

# Yare Valley Society

Enhancing the Valley  
for Wildlife and Informal Recreation

Newsletter 123 December 2024



While taking your Christmas walks in the Valley, please give some thought to Norwich's 10-yr Strategy to enhance its parks and green spaces. Norwich has 101 parks, gardens and green spaces across the city. They are managed by the city council's parks and open spaces team, the Norwich Fringe Project and Norwich City Services Ltd, with the support of friends' groups and volunteers.

You have until Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2025 to have your say on the proposed Strategy.

Other news is of an opportunity to join a new band of volunteers giving practical support to improving green spaces. This band will give support specifically to improving the ecology around the UEA campus.

## Have your Say:

To have your say on Norwich's parks and open spaces strategy go to [Get Talking Norwich](#). Read the draft Strategy and respond to questions on what you think about it. You can use an interactive map to comment on areas of particular interest to you.

You will see from the interactive map there are a lot of green spaces in the Yare Valley to comment on. Remember that these green spaces tell only part of the story. Much of the green space of the Valley Corridor lies outside of the Norwich Boundary in South Norfolk. What may seem like small insignificant disconnected green spaces in the Valley, become linked into the green corridor once the bigger picture is considered.

The Yare Valley Society has already contributed to formulating the new Strategy and will make further comment now a draft is available.

**Please take part in the consultation and help focus attention on the value of the improving the Yare Valley Green Infrastructure Corridor.**



## Volunteer to join the UEA Biodiversity Heroes

The new Biodiversity Officer and Volunteer Coordinator at the University of East Anglia, Nadia El-Fakhri, is putting together a list of people who would be interested in helping out on conservation work parties at UEA. Her role is new at UEA. It was created to implement the university's Green Infrastructure Strategy. UEA's aim is to conserve and improve ecologically important areas on campus for biodiversity and to involve the community in the process.

Nadia says:

"We'll be working on a few different sites across campus including areas closed to the public such as Bluebell Marsh and Lusty Hills. Tasks this winter will be things like gorse and scrub clearing, tree removal and reed cutting. In the warmer months we're hoping to do some river bank restoration, ragwort pulling (so we can continue to make hay!) and biodiversity monitoring. All training and equipment is provided and there will of course be hot drinks, treats and socials down the line when we have regular groups established."

Nadia is experienced in conservation work and was previously one of the Yare Valley Meadow Makers (YVMM). If you are interested in giving practical help to improve the ecology of

the UEA area of the Yare Valley Green Corridor, please sign up with the UEA Biodiversity Heroes [here](#).

If you have any questions you can email Nadia at [n.el-fakhri@uea.ac.uk](mailto:n.el-fakhri@uea.ac.uk).

Other volunteering opportunities are with the [Yare Valley Meadow Makers](#), the [Norwich Fringe Project](#) and the [Conservation Volunteers \(TCV\)](#).

## Work continues on McCarthy Stone Green Space



Nadia is on the left at a YVMM plant survey at UEA Meadow



Looking southwards - the meadow begins to grow

The development of the McCarthy Stone site saw a significant bite taken out of the green space of the Yare Valley corridor. To compensate, environmental conditions were placed on the planning application approval. Early in 2024 the Yare Valley Society committee became concerned about the lack of progress being made towards fulfilling the conditions. It sent a report to the Norwich City council detailing deficiencies. The council acted swiftly, and progress has been made. In October YVS submitted a second report drawing attention to what remained to be done. YVS is pleased to note that most of the promised on-site habitats such as bird boxes, bee bricks and bat boxes had been installed. So far so good, but much remains to be done including completing the planting of the green open space to the southwest of the site, the hedging on Bluebell Rd, and the openings for hedgehogs in the boundary fence erected between phase 1 and phase 2. While work proceeds there is no public access to the green space.

On the positive side the green open space has been part seeded, paths laid out and seats installed. The chance must not be missed in the present season to plant the promised trees in the green open space.

When work is completed, the increase in habitats and the landscaped green space will make a valuable contribution to local biodiversity and to accessible public green space. The green space will link with the Strawberry Field meadow, and its north and south ends will have links to the Yare Valley Walk and so increase the options for short circular walks.



Looking Northwards

## Sowers and the Reapers

Here is a volunteer team in action. The Yare Valley Meadow Makers has recently been busy preparing the ground for next year's crop of wildflowers. A lot has been done, and a large area of UEA meadows is now ready for seeding.



Sowers on the left, reapers on the right

Look beyond the workers and to the right and you will see lurking in the background "The Reapers" Three in all, they have appeared in the Sainsbury Centre Sculpture Park.

The Artist Ivan Morison says "In gaming circles Reapers are a synthetic-organic alien race, connecting us to the fear we share of the mutant monsters sure to come from human techno meddling in plant biology. ..." The works are an outcome of the artist's research residency [\*Towards the Weird Heart of Things\*](#) at The Sainsbury Centre.

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](mailto:yarevalleysociety@gmail.com).