



Yare Valley Society Newsletter

Issue 61

October 2003

SOCIAL EVENING

MONDAY 20 OCTOBER 2003

7.30 pm

CRINGLEFORD PLAYING FIELD PAVILION
(End of Oakfields Road)

WINE AND NIBBLES

Cost £3 per person payable at the door

The evening will give members a chance to talk informally and to raise matters of concern which can then be discussed generally. Do bring friends who might be interested in the Society.

For catering purposes, please ring Alison Ward (452330) by 15 October to indicate that you will be attending.

Wind turbines in the valley?

Thank you to all our members who responded about wind turbines in the valley. By 21 July, 85 members had responded and the results were 42 in favour of the proposed turbines in the valley and 43 not in favour. Two responses were received after that date, one in favour and one against.

South Norfolk District Council has carried out an initial survey of opinion and the response from the Yare Valley Society reflected the balance of opinion of our members, with summaries of the reasons given for the opinions as follows.

Points made in favour of wind turbines in the valley:

- There is an urgent need to generate energy by renewable means because of climate change. (This point was repeatedly made.)
- As an environmental society, the Yare Valley Society needs to set an example to Norfolk by accepting these wind turbines.
- The turbines would not be unsightly or too intrusive, especially in view of the other intrusions into the valley that are worse. Like the old windmills, they would blend into the landscape and become acceptable.
- Their benefits outweigh their disadvantages.
- Their presence may inhibit future less favourable development in the UEA area.
- Could they be painted a suitable shade of green to blend with the surroundings?

- However any additions to their number in the valley would not necessarily be welcomed. Also whether a river valley was the best place for wind was questioned.

Points made against wind turbines in the valley:

- Whilst the need for CO2 reduction was recognised, the means of realistically achieving it through wind power was seen as totally inadequate. There needed to be a drastic reduction in emissions from aircraft and the promotion of far more effective forms of energy generation such as nuclear and wave-power. These are the sort of issues that Cred should be promoting.
- The wind turbines would be a pollutant in visual terms in a small, sensitive and beautiful area that is a very important, popular and easily accessible recreational resource for the people of the Norwich area. Such areas are becoming increasingly rare and are very valuable for people's psychological well-being. The turbines would be too obtrusive: they would clutter the landscape, be out of scale with it in the heart of the valley and deface a true beauty spot.
- Statutory planning policies of all the local planning authorities strongly protect the landscape character of the Yare valley.
- Allowing some turbines in the valley could become a precedent for allowing more.
- There should be more effort to search for other sites away from the river valleys. Siting should not depend on a landowner's willingness regardless of other environmental constraints.
- One correspondent suggested the UEA car park as a site.
- There was some concern about the effect of the turbines on helicopter flights to the hospital and UEA, and also on balloon flights in the valley.

To date, UEA has not applied for planning permission for the wind turbines and has indicated that this is not likely to happen until November. When we have details of the application, we will publish an additional newsletter with the necessary information and will ask members to write either for or against it, as they feel appropriate.

Autumn Walk

Matt Davies from the Norwich Fringe Project has kindly offered to lead a walk for members of the Society in the **Charter Wood** area of the valley on **Sunday 5 October 2003**, meeting at **2.30 pm**, at **Roys Car Park, Bowthorpe**. This is a part of the valley that may be unfamiliar to many members.

According to *Nature in Norwich* produced by Norwich City Council in conjunction with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and English Nature, Charter Wood was created on 25 acres of land at Bowthorpe as part of the Norwich 800 celebrations commemorating the granting of the City's Royal Charter in 1194. 'Planning the wood involved selecting the right mix of trees and shrubs. Only locally occurring species were planted in combinations naturally found in the wild. Ultimately the new planting aims to create an oak dominated woodland with an underwood of hazel, ash, hornbeam and lime which will be coppiced regularly.'

Cross valley street lighting

In the last newsletter, we reported that Norwich City Council had given permission to UEA to erect street lighting on the part of the cross valley link that lies within the City but a condition was imposed banning motorised vehicles at certain times. UEA applied subsequently to have this condition removed. The planning committee met on 4 September; they were advised that this condition was unlikely to stand up at appeal and decided to remove it after considerable debate and a vote (10 for, 1 against and 3 abstentions).

Thank you to the many who wrote supporting this sensible condition. It was a pity that the committee had not been advised that it could be invalid before the decision was made to approve the overall proposal.

Other planning applications

These have included an extension to the **UEA cricket pavilion** to which we made no objection; extensions to the **UEA library** which are within the UEA 'development envelope' and again to which we did not object; and a **32.5 metre mast** on the edge of Colney Wood near the A47 to which we have objected unless there can be shown to be a justifiable need for it.

Yare Valley Walk Guide

Over 700 copies of the Guide have been sold since its publication by the Society to mark the millennium. It is being revised now. If you have any comments or ideas which might be included in the revised edition, please contact the editor, John Thurman