



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER BLACK 'N WHITE BUT NOT READ ALL OVER...



# SchNEWS

www.schnews.org.uk

Friday 17th May 2013

Free/Donation

Issue 843

## SETT FOR A SHOWDOWN

(DESPITE AWFUL BRIAN MAY RECORD) THE BADGER PROTESTS CONTINUE...

*“As well as campaigning against the cull and raising awareness of it, we also aim to stop the culls using DIRECT ACTION. We will be out in the fields before and during the cull, stopping and making citizen’s arrests on marksmen/women when we can, filming, rescuing injured badgers and neutralizing bait points when we find them.” Stop the Cull*

Somerset badgers will soon find themselves in the sniper’s sights as part of the national cull. Last year a mixture of activism and Middle England’s outrage was enough to see off the proposed cull in Gloucestershire before a single shot was fired. That time the level of public outcry caught the government by surprise but badger activists are predicting a more determined approach from the government this year as despite the flawed science they are determined to push the cull through.

Crucially campaigners were able to derail the cull last year before DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) were able to sign up the required 70% acreage in the cull zone. In Somerset though they are already at around 90%, so the moment when activists will have to confront shooters is growing closer.

### BROCK AND A HARD PLACE

Theoretically the cull could start in Somerset or Gloucestershire as early as June 1st – as that’s when the necessary licenses, issued in September last year, start. That’s the same day that all the groups opposing the cull are calling for a national march in London as an opening salvo in the campaign. The demo is meeting at Millbank (link/map) at 12pm to march on DEFRA’s headquarters. Organisers are asking attendees to wear black and white to demonstrate their willingness to take action in the cull zones.

Currently anti-cull activists are predicting that the shooting will start in Somerset in mid-July but warned SchNEWS that “the situation is fluid and unpredictable”. The resources required - policing, trained marksmen etc to cull 70% of the badger population in an area are significant enough to make a simultaneous cull in both zones unlikely but possible. If either of the cull zones pull out due to farmers withdrawing their consent for shooting on their land DEFRA have

organised a back up cull zone in Dorset.

### SABOTAGE!

There are a lot of groups out there opposing the cull, but the ones gearing themselves up for direct action are Stop the Cull and the Hunt Saboteurs Association. The best way to get yourself into the cull zone and be effective is to hook up with your local sab group. You wouldn’t even need to buy a black hoody, bone up on Conflicts back catalogue and the history of Land Rovers first (but it would help) . Head to <http://hsa.enviroweb.org/index.php/get-involved/localgroups> for useful info.

Once in the zones, suggested activities include:

**Sett surveying** – a knowledge of exactly where the badgers are will be vital to disrupting the cull. This is definitely one where you’ll need to hook up with an expert first, but once you know the signs are obvious. Stop the Cull will be maintaining a database of all the setts.

**Ribbons** – Just letting farmers know that pro-badger types have been out and about on their land is useful – it’s been suggested that activists leave black and white ribbons or paper around the place.

**Watching for signs of pre-baiting** - In order to get a clear shot at the badgers the gun teams are likely to start pre-baiting areas around the setts with peanuts up to three weeks before shooting starts. Peanuts are typically buried near sett entrances initially before being spread further afield in order to get the badgers habituated to foraging in certain areas making them an easier target. This will probably be the clearest sign of where shooters are intending to operate.

### PHEASANTS REVOLT?

The Somerset cull zone particularly is dominated by the pheasant shooting industry. This ‘sport’, worth £1 billion annually, sees factory farmed birds forced into the air to be used as feathered targets for the entertainment of ‘guns’ who pay hundreds a day for the privilege. One huge estate in the cull zone Charget , a vital participant in the cull, boasts its own helicopter pad for the wealthier brand of bloodsports enthusiast. In order to make sure that there are enough birds to be gunned down on any given day the pheasants are

## CRAP DOCUMENTS OF THE WEEK

Well, they finally coughed up. After two days of consistent hassling by activists at the Department for Transport earlier last month, during which one person got nicked, the DfT sheepishly released the previously top secret (read: problematic and embarrassing) documents revealing the truth about the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road.

The findings, courtesy of Combe Haven Defenders, were:

A) The DfT fudged the question of whether or not public money should be used to fund the project, noting that one ‘emerging option’ was to ‘decline funding approval’. (The other ‘emerging option’ was to approve funding.)

B) That the DfT noted that ‘possible, alternative road-based solutions ha[d] not been fully worked through and tested’ at the time of the decision.

C) That the DfT assessed the BHLR as being of “low or medium value for money” – and was therefore not a project that the Department would normally consider funding.

