



Yare Valley Society Newsletter

Issue 54

February 2002

Subscriptions

The new year means that the annual subscription of £1 per family is now due. Please either give this to the person who delivers your newsletter, or to a committee member, or send it to the membership secretary, at 42 Bluebell Road, Norwich, NR4 7LG.

Plea for help

We urgently need people to offer to deliver newsletters in the Colney Lane area and Church Lane area. If you would be willing to deliver a few newsletters in your immediate vicinity, please contact either Elaine on 458657, or Alison on 452330.

Second mast in The Loke, Cringleford

The mast, contrary to our earlier information, did require prior approval from South Norfolk Council on the basis of siting and appearance. In the event, this was refused and the application from Orange is now **going to appeal by written submission**. The reasons for refusal given are that '... its bulk and appearance would harm the character and appearance of this sensitive area of countryside designated as an Area of High Landscape Quality in the Local Plan ...'

If you wish to reiterate your earlier comments or add to them, your representation needs to be sent **by 15 February to the Planning Inspectorate, 3/04a Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6PN**. The Society will be reiterating its strong objection and supporting South Norfolk's refusal of permission.

Installation of benches on Yare valley walk

The two benches being given by the Society will be installed by the Norwich Fringe Project with the help of Drayton Scouts on **Sunday 3 March 2002**. You are all invited to join us at 3.00 pm that day to admire the benches and thank Matt (the Project Officer) and the Scouts for erecting them. We will meet on the Yare valley walk at the sharp bend in the river opposite Harmer Lane.

Proposed development at Earlham Park

There has been vociferous objection to the proposed hi-tech development from many quarters. We have objected to this development also and in fact our objection goes back several years to the time when it was mooted in a 'development brief'. It of course seriously affects this part of the valley.

The City is now considering all the objections made to its Deposit Local Plan. Any changes made as a result of negotiations will be included in a Revised Deposit Plan due out this summer. There will then be a Public Local Inquiry into any outstanding representations early in 2003.

South West Sector Transport

At a County Council Review Panel into the recent study, among the recommendations made is one stating that 'The Cross Valley Link will not be pursued by the County Council'. This is very good news and no doubt has been influenced by the many representations made. So thank you to you all for your worthwhile efforts! It also recommended that the Direct Access to the hospital from the bypass should be vigorously pursued. However, this proposal has now been turned down yet again by the Highways Agency. The Agency has also stopped three planning applications affecting the A47 from being approved because the data used by the South West Sector Study was considered out of date and flawed. Meanwhile there are many proposals for access to the hospital and research park in the melting-pot, some of which concern us as you will see below.

Proposed major housing development at Cringleford

This is one of the applications currently stopped by the Highways Agency. Whilst this development is largely outside the ambit of the Society, the proposal to use the link road involved to serve as a second access to the hospital would mean widening and upgrading the undeveloped part of Colney Lane that runs alongside the protected Yare valley. It would also involve another large urban-type roundabout on this part of Colney Lane, as well as development along this section. All this would seriously affect the amenity of the valley and we

have strongly objected to it. We have also expressed our concern that no provision seems to have been made for car parking for the many who come to walk in and enjoy the valley in this area.

Inquiry into proposed 15 ha extension to Norwich Research Park at Colney Hall

There is to be a Public Inquiry into this very controversial allocation by South Norfolk in its draft Local Plan. Your society has prepared a submission detailing its objection to it and has been given space to appear at the Inquiry on **Thursday afternoon, 7 February, at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton**. Support from members would be very welcome.

The UEA Farm

Members may have noticed that the UEA farm on Bluebell Road has been abandoned. This is because the University has decided to discontinue its use as a teaching and research facility, and the staff who ran it (Willie Buhler and Don Saunders) have left. We wish the two of them well. They were responsible for improving access for walkers and did some good conservation work on the marsh. There are no immediate plans for the site but we will monitor developments very closely, as this is one of the most prominent parts of the valley landscape. Meanwhile, our understanding is that the meeting room in the farm building can be booked if we or others wish to use it.

Guide to the Yare Valley Walk

Sales of the Society's booklet have now exceeded 500, and we have reprinted. Copies are still available at £1 from John Thurman, 20 Bluebell Road, Norwich, NR4 7LF. Please send an A5 self addressed envelope with a 27p stamp.

Natural history working group

Several members have volunteered to join this group which John Thurman has kindly agreed to coordinate. If you think you might be interested, do contact John to talk about it further.

Advance Notice of Annual General Meeting

Our annual general meeting will take place on Monday 13 May 2002 at Cringleford Playing Field Pavilion. The short business meeting will be followed by an illustrated talk, to be given by Steve Henson who is the Anglian Otters and River Project Officer. Our October 2001 newsletter included an article written by him. Do note this date in your diary now.

Government Green Paper on the Future of Planning

The Government published a Green Paper on the future of Planning ("Planning to deliver") in December which puts forward changes to the Planning system, according to Lord Falconer, the minister responsible, to make it much simpler, more user-friendly and easier to understand. There are a number of suggestions for reviewing the system which are unlikely to be controversial but among the proposals are the abolition of County Structure Plans, to be replaced by "Regional Spatial Strategies" prepared by regional development agencies and representatives of public, business and voluntary sectors and subject to approval by the Secretary of State. Local Plans would be replaced by "local development frameworks".

With regard to planning applications the Paper proposes reducing the number of consultations and for major applications local authorities and applicants (the developers) would be required to agree a time-table for reaching a decision.

There is also a proposal for "business planning zones" where permission for development within defined limits would not require planning permission.

Some environmental agencies, including the CPRE, while accepting a case for improving the system, have expressed concern that the objective of speeding up the system will reduce the opportunities for voluntary bodies and interest groups (including the YVS) to comment on, or object to developments.

The CBI have welcomed the proposals, while a spokesman for Friends of the Earth was quoted as saying "This is one of the biggest blows to environmental protection and democracy in the past 50 years".

Thanks to the 'Keep our hospital in Norwich' campaign

Our chairman has very recently received a cheque for £68.38 for the Yare Valley Society from the treasurer of the campaign to keep our hospital in Norwich, to whom we offer our thanks.

He states in his letter 'This sum is the remaining funds of our group, which we have agreed to give to your Yare Valley Society. The reason for you getting this money is that you are the nearest representation of the continuation of our campaign in that you are fighting to stop the County Council putting an access road to the hospital from the University over the Yare Valley'.

We are very grateful to them for this sum and assure them that the Society will continue to do all that it can to preserve the valley and oppose any cross-valley route.

Articles, comments and letters for possible publication in future newsletters can be sent to Alison Ward, 20 Brettingham Avenue, Cringleford, Norwich NR4 6X, or e-mail davidcward@ntlworld.com