

# Scout Association Campaign Team

## Member Briefing Document



Date: 31/10/08

### THE 'STOP THE RAIN TAX' CAMPAIGN: NOVEMBER 2008 UPDATE

#### The story so far...

Changes are planned for the way water companies charge non-domestic customers, including Scout Groups, for the disposal of rainwater. In the past, organisations such as Scout Groups and sports halls have not been charged for the surface water which runs into sewers from their buildings. In 2003 the Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT) decided that this exemption should end and has given the Water Companies until 2010 to start charging all users for the disposal of water from their properties through public sewers in England<sup>1</sup>.

To date only a limited number of the ten water companies serving English regions have already introduced the charge - sometimes labelled as 'surface area' costs, 'sewerage costs' or 'grey water disposal' costs on water bills. However, all are at present required to introduce these costs within the next year. Furthermore those who have sought to introduce exemptions for charities and community organisations have been refused permission by OFWAT.

The changes to water charging will affect all charities, religious and community organisations

that own or lease their meeting place. Thus, for the 4,500 Scout Group buildings in England, the implications on their incomes could be substantial; an average Scout meeting place with associated parking will most likely be subjected to an increase in costs of around £400 a year. Initial estimates suggest that the total cost to the Scout Movement each year could be around £1.5m.

**Our campaign priority for November is to ensure we have accurate information regarding the impact of these charges on local Groups. We are also trying to identify whether these costs could be mitigated through the use of soakaways, introducing water metering or putting in machinery that can recycle rainwater for use in sewerage facilities.**

This is being done through an on-line survey which can be accessed [here](#). We are also meeting with the Water Companies themselves to identify whether they would in principle be willing to reverse these charges or offer a lower tariff for buildings used for community purposes.

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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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## Our November 2008 Campaign Actions:

1. Help us grow our campaign team as a Movement by recruiting friends and families to help us make our case. You can do this by emailing [water@scout.org.uk](mailto:water@scout.org.uk) to register interest in this issue and to receive regular updates like this that set out our monthly campaign activity.
2. Help us gather evidence of the impact these changes could make to local Scout Groups by completing our short survey and encouraging others within Scouting to do the same. You can fill in the survey [here](#).

On behalf of The Scout Association I would like to thank you for your help – together we can make a difference.

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The Scout Association

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<sup>i</sup> These charges will affect groups in England and Wales only as Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own separate rules regarding water charges.