



# Occasional Newsletter No. 1

## February 2011

<http://naturistactiongroup.org>

**Welcome to our first NAG newsletter!**

### **Our inaugural year**

NAG launched in March 2010. We are not a members' organisation, and do not organise social events; NAG provides a platform for naturists to raise issues and campaign in the interests of UK naturism. NAG can help you to gather support from other naturists without the restrictions or the 'baggage' that are present with some other naturists bodies. The Naturist Action Group works with many other naturist bodies in Britain. Our twin aims are to:

- Campaign on behalf of naturism to the Government and national representative bodies
- Educate the public and promote awareness about naturism

The concept of NAG had been discussed for a while, but the decision to go ahead was taken only early in 2010. We took as our model the way in which The Naked London Bike-ride is organised. We felt that it was better to start NAG and do some of our planning 'on the hoof', rather than spend a very long period trying to get it perfect and thus risk a stillbirth. Consequently we plead guilty to not being as well prepared as we may have wished at our March 2010 launch!

We always knew that the issues of public perception and anti-naturist prejudice, which NAG aims to tackle, are huge tasks. They need a long-term approach, with a lot of research and groundwork. To be successful we felt that NAG approaches to various Authorities would need to be evidence based and properly documented, all of which takes time. Creating the NAG process for dealing with these occupied us for 2010, as well as setting up a NAG website. More recently a new website has been created (still not fully finished –is a website ever 'finished?'), which can be visited at <http://naturistactiongroup.org>. **If you want to be kept abreast of what NAG is doing in future please register on this website.** We won't flood you with Spam, but it does enable us to keep in touch occasionally easily, and we shall be discontinuing postal contact after this newsletter (except in special need), as it is too costly and time consuming.

An enormous amount of voluntary effort went into setting up NAG. Consequently, we had less time and energy to make as quick an impact in 2010 on our chosen areas of interest as we might have hoped. By reading the information below you can judge how NAG has done in its first year. Maybe you agree that, by using our energies to set up NAG, including dealing with several 'teething problems', we have provided a worthy new UK facility to use in campaigning for naturism?

### **Volunteers together**

We continue to encourage naturists to contact NAG, and for you to use our facility to campaign for naturism in the ways that we describe below. With no membership structure we regard all naturists who work with NAG as our 'supporters'.

You will see from our accounts (given below) that NAG does not charge you money to be involved. We do not have a large wages bill for paid staff (we are all volunteers!). NAG is able to keep its running costs low, which is also partly due to significant 'support in kind' from various supporters. So NAG seeks financial support from its friends only as 'supporters' feel they may want to help cover costs. The main way that supporters of the NAG concept can help is by **getting involved** in the NAG campaigning activity! Below we summarise briefly the campaigning work NAG has done in 2010.

## The London Question

London has a population of 7.5m people and several thousand are likely to be naturists. London also lacks facilities for naturism, and particularly open-air naturism. While some larger European cities have accepted naturist places within parks, Greater London has none. Discreet naturist activity takes place in Hyde Park and Regents Park on an occasional basis. The public has accepted nakedness as part of the *World Naked Bike Ride* in central London for several years. Do naturists, collectively, now want London to have the equivalent of Munich's *English Garden* naturist area?

In October 2010 NAG launched *The London Question*. This invitation to all individual naturists, naturist groups, and supporters of naturism - not only those living in Greater London - is to comment a) whether naturists should explore the lack of opportunity for naturism in London, b) what type of new London facilities for naturism you would support, c) if naturists should identify suitable open space places to be recognised naturism locations, d) how you might like to be involved in *The London Question*. Further information is available at <http://naturistactiongroup.org>.

To help with this NAG Project you can contact me at [john.paine@naturistactiongroup.org](mailto:john.paine@naturistactiongroup.org).

## Changing police attitudes

There is a lot of anecdotal evidence to indicate that different police authorities take widely different approaches to the laws regarding nudity in public places. This sometimes seems to arise from ignorance of what the law actually is. Interpretation seems to rely heavily on the personal view of police officers as to what 'ought to be allowed', and often there seems a presumption that nudity per se will cause alarm and offence, and should therefore be prevented. There have even been cases where the police seem to have actively solicited complaints from the public, rather than reacting to them. Arrests are very upsetting and disruptive, and even when there is no charge brought or caution issued, those affected can be left traumatised by heavy handed or disproportionate police action.

