



Yare Valley Society Newsletter

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YVS Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on 20 May. George Ishmael, Landscape Architect with Norwich City Council gave a fascinating illustrated talk on the landscape and management of the Yare valley.

Marshes near Bartram Mowers

The committee were concerned that dykes and banks constructed on the marshes north of the A11 at Eaton could have an adverse effect on the landscape and wildlife. We are pleased that the landowner will manage the land and dykes under a scheme agreed with the City Council and the Ministry of Agriculture, with advice from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. The essential features of the scheme are for cattle to be grazed on the land and water levels to be maintained, with the object of enhancing the wildlife and landscape interest (potentially perhaps like Marston Marshes).

John Ayton

Changes on the Strawberry Field

You will have noticed that fences (and sheep) have appeared on the old strawberry field beside Bluebell road. The reason is that the larger part of the field has been bought by UEA for use as an experimental farm. Planning consent has been granted for a farm building in the corner of the hedgerow opposite North Park Avenue, and construction should begin this winter.

The Society has been involved in discussions both with the City planners and UEA, and we feel that there are substantial benefits from the change of use. The building will be large but cut into the bank; roof level will be below the top of the hedgerow. On the positive side are the following:

- A Countryside Stewardship agreement to

improve and create hedges

- Conservation measures (including grazing) on the adjacent marsh
- A small permaculture experiment, and 'low impact' agriculture, generally
- A signboard and provision for visitors interested in the work.

The Society welcomes these developments, but we are also pressing City planners to ensure that the use of the land and building remains strictly 'agricultural'.

John Thurman

Marston Marshes

The latest meeting with John Jones, Landscape Architect from Norwich City Council, took place on the marsh in July.

We visited the sheep, known as the 'Flying Flock', which are moved to graze different areas of pasture in Norfolk, and inspected the two ponds recently formed for educational purposes.

We were pleased to see the improved access for vehicles of disabled persons at the Ipswich Road end and discussed the possibility of providing some pathways onto the marsh and through the nearby copse that would be suitable for wheelchairs.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 23 October 1996 at the Adult Training Centre, Ipswich Road at 7.30 pm. Funding for future activities will be one item on the Agenda. These meetings are open to anyone interested in the maintenance and usage of the marsh.

May I recommend to you the booklet recently produced by the Landscape section of Norwich City Council, Nature in Norfolk, price £3, available from Reception, 2nd Floor, City Hall.

Pam Ford

Earlham Millennium Green

You may remember reading in our April newsletter

that the City Council has had its plan accepted to have Earlham Marsh near the UEA village developed as one of 1,000 village greens throughout the country, with a grant from the Millennium Fund. The Society has supported the plan which will lead to the area being managed to allow informal recreation while benefiting wildlife and the landscape, without changing the character of the area. Earlham Marsh will in fact be used as a pilot scheme for the greens in other parts of the country.

We have subsequently been asked to comment on detailed plans by the City Council. The plans show that the area will include a wetland section for wildlife, a small piece of woodland, a wildflower meadow and an open space for events and recreation, as well as improved footpaths and access via new stretches of boardwalk.

We have conveyed our enthusiasm for the plan to the Council, while asking for some additional measures such as additional access from Bridge Farm Lane; an improved way of crossing the Watton Road from Earlham Park to the riverside walk which leads to the area (preferably close to Earlham Bridge) and attention to be paid to the water quality in some of the dykes and ditches in the area which can sometimes smell unpleasant at the present time.

We are grateful to Yare Valley Society member Ron Bocking for his help with this particular item.

Steve Dawson

Norwich Area Local Plan (Keswick - Cringleford - Colney)

The Committee have examined the draft revisions to the South Norfolk Local Plan for the Norwich Area, to assess the implications for the Yare Valley. Comments have been made to the South Norfolk council to the effect that the Society supports the designation of the Yare Valley as "High Landscape Quality" but considers that the policy should give greater emphasis to the protection of the existing landscape and wildlife characteristics of the valley. The proposals for a new road and development between Colney Lane and the by-pass do not directly impinge on the Yare Valley, except that the northern section of Colney Lane (to the new hospital site) follows the edge of the valley and its improvement should be carried out as sensitively as possible to reflect the rural character of the valley.

John Ayton

Proposed NHS District General Hospital at Colney

As you will know, and in spite of much reasoned opposition, the hospital received planning permission in June. The permission was given subject to some amendments involving comparatively minor highway adjustments, changes to the appearance and landscaping of the building, and further consideration of

proposed bus services and routes to serve the new hospital.

It is the last mentioned with which we are especially concerned, although an actual decision on it is not included in the present planning application. We are concerned because the preferred option being put forward by the traffic consultants is a new bus link across the valley using the private track between UEA and the Food Research Institute.

This narrow and winding track is at present a country lane which, as you probably know, fits well into the valley landscape. As a bus route with 40-seater buses using it every five minutes (as well as cyclists, walkers and cars), the traffic consultants tell us it would have to receive a great deal of reconstruction. Together with the embankment on which it runs and its bridge over the river, it would have to be made much wider, stronger and far better lit.

This would be seriously detrimental to the character and amenity of the Yare Valley and we have vigorously objected both to Norfolk County and South Norfolk councils to any possibility of it happening. We have asked the councils to make it clear to the applicants that the bus link across the valley would be unacceptable and should not be pursued as an option.

If you want to make your own protest about this or any other aspect of the hospital application, then write to South Norfolk Planning Department before 16 October, and/or turn up at their planning meeting on that date, at which there will be public speaking rights.

Elaine Tucker

Cringleford Wood and Marsh

After a long period of seeming neglect, the wood is now being actively managed, whilst the adjoining marsh is benefiting from cattle grazing. George Ishmael tells us that the marsh should see a return of more wild flowers, including orchids.

Elaine Tucker

Anglian Water

Anglian Water is renewing its water main in the Yare valley. We have been sent plans and consider them sensible. The work will be carried out at an appropriate time in environmental terms.

Elaine Tucker

Stop Press

In spite of their strong environmental policies protecting the Yare Valley, Norfolk Planning and Transportation committee, at its meeting on 26 September, backed the possibility of the cross valley bus link. Your committee continues its vigorous protest against this. Please join us.