

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill # 2

A British Naturism Briefing Paper - Malcolm Boura - May 2007

Thank you for your interest in the Local Government Bill and Public Involvement in Health. It is a complex piece of legislation but I will endeavour to cover the relevant points in this briefing note.

At present bye laws have to be approved by the appropriate Secretary of State which gives us vital protection against prejudiced councils. Bye laws are also relatively expensive to enforce which protects us against petty use. If the Bill goes through as at present then bye laws will be easy to create, easy to enforce and a profit making opportunity for councils and contractors. If contractors can flout the anti-race discrimination legislation as happened recently in one north east town then what chance have we got? Can councils such as Sefton (Ainsdale) and East Riding of Yorkshire (Fraisthorpe) really be trusted with that sort of power?

Present position

The Bill has completed its first visit to the House of Commons without any relevant improvements. It will now spend some time in the House of Lords starting on 20th. It will then return, probably briefly, to the Commons.

We have written to the Secretary of State Ruth Kelly but there has been no reply as yet and we are about to make a complaint.

We have managed to persuade the government that the enabling power regulating clothing of bathers should be repealed and so far that is going through.

What to do

- Write to a member of the House of Lords now
- Write to your MP later
- Discuss it with your MP at his/her surgery or other opportunity

Paper carries a lot more weight than email so we advise old fashioned paper. Please send us copies of your letter and the reply by either post or email (scans are fine).

Lords

Members of the House of Lords do not have constituencies so you can take your pick of who to write to. Baroness Noakes, Baroness Mallalieu, Baroness Walmsley and Lord Northbourne made helpful comments during the debates on the Sexual Offences Bill.

A full list of Lords is available from http://www.parliament.uk/directories/house_of_lords_information_office/alphabetical_list_of_members.cfm

Full details of how to address lords is at http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/members/lords_contact/address.cfm. The two commonest are Baroness (beginning *Dear Lady XXX*, end *Yours sincerely*, envelope *The (Rt Hon. the) Baroness XXX*) and Lord (beginning *Dear Lord XXX*, end *Yours sincerely*, envelope *The (Rt Hon. the) Lord XXX*. Substitute surname for XXX.

The postal address is "House of Lords, London, SW1A 0PW" but the letter may then be forwarded so allow plenty of time.

What to say

Please take your pick from the following, in your own order and of course add your own. The first one is very important as it will be useful in a very wide range of circumstances. Is it really unreasonable for us to expect councils to be reasonable?

- **Councils must be required to make reasonable provision for naturists**
- **There must be robust protection for naturists.**
- We welcome the repeal of the enabling power regarding swim suits.
- Naturism is a legitimate activity which must be allowed to continue.
- Some councils have demonstrated by their actions that they can not be trusted with powers that will enable them to discriminate against naturists.
- The catch all nuisance powers will be abused to make naturism illegal across large areas.
- Platitudes and reassurances have no value.
- Fighting with councils in the courts over the validity of bye laws is not an acceptable alternative to good legislation.
- There have been two instances already this year of councils erecting misleading notices.
- There have been two instances already this year of councils flouting good practice as recommended by Defra.
- The difficulty of enforcing bye laws protects us from petty use and discourages councils from creating them.
- The Home Office has refused a number of applications for bye laws against nudity. That protection must continue.
- There is no central record of bye laws so the DCLG is letting a genie out of the bottle with very little idea what it actually is.
- Several million naturists forced to holiday overseas is not a good idea.
- More? Please let us know!

Further updates

The web site www.british-naturism.org.uk will be updated as events develop.

To join the Campaigns Group and receive up to the minute emails send an email to rlo@british-naturism.org.uk

To receive the next edition of this briefing note please visit the web site or ask when you send us a copy of your letter. An sae for the briefing note would be appreciated.

This briefing note is part of growing collection of campaigning materials available from the BN web site.

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