

# Countryside Update

October 2004 (issue no. 59)

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## Consultation Closes on M6 Toll Road Proposals

The consultation on the proposals to build a new M6 toll road closed on the 21<sup>st</sup> October. Representatives from many of the RA areas which would be directly affected by the proposals responded to the consultation.

This consultation was opposed by many environmental organisations because of the wider implications for road building across the UK. It is feared that this could act as a test case to see if road building is any more acceptable if the road is to be tolled, so that motorists are paying more for the damage caused.

While the RA doesn't have a policy on road user charging, we don't believe that building new roads is an acceptable solution to this problem and responses have made that clear.

There were several responses submitted on behalf of the RA. One was submitted by the Staffordshire Area where the Countryside Officer in the area consulted other organisations to see what was being said and where the RA could add particular weight. It was a good example of where working with other networks and organisations can add weight to a campaign and reduce the workload for individual activists. Networks such as North West Wildlife and Countryside Link were able to keep people in touch with each other to make sure all areas were covered.

## Local Transport Plan Training Day

With the exception of London all local councils are getting down to writing their second Local Transport Plan (LTP). These plans will decide on transport priorities and spending plans from 2006-2011.

Friends of the Earth is organising a training day in London on 6<sup>th</sup> November for campaigners who want to make sure the LTP in their area is a good reflection of sustainable transport needs, including proper provision for walking and cycling.

The day will run from 10:45 to 5:30 and full details of the venue and agenda will be available when you book. There is a small charge of £6 to cover the costs of organising the event.

If you would like more information, or to reserve a place, please contact Simon Bowens on 0113 242 8151 or by email [simonbw@foe.co.uk](mailto:simonbw@foe.co.uk)

## Airport Watch Launches Pledge for Personal Action

Airportwatch (which the RA is a member of) has launched an online pledge this month which calls for individuals who are opposed to current plans for airport expansion to take some form of action to campaign against them.

The pledge, which can be signed online at <http://www.airportpledge.org.uk/index.php> makes some suggestions for action which individuals can take part in. These include:

Circular no.	04/106	For	Information
Date	October 2004	To	Area and Group Countryside Officers
From	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		Area and Group Secretaries Area Media Contacts England and Wales (Scotland for Information only) Staff and EC  Countryside Update members  Extra Countryside Secretaries

- Local action: setting up or supporting local campaigns, rallies or demonstrations
- National action: taking part in rallies, demonstrations, mass letter-writing or e-mail campaigns
- Political action: voting only for candidates who oppose airport expansion, boycotting companies funding or constructing airports and runways, protesting at the AGMs of companies involved in airport expansion
- Direct action: taking part in non-violent direct action at construction sites and against companies involved in airport expansion
- Supporting others: providing financial or resource support to others involved in the campaign

Part of the aim of the pledge is to target the companies who will be involved in financing and constructing the airports. Often these are not included in campaigning as they are not seen as key decision makers, but consumer power has historically been a huge mover in environmental campaigns.

If you do not have access to the Internet, you can call the organisers of the pledge on 01865 241097 to register your support.

## **New Transport Direct Website Online**

A new website, sponsored by the Department for Transport has gone online this month. The website aims to offer an integrated solution to transport information in Britain. It can be found at [www.transportdirect.info](http://www.transportdirect.info)

They are currently trialling the website and asking for feedback, so have a look and check that it works for making journeys you are familiar with and register your comments. It provides some walking information and gives generous timings to allow for the needs of most people.

## **New Wildlands Campaigner for The Ramblers**

The Ramblers' Association in Scotland has appointed a new Wildlands Campaigner who will be involved in campaigning for a renewable energy policy which takes into account the local environment. Although he will be based in Scotland he will look at campaigns across Great Britain.

Both the Ramblers' Association in Scotland and England are currently reviewing their renewable energy policies to take into account new Government guidance in the form of PPS 22. The policies will take into full account the absolute need and support for renewable energy, but call for a more imaginative and less damaging approach to be taken.

In the next few months we intend to consult Areas on the new policy which will build on General Council motions. If you would like to respond to this consultation please register your interest with the countryside team so we can make sure you're included.

## **Quality of Life in the Thames Gateway**

The Countryside Agency is running some half day seminars for groups who are based in the Thames Gateway 'growth areas'. The seminars will focus on landscape, quality of life issues and general development quality. They will offer practical tools and techniques for engagement in the planning and delivery process. There will also be an opportunity to arrange follow up meetings with Countryside Agency staff.

The first seminar will be on 30<sup>th</sup> November at Cranham in Upminster and the second will be on 1<sup>st</sup> December, at a venue in South London (to be confirmed).

For more information please contact [Catherine.cairns@countryside.gov.uk](mailto:Catherine.cairns@countryside.gov.uk) or call 01223 273557.

## **CPRE Launches New Guidance on Telecoms Development**

CPRE has recently launched new guidance aimed at helping campaigners work for a better policy on telecoms masts through the planning system.

The guidance uses case studies as examples of how campaigners have used existing planning legislation to work towards getting the best protection for the countryside when applications come in for telecoms and tetra masts.

If you would like a copy of this briefing, please contact CPRE's central office on 020 7981 2800.