

Countryside Update

October 2003 (issue no. 47)

Funding Achieved for Walking Out

The Countryside team is celebrating the success of achieving funding for the Walking Out project. We have been awarded just over £25,000 from the Countryside Agency to continue with the project that was piloted in Furness this year.

The money will enable the project to continue in Furness and run in Lincoln and Stoke at the same time. We shall be recruiting a project officer in each area who will administer the project, make links with local community groups and manage publicity. We see this project as being important for achieving the aims of the RA's 5 year strategy 'Waymarking the Future'.

We would like to thank everyone who has been involved in this project so far. Particularly our fundraiser Paul Wilkinson who has been extremely helpful with the funding applications, despite being currently unable to work full time.

If you would like any more information on this project, please call Sarah at central office.

Coppergate Victory

Following a public inquiry with strong input from York RA volunteer, David Rubenstein, a proposal for a new riverside shopping development, known as Coppergate, has been refused. The Inspector concluded that the historic environment should have been given greater consideration and that more dwellings should have been proposed for the site. The proposal was also not in tune with the

local plan. This is a great victory for the RA and our thanks go to David for his work on it.

Your Campaign Results

At central office we are always keen to hear whether or not your campaigns have been successful.

The results of campaigns can help other volunteers who are facing similar issues find out how people have succeeded or why the campaigns were unsuccessful.

Please contact Sarah with any results that you would like to share. We are particularly interested in hearing about wind turbine campaigns as these are of increasing concern across the country.

Party Walks

The Countryside Team attended the walks led by Ramblers' volunteers which were put on in Brighton (for the Liberal Democrats) and Bournemouth (for Labour). The location of both provided the opportunity to highlight to those attended the importance of the two proposed National Parks in the South Downs and the New Forest.

Both were well attended and there was a significant increase in the number of people attending the Liberal Democrat walk, which has only been running for three years.

The RA's walks at the party conferences are now becoming quite a fixture with many of the same faces appearing year after year. In Bournemouth,

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we were once again pleased to have the Minister for the Environment, Alun Michael, attend as well as Lord Rooker, former Minister for Planning.

Ramblers Involved in Transport 10 Year Plan Campaign

The Ramblers has become involved in the steering group for the Transport Activists' Roundtable campaign on the government's 10-year transport plan.

The government will be reviewing its ten-year transport plan next year. The plan had some good targets and ideas, including only using road building as a last resort and decreasing congestion. Unfortunately it has been somewhat forgotten recently and the good ideas and targets not carried through.

The review will be launched in January and more information, as well as advice on how to help with the campaign, will be put on our website and in this newsletter.

EDM Update

There are currently two Early Day Motions (EDM) which the Ramblers' Association is fully supporting.

The first is number 1589 on vehicular use on ancient rights of way. The EDM is in support of our campaign to protect our National Trails from increasing abuse from 4x4 riders and motorcyclists. At the time of writing 29 MPs had signed it.

The second EDM is on aviation, which was written about in last month's Countryside Update. The number for this EDM is 1688 (which we didn't have at the time of writing last month). So far 59 MPs have signed up to it.

Both of these EDMs will fall in the middle of November (rather than the middle of October as was reported last month). You can help by writing to your MP, if you haven't already done so, and asking them to sign up to them.

You can check the progress of the EDMs on the Internet at www.edm.ais.co.uk and using the search function. You can also see whether your MP has already signed them. If they have, why not write to them thanking them for supporting these important issues and asking if they will be supporting them in the future?

News From Wales

Spatial Planning

The Wales Spatial Plan entitled, *People, Places and Futures* is out for consultation until the end of January 2004. This document is seen very much as an integrated policy tool and does not have statutory status. What it does do is to bring together a significant data set for Wales which is available on CD Rom.

Its indicative map for future planning does have 'fuzzy boundaries' linking common features. This has merit in that it cannot be seen as a document opening up specific areas for development.

Sports Strategy Consultation Closes

Climbing Higher-A Strategy for Sport and Active Recreation in Wales comes to the end of its consultation period at the end of October. It looks at the health of the nation, the value to the economy of healthy and active citizens, the benefits to people of being 'physically literate' and the use of the natural environment for active sport and recreation.

Sports Tourism

The RA in Wales has also responded to a Sports Tourism consultation paper from the Wales Tourist Board pointing out the importance of the public rights of way network, the benefits to tourism of an integrated transport system and the importance of a wide range of accommodation providers for walkers.

Access to MOD Land

The MOD 'presumption to greater access' has led to the launch of a circular route around the Epynt and Sennybridge Ranges in mid Wales. Phase one was launched by the 2nd permanent secretary at the MOD on 15th October and the rest should be available in the coming year.

Off Road Motor Cycling

The Countryside Council for Wales has been trying to assess the extent of this issue with a questionnaire to user groups. This is providing information on areas where the off roading is seen as creating problems for landowners and recreational users.

Forestry Commission Advisory Committee for Wales

Sue Gittins, Deputy Director in Wales has been appointed to the Forestry Commission Advisory Committee for Wales for a three-year period.