

Countryside Update

September 2003 (issue no. 46)

Commission for Integrated Transport release aviation report

The Commission for Integrated Transport, an independent body set up by the Government to monitor transport policy, released a report earlier this month.

The report, entitled A Report on Aviation's External Costs, contains 16 key recommendations which could potentially have implications for the Government's White Paper on aviation. Primarily the commission recognises that the current situation means that the aviation industry is not paying for the environmental damage it is creating. It calls for "internalisation" of costs, which means that the costs of flying should reflect the costs it inflicts on the environment.

The report also recognises that while there are limitations on what the UK government could do because of international law and obligations, it could and should lead the way where possible. This could include pushing for congestion charging for airlines to reflect the external cost for use of airspace at different times of the day.

Among some of the responses from the aviation industry was a statement on Easyjet's website "We operate an almost paperless administration office...this results in lower usage of packaging and paper and therefore less waste." While this may be true – it hardly recognises the damage caused by its airplanes!

The report is available online at www.cfit.gov.uk/reports/aec/index.htm or, if you

don't have access to the Internet we have a copy at central office. Please call Sarah if you would like to see it. You can help the campaign against unnecessary airport expansion by writing to your MP and making them aware of this report. Ask them to highlight the issues it raises with Alastair Darling.

Welcome to Walking Week

At the time of Countryside Update going to print Welcome to Walking Week was fast approaching and was looking like it would be even bigger and better than last year! The full walks guide was published in the most recent edition of The Rambler, but if you haven't seen it – or would like some extra copies then please call Sarah.

Publicity for the week is also going well – some of you may have seen Emily on BBC 1's Countryfile recently, discussing the importance of the Elm Tree walks. Emily's also been on Radio 4's Today programme and we've had lots of coverage in other sections of the media. All that remains now is for as many people as possible to go on one the walks being put on. We're very pleased with the support received so far. We hope that where possible our members use it as an opportunity to get non-ramblers out, so they too can see how enjoyable walking is!

Over half the walks are "Car Free" and people will be using the opportunity to help celebrate European Car Free Day and doing their bit for the environment by not using their car to go for a walk.

Circular no.	03/105	For	Information
Date	September 2003	To	Area and Group Countryside Officers
From	Ramblers' Association Countryside Protection Team – Central Office Sarah Williams – Tel 020 7339 8571 Email sarahw@london.ramblers.org.uk Emily Richmond – Tel 020 7339 8541 Email emilyr@london.ramblers.org.uk NB- Please contact Sarah if you would like to add others to the circulation list		Area and Group Secretaries Area Media Contacts England and Wales (Scotland for information only) Staff and EC

All of the walks have been listed on the Walks Finder database and you can find this on our website

Walking out

It is looking more hopeful that the Walking Out project, piloted in Furness earlier this year, may attract funding from the Countryside Agency. While it is not definite, we are hoping that the funding can be used to pay for support of the project in up to three areas. We are not allowed to use the funding to pay for an employee, but hope to use it to help pay expenses for a volunteer.

The Furness Ramblers, having already given up lots of time and energy, are keen to see it progress and have agreed to take it on for a second time. One of the great things they discovered was the benefit of leaving their cars at home and using public transport for the walks. Most of the walks they arranged were linear and because of the reliance on public transport they were able to link in with their local Stagecoach who were very keen on the project.

We hope to build on the success of this year and hopefully role this out and continue to improve it.

Aviation EDM

The Ramblers' Association are giving their full support to an Early Day Motion (EDM) being tabled by Airportwatch. The text of the EDM is as follows:

"This House calls on the Secretary of State for Transport to develop an aviation policy that accords with national air pollution, sustainability and climate change targets and pays its full external costs; to work at a National, European and international level to reduce and eliminate the tax concessions received by the aviation industry in the form of tax-free fuel and VAT-exempt products; to ensure that our countryside, biodiversity and heritage is safeguarded; to ensure that aircraft noise does not erode rural tranquillity, and does not continue to significantly annoy communities both day and night; and to explore the potential of high-speed rail as an alternative to short-haul flights."

The EDM will fall in mid-October when Parliament sits again after the party conferences. It is very important that as many MPs as possible sign this EDM, or it could work against the campaign. Airportwatch is aiming for over 200 cross-party signatures.

You can help by writing to your MP and asking them to sign it. This is particularly important for MPs who do not sit in a constituency where there is a proposed airport expansion.

Proposed beach development in Cornwall

A frightening new development has been applied for on a private beach in Cornwall. The proposed development on Carlyon bay could set a precedent for building on beaches in a way that Britain has so far avoided, but which has ruined many beautiful tourist areas around the world.

Local residents are currently trying to persuade the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to start a public inquiry into the proposals. The planning permission was given in 1988 and it is generally believed that, if the application were to arrive now, permission would not be granted.

More information can be found on the Carlyon Bay Watch website www.carlyonbaywatch.co.uk

National Walking Strategy update

We have been working on our submission to the Government's recent consultation on the National Walking Strategy. The deadline is the 26th September, which will have passed by the time many of you read this.

We would like to thank everyone who has given us their comments on the strategy and all of you interesting and informative comments. We have consulted other teams within the Ramblers' Association as it is such an important issue and feel we have produced a good, wide reaching response. Please contact Sarah or Emily if you would like to see a copy of the response we submitted.

We would also like to thank all those who sent in a questions for Kim Howells for our website discussion. His responses will be posted soon and we will let you know about them in our next issue.

Emily and Nick Barrett will be meeting Kim Howells in early October to discuss how the strategy will be taken forward.

