

Countryside Update

September 2005 (issue no. 68)

Renewables Obligation Criticised by Public Accounts Committee

A report published this month by the Public Accounts Committee heavily criticises the Renewables Obligation for being too expensive. Many of its conclusions and recommendations are the same policies advocated by the Ramblers' Association and reinforce our arguments for change.

The report, entitled *Department of Trade and Industry: Renewable Energy, Sixth Report of session* can be downloaded from the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmpublic/413/413.pdf> or it can be bought from The Stationary Office for £10. Their telephone number is 0870 242 2345.

The report lists 11 conclusions and recommendations including:

Around a third of the support provided by the Renewables Obligation exceeds the extra cost of renewable generation. It calls for the review of the Renewables Obligation currently taking place to reduce the excess support in the scheme.

It concludes that wind power generation is much less environmentally intrusive when situated offshore and that the level of financial support

afforded to onshore and offshore wind should take this into account.

You can help by writing to your MP highlighting the report and asking them to raise the issues with Malcolm Wicks, the Energy Minister. We are trying to gather a list of MPs who support our campaign for a change in the Renewables Obligation, so if your MP is supportive, please contact us and let us know.

Mark Lazarowicz's Private Members Bill on Climate Change

Mark Lazarowicz MP has a private members' bill in Parliament at the moment, which calls for eight measures that would help to address climate change and microgeneration of renewable energy.

The measures would include a fiscal and economic strategy to promote microgeneration and energy efficiency and an annual report on emissions of greenhouse gases in the UK.

The Ramblers' Association is supportive of the Bill's aims and it stands much more of a chance of succeeding if lots of MPs support it. You can help by contacting your MP and asking them to sign up in support. The full name of the Bill is *The Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Bill*. More information on the Bill can be found at Mark Lazarowicz's website: www.marklazarowicz.org.uk

Circular no. Date From	05/97 September 2005 Ramblers' Association Countryside Protection Team – Central Office Sarah Williams – Tel 020 7339 8571 Email sarahw@london.ramblers.org.uk 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
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New Members Needed for National Park and Broads Authorities

The Lake District, Peak District, Yorkshire Dales, Northumberland National Parks and the Broads Authorities are currently looking for new members. Members will not be expected to represent a particular group or organization but they will be looking for people to represent a range of interests and user groups.

Applications must be in by 5th October and more information is available on the Countryside Agency's website www.countryside.gov.uk, or if you don't have access to the Internet, you can get more details and an application form from Carol Foster at the Countryside Agency on 01242 533284.

Representative Wanted for South West Regional Road User Committee

The current representative for the Ramblers' Association on the South West Regional Road User Committee is looking for someone to replace him. If you are interested in becoming our representative, please contact Sarah Williams at central office.

Guidance on Environmental Planning Issued

A consortium of organizations including the Countryside Agency, English Nature, English Heritage and the Environment Agency have published *Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning*: guidance to help in the preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks which incorporates the natural, built and historic environment, and rural issues in plans and strategies.

A copy of this can be downloaded from this website:

www.helm.org.uk/server/show/category.8762

Or you can call HELM on 0870 333 1181.

New Minerals Leaflets Published

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the British Geological Society have published two new leaflets in the *Minerals Matter* series.

The leaflets are intended to raise general awareness of minerals issues and can be

downloaded from www.mineralsuk.com or by calling 0115 9363494.

Other minerals news is that the annexes to Minerals Planning Statement 1 (which was consulted on earlier this year) is currently out for consultation. The Ramblers' Association will be responding as an individual organization and also through Wildlife and Countryside Link.

M6 Expressway Update

Following overwhelming opposition to a consultation on a new tolled motorway in Staffordshire in July 2004, the Government have reacted by pressing ahead with further studies on the road.

The road has been rejected by the West Midlands Regional Assembly, the Government's own consultation had responses which were 77/1 against and has been criticised by the House of Commons Transport Select Committee and four of the statutory environmental advisory bodies have raised serious concerns.

Further studies will, of course, cost more money which could be better spent on helping to improve public transport or measures to promote walking and cycling.

You can help by writing to your MP asking them to raise the issue with the Department for Transport.

Your Successes!

The Ramblers' Association is always looking for examples of the successes of campaigns, big and small. Our fundraising and marketing departments can use them to show that we are a lot more than just a big walking club (still a common misconception) and through this try and increase our membership and funds. Our new volunteer team can use them as examples to show what different volunteers get up to, and how much of a difference they can make. So it would be great to hear more of your campaign wins.

These might be campaigns on large scale developments or smaller ones. It could be involvements in local plans, where your opinions have been taken into account, public inquiries, or local campaign groups against a particular development.