

FORESTRY COMMISSION PROPOSAL UPDATE

Thank you very much for your continued support

The Ashley Park Action Group continues to try to keep our fight in the local media.

Christopher Chope MP, acting on our behalf, has managed to raise the matter in a parliamentary debate and a number of articles have appeared in the local press. A large number of us have been in correspondence with RT. Hon Lord Clark of Windermere, Chairman of the Forestry Commission, East Dorset District Council and the Dorset Constabulary, to name but a few.

We understand and as reported in the Stour and Avon Magazine (May 9th) that the Forestry Commission is apparently looking at 'alternative sites in the area from the Avon Valley round to north of Bournemouth. This includes Hurn Forest and other large areas of woodlands' (Bruce Rothnie: Forestry Commission)

Nevertheless, the Forestry Commission invited members of the St Leonards & St Ives Parish Council and members of the Ashley Park Action Group to visit one of their concert events at Cannock Chase on 28-29th June. The Ashley Park Action Group was concerned with this invitation as we saw it as a pointless exercise until a final decision has been made regarding the siting of a concert venue in Ringwood/Ashley forest. Nevertheless, as a sign of good will, two of our members, at their own expense and time, have visited Cannock Chase as a fact finding exercise. They have found:

- that Cannock Chase and the proposed Ashley Heath/Ringwood forest sites are not at all comparable, as Cannock Chase is extremely large compared to our local forest
- that there are few residential properties near to the venue at Cannock Chase and therefore most importantly the density of population there is significantly lower than at Ashley Heath
- that the traffic flow is tri-directional, whereas in Ashley Heath it will be predominantly from one direction from Ringwood along the B3081 which will therefore cause gridlock.
- At a chance meeting, one local resident who lives 3 miles away from the venue reported when the wind was in a certain direction, the concert noise was heard in-doors over the sound of their television, while another offered to sign our petition.

The Action Group strongly maintains that the proposed siting at the Ringwood/Ashley Forest is unique and unlike any of the other sites, including Cannock Chase. It is near a large residential area that includes Ringwood. The proposed siting will allow large numbers of non-ticket holders from the surrounding area to simply walk to the site and it is this that makes it impossible for the Forestry Commission to properly control the event. The resulting disturbance/environmental impact on the local community including, noise / parking / road safety / congestion / illegal camping / drinking / BBQ's / fire hazards, (which we have highlighted on numerous occasions) will still exist, however well-managed the actual concert may be. There is also concern that access via the Horton Road may be utilised if the B3081 becomes congested.

Ashley Park Action Group urges you to **continue the fight by writing again** to the Forestry Commission expressing your continued concerns and your determination to fight on, until they withdraw the proposal. We also require them to disclose as much information as possible (which to date has not been forthcoming) regarding the actual review process being undertaken when considering these alternatives and their progress to date. We would like to know when the final decision will be made.

We must ensure that the Forestry Commission's review of alternative sites is not simply a delaying tactic to lull us into a false sense of security.

<u>Please write to:</u> The Chairman The RT Hon. Lord Clark of Windermere Forestry Commission Silvan House 321 Corstorphine Road Edinburgh EH 12 7AT	<u>Ashley Park Action Group</u> Mike Beard mike.beard35@talktalk.net Jonathan Edwards jonathanedwards@live.co.uk Dick Harnden, axkv93@dsl.pipex.com Ian House, ian_house@mentor.com Frank Peach, fmpeach@aol.com Desiree Mears, dsteane@btinternet.com Kay Rednap, kcrspider@aol.com
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Once again thank you for your continued support