NAG wishes to address this situation by making a formal approach to the Association of Chief Police Officers &/or the Ministry of Justice. To do this we need to gather and document evidence of as many incidents and cases as we can. This process has started, and several current Court cases are being followed. However, progress has been fairly slow so far, as some naturists seem reluctant to talk, even in confidence, about such brushes with The Law, and the response to our calls for evidence has been disappointing. However, this project will continue, and we shall persevere in the task of gathering evidence of incidents from those involved. This issue will not be resolved quickly, and we need to be tenacious and patient if we are to achieve our end. The aim is to educate the police on the true state of Law, and get them to agree a guidance document so that their approach is lawful, consistent everywhere, and sympathetic to innocent nudity.

For help with this NAG Project you can contact me at [duncan.heenan@naturistactiongroup.org](mailto:duncan.heenan@naturistactiongroup.org).

## Guidance Leaflet

One of the hazards of enjoying a non-designated beach or the open countryside clothes free is the possibility that a complaint will be made to the local constabulary and you will be approached by either a police officer or a PCSO. This April, we shall be publishing, *You and the Law*, which will explain your legal position should this happen to you. It will appear in H&E Naturist and we hope that it will also appear in Naturist Life. Not only that of course, it will be downloadable free by anyone as a PDF from our website <http://naturistactiongroup.org>.

## Hampstead Heath Naturist Campaign

In May 2010 NAG joined with the Hampstead Heath Naturist Campaign, initiated by Michael Peacock and supported by 1,200 people, to get naturist facilities on Hampstead Heath. The Corporation of London manages Hampstead Heath and is concerned that naturists have singled out the Heath. To help this Naturist Campaign in May 2010 NAG offered to seek your views on other possible London locations as well (see *The London Question* above).

British Naturism has also been working with this campaign and was to assist with a paper to present to the Hampstead Heath management body in November 2010. This did not happen and Malcolm Boura, the BN Research & Liaison Officer, is currently considering how to progress this Campaign. For an update Malcolm can be contacted at [rlo@british-naturism.org.uk](mailto:rlo@british-naturism.org.uk).

A detailed report, *Naturism on Hampstead Heath*, was written by NAG, which gives an analysis of options open to this campaign, following a joint site meeting in May 2010 at which the Campaign's primary objective was changed. The Report was given to British Naturism and the Hampstead Heath Naturist Campaign. It is

available, free, at <http://naturistactiongroup.org>.

## ***What does the Government think?***

Soon after the coalition Government got its feet under the Downing Street table, NAG contacted the offices of the relevant ministers of state to naturism: Kenneth Clarke (Lord Chancellor), Theresa May (Home Secretary) and Eric Pickles (Communities Secretary). We told them of the increasing feeling among the naturist community that different police services and the CPS were being inconsistent with the way they apply the law regarding public nudity, and that every one would benefit by better training on the subject. We also asked them if they agreed with us that both the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office could make a small but significant saving if the UK followed the example of Denmark and make all beaches clothes optional.

Officials from the Lord Chancellor's and Home Secretary's offices quickly passed on the job of providing an answer to the Communities Secretary's office and we were promised a reply, none came. A follow-up message to the Communities Secretary obtained a reply that it had been passed to the appropriate civil servant in charge of policy to consider a reply. And there it stayed, still being considered no doubt. We shall persevere!

## **Support for other Campaigns**

We participated in this line of activity in a number of ways. NAG supported the Save Eastney Naturist Beach campaign - including raising questions at the QinetiQ AGM. This company owns the access to the beach and arbitrarily tried to stop naturists using it in 2010. Present at the AGM was Duncan Heenan, who took the opportunity to inform the CEO and two non-executive directors of our side of the story. Unfortunately, despite the strength of his arguments, a meeting of minds was not achieved. Other NAG supporters also emailed and wrote to QinetiQ.

Support was also given by NAG to the Corton Beach campaign. Whilst British Naturism did not get a new designated beach, a notable victory was achieved when Waveney District Council agreed with BN's Allan Kidney that their published ruling meant that naturists could use any beach within their area. That does not mean that you can act illegally, but relations between naturists and Suffolk Police were strengthened during the discussions.

A NAG supporter suggested in September that NAG start a campaign for an official naturist beach at Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire. John Paine responded by notifying him of existing naturist beaches nearby. Since then the supporter has not indicated that a new campaign is needed. NAG is happy to liaise with other supporters who may raise naturist issues on which to campaign. You can suggest these via [nag@naturistactiongroup.org](mailto:nag@naturistactiongroup.org)

The Libel Law Reform movement has been supported by NAG and by John Paine in particular. As the Law stands, it could mean that an opinion, even when expressed with overwhelming evidence such as in journalist Simon Singh's case, is liable to legal action. The Coalition Government has accepted that the libel law needs reform but has yet to publish any proposals.

