



**Leckhampton Green Land Action Group**  
Newsletter 38, March 2013

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – WED. 10 APRIL 2013 AT 7.45 PM,  
VILLAGE HALL, CHURCH ROAD, LECKHAMPTON (Members only)**

All members are invited to the Annual General Meeting of LEGLAG, as detailed above. Doors will open at 7.25 pm for a 7.45 pm start. Refreshments will be available before the meeting and during the interval. The meeting will close at 9.30 pm at the latest. This AGM may well be the most important we have ever held and your input as members is vital: PLEASE DO COME IF POSSIBLE and hear the latest news on planning issues in LECKHAMPTON/SHURDINGTON.

**Planning Matters**

**Massive threatened Development of 1,100 Houses and more!**

**AN APPEAL FOR HELP.** All LEGLAG members and supporters **MUST ACT NOW** if the fields in Leckhampton and Shurdington, that we have been protecting for twenty years (sometimes known as the “**White Lands**”), are to be saved from this huge proposed development.

The RPS agents for a consortium of developers, including BOVIS, told us last month that they intend to submit Planning Applications for this proposed development THIS MONTH: by the time you receive this newsletter these applications may well already have been submitted.

Worse still, there is recent news that another Planning Application (from another developer) is also expected very shortly - this time for land at Brizen Farm, even though this land is currently in the “**Green Belt**”. Approximately 175 houses are expected to be applied for here; but as this land is adjacent to both the White Land and Brizen/Lanes estates, development here would not only spoil another piece of attractive countryside, but would make development on the White Land itself almost inevitable.

LEGLAG will fight tooth and nail to stop both these developments - but time is short. Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Borough Councils must both respond to the applications quite soon - in three months or less - so an all-out mobilisation of LEGLAG 's forces is needed before then to tell them in the most convincing way possible of the many good arguments why the two Councils should turn down these applications.

Unfortunately, because of the new Planning Framework introduced by the Government, which kicks in fully next month, the Developers also have strong planning arguments in favour of building here - which is of course why they are applying now!

Therefore LEGLAG is now doing something it has never done before – asking for lots of your MONEY so that we can establish a **FIGHTING FUND!**

Please respond as generously as you can - we know you care but we also know that many of you are having trouble making ends meet at the moment. But if you do have a bit to spare, this

is the time to show how much you care! We desperately need your contribution. We need to raise around £10,000 to put up the best case we can, so **PLEASE ACT NOW.**

**Details of how to send your money appear at the bottom of this page**

It is incredibly important for us to make the strongest possible case why these developments are not needed and should not be built here. We need to be able to force Planners and Councillors to listen hard to our arguments - something that has not always happened recently. We are certain our arguments are correct and overwhelming, but if Planners and, especially, Councillors do not give them proper attention they may not be convinced.

So, to ensure that our arguments ARE listened to, we need to do what the Planners have already done - apply to expert consultants and ask them to confirm our views (if they agree with us), and to write reports that make our case for us in the most convincing way possible. This will force Planners and Councillors to pay proper attention to our arguments.

We are already in touch with a number of possible consultants who do agree with us, but of course getting an expert consultant to write a report for us can cost serious money - though in every case LEGLAG will plead poverty - and we have already persuaded one friendly consultant to agree to work for a much reduced fee!

We believe that if we can quickly establish a **FIGHTING FUND** of about £10,000 (or more), then we will not only have enough cash to win the case for turning down the Planning Applications for the proposed developments, but also something extra to help us to fight the next battle. This will arise when the Developers appeal - as they are sure to do - against the Councils' decisions in our favour. This battle will take the form of a Planning Inquiry (or maybe two Inquiries), to be conducted by a Planning Inspector. We shall almost certainly need a Barrister to help us make our case most effectively; and barristers don't come cheap, though we shall bargain hard (if any of you know a friendly Barrister specialising in Planning Law, please let us know). We already have the help of a local Solicitor who will help us select the right barrister, and help negotiate a reduced fee, but it will be very expensive. So the more we have in the kitty the better. (If, in the end, it turns out that you have given us more than we actually need, we will return a proportion of your contribution).

## **How to donate to the FIGHTING FUND.**

There are various ways of making a donation to LEGLAG:-

- On line, or telephone banking payments via BACS transfer direct from your bank account to that of LEGLAG or,
- by sending a cheque, payable to LEGLAG, through the post to the Treasurer.

If you wish to make a BACS payment, LEGLAG's bank details are:-  
Sort Code: 30-95-72    Bank Account Number: 01167051

If you choose to make a payment in this way, please quote your Surname followed by Initial in the reference field.

