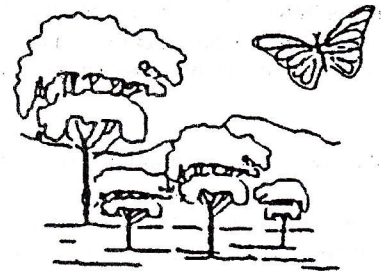


THIS
WAY
UP



Yare Valley Society Newsletter

Issue 68

August 2005

Annual general meeting 2005

Nearly 40 members attended the AGM in May which was followed by a very comprehensive look at 'What's going on in the Broads', a talk given by Dr Michael Green, Director of Research and Strategy at the Broads Authority.

In her annual report Elaine Tucker, our chairman, commented that '... this year has been a relatively quiet one because of fewer planning applications as well as the finalising and adoption of Local Plans. But we should by no means be lulled into a false sense of security, as soon there will be new long-term local plans under a new planning framework for us to digest and assess. Also, important developments are coming at UEA about which we will need to clarify our position.

'... As far as future plans for the City, including the Yare valley, are concerned, we are members of the Norwich Partnership Environmental Round Table which is producing a strategy for future development. Our own remit, of course, is to try to ensure that the river valleys continue to be truly valued as the important open spaces they are. We were, therefore, pleased when John Elbro was successful in having the valleys of the Yare and the Wensum inserted by name into the relevant part of the draft strategy.

'... On a lighter note, we have been pleased that our recommendation for a Design Award was successful for the attractive wooden buildings that blend so well with the woodland at Colney Wood Burial Park. We would like often to be more positive about developments in the valley, but developers generally want to ruin rather than enhance it.

'... There are so many others to thank too – our local councillors who continually support our efforts to protect the valley; our newsletter distributors who keep you all in touch with what is happening; the people who have led our walks; the people who kindly hosted us at their home at Keswick Mill last summer; and you for supporting us as members.

'A quote from a speech made last year by a local MP sums

up much of what we all seek to achieve, "... How important it is," he said, "for everyone to have access to peaceful riverside areas full of wildlife and other interest to counterbalance the stress and strain of urban lives." That is just what we think about the Yare valley and that is why we want to go on protecting it for the enjoyment and well-being of present and future generations.'

The following discussion document was circulated at the AGM:

Development at UEA

'The committee considered, at some length, the proposal for a multi-storey car park at the UEA but concluded that the direct effect of the building on the landscape and character of the Yare Valley was not such as to justify raising an objection. We were concerned, however, at the implications of the proposals for further development at the UEA and Roger Bond, the Estates Manager, kindly agreed to meet the committee to explain the current development plans.

'Mr Bond stressed the UEA's perception of the importance of the links between the University and the Hospital and Research Institutes in Colney and referred to the need for a new road link across the valley, at least to accommodate buses. He also explained that the multi-storey car park was required primarily to replace existing parking space (including the 'over-flow' spaces) which would be taken for the new building development, and would not add significantly to the number of available spaces on campus. He pointed to the policies now being operated to restrict parking demand on the site and the number of people who would be entitled to park on the campus.

'While not objecting to the car park, the committee are concerned at the wider implications of the University's plans which, in effect, envisage the development of any open site north of the Lasdun 'ziggurats' (which are listed and, with the parkland, in a conservation area). These proposals are based on the principle of getting as much development on the campus as possible, with no assessment of the implications of expanding and intensifying the activities of the University outside the

campus, including the environmental effects of increased traffic and congestion on the local road system, and consequently, increasing pressure for a road across the valley.'

The following recommendations were put to the AGM:

'The committee consider that the Society should urge the three planning authorities involved to consider all future developments at the UEA in the context of a comprehensive plan for the campus as a whole (rather than as piece-meal incremental developments) which recognises the importance of the Yare Valley as a green wedge between major areas of development. Specifically they should be urged:

- to oppose any developments which affect the existing open landscape of the valley, including any cross valley link road which would be substantially different from the existing roadway;
- to oppose any further development of the "Strawberry Field" off Bluebell Road, Earlham park west of the access road, the University playing fields and lands east of Colney Lane, the Blackdale school site;
- to give reassurance that the temporary structures and parking around the Sainsbury centre and east of Suffolk Walk will be reinstated to grassland as soon as current building works are completed.'

The AGM endorsed all the above recommendations but excluding the Blackdale school site.

NB. The relevant letter has since been sent to Norfolk County Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk District Council.

Pollution in the valley

Some time ago the Society was notified about pollution in a small stream underneath Cringleford flyover. Instead of being clean, it was very muddy and the stones were covered in muck. Further up-stream from a ditch that is parallel to the bypass, there was a blue milky discharge into the stream and it smelt. The Environment Agency contacted the water board and have said that they will keep an eye on the situation. If you see any signs of pollution there or elsewhere in the valley, please contact the Environment Agency, on telephone number 01473 706541.

Spring Walk

Our sincere thanks go to Glenn Collier for leading a walk in April on Eaton Common and the Keswick mill area which was enjoyed by a small group of members.

'Temporary' road between Suffolk Way and the Prospect, UEA

In September 2004, we were assured that this area would be reinstated to its original condition when construction activities were over. In fact, its width and present use as a car park were not envisaged at the outset. We have written to the City planners asking for an approximate date by

which reinstatements will take place but have not yet heard anything from them

Similarly, we have inquired about the works at the Sainsbury Centre.

UEA application for a new footpath and cycle way

This would link the triangular site at Watton Road with the track from the Food Research Institute to UEA. Whilst we have no objection to footpaths and cycle ways, it would mean even more street lighting in the valley as safety is vital.

Footpaths and bridleways at Bowthorpe

You will no doubt remember the previous efforts of Mr Jim Moore to establish rights of way along old paths at Bowthorpe. These efforts remain unabated, his aim being eventually 'to create a walkers' network around Bowthorpe into the Yare valley and back through Bowthorpe again for everyone's benefit.'

Mr Moore has a fund of information about old river crossings and in a recent letter, he painted an evocative picture of the times, that some can still remember, when people who could not afford a holiday would enjoy hot summers in the open adjacent countryside of the Yare valley, picnicking and fishing, with the very young ones paddling to fish in the shallows with fishing nets and jam jars. We hope we shall hear more from him!

Shops at Bartram Mowers, Bluebell Road

There is no further news to report at present, as the City is in further talks with the applicant.

Public liability insurance

Because litigation is so popular nowadays, the Society has had to consider this insurance. John Elbro led a discussion about it at the AGM when several points of view were put forward, varying from obtaining such an insurance (at considerable expense), to doing nothing about it as our potential liabilities were so low, with an in-between suggestion of issuing waivers when necessary. The committee is continuing to look into the matter. If you have anything to contribute to the discussion, please contact Alison Ward.

River bank news

In the spring, Colin and Maureen Forbes, have seen on or near the river, a male goosander with two females; a pair of goldeneye ducks; a pair of kingfishers; mallard ducks; a fox. From early April to the end of May, they heard and saw the cuckoo.

NB. It would be interesting to hear from other members who live near or walk in the valley, as to what wildlife they spot.

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