D) That East Sussex County Council (ESCC) had “significantly overstate[d] the benefits of the scheme”, “double count[ing] productivity improvements” and exaggerating the number of jobs that the project would create.

A spokesperson for Combe Haven Defenders says: “These documents show that, despite intense pressure from the Treasury, the DfT’s own civil servants suggested that the Department should consider cancelling the project, and were highly critical of the exaggerated picture of the Road’s merits put forward by East Sussex County Council. By forcing the DfT to give £57m of public money to fund this environmentally disastrous white-elf project George Osborne has now lit the touchpaper for national peaceful resistance to the project.”

\* For more about the protest campaign and how they forced the release of these entirely accurate but awkward papers for a government hell-bent on building the road anyway, see <http://www.schnews.org.uk/stories/FULL-DISCLOSURE>

kept in pens near the ranges. It’s these pens that STOP THE CULL are asking activists to monitor. They want photographs and locations of the pens – they also need people to leave luggage tags with their web address on the pens themselves [www.stopthecull.net/pheasant](http://www.stopthecull.net/pheasant). See you in the fields!

# LEVEL PLAYING FIELD? IT'S HOVE VS GOVE!

Education Secretary Michael Gove has, once again, shown his democratic principles to be as flexible as his listening skills. The battle of Hove v Gove is over the use of school playing fields. The question Gove has been wrestling with is: should he allow four schools/colleges continued use of a shared playing field or should he let his mates in the Russell Education Trust concrete it over and build a religious school instead?

To the surprise of local residents, the four schools, Brighton & Hove Council and even the local Tory MP (none of whom had been consulted) Gove went with the God SquadBack in September 2012 Gove announced his support for a new free school in Hove. The King's Church of England School, set up by the Russell Education Trust (RET), is in agreement with Gove's educational "ideas" (i.e. a return to Tom Brown's schooldays) and has been given the green light to build on what is known as "Bhasvic field". The 15 acre playing field is shared by BHASVIC, Cardinal Newman School, Stanford Junior School and Stanford Infants School. It's also used as a general public amenity - by dog walkers and those fancying a five-a-side kickabout.

Between the announcement being made and plans submitted to the DfE was a whole FIVE weeks! Little time to mount any serious opposition, you'd have thought? But local parents and residents have organised and the "Friends of the Field" is fighting the proposals. Two weeks ago the four schools issued a joint statement warning that the plan would leave them unable to deliver their sports curriculum and would "permanently remove a vital green space in the heart of a densely populated city". Cardinal Newman School's acting headteacher, Dr James Kilmartin: "We were shocked and outraged. There was no consultation. We use that field every day - for cricket, rounders, athletics, football." So much for the Olympic legacy then!

## LYNCH MOB

And how easy is it for the public to find out about the Russell Education Trust? Not very, according to Information Commissioner, Christopher Graham (someone else Gove has fallen out with). Well, what we do know about RET is that it may have charitable status, but its directors draw a salary, and that salary is dependent upon... the number of schools the Trust runs! For example,

whilst the rest of the State education system faces swingeing cuts RET will receive an average of four per cent of Brentwood school Becket Keys' annual revenue over the first seven years of its operation. That religious free school will receive 2 million quid of taxpayers' money, possibly rising to £4.5 million by 2019. Nice work if you can get it, which directors Karen Lynch and David Lynch certainly can. RET is an offshoot of Education London, a private education company offering services that include curriculum planning and management restructuring (i.e. redundancies). And the directors of Education London? Karen and David Lynch...

Why is taxpayers money being used to set up a school which states its admissions criteria as '50% Christian and 50% other faiths or non-faiths'? As only around 7% of the UK population are practicing Christians it looks like a lot of people will have to "find God" in order to gain admission. With its "distinctly Christian ethos" what will the school teach about creationism, homosexuality and same-sex relationships?

A new school is needed in the Hove area, but between the four schools there are over 4,000 students in a fairly small area. The proposed King's School, due to open at Portslade Sixth Form Centre in September 2013, relocating to Bhasvic field three years later, will offer education to 1,100 11 - 18 year olds. That'll be around 6,000 students in the same place. They'll be needing a lot of school buses.

But fear not. Surely Brighton & Hove Council can turn this down? Well, no. The council is against the plan, but it is the Dept for Education that has the final say. The school land and playing fields are owned by the council, but the Education Act 2011 gives the Government the power to take control of public land allocated for educational use and transfer ownership to a trustee or governing body of an academy or free school, which is free from council control. If this were to happen to Bhasvic field the council will receive no money from the transfer. The King's School would still need council planning permission to build on the site but a refusal from the council would simply lead to an appeal to the Government. So that's in the bag then!