For payment by cheque, our Treasurer's details are:-

Mr David Pitts, 10 The Spindles, Leckhampton, Cheltenham, GL53 0QD  
**What's Been Happening about Local Planning This Year**

For those of you who have not been following the twists and turns of local planning this year, here is a brief monthly diary. The main bone of contention has been the forecast level of demand - i.e. how many new houses need to be built between now and 2031 to provide for local population growth and for net immigration (mainly to and from other English regions). There have been new twists and turns almost every month, and it is because of this that we never felt it was the right time to print a Newsletter - by the time you got it, it would be out of date! Obviously, the higher the forecast demand, the more houses will have to be planned for, and so there will be more pressure to build on green fields, including the land we are trying to protect. That is why getting the right answer is so important!

Detailed accounts of the many other activities we have participated in can be found on our web site [www.leglag.org.uk](http://www.leglag.org.uk) which is well worth taking a frequent look at if you are on the internet.

**June 2012.** Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Planners, faced by massive objections to the high housing demand (around 38,000) that they had projected, hire consultants Nathaniel Lichfield Partners (NLP) to report on housing requirement.

**July 2012.** LEGLAG is concerned by this choice of consultant, who we suspect of being pro-developer. Most of NLP's clients are big developers. LEGLAG also learns of a group in Stroud ("Don't Strangle Stroud" or DSS) who have prepared good arguments against the high housing requirement being considered by Stroud Borough Council. The DSS arguments could help us!

**Sept. 2012.** The NLP consultant report says there will be a 'need' for 28,500 houses in the JCS area based on an outdated DCLG housing model, for Cheltenham this equates to >20% growth not seen since 1830! Plus talk of even higher housing numbers for the wider JCS area, equivalent to a city the size of Gloucester foolishly justified by huge economic growth, would you believe projected growth levels significantly higher than the long forgotten boom decades. As you will already know LEGLAG do not agree with such a huge expansion with no sound evidence to back their claims. We believe in the ONS & SWEM growth projections and use of best practice from the Bristol Inspectorate, these predict a gradual return to pre-2008 levels of growth, 8% to 2030; however this will be difficult to achieve with the continued flatline in the national economy. Gloucester and Tewkesbury Councils sadly tend to agree with JCS numbers with very little debate; Cheltenham, heavily lobbied by residents, LEGLAG, STC & CPRE and others, continues to query the JCS housing numbers.

**Oct. 2012.** Under pressure from Tewkesbury and Gloucester, Cheltenham is forced to accept NLP housing requirement figures for the present. Nevertheless, Cheltenham decides to examine whether the NLP forecast of Average Household Size (AHS) in 2031 is justifiable.

**Dec. 2012.** Cheltenham appoints consultants Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research (CCHPR) to examine the NLP approach to forecasting AHS.

**Jan. 2013.** CCHPR report agrees with NLP figure of 28,500. LEGLAG does not accept their arguments, which are based on "prudence", but Cheltenham does accept them.

**Feb. 2013.** The RPS consortium announce a new master plan for their proposed development on the Leckhampton White Land, with housing numbers reduced from 1,300 to 1,100 and new traffic management proposals. Residents invited to comment on their plans are over 90% against their proposals; but RPS announce that they intend to submit an Outline Planning Application in March 2013.

While all this argument about the expected number of houses needed has been going on, the JCS planning team has been working on preparing their next consultation document which is due to be published this coming summer and will give details of the JCS team's "Preferred Option". Presumably this "preferred option" will be based on the NLP report which the three Councils have accepted - unless we can get the planners to look at our strong evidence that the NLP report is wrong before they publish their "Preferred Option" paper.

## **Future Events Planned By LEGLAG**

### **April 10 - Annual General Meeting.**

7:45 pm start, Leckhampton Village Hall (Members only).

The Formal AGM will be followed by discussion on the current situation and LEGLAG's plans to defeat the developers.

### **April 19 - Protest Rally against proposals to build on the threatened lands.**

7:30 pm start, Leckhampton Primary School, Hall Road, Leckhampton.

The main speaker will be Professor Adrian Phillips, supported by a strong panel of local objectors.

**This is our main Protest Rally and we hope the Hall will be full to overflowing! Please come if you possibly can, to show the strength of feeling against the proposed developments.**

### **Other future planned events:**

**LEGLAG Protest Walk across the threatened fields.**

**LEGLAG sponsored listen to Dawn Chorus** (with an expert to identify songs).

## **Leglag Committee**

Committee contacts can be found on our website at [www.leglag.org.uk](http://www.leglag.org.uk) or by contacting one of the following members by phone (ALL 01242 nos.) - or by email:

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### **Please note:**

We are able to communicate with our members much more frequently and quickly by email, so if you do have an email address and you are not yet receiving our emails, please do let us have it - this will help both you and us.