

Yare Valley Society Newsletter



The objects of the society are to protect the natural landscape and wildlife habitats of the Yare Valley south and west of Norwich, principally between Harford and Bowthorpe. We oppose any development that would detract from its natural qualities and support projects which would preserve the valley for the benefit of all.

Urgent Rugby Club update to Issue 105 Car Park Threat to Valley

Act today to ensure your comments reach South Norfolk District Council before the closing date of **23 September 2018**.

UEA planning application to South Norfolk District Council 2018/1830

Is this an application to build car parking spaces on protected green space for a Rugby Club facility that does not exist and may never exist?

Sorry, what follows may seem complicated, but who said the planning process was simple!

Backstory

The original 2016/0233 Rugby Club application to build a Clubhouse, sports facilities and car parks on the protected green space in the Valley was controversial, being a development within the supposedly protected green space of the Yare Valley Green Infrastructure Corridor. Those who cared about the Valley objected both locally and nationally.

The Development Management Committee of the South Norfolk District Council considered the Rugby Club facility as *an integrated whole* when it gave approval for the application, subject to a number of conditions. The first condition was for the development to be started within three years of approval. Part of the proposal included extending the UEA Sports Field car park adjacent to Colney Lane to meet the needs of parking for the new Rugby Club facility.

Doubts Arise

Doubts have arisen as to the Rugby Club's ability to finance the new Club facility:

UEA in its 2018/1830 application admits: "Timescales regarding when the Rugby Club will be in a position to enter into a long lease for the land are currently unknown as negotiations between the Rugby Club and the developer purchasing its current facility at Beeston Hyrne are yet to conclude."

In an EDP article on 17 August 2018 Andy Pott, the Chair of the Rugby Club, speaks of a potential situation "that massively reduces the proceeds we were anticipating from the sale of the land".

The new planning application 2018/1830

The application is being made at a time of doubt about the future of the Rugby Club facility.

The application is for permission:

1. To split the development into two phases:
Phase 1 Extending the car park on Colney Lane from 37 spaces to 111, (3 times original size).
Phase 2 The rest of the Rugby Club facility in the original approval of 2016/0233.
2. To delay the requirement of meeting many of the conditions that were placed on the original approval.

What would be the consequences if approval of 2018/1830?

- Car parking, approved on the understanding it was for the Rugby Club facility, could be built without the Rugby Club facility being built.
- In the event of the Rugby Club facility not being built, the UEA will have significantly increased car parking in “protected” green space without the very close public scrutiny that would have been given to a “stand alone” planning application for car parking.
- The existing approval of 2016/0233 is subject to a three-year time on the start date from the date of approval. Failure to meet this deadline would mean a *new* planning application would have to be submitted with all that entails for the developers. Approval of 2018/1830 would enable the developer to *claim* that by starting the car park, the deadline had been met. A start could then be made on the Rugby Club facility “sometime” or never.
- The existing approval of 2016/0233 requires many pre-start conditions to be met. Approval of 2018/1830 will remove many of these pre-start conditions for phase 1. The meeting of the pre-start conditions for the rest of the development will be “sometime” or never.
- The building of the car park before uncertainty about the Rugby Club development is resolved will limit options for changes to the development should the funds available be “massively” reduced, e.g. option of a more modest clubhouse next to Colney Lane.
- It would allow the valley to become eroded by purposeless piecemeal development.

Do you want our green space gobbled up by parked cars?

What can you do?

The original application had 251 objectors and 157 supporters. It could easily swing the other way if we do not act. Please write, before 23 September, to South Norfolk District Council to object to this application: How will the “consequences” listed threaten your enjoyment of the Valley and how might it impact on the wildlife?

More information

More information about the application can be found at <https://info.south-norfolk.gov.uk/online-applications/> then search under 2018/1830

click on documents tab

pick on document date 16 Aug 2018, Section 73 Application Statement to begin your exploration of the documents.

click on symbol on RHS to open.

Thank you for taking the time to understand this

Thank you for helping to safeguard the Valley for the enjoyment of all.