\* To find out more head to **Friends of the Field** (virtually, like, at: <https://www.facebook.com/friendsoffield?filter=2>)

# STICK IT TO LES FLIGS

Four months ago the notoriously brutal policing of migrants in Calais was in the spotlight. The French 'Defender of Rights' (Human rights ombudsman) reported after a year-long investigation and officially acknowledged the police abuse, long known and resisted by the likes of anti-border activists Calais Migrant Solidarity (CMS).

Now the Minister of the Interior has given the long-awaited official response—but don't hold your breath for a *mea culpa* though. Were the abuses a case of bad apples? No. Necessary evil? Not exactly. Interior Minister Valls has chosen the left-field, delusional excuse of complete denial, stating (in pure Sir Humphrey): "The points set out in your decision are based essentially on declarations made by representatives of associations which quote non-verifiable statements concerning events which took place some time ago which cannot be supported by any objective facts today." This is the ministerial version of putting your fingers in your ears and saying "La la la, I can't hear you".

In the words of Migreurop, a signatory to the initial report, the Minister has chosen to "close his eyes and to deny an unacceptable reality", resulting in a "whitewash".

One CMS activist told SchNEWS, "This really isn't a surprise [but] we can't let them push this under the carpet."

The situation on the ground in Calais is as chaotic as ever. Even after one aspect of the policing investigation was direct criticism of eviction of squats outside the legal processes, the last two weeks have seen two established squats evicted illegally. We're also told CMS are a bit thin on the ground right now, so if you have spare time for some solidarity activism and police-abuse-documentation then head for France...

## ...and finally...

SchNEWS has, of course, long drunk from the well of horror stories about remote controlled killing and bombing by military drones. Now, at last, we can take the piss with news of a more-dumb-than-deadly civilian use. For lo and behold, here comes the beer drone. Lager-than-life organisers of the Oppikoppi music festival in South Africa plan to help punters at this years festie get 'wasted' by flying drones overhead and then parachuting mobile-phone-placed drinks orders down into the crowd. (We know, it sounds ridiculous - and they probably know it but just want the free coverage a cheap publicity stunt can bring... and we've just fallen into their trap. Damn it.)

Whilst a bit of a shake generally does beer no favours, apparently they see no problem with just dropping booze (but not Jägerbombs we hope) from the skies - and on to a thirsty heavy-drinking crowd: well what could possibly go wrong?!

They may have been sold the whizz-bang idea from all the military hype-types telling them about precision targeting and surgical strikes. But knowing as we do the messy actual military truth about collateral damage and indiscriminate killing...the chances of said drink arriving safely into punters fist? We predict a riot. Or lawsuits as a pilot error / malfunction sends an eight-propeller vehicle plummeting into the crowd and it rips someone's face off rather than helping them get off it.

(NB the campsite for the festival is amusingly called District 9. Lets hope it's not full of the prawn sandwich brigade...)

## Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers, ready, sett, GO! Honest!

# RUBBISH DUST UP! IT'S KITKAT VS WILDCAT!

When given an ultimatum of a £4,000 a year pay cut or the sack Brighton's refuse workers and street cleaners voted instead for an immediate wildcat strike, with 300 workers downing brooms and occupying their canteen.

The cuts, pushed through by the Green Party led council have caused a split in the party, with the grass-roots membership hitting the panic button and churning out blog articles and social media posts condemning the 'rouge' actions of the city council leader Jason Kitkat. Even Caroline Lucas, Brighton's Green Party MP has addressed the workers occupation pledging her allegiance to the workers whilst criticising the decisions of her party led city council.

The wildcat industrial action, which lasted from Wednesday 'til Thursday was a credible show of the forced of organised rank 'n' file labour in austerity Britain. Able to bypass union bureaucracy and the anti-union laws of countless Labour and Conservative governments workers held strong, with no need even for a picket line

and were instead able to spend the day resting with a warm cup of tea in the canteen. On Thursday uniformed workers marched from their depot in Hollingdean to the town hall where council leader Jason Kitkat was given a personally dedicated rendition of the traditional football chant 'you're shit and you know you are'. (can be seen here <http://twitpic.com/cpetdt>)

On Friday workers agreed to return to work but on 'work to rule' basis with the prospect of additional industrial action as the GMB launches its ballot for an official strike.

Direct action got the goods. Workers demands, drafted and agreed through mass assemblies were all won and as bins overflowed and crisp packets blew around the street workers held the power. The bin men and women of Brighton have provided an example of how workers can fight for themselves, against the austerity and the bosses.

And what did we expect from the Green Party anyway? We can't disagree with one binman who commented, 'they're all the same aren't they?'

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