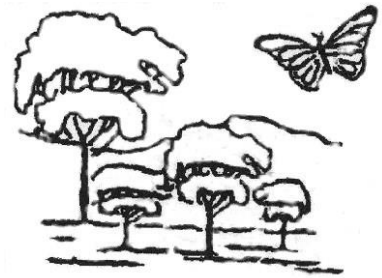


Yare Valley Society

Enhancing the Valley
for wildlife and Informal recreation



Newsletter 114 August 2022

Time to respond to McCarthy Stone Phase 3 Planning Application!

It would have been nice to report the latest planning application for the McCarthy Stone development on Bluebell Road was a model of best practice development in an ecological sensitive area. Unfortunately the proposals in the application are far from such a model.



Foreground: work on Phase 2, background: (beyond fence) Phase 3 site.

On a first look through the application, some concerns are:

The high dwelling density of the development and its design will have a serious visual impact on the landscape of the valley and will degrade environmental assets within and adjacent to the site. The high dwelling density should be reduced.

Policy R42 of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) envisaged the number of dwellings for the whole of the Bartrams Site as being “... in the region of 120 dwellings. This figure is based on an assumption that the site will be developed mainly at low densities to ensure that impact on the landscape is minimised”. The GNLP aim was to “minimise impact on the landscape of the Yare Valley and important views”, and for the development to “protect and enhance environmental assets within and adjacent to the site”.

McCarthy and Stone in their latest Phase 3 application are proposing to build 100 dwellings in Phase 3 alone. These will be added to those of Phase 1 (61) and Phase 2 (50) resulting in a total of 211, almost double the number of 120 envisaged in the GNLP. These high densities can be expected to have a detrimental effect on the environment, both visually and ecologically. The proposals breach seriously the density safeguard of the GNLP.

The Public Access green space that formed part of Phase 2, should not be degraded by a large infiltration basin. Any such basin should be incorporated within the original site area for phase 3.

While accepting that that an infiltration basin is necessary to reduce runoff into the river and limit flooding downstream, little attention seems to be given to reducing the basin size by a greater use of water permeable surfaces of drives, parking areas etc., and by use of rainwater harvesting within the site. Further reduction in runoff could be achieved by reducing the dwelling density, by retaining more of the existing vegetation, and by increasing the area of planted green space in the proposals. At the same time the site's ecology would be improved.

If the basin were to be built in the Phase 2 area, there should be a plan to show how it would be managed and integrated into the footpath and design of the public access space of phase 2.



Many mature and semi-mature trees will be removed from the site.

The UK biodiversity is generally acknowledged as being in catastrophic decline. More needs to be done on this site to enhance biodiversity and provide some “ecological gain”

McCarthy Stone's own Ecological Report makes a number of recommendations for ecological enhancement. These include "Removal of existing trees on site should be avoided where possible" and "Removal of the existing hedgerows on the site should be avoided where possible and kept to a minimum if unavoidable" The proposals include the removal of most of the relatively mature trees and shrubs in contradiction of Ecological Report's recommendations. The site tree survey suggests that many trees are not perfect specimens, but they are established, (important in drought conditions), and considerably more mature than any that are likely to be planted as part of the development.

Please take a critical look at and respond to the plans at <https://planning.norwich.gov.uk>, using application number 22/00298/F and selecting the Documents tab. The Layout Plan, Tree Survey and Ecological Report are good start points. Comment by 24th August 2022.

Your comment is essential if these proposals are to be improved.

River Path Improvements

A more welcome planning application is 22/01005/D for improving the part of the Yare Valley Walk from the present improved path near the Strawberry Field to the Flyover. At the flyover it will link with the recently completed Cringleford Meadow paths. This is to satisfy a condition laid upon Phase 2 of the McCarthy Stone development. The plans are at <https://planning.norwich.gov.uk>.



Path to be improved on a pretty stretch of the river

The improvement will be along one of the prettiest stretches of the Yare Valley Walk where at times in the year marsh type flowers such as water lilies, loosestrife, marsh buttercups, etc. can be found. At present it looks less than at its best due to nettles and rampant willow herb which obscure the river in many places. In the past it has been a section that is muddy and difficult in times of bad weather, the improved surface should encourage walkers to keep to the path and to avoid trampling neighbouring vegetation. Again, please respond to the application (by 29th August 2022) if you can see where improvements to the proposals might be made.

Cringleford Meadow Path and Car park Improvements

The City Council improvements to Cringleford Meadow are now complete except for an Interpretation Panel that is yet to be added. The new car park has a water permeable surface – take note McCarthy Stone!



Cringleford Meadow Improvements

Kett's Country Long Distance Trail ends at Yare Valley Walk: Sculpture

A sculpture marks the end point of the recently opened Kett's Country Long Distance Trail and where it joins the Yare Valley Walk as it crosses Eaton Street. The 18 mile (29 km) trail begins at Wymondham where Kett's Rebellion began in 1549. It does not follow the route of Kett's original march on Norwich but does cross the Yare at Cringleford Bridge (built 1520), which was Kett's initial approach to Norwich on his way to Mousehold Heath. There is an Interpretation Panel nearby.

Enjoy your walking!



Stories, pictures and news of activities for possible publication in the Newsletter and/or on the YVS website and Facebook are always welcome at yarevalleysociety@gmail.com.

Norwich City Council Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Consultation

Norwich City Council are “seeking your feedback and ideas to inform” their Biodiversity Strategy for 2022 to 2032 and their associated Biodiversity Action Plan.

A copy of the Strategy is available at <https://gettalking.norwich.gov.uk/biodiversity-strategy> .

The Yare Valley Green Infrastructure Corridor can be expected to play a key role in the strategy, linking as it does five of the eight Norwich local nature reserves. But there is also an opportunity to make suggestions as to how climate change and biodiversity decline can be tackled at a smaller scale. Your ideas can join the **Big Biodiversity Conversation** at <https://gettalking.norwich.gov.uk/big-biodiversity-conversation>.

The consultation ends on Wednesday 31st August 2022.

Kate Stephenson's photographs taken around the Waitrose Watermeadow and St Andrew's Church give a flavour of what needs to be safeguarded.



Kate's Blog at www.kateonconservation.com is an online space dedicated to spotlighting wildlife conservation and environmental issues worldwide.