Ten years ago British Naturism commissioned NOP to carry out a Survey to find out what the general public thought about naturists and naturism. BN has suggested that a new Survey is needed for 2011 and the estimated cost is at least £5,000. BN decided to ask its members if they would support a new Survey and donate money to make it happen. Regardless of whether it is BN or NAG campaigning, our arguments will be stronger if we can quote evidence in support of them. Of course, we can't tell you what to do with your own money, but if you are a BN member, or can speak to one, we urge you to support this initiative.

Some NAG supporters have been involved in the London Naked Bike Ride for the past 3 years. In 2011 we are inviting more NAG supporters to join us at the Hyde Park start on Saturday 11 June. As well as NAG riders - naked naturally - there will be some NAG activists at Hyde Park who will be promoting NAG to the many hundreds of riders expected.

## **Articles in naturist magazines**

If nothing else – certainly not clothing anyway – naturists' need a sense of humour, so giving an odd take on naturism is the blog written by our chairperson Reg Barlow (he thinks he's funny and we don't delude him). They range from the idea that people are *introduced* to naturism rather than *converted*, to the need of the naturist community to take back the word 'Naturism', stolen by the porn industry. These are published monthly on our website <http://naturistactiongroup.org> while an edited version appears in H&E Naturist. You are

welcome to disagree with him of course, in fact all the better if you did, but don't just grumble into your cornflakes, comment. All views are welcome through [nag@naturistactiongroup.org](mailto:nag@naturistactiongroup.org)

Less obvious are the news items, of interest to a naturist, taken from the world's press by NAG. They then appear in a Naturist Life column. In addition NAG has supplied information and photos on other naturist matters to these two magazines, which have appeared as stories or news items.

## NAG Petitions

You may recall that during 2010 there were a number of opportunities to comment to the Government online. NAG did so, particularly on the issue of which Laws should be scrapped! We also organised a No.10 petition, assisted by Pete Knight. With more help from NAG supporters this could be an easy activity for giving genuine naturist issues a higher profile.

## Money spent wisely

NAG greatly appreciates the support of those people who have donated their money, time and skills to date. Also to the people who have helped the NAG Management Group to publicise NAG and its activities. NAG is set up as a not-for-profit activity within the company Naturists Ltd. We have been supported financially in our set-up phase from the following sources:

Income:		Expenditure:		Total Funds	
Donations	783.00	Paypal charges	-11.91	Lloyds	1,105.88
Advertising	160.00	Website Costs	-35.18	Paypal	25.03
Publications	235.00				
	1,178.00				
			-47.09		
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>1,130.91</b>				<b>1,130.91</b>

You will see that we haven't spent much money yet, as our volunteers have borne their own costs. If you would like to know more about NAG's money please contact [duncan.heenan@naturistactiongroup.org](mailto:duncan.heenan@naturistactiongroup.org).

Thank you for supporting us in our first year. We hope you will continue to do so, and will perhaps be actively involved in issues promoted by NAG. If you feel you would like to assist us in doing what we can for naturism, please get in touch on [nag@naturistactiongroup.org](mailto:nag@naturistactiongroup.org).

## Your actions can help

In summer 2010 NAG produced a black print A5 single-sided leaflet that can be printed off easily (2 on an A4 sheet) by anybody. This is useful for handing out at naturist events and beaches, should the opportunity arise. Our supporters are encouraged to download and print off leaflets to give out at events, which they attend. The leaflet is available at <http://naturistactiongroup.org>

As mentioned above NAG does not organise social events. We feel that to do so would dissipate our time and slender resources. It would take us away from our core aim to pro-actively campaign for greater naturist freedom. The Naturist Action Group is a small, new UK naturist organisation - which relies on the dedication of a few founders, together with the help of anyone who is prepared to do so. NAG campaigns for naturism in Britain and to achieve our aim we need to be bigger than just a small band of enthusiasts. **If you think naturism is worthwhile, and want to help promote its advancement in the UK, then why not contact us at [nag@naturistactiongroup.org](mailto:nag@naturistactiongroup.org).**

*The Naturist Action Group (NAG) is made up of naturists who are campaigning for naturism and our activities are funded entirely by donations made by those who believe as we do. You can donate to NAG through our website <http://naturistactiongroup.org>, or by a cheque made out to Naturists Ltd, which can be sent to: N.A.G. PO Box 76, Ventnor, PO38 9BJ*