



Yare Valley Society Newsletter

Issue 73

February 2007

Subscriptions

Following the decision to take out public liability insurance last year, the Society has had to raise the subscription rates. The rates per household will be:

Yearly	£2
For 5 years	£8
Life membership	£20 (for new members)

Dick Phelan 1921—2006

John Thurman writes:

Dick was a longstanding member and supporter of the Society. He died in September. He will be remembered with much affection and respect by all who knew him. His record of public service in Norwich was almost without parallel. He was a City or County Councillor (and for many years both) for almost 30 years. At different times he chaired the City Planning Committee and the County Planning and Transportation Committee. He was also a member of the Broads Authority and, in 1997, chairman of the County Council. With his vast experience, Dick made regular and very pertinent contributions to the Society's deliberations. He is greatly missed as a valued member and friend and our sympathy goes to his wife Pat and the four children.

Diary date for AGM 2007

The annual general meeting of the Society will take place on Tuesday 8 May 2007, at 7.30 pm, at St Andrew's Church Hall, Church Lane, Eaton. Please make a note of the date now. After the business part of the meeting, we shall welcome David Paull, who will talk about the wildlife on Marston Marshes. Do come and learn more about a very important area in 'our' part of the Yare valley.

Cross-valley bus link

UEA has now made it clear that it intends to submit a planning application for a cross-valley bus route between UEA and Colney Lane including the Norwich Research Park and the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital.

The application will not be submitted immediately because an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has to be

carried out by the applicant first. An initial report on this by their agent (Bidwells) includes some consideration of many obvious issues. The YVS, together with other consultees, has been asked for its views on the list and to suggest any additions.

Your committee has written to South Norfolk District Council as follows:

' We have considered the list of issues put forward in your letter and also the EIA set out by Bidwells. We appreciate that the object at this stage is to identify the issues for examination in an EIA but there are a number of aspects relating to the proposal and its environmental impact which give rise to concern and to which we wish to draw attention.

'Although the proposal is for a bus link we would like clarification on the extent to which a private application unsupported by any commitment by any bus company can be constrained to be for a "bus-only" road or to vehicles of a particular size. We assume that the suggested bus link would involve the construction of a standard roadway with a significantly greater impact on the environment than the existing track. Would all other traffic be excluded and, if so, how?

'We are also unhappy with phrases like "the UEA are likely to" or "may" exercise extensions of bus use and question how this sort of flexibility can be assessed for its environmental impact. The actual nature of the physical development proposed is not clear, in that while we assume that the road will be dual track west of the bridge, this is not made explicit. Similarly, the indication that a new bridge "may" be required is not an adequate basis for an impact assessment and certainly not for a planning application.

'With regard to the issues to be examined the list in your letter and in the Bidwells document all seem to be entirely relevant, but we would like to see particular emphasis given to some in particular which are not necessarily reflected in the Bidwells approach.

‘With regard to the issues of the Landscape, the visual impact, noise, air quality and recreation we believe that these need to be considered in the context of the valley as a whole and not just the immediate local effect.

‘The Yare valley is an invaluable green corridor, much used and enjoyed by people and wildlife and needs to be protected as such. Its location sandwiched between the urban area of the city and the rapidly developing areas west of the river means that it is under increasing pressure for incremental developments which could diminish its role as a green space at a time when the need for such space is increasing. The importance of the valley is acknowledged in the current development plans and this should be reflected in the EIA (which is recognised by Bidwells but it is not included in your list).

‘The use of the valley for informal recreation will need to be fully assessed and take account of the expansion of the University and of the local population together with the attraction of the valley for visitors from wider afield. Air quality and noise will both be serious issues but difficult to assess unless there is clarification of and commitment to defined levels of traffic use. The particular form of lighting will need to be clearly defined to indicate the physical impact on the scene and the consequent light pollution.

‘There are two other aspects relevant to this proposal which we feel should be taken into account. Firstly, in the unlikely event of a road being approved, we feel that serious consideration should be given to a fifth optional route, that is the existing route which goes through the Institute of Food Research (IFR) and joins Colney Lane at a light controlled junction. This would not only serve the IFR directly but avoid the need for a new junction.

‘Secondly, we believe that serious consideration should be given to two-way use for buses of University Drive. We understand that an eighteen month trial on this is to be undertaken and, assuming this to be serious and fully resourced consider that no final decision on any cross valley link should be taken until it is completed. We appreciate that this is not directly a matter for your Council but it is critical to the question of the necessity for a cross valley road. We assume that there will be close liaison between the City, County and your Council.’

We will keep you informed about the progress of this proposal.

Second exit to UEA agreed

At the same time as the above came to our attention, at the beginning of January, we understand that UEA has agreed to open up University Drive to two-way bus traffic for an experimental 18 month period. Your Society, and many other local groups, have been pressing for this for years and strongly welcome it, as it should greatly ease the congestion on Bluebell Road. In addition the Society considers it would lessen any perceived need for a cross valley bus link.

Central Norfolk Health Walks

Carrie Kerry, the Health Walks Co-ordinator, in partnership with the Norwich Fringe Project, has asked the Society to publicise the following:

The Norwich Fringe Health Walks have recently expanded to offer around 10 weekly walks throughout Norwich, Broadland and South Norfolk. However, regular walkers still enjoy walking locally in the Yare valley area, so after a winter break to avoid the worst of the muddy footpaths we have programmed the health walks to start again in April in the Yare valley.

Regular walking can bring so many benefits, for example, keep your heart strong, reduce blood pressure, and help to manage weight, help you to sleep better, improve stamina and energy levels. Brisk walking can also lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. It also has many mental health benefits, such as improving self-confidence, reducing stress, depression and anxiety.

The aim of the health walks project is to encourage as many people as possible to do at least 30 minutes moderate exercise at least five times a week. Moderate exercise is any activity that makes you breathe a little heavier than usual, feel warmer than usual and gets the heart beating faster than usual. A simple walk is an enjoyable way to exercise, particularly if you have a cup of tea in a local café afterwards! Here are details of a couple of walks:

MONDAY 16 APRIL 10.45 am (for an 11 am START)

Meet at the St Andrew's Church end of Waitrose car park

2.8 mile walk around MARSTON MARSH

TUESDAY 24 APRIL 1.45 pm (for a 2 pm START)

Meet at Eaton Park (the golf course car park in the middle of the park)

2.2 mile walk along the YARE VALLEY

For more information and a full programme contact Carrie Kerry, the Health Walks Co-ordinator on 01603 423377.

Help with web site

Your committee is very aware that the Society does not have a web site, although a certain amount of work has already been done in this respect. If any member has the time and expertise to help get the site up and running, please contact Alison Ward (01603 452330).

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