

# SCOUT ASSOCIATION CAMPAIGN TEAM

## JANUARY 2009 MEMBER BRIEFING DOCUMENT



Date: 01/01/09

### THE 'STOP THE RAIN TAX' CAMPAIGN: JANUARY 2009 UPDATE

#### ***The Story So Far....***

If this is the first briefing you have received relating to changes in surface water drainage charges, you may wish to look at the [November](#) and [December](#) briefings.

These give you the background information on charges for surface area water drainage and our actions so far in campaigning on this issue.

#### ***Reporting Back On Our Campaign To Date...***

In December, we asked members of this campaign to write to their local MP and ask for support in our campaign. Thank you to everyone who participated in this activity. Over 100 of you let our political representatives know the difficulties these charges will cause our groups.

Letters have been sent to MPs across the country in areas ranging from Beckenham and Croydon to Manchester, The New Forest to Sherwood Forest and Eastbourne to The Wirral.

If you have not yet written to your MP regarding these charges you can find a sample letter that you can send via email [here](#). This will automatically send your email to your local MP. We want to make sure all MPs know about the impact of these charges on community organisations so that they can add their voice to calling for the charges to be removed. We also want them to know how they could help our Groups to make their properties more environmentally friendly.

If you have been in contact with your MP regarding this issue please do let us know how they responded and if they give their support to our campaign.

#### ***What Do The Water Companies Themselves Say?***

At first glance it may appear that this is a charge which has been instigated by the Water Companies themselves. However, it is clear that these charges are being levied directly due to the actions of OFWAT, the water regulator. In the course of our campaigning activities on behalf of The Association, we have been in discussions with Severn Trent, a water company serving the Midlands. Previously Severn Trent offered an exemption from these charges to those buildings used for community purposes. They have confirmed that they did not wish to end the exemption they offered community use buildings for surface area water charges but were forced to do so by OFWAT. This highlights how the real culprit for these charges is OFWAT.

#### ***National Coverage Of This Issue***

This issue is now making headlines nationally. The Daily Telegraph recently ran a story highlighting the impact particularly on churches, and noting that Scout properties and community buildings are also affected. The article can be seen [here](#). The issue has also been raised in Parliament (see [here](#), towards the bottom of the page, Q9)

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#### **The Scout Association**

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Patron HM The Queen President HRH The Duke of Kent Founder Robert Baden-Powell OM Chief Scout Peter Duncan

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## ***What We Are Doing Now***

Following on from our discussions with Severn Trent Water we are now writing to all the water companies in England to ask if they would in principle offer an exemption for community use buildings if allowed to do by OFWAT. We will update our next campaign briefing with details of the responses we have received and a list of the water companies who have indicated their willingness to offer an exemption if OFWAT change their decision so that you can find out if your local water company is supporting our campaign.

We are also seeking to support MPs who wish to raise this issue in the House of Commons as they press for action on this matter. We have also requested a direct meeting with the Department for the Environment and the Minister who is overseeing a review of this matter so that we can put our case directly to them for an exemption for Scout Groups from these charges.

## ***How You Can Help In January***

Please help us by writing to your local paper to raise awareness about the impact of these charges. We need to keep this issue in the public eye and ensure that other local organisations and groups know how to help our campaign. We have drafted a short letter you can send by email [here](#).

We now have almost 200 members signed up to help campaign on this issue - if you want to join our campaign please email [water@scout.org.uk](mailto:water@scout.org.uk) to receive campaign updates and please encourage your friends and fellow Scouts to participate too. On behalf of The Scout Association I would like to thank you for your help – together we can and we are making a difference through this campaign.

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