

# Countryside Update

April 2005 (issue no. 65)

---

## Transport 2000 Training Day

Transport 2000 are organising a training day for campaign groups and local residents who are interested in seeing how they can actively try and reduce traffic in their local area. It would be ideal if you have problems in your area and would like practical ideas as to how they can be solved.

There are four different training sessions and delegates can choose two.

- Campaigning for lower speeds and enforcement in a rural and urban context
- Making better use of local government processes to improve local transport and traffic, working with Councillors and MPs
- Big picture campaigning; influencing policy that benefits sustainable transport and reduces traffic. This will cover travel plans and other soft measures as well as funding streams
- Direct Action; ideas, techniques and application to traffic and transport issues

The training day will be on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> April from 10:10 – 4 pm and it will be held in London. The cost is £20 and includes lunch. If you would like any more information or you would like to book a place, please contact Katinka Broersen on 020 7613 0743 (ext. 110) or email [katinka.broersen@transport2000.org.uk](mailto:katinka.broersen@transport2000.org.uk)

## Sign the Early Day Motion on New Housing

There is an EDM (Early Day Motion) currently tabled which supports a recent report by the Environmental Audit Committee called Housing: Building a Sustainable Future.

The report concludes that the government's plans for house expansion have not placed enough importance on environmental considerations.

The EDM also calls for development to be on brownfield land where possible. The EDM is entitled Environmental Audit Committee Report on Housing and it's number 645. If you are concerned about the government's house building proposals you can write to your MP and ask them to sign up.

## South East England Regional Plan

The South East England Regional Plan is currently out for consultation with the deadline for responses the 15<sup>th</sup> April.

There are some very worrying elements of the plan and some of our campaigners in the area have been involved in trying to get people to respond to the plan. As it currently stands it gives no where near enough recognition to countryside and landscape issues. This is even more concerning as the South East is home to the South Downs and the New Forest, Britain's most recent National Park.

Circular no. Date From	05/35 April 2005 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>  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  Extra Countryside Secretaries
------------------------------	--	-----------	---

If you live in the area you may have received a leaflet called 'Your Shout!' which is asking people to fill it in with their views about what is important in the region.

You can help by filling in the leaflet if you have received it and letting the Regional Assembly know that countryside is important. If you haven't had a leaflet you can respond online at [www.southeast-ra.gov.uk](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk)

You can also write a letter as a response demanding that countryside and landscape are given at least equal weighting to economic considerations and that the economic and social value of the countryside is recognised.

You should address your letters to:

Secretariat, SEERA, Berkeley House, Cross Lanes, Guildford, GU1 1UN.

Or you can email: [plan@southeast-ra.gov.uk](mailto:plan@southeast-ra.gov.uk)

## Rural Roads at Risk

Friends of the Lake District have recently released a report called *Rural Roads at Risk – Saving the Character of Country Roads*. The report looks at a study which has taken place over the last 18 months into how the road landscape has changed over the last 30 years.

The report found that there has been an increase in clutter on the busier rural routes and this is starting to spread to routes which are more remote. This backed up a trend which had been recognised by Friends of the Lake District before, but they didn't have any evidence to support it.

The summary report lists 20 recommendations for how to start to reduce the negative impacts of the changes. These include policy and regulation changes at a local and national level.

If you would like a copy of the report you can get one from the Friends of the Lake District website: [www.fld.org.uk](http://www.fld.org.uk) or you can contact them on 01539 720788.

## Blunkett's Speech on Englishness

A recent speech by David Blunkett highlighted the Ramblers and National Parks as examples of what Englishness meant to him. As a Sheffield MP he has the Peak District right on his doorstep and he also reminded listeners of the importance of the new national parks.

The speech listed some of the key things that he felt defined Englishness and the importance of the landscape, townscape and coastline were all given a special mention.

## Election Fever

As the time towards a likely General Election draws near, it's worth bearing in mind that now is a particularly good time to lobby your MP and Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPC) on issues both national and local.

Not all constituencies have their lists of PPCs yet, but many have been chosen and you should be able to find out the names of the PPCs for your constituencies by contacting the local branch of the political party concerned.

It might be that there is a proposed development in your area that you would like support in campaigning against. This is particularly strong if you are part of a local campaign group (and you can show you represent more than one potential voter). The chances are they will be looking for publicity opportunities as well, so they might help you to get the story in the local papers.

If there is a national issue you are campaigning on, see if you can get commitment from PPCs that if they win they will support your campaign. That way, after the election, you might have some committed support in Parliament.

## South Downs Public Inquiry Draws to a Close

The public inquiry into the South Downs National Park will be drawing to a close at the end of March. The Inquiry opened nearly 18 months ago and the Ramblers Associations has spoken on issues concerning the boundary and the administration of the park.

We will be campaigning over the next few months to make sure that the importance of the new national park is not forgotten after the General Election.

You can help by writing to your MPs and PPCs and asking them to support the South Downs National Park if they are elected. You can also ask them to support a wide reaching boundary and to ask them to call for the park to be introduced as soon as possible.

