



Yare Valley Society Newsletter

Issue 52

July 2001

URGENT— THE VALLEY IS UNDER ATTACK AGAIN!

Firstly, good news . . . Harford Park and Ride

The new County Council is reviewing the selection of the site and is currently examining one that is less environmentally damaging than the previous choice on the prominent spur of land opposite Tesco. No doubt, we shall be kept informed. Thanks to the many who wrote to the Secretary of State asking for the original decision to go to a public inquiry. In the event he made a decision not to 'call it in' as early as 17 April, even with Easter intervening. However, the County Council was aware of the community's protest and is now doing something about it

Two matters which require immediate action

The cross valley link

Very shortly, each household should receive a leaflet and questionnaire from Norfolk County Council about the strategy resulting from the South West Sector Transport Study that has been taking place over the last year. There is much on which we will all want to comment but, as a Society, we should especially direct you to the proposals concerning a cross valley link. The questionnaire confines your opinion to whether or not there should be a bus link across the valley without describing that this would involve serious engineering works in the form of a new road and bridge—a two-lane carriageway having, so far, been declared the preferred County Council option. Moreover, in the full version of the Study's Report, it is suggested that it could become an "All Vehicle Cross Valley Link", serving as the main entrance to the University.

This is an opportunity to express your opinion on this destruction of the valley environment and the major departure from the Structure and Local Plan policies that protect it. Over the years and with the encouragement of members and many others, the Society has stated its opposition to a cross valley bus link many times. **Now you can do so individually.** Apart from the questionnaire, individuals are being specifically asked in the Study's Report for their views on a few particular issues, including the cross valley bus link. We strongly suggest you take this opportunity to **write with your views to The Director of Planning and Transportation, Norfolk County Council, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2SG, reference South West Sector Strategy, by 20 July.**

A proposed 15 ha. (about 37 acres) Research Park extension at Colney Hall

This is proposed in the Draft South Norfolk Local Plan. Again, this is a major departure from County Structure and Local Plan policies that protect the Yare valley and also historic parkland, such as the Colney estate, from inappropriate development. The proposal encompasses Colney Hall and the wooded spur of land leading down to the heronry (which some of us visited in March) and the river. It would seriously affect the unspoilt valley landscape, being visible from within the valley, from Bowthorpe and the southern bypass. There is no justification for it when suitable space in less environmentally sensitive areas is available adjacent to the existing Research Park. If you want to continue protecting our limited but beautiful valley, please write with your comments by **Friday 13 July to the Chief Planning Officer, South Norfolk Council, Long Stratton, NR15 2XE, using the following reference, South Norfolk Local Plan proposed modifications; M-EMP 3. Every letter counts!**

Summer Walk Reminder

Matt Davies from Norwich Fringe Project has very kindly agreed to lead a walk on Earham and Bowthorpe Marshes, meeting on Sunday 15 July, 2.00 pm, at the lay-by on the Watton Road below St Mary's church, Earham.

Another mast at The Loke, Cringleford

The Society has objected on the grounds of visual intrusion into the Yare valley, two masts being even more alien than one.

AGM Report

Thirty-five people attended and enjoyed an excellent talk by Dr Mike Hulme on the fact and problems of climate change and how it could affect us.

The chairman's report referred to the current problems faced by the Society (see other items in this newsletter) and the great need for us as individuals to influence decisions by writing with our opinions to the authorities involved. She also thanked our "excellent committee, always ready to put its hand to anything that needs to be done". Liz Varge our treasurer was unfortunately resigning. She was thanked for the efficient way she had handled our finances and membership over the last two years. The committee remains as previously except that Jean Ray has become our new treasurer. We warmly welcome her. Andrew Salisbury has kindly taken on the role of membership secretary.

We were reminded that our work also involved actually enjoying the valley itself— in our organised walks, the improvements we support and in the promotion of our millennium guide.

New Working Groups: an invitation to join

We don't often get members who volunteer to join the Committee—probably because it seems such a regular and on-going commitment. For this reason, and because we know that many of you have a real interest in helping the Society achieve its aims, we are now offering an alternative way for you to get involved in aspects of our activities that interest you.

The suggestion is to establish a number of working groups, consisting of several members and one or more committee members on each. These groups would meet from time to time, either to plan a particular event or to respond to a specific issue of concern. An example of how this approach has worked well in the past was the editorial group which produced the Guide to the Yare valley walk. This had equal numbers of committee members and ordinary members, worked for six months, and was an interesting and worthwhile experience for all concerned!

So volunteer please. Even if you can spare only a couple of hours every other month, we would like to hear from you.

Suggested working groups are as follows:

- ◆ Wildlife/natural history activities
- ◆ Social events
- ◆ Planning/development, concerning buildings
- ◆ Planning concerns, involving roads and traffic

If you can help, please contact John Thurman (01603 455329) or Alison Ward (01603 452330).

E-Mail contacts

We are considering whether to establish an e-mail contact group. There are no plans to discontinue this Newsletter in its present form but it would be useful to know how many members have e-mail addresses. If numbers are significant, we would propose establishing a mailing list as a way of communicating rapidly with at least a proportion of our members. It could also provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information between members. As a first step, please contact John Thurman (J.Thurman@uea.ac.uk) if you are on e-mail, and watch this space!

Articles, comments and letters for possible publication in future newsletters can be sent to Alison Ward, 20 Brettingham Avenue, Cringleford, Norwich NR4 6XG