

# Countryside Update

February 2004 (issue no. 51)

---

## Local Campaigns

As part of a new drive to share news from around the country, we plan to run a series of articles about local campaigns. In the last issue of Countryside Update we heard from Alan John in Lancashire. This month we hear from John Barnard, Countryside Secretary for Essex, who has been busy campaigning on a number of proposed large developments.

The public inquiry into the proposed Bathside Bay container port at Harwich will open in April 2004. The proposed port would be built on mudflats which are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. John objected in 2002 and other objectors include English Nature and RSPB. Portswatch, which is a new coalition of organisations has said that a national study of need is necessary before any new ports are agreed.

As part of the urban regeneration plan for the St. Botolph's area of Colchester there is a proposal to demolish the present bus station which serves the town and a large rural community. The station would be replaced with one on a far less convenient site and as this development is not mentioned in the Borough Local Development Plan John has asked the Government Office for the East of England Region to refuse it.

There is a major commercial development proposed in the open countryside on the border of the Dedham Vale AONB. It includes parking for 200 cars and 200,000 visitors per year are

expected and John is involved in a local campaign against this.

The campaign to stop the expansion of Stansted Airport is growing and John is involved with this locally. There is more about the campaign on aviation below.

## Way to Go campaign launched

The Ramblers' Association is part of a coalition of over 25 organisations involved in a national campaign on transport. The campaign has been launched to coincide with the Government's review of the Ten Year Plan and its general spending review, which will look at how the Government spends money on key areas.

The Ten Year Plan was published in July 2000 and set many targets to be attained in a bid to improve transport. Although many of the targets were laudable, including cutting greenhouse gas emissions and increasing rail travel by 50%, many of these are now looking like they will not be achieved.

Since the Government is not intending to do any public consultation when reviewing the Ten Year Plan the Way to Go campaign aims to give the public a voice in the decisions being made about transport. In particular to make sure that more money is spent on public transport and schemes to promote walking and less is spent on large road building projects.

The campaign is promoting its own 12 point manifesto, which includes better provision for cyclists and pedestrians. The Ramblers' Association is actively campaigning on two of the manifesto

Circular no. Date From	04/16 February 2004 Ramblers' Association Countryside Protection Team – Central Office Sarah Williams – Tel 020 7339 8571 Email <a href="mailto:sarahw@london.ramblers.org.uk">sarahw@london.ramblers.org.uk</a> Emily Richmond – Tel 020 7339 8541 Email <a href="mailto:emilyr@london.ramblers.org.uk">emilyr@london.ramblers.org.uk</a> NB – Please contact Sarah if you would like to add others to the circulation list	For To	Information Area and Group Countryside Officers Area and Group Secretaries Area Media Contacts England and Wales (Scotland for Information only) Staff and EC  Countryside Update members
------------------------------	---	-----------	--

points, which are the most closely linked with our policies. These are what we want:

- Streets, lanes and paths in good condition and pleasant for walking.
- Services and facilities close to people so they don't need to drive.

### **How you can help**

In the spring edition of walk you should find an A4 Way to Go campaign sheet. This has the full manifesto and a bit more information about the campaign. It also has a detachable postcard which you can send to your MP. Please do this and ask other Ramblers' members to do the same, it shouldn't take much time and will help the campaign.

There is an action pack that the coalition has produced which can be used by local groups and gives more ideas about how you can get involved. This can either be downloaded from the website [www.waytogo.org.uk](http://www.waytogo.org.uk) or we can post one to you, please call Sarah at central office.

You can also write an individual letter to your MP, highlighting some of your concerns about transport and ask them to forward this on to Minister for Transport, Alistair Darling.

If you would like more advice about how to help with this campaign, please call Sarah at central office.

### **National Park Week 2004**

In 2004 the Association of National Park Authorities will be holding the first ever National Park Week. National Park Week will run from Thursday, July 1<sup>st</sup> to Friday, July 9<sup>th</sup>. The week is dedicated to raising public awareness of the reasons for the existence of National Parks and to celebrate their beauty and diversity.

The Ramblers' Association is planning to get involved, so watch this space for further information.

### **Aviation White Paper update**

*The Future of Air Transport*, the Government's White Paper on aviation, was published last December outlining the Government's policy on aviation for the next 30 years. The original consultation received around 500, 000 responses (the vast majority arguing against significant expansion) – the largest number for any government consultation.

The Ramblers' Association has grave concerns about the White Paper. Its underlying policies are based on an outdated 'predict and provide' planning policy approach, one which the Ramblers' Association firmly disagrees with. Using future forecasts which environmental organisations have found fault with, it foresees that massive expansion will be necessary and encourages it to take place as soon as possible.

The tone of the White Paper is overwhelmingly pro-aviation. An example of this is when it argues its case for setting out aviation policy for the next 30 years as the *'lack of such a framework has been a serious hindrance to the efficient development of airports in this country, resulting in over-lengthy planning inquiries and unnecessary delay'*.

We are concerned that important environmental concerns have come second place to the perceived needs of the aviation industry and the 'right' of the public to greater travel. Time and time again through the White Paper environmental concerns are given second consideration.

There are many strong local campaign groups working on this issue and different strategies are being considered, including increased direct action against companies likely to fund the proposals. If you would like more information and advice about how this might affect your area, please call Sarah at central office.

### **News from Wales**

The Welsh Assembly Government told us at a recent meeting that it will be issuing guidance to potential dedicators of land for access under CROW section 16, and that the minister Carwyn Jones will be writing to potential dedicators to encourage them to make their land available for access in this way.