



Leckhampton Green Land Action Group

Newsletter 36, September 2011

Introduction

Welcome to our September newsletter. There are several important things happening in the planning world at the moment, locally and nationally, and we shall ask you to sharpen your pencils and get writing (once again!), but first we report on what has already happened.

What's Been Happening

PETITION FOR COUNTRY PARK STATUS: This Petition (which had over 2,000 signatures, thanks to your efforts) has been presented to both Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Borough Councils. They both referred it to the Planners and Councillors who are preparing the **Joint Core Strategy (JCS)** for Cheltenham, Tewkesbury and Gloucester, as we hoped they would. One consequence of this is that we now have regular meetings with the JCS planners to monitor their progress and the evidence they are collecting. We do not expect the immediate creation of a Country Park, but a marker has been put down for the future.

MEMBERSHIP: We now have over 1,000 members of LEGLAG! This will greatly increase LEGLAG's clout when we respond to planning consultations or object to planning proposals. Thanks to all of you who have helped recruit friends and neighbours, and especially to Gerry Potter who is largely responsible for this brilliant achievement. We celebrated this recently by presenting our 1,000th member, Mr Jim Walker, with the LEGLAG book of Country Walks. Martin Horwood made the presentation in Burrows Field, near the bench we erected in memory of his father, Don Horwood, who founded LEGLAG in 1993. Our next goal is 2,000 members!

What's Coming Up

GOVERNMENT PLANNING PROPOSALS: As you will all have seen in many of the national newspapers, the Government has issued a new planning document which threatens to transform the planning system and is the most serious threat to "our" land since LEGLAG was started in 1993. When the Government proposed their Localism Bill (which is still not yet law), we thought the views of local people would really start to count. But the new document, the draft **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**, will totally turn the tables in favour of developers if it is not drastically rewritten.

PLEASE WRITE AND OBJECT, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (but before 17th October).

Write to Alan Scott, NPPF, DCLG, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU or respond on-line (you can google DCLG, NPPF to find all the relevant information).

Please also go to the National Trust and CPRE websites and sign the petition and/or write to your M.P. The RSPB, FOE, and other groups, are also campaigning against the above.

You could make any, or all, of the following points in your objection:-

- **The NPPF calls for "a presumption in favour of sustainable development", but its interpretation of 'sustainable' is unclear. It seems to be confined to excluding development on Green Belt and AONBs. Development on all other countryside is apparently regarded as sustainable.**

- The above presumption should be balanced by a “presumption against unsustainable development”, with a proper definition of unsustainable.
- Development of land that is of great value to many local people for its recreational or environmental value should be regarded as unsustainable.
- The NPPF should also favour redevelopment of brownfield land over greenfield land, because of the need for regeneration of run-down urban sites and the need to preserve agricultural land in a world where future food shortages are likely.

JOINT CORE STRATEGY (JCS): As reported above, we are now having regular meetings with the JCS planners and have a good relationship with them. But the progress of the JCS has been slower than planned, not surprising in view of the need to consult with three Councils at each stage of the process. We expect the public consultation on the draft strategy to be later on this year, probably over Christmas, as usual with consultations.

We will let you know when it is out, and maybe ask you to respond. Please be prepared!

PLANNING APPLICATION: The RPS development consortium have not yet made the Planning Application for 1,300 houses in our area - we were told to expect it sometime in the summer. We don't know whether this is because they do not now think they could sell the houses at present, or because they are waiting for the NPPF to make their life easier - probably the latter.

When they apply, we will ask you to object. Keep your pencils sharp!

WEBSITE: LEGLAG will shortly have an up-to-date revised website, thanks to a lot of hard work by new committee member Angela Rimmer and member Dave Mullins.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: This will be on 28th March 2012 in Leckhampton Village Hall. Book the date now - further details will be announced in our next newsletter.

WILDLIFE REPORT: Due to lack of space and time we have postponed our usual full wildlife report until our next newsletter in February. In the meantime we merely mention that we do not believe that the adder recently found by our chairman Kit Brauholtz in his bedroom was placed there by the developers' agents!

COMMITTEE: We welcome Elizabeth Pimley, a wildlife expert, whom we have co-opted onto our committee. She will bring valuable new expertise to our deliberations.

Due to lack of space this time, we are providing only a selection of committee contacts; a full list can be found on our website www.leglag.co.uk

Kit Brauholtz (Planning activities, Chairman) tel: 862327 christopherbrauholtz@btinternet.com

Margaret White (Secretary, Membership) tel: 523668 mwhite11@talktalk.net

Gerry Potter tel: 574677 potluck@blueyonder.co.uk