



M40 Chilterns Environmental Group

Summer Issue
June 2010

Progress Report: Noise Action and the Law

Three years ago, we recognized that complaints and protests, however justified, would not achieve change in rural areas, because government processes and policies were biased in favour of urban populations. We had to provide hard evidence that policies were wrong and we had to get that evidence in front of decision makers. Fortunately, we are not alone. In 2002, the EU published an Environmental Noise Directive (END). It required that member governments prepare National Noise Maps, including major highways, M40 CEG did not exist at the time of the directive. By 2010, when Environmental Protection (UK) wrote to the Director General requesting a formal review of progress of the END, it cited M40CEG as a 'proactive local group addressing its noise problems directly'. By implication, within the UK, we are seen as a leading local environmental group campaigning for action on traffic noise.

www.environmentalprotection.org.uk/assets/library/documents/Defra_event_Sept_09_Yvette_Bosworth_1.pdf.

A year ago, a major report 'Traffic Noise in Rural Areas' by the Noise Association, exposed rural noise as a major issue. It was based on interviews with people who suffer from traffic noise around the country. The report drew heavily on the experience of M40CEG members. It concluded that *Noise Policy should be ambitious. It should aim to 'cleanup' country-side polluted by road noise, just as its rivers and estuaries have been successfully cleaned in recent decades.* The study found that people living in otherwise quiet locations were much more annoyed by traffic noise than those living in areas where higher background noise was experienced.

www.ukna.org.uk/index_files/page0031.htm

The Sustainable Communities Act became law in 2007. The intention is for local communities to bring intractable issues directly to attention of central government, through submission by their local authorities. Wycombe District Council, supported by South Oxfordshire District Council, undertook submission of the issue of 'M40 Traffic Noise J3 – J8'. M40CEG agreed to be responsible for evidence to support the submission. The submission was shortlisted, the only one citing traffic noise. For detail of progress, and the evidence provided, www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/ukpga_20070023_en_1. To bring this effort to a successful conclusion, we need support at many levels. We can specifically encourage those who are directly affected by traffic noise to make sure your counsellors and MPs know how you feel.

Use the guidelines below for writing a letter

Together we can make change happen!

Notes for Letters to MP's

Some notes on addressing MPs on the issue of M40 noise.

Boris Johnson once told us that letters from constituents were important in helping them gauge key issues for constituents.

30 letters on one subject would be a large number.

However, they must be individual letters on a common topic. It is most effective therefore if we give guidance on what you might say, but not put words into your mouths.

A good letter:

- *has a few simple action requests,*
- *1 - 1 ½ pages at most,*
- *says who you are, why you are writing **now**, and what do you want done,*
- *is courteous – They are busy,*

Dear Mr MP

1. What do you want to tell him about – eg noise, fumes, diverted traffic
2. Who are you – where do you live, for how long, how close to the M40, age and circumstances if that is relevant
3. What is that is annoying you and what else have you or others tried to do (and failed?)? (it might be noise keeping you or family awake, keeping windows closed, sirens in the night, affecting your health or well being, dirt on windows or washing – **whatever is real for you**)
4. Maybe you are aware of M40 CEG's progress through WDC and SODC with the submission under the Sustainable Communities Act. **Tell him you support this initiative.** Ask him to press for a successful outcome?
5. Tell him what you want him to do? promote reduced speeds, stop HGVs at night or weekend, environmental improvements such as turning off lighting J4 to J5, reduce accidents, replace noise barriers **or your own favoured idea**),
6. Send by email to your local MP. If you use email you must put your Name and Address on it or it will be ignored.

South Oxon: John Howells, MP Henley howelljm@parliament.uk
Stokenchurch distr: David Lidington, Aylesbury davidlidingtonmp@parliament.uk
Wycombe distr: Steve Baker, Wycombe steve.baker.mp@parliament.uk
Chepping Wycombe: Dominic Grieve, Beaconsfield GrieveD@parliament.uk

We will appreciate a copy to m40cc@btinternet.com

OR by mail to Mr X, MP for *constituency*, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Take a look at our updated website:

www.m40-chilterns.org.uk