



M40 Chilterns Environmental Group

Summer Issue

September
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Chairman's News

This issue starts with our thanks to many people who have become involved in our work recently. First, our highly informative noise survey, to be published shortly, is probably the first major survey of the effects of motorway noise which includes rural populations. It is based on 923 responses to about 1600 questionnaires. The questionnaires asked people who are affected by the M40 between Jn3 and Jn8, how and where traffic noise affected them. The response rate of almost 60% tells its own remarkable story, and the details reinforce it. 4 out of 5 respondents state that M40 noise is a problem either frequently or almost always, and many of the responses explained its impact on their lives very forcefully.

Distribution and collection of 1600 forms is a big task and would not have happened without great support in distribution of questionnaires, data entry, data analysis and results reporting. The committee greatly appreciated additional support of Mike Chadwick, Ros Jenny, Lydia Bright, Bea Taylor and Georgina Brooks from Stokenchurch, Clifford Miller, Robert Harding and Colin Baker from Cadmore End and Cadmore Common, Ian Sparrowhawk and Sue Griffin from Wheeler End, Jan and David Eedle Wells from Bolter End, Nigel Finn, Robert Briggs, Peter and Pauline Grosse from Lane End, William Birchill from Dawes Lea in High Wycombe, and Pat Kendall from Flackwell Heath. Data entry was led by committee member Tina Hammond (Postcombe), with great assistance from Rob and Maria Hooper of Bolter End, various committee members and the extended distribution team listed above. We are enormously appreciative of the very professional contribution by Brian Foster (Tetsworth) in undertaking the whole of the data analysis. Janet Chard (Wycombe District Council) mapped the results by postcode and committee member John Thompson (Tetsworth) wrote the report.

Sustainable Communities Act:

The survey is a major element of the evidence provided by M40 CEG to Wycombe District Council in support of its submission of M40 Noise Jn3 to Jn 8 under the Sustainable Communities Act (2007). The submission went in on schedule to the Local Government Association before the end of July, thanks to the efforts of James Porter of Wycombe District Council. We now welcome June Campbell (WDC) who takes over from James, and will pilot the proposal through its next stages and hopefully its submission to James Purnell, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The submission has the support of South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire County Councils, the Chilterns Conservation Board and various other local bodies. As 300 submissions were received by the closing date, this new Act has very quickly achieved popular acceptance. We now await the next stages, which will hopefully enable us to present the evidence that supports the case, largely provided by M40 CEG, based on the past 4 years work.

If you wish to see the response so far use the link below to see the statement and to access what other communities have submitted too.

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pageId=2765080>

DEFRA:

Earlier in the year, we registered with DEFRA as an interested party with regard to its work under the Noise Regulations (2006) under which the European Environmental Noise Directive was brought into English Law. This is the first time that traffic noise has been brought into a statutory framework in this country.

DEFRA has now released maps which show the 'first round' locations where noise outside conurbations is judged to be excessive. The locations include several between Jn3 and Jn8 on the M40. We are invited to join the consultation on DEFRA's recommendations takes place in early September.

To put this in perspective, the initial impact of the Noise Regulations (2006) has been on the consultation regarding the proposed new runway at Heathrow, where its application has doubled the number of people falling within its noise shadow. We will be asking DEFRA why maximum noise limits for Aircraft are 55dB(A), while those proposed for road traffic are about 128 times higher, at 76dB(A), especially as there is no respite from road traffic noise at night.

Some of you may recall that we had an abortive discussion with the Minister of Transport at Westminster last year about the cost of improving noise barriers at Milton Common? It has taken time, but at last we expect to meet the Highways Agency to discuss the basis for widely varying estimates provided. This could prove more than an academic discussion, in view of expenditures that will be called for to reduce noise at the many hundreds of locations identified nationally.

For those of you who have read this far, this summer has required us to be 'on the case'. Progress, however, is measured by noise reduction programmes, not by meetings!

News from the districts:

During the last few weeks the Motorway has experienced a higher than average number of closures. This has a significant impact on the village. Driving along the A40 from High Wycombe at night when the south bound side of the motorway is closed is not a pleasant journey. The lack of lighting makes it particularly tricky through Studley Green. The impact on the National Trust village of West Wycombe is severe where the heavy lorries must rattle the fabric of the old Tudor buildings.

The survey highlighted the number of people who are disturbed by the sirens going through the village.

We would be interested in hearing your views on this.

Email us at m40cc@btinternet.com

The new Web Site is now up and running and we would welcome any feedback

The Web address is:

www.m40-chilterns.org.uk

