

Skelmanthorpe Community Action Group Newsletter.

Welcome to the fifth edition of the SCAG newsletter.

If you are a first time reader of this newsletter you are probably wondering what SCAG is? Skelmanthorpe Community Action Group was formed to fight Kirklees development plans, which included a proposal to build 14,000 houses in our area.

Thanks to the many letters of objection they received these plans have now been shelved. But, the risk to our green spaces has only been reprieved temporarily, indeed the threat to the countryside has never been greater.

The government 'now' wants Kirklees to build 40,000 new houses in the next few years, a 55% increase on their original target!

The Leader of Kirklees Council, Councillor Robert Light stated in a recent article in the Examiner that the new central government targets call for Kirklees to build over 40,000 houses to meet Gordon Brown's new initiative to provide more low cost housing. To meet that target he voiced the concern that much of the countryside would have to be concreted over to achieve it. It would seem that our fears of twelve months ago were well founded and the situation is potentially much worse than anyone thought possible.

Our aim is still to organise ourselves to fight any proposals that threaten our green spaces. We will need the support of the whole community if we are to have any chance of success.

SCAG acts as a voice for the community.

In addition to our efforts to save the countryside we try to act as a voice for our community, campaigning for action to be taken on issues that affect the people of Skelmanthorpe, and to try to improve the area in which we live.

We welcome all the help we can get so if you would like to learn more about SCAG visit our web site www.skelmanthorpeaction.org.uk

The Proposed Strike Lane Development has been refused planning permission.

The recent planning application to develop a plot of land on Strike Lane, known as the Piggeries has been rejected after strong objections by local residents, supported by SCAG and our local councillors. This is a good example of the results that can be achieved when the community bands together to fight against unwanted developments. The developers do not always win if the opposition is well organised.

Let us know if you hear about planning applications.

We would ask you to report any planning applications to SCAG and to be prepared to raise objections with the council. The more people who add their voices to our protests, the more chance of success we will have. You can make a difference.

Dangerous school crossing will now be improved.

You may remember that our last newsletter mentioned the concerns of parents about their children having to cross Commercial Road without the help of either a proper crossing or a "lolly pop man/woman".

After further pressure from parents, SCAG and our local councillors a further review of the situation has been conducted and Kirklees has now agreed to install a crossing

and to employ a lolly pop man/ woman. Sadly due to budget restraints the crossing may not be installed until 2009-10, so SCAG intends to keep pressing for this to be done at an earlier date.

Improvements at the Bovis Homes Development.

Local residents approached SCAG about their concerns with the state of the area around the Bovis Homes Development on the old allotments. Construction workers were causing problems parking their cars on the roadside, and the pavement was often blocked for long periods, especially around the entrance to the site. Heavy vehicles were also causing a nuisance turning round in residents' drive-ways. There was also a lot of mud being brought from the site onto the roads and pavements.

SCAG brought these issues to the attention of the site manager and improvements were quickly made to the situation. We continue to monitor it on a regular basis.

Warning signs have been erected at the entrance to Station Road.

Last year SCAG approached Kirklees Council about the problems of large numbers of heavy vehicles using Station Road as a route to Emley and Huddersfield. Many vehicles were having difficulties at the narrow section of road at Parkgate bridge.

Signs have now been erected at both the entrance to Station Road at the Grove Inn and at the entrance near Emley business Park, warning drivers that the road is not suitable for large vehicles.

The July floods.

SCAG has been working hard to try to help local residents at Park Gate to get action from both Kirklees and the Department of the Environment to improve the flow of the Beck at Park Gate bridge.

During the heavy rain in July several houses in Parkgate were flooded when Baildon Dyke burst its banks. The problem lies with the ancient arched bridge, which no longer has the capacity to deal with heavy rain as it is badly silted up. SCAG is pressing for the bridge to be dredged to prevent any repeat of the July flooding.

We have written to all the departments concerned and the situation is currently under investigation. However, we have had some small success and anyone using the bridge may have noticed some new and much larger drains have been installed on both sides of the road. These are intended to ensure that there will no longer be a large pool of standing water on the bridge at times of heavy rain.

Part of the flooding problem lies with the planning permission granted to build a large housing estate and commercial properties on Station Road. This new development discharges huge volumes of rain water, from roofs and road ways, into the Dyke, up stream of the bridge, at times of heavy rain and is contributing significantly to the flooding risk. The attention of Kirklees Council and planning department has been drawn to the problem.

SCAG annual general meeting Wednesday 3 October, 7.30 pm.

It is now over a year since SCAG was founded so we would like to invite all SCAG members, supporters and other interested parties to our first AGM to be held at St Aidan's Parish Church, Radcliffe Street, Skelmanthorpe.

This will be an important venue for further discussion of Kirklees housing development plans and our plans to fight any developments detrimental to our village, please attend if you possibly can.

The meeting will also be asked to elect or re-elect members of the SCAG committee.

SCAG tries to help all the community.

SCAG tries to help anyone in Skelmanthorpe with a problem they don't know how to address. We have for example helped people deal with disturbances by rowdy youngsters and people being plagued by noise nuisance. So if you have a problem and you are not sure what to do about it, give us a call we will help whenever we can.

Skelmanthorpe Walkabout.

On the 8th August the SCAG committee got out and about around Skelmanthorpe to see for themselves the issues that needed attention in the village.

The village walkabout was a great success and a number of issues were immediately actioned with the people responsible. These included the need to demolish the old changing rooms at the skate park and a redundant shelter at the rear of the Chartist public house. Suggestions have also been put forward to try to improve security at the Health Centre car park at night and to inhibit drug dealing in the area.

Further walkabouts are planned so if you have something you would like us to take a look at let us know and we will add it to our agenda for the next tour of Skelmanthorpe.

We have had some fun too.

It hasn't been all work these past few months:

Successful Cheese and Wine party.

On 14 July we held a very successful cheese and wine party hosted by Ray and Julie Dansey - Wright. The event was hugely enjoyed by all who attended and helped to swell the SCAG fighting fund. Our sincere thanks to Julie and Ray for all their help with this event.

August Barbeque in Parkgate.

This very successful event was held at the home of Pat and Brain Oliver in Parkgate and helped to raise some £300 for the SCAG fund. In addition to the barbeque the plant sale proved to be very popular and we hope to repeat this in future. Many thanks to Pat and Brain for all the hard work they put in and to the rest of the SCAG team.

Coffee morning 6 October

We plan to hold a coffee morning combined with a seed and plant exchange on 6 October at the Skelmanthorpe Council offices (at the Library). Please put the date in your diary and come along to support us.

If you would like to know more about SCAG or if you have concerns about building development in Skelmanthorpe why not come to meet us at one of our social events, we would be pleased to meet you.

We haven't forgotten that development is still a threat.

While all the issues listed above have been receiving our attention we haven't forgotten that our primary goal is to defeat any development proposals that threaten our village and our green spaces. We have been quietly developing plans so we can launch a campaign of protest if necessary.

You can help to beat unwanted developments.

How can you help?

- First believe that **you can make a difference**, we need **you** to take action when the time comes.
- Encourage your friends and neighbours to take action too.
- Contact SCAG and offer to become a volunteer. We need people willing to leaflet their street or circulate petitions. Our contact details are on our web site and our telephone numbers are given below.
- Complain to Kirklees – we will tell you how when the time comes.
- Support our fund raising efforts and socialise with like-minded people at our social events.

Remember if we all work together as we did last year we can stop any development plans that threaten our village.

If you would like to talk to us about SCAG or wish to join please contact:

Christopher Ward 01484 866705

Richard Graham 01484 860690.