adversely affect our health and our quality of life.

Mark Dixon and Judith Plouviez
January 2007