



Leckhampton Green Land Action Group

Newsletter 35, February 2011

Annual General Meeting

You are invited to the Annual General Meeting which will be held on **Wednesday 23rd March** at 7.30 for 7.45 pm in the Village Hall on Church Road. As usual, after the formal business of the meeting, there will be a break for refreshments, and then Cheltenham MP Martin Horwood will speak (subject to be confirmed). Everyone is welcome, and non-members can join at the meeting.

Planning issues

Kit Braunholtz

Since the last newsletter in September there have been two major external events affecting LEGLAG. One is the publication of the new "Localism" bill; and the other is the announcement by a consortium of developers that they intend to apply for permission to build 1300 new homes on some of the land we are trying to protect in Leckhampton and Shurdington. The Localism Bill (which is not yet law) will probably help us in the long run, as it gives more power to local Councils, and also contains a clause allowing Local Communities to protect buildings and land that are considered to be of community value - but to do this they may have to compensate the owner at market value. The proposed development of 1300 houses is of more immediate concern, as the developers are expected to apply for planning permission in the next few months.

As the Planning laws stand now, we are fairly confident that this would be turned down by the Local Councils, as it is contrary to both the Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Local Plans, and the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (on which the developers no doubt rely) has never been approved by the Government, which now wants to abolish all the Regional Strategies. But in the long run, what will decide the issue will be the Joint Core Strategy now being worked on by Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Councils. The Councils are due to consult on a proposed Strategy this Summer, (possibly starting in July), and meanwhile LEGLAG is working to ensure that this Strategy does NOT include large developments in Leckhampton or Shurdington. As part of this campaign we have obtained over 2100 signatures to our petition, which asks the Councils to protect the threatened land by conferring on it some status such as "Country Park" which would prevent inappropriate development. By the time you get this newsletter, the petition will have been presented to Cheltenham (on Feb 25th) and it will be presented to Tewkesbury on March 31st.

Meanwhile, we want to ensure there is a strong local opposition to the proposed development, and we will ask all LEGLAG members to write and object to the planning application as soon as it is submitted. We are also working hard to recruit more members in various ways - you can help in this by persuading your friends and neighbours to join - because, the larger our membership is, the stronger our response will be, and the more notice will be taken by Councillors and planners.

LEGLAG activities

Ramble & Roast – 10th April starts 11am followed by lunch at 1pm

Please join LEGLAG and Cheltenham Connect for a 2-hour walk around the fields of Leckhampton. The walk should be suitable for all ages but please wear appropriate footwear and, as there are a number of stiles, you may want to leave your dog at home. The walk starts at 11am from **Burrow's Playing Fields, Moorend Grove** (off Moorend Road) and ends at the **Brown Jug**, Bath Road for a 2-course Sunday Roast Lunch. The walk is free to attend and the lunch is £11.50 for adults and £6 for children. Booking for lunch is essential – please call The Brown Jug direct on 01242 521736. For more information, email angela@cheltenhamconnect.co.uk. If this event is successful, we may repeat it on June 26th this year.

Stalls We hope to have a LEGLAG stall at the Cheltenham Connect Festival at the Norwood Arms on Saturday 25th June, and also at the popular “Paws in the Park” dog show on August 7th at Burrows Field. (Last year we recruited many new members at these events)

If anybody can help us with any of our proposed activities, please do contact us, by phoning 01242 523668 or 01242 862327, or any of the committee members whose details are shown on this News Letter. We cannot survive without your enthusiasm and support.

Communications

LEGLAG is on Twitter! @LEGLAG1

LEGLAG has now joined the 175 million registered users on Twitter who write 95 million tweets per day. Twitter is a real-time online information network that connects you to the latest information about what you find interesting. At the heart of Twitter are small bursts of information called Tweets which are 140 characters in length, but don't let the small size fool you—you can share a lot with a little space. LEGLAG's profile is @LEGLAG1 so please follow us if you're on Twitter and we'll follow you back!

Don't forget to look at our web site, www.leglag.org.uk for notice of all upcoming events and any other news. We also intend to publicise such events on posters in shops and on notice boards, so keep an eye open for them!

The website also contains a membership slip for new members, so do encourage your friends and neighbours to join LEGLAG. Alternatively, membership forms can be obtained by ringing 01242 523668

LEGLAG committee

The Committee has suffered a serious loss by the resignation of Councillor Robin MacDonald, who has been dogged by ill health in the last year. Robin was our treasurer for many years, and had been on the committee almost from the start. We have also lost our hard-working webmaster, Jeremy Davis, but fortunately we have recruited a younger replacement, Angela Rimmer, who will be taking over running the web site from him, and whose expertise is already helping us improve our publicity. LEGLAG owes a great debt to both Robin and Jeremy. As always, we need and would welcome new members on the committee, to help organise activities and bring new ideas, so if you want LEGLAG to continue, and you have the time and the enthusiasm, please volunteer! The current members of the committee are shown on the back page of this newsletter.

Wildlife Sightings

Steve Gladstone

Yet another report of the outstanding richness of these threatened fields as well as unusual sightings of birds elsewhere in Leckhampton.

APRIL, 2010

A pair of **Ravens** appeared in Moorend Road where **Goldcrests** were also seen. Male and female **Greater-Spotted Woodpeckers** were heard drumming at Leckhampton Farm. **Swallows** were observed flying into Cherringtons horse stables (where they nested last year). A pair of **Mallards** were spotted in Lotts Meadow and **Song Thrushes** seen across the LEGLAG area.

JUNE

A **Buzzard** being mobbed by Crows was spotted at Robinswood. **House Martins** appeared over Burrows Field and a **Pied Wagtail** was seen at Leckhampton Farm.

JULY

Large numbers of **Wrens, Robins, Blackbirds** and **Greenfinches** were seen across the LEGLAG area. A **Swift** appeared near Burrows Field.

OCTOBER

A **Sparrowhawk** was seen feeding on Blue Tits in Vineries Close. A cock **Pheasant** with 4 hens appeared near Merlin Way. A **Jay** was spotted near Robinswood and a *large* number of **Coal Tits** in the conifers of the smallholdings.

NOVEMBER

A flock of approximately 25 **Siskins** appeared in Alder trees near Hatherley Brook.. **Dunnocks** were seen near Leckhampton Farm and **Blue Tits** and **Great Tits** across the LEGLAG area.

DECEMBER

8 **Long Tailed Tits** appeared in Farm Lane hedgerow and a **Kestrel** was seen hunting along Hatherley Brook. 7 **Collared Doves** were seen near Merlin Way and a **Mistle Thrush** also near Hatherley Brook. I was informed of the dramatic sight of 12 **Waxwings** in a Moorend Grove garden. 2 **Lapwings** were seen in fields near Collum End Rise.

JANUARY, 2011

Tawny Owls were heard calling in the wood in Crippetts Lane. A flock of over 20 **Starlings** appeared in Burrows Field and **Jackdaws** in Farm Lane. **Redwings** and **Fieldfares** were seen in the smallholdings and Burrows Field.

If more specific information is required on the wildlife seen, please contact me.

My thanks to those people who have contributed over this period, especially Tony and Frances Meredith. If anyone has any information on wildlife seen in the LEGLAG and surrounding area, please contact me: dave@gladstone0.wanadoo.co.uk

Contact details are on our website at: www.leglag.org.uk.

We also gratefully acknowledge the support of various members, who assist us from time to time on specific matters, and thank Barbara Kelly for compiling this edition of our Newsletter.