Yare Valley Society

Enhancing the Valley
for Wildlife and Informal Recreation

Newsletter 129 September 2026

Two threats to the Valley

A Newsletter with two important messages: respond to the Planning Application for a large Care Home on the Bartram Mowers Site and be ready for the awaited planning Application for an enormous Data Centre at Keswick Triangle.

Bartram Mowers Development

Time is running out to respond to the Bartram Mowers Application. The application is by LNT Care Developments they propose a 66 bed Care home on the former Bartram Mowers site, Bluebell Road, Eaton. This is a large structure that impacts in several ways on the Yare Valley Green Corridor.

You have only until Tuesday 8th of September to respond.

View of site from the public green space in the Valley to the south - no existing green screening

The care home would occupy roughly the same footprint as the existing old Bartram Mowers building, but would be three storeys high. The Yare Valley Society is opposing the proposals in their present form because:

- The proposed scale and design would be significantly detrimental to the amenity of the local community using the green space for their well-being and recreation.
- There is a lack of firm undertakings to ensure the screening trees and shrubs immediately adjacent to the site are safeguarded for the lifetime of the building together with a management scheme for their maintenance and/or replacement as may be appropriate from time to time.
- There is no detailed lighting strategy in place which aims to minimise disturbance to wildlife.
- A Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) has yet to be produced for the site.

The Planning Application can be viewed at https://planning.norwich.gov.uk/online-applications//.

Search using the reference number **26/00652/F.** A good start point is “Documents”, and to look at Elevations Proposed, the 3D visualisations and the Landscape Master Plan. Then Explore other documents and Comments.

The Yare Valley Society submission is at https://yarevalleysociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/260825-Planning-Application-response.pdf, but please create your own comments based on your knowledge of the site, and how the changes would impact upon you.

Data Centre at Keswick

This seems to be on everyone’s minds at the moment, and for good reason. The Data Centre could have a serious and wide-ranging impact on the wildlife of the Valley and on its use as a place for informal recreation.

Almost all of us make use of data centres on a regular basis, and with the advance of AI more will be necessary, but the Yare Valley Committee are convinced the Keswick triangle of land opposite Tesco is the wrong place to put one. Its position in the Yare Valley adjacent to a key Green Infrastructure Corridor could seriously interfere with wildlife habitats, foraging and migration, and significantly reduce the amenity of the public spaces of Danby Wood, Marston Marsh, and Eaton Common. It is also isolated from opportunities to put its large heat output (in excess of 100 MW?) to useful purpose, and so the heat will be dispersed into the surrounding area, raising local temperature levels.

The Site viewed from the proposed roundabout on the Mulbarton Road in the direction of the traffic lights at Tesco (a road will be built to join the two). Note the few mature tall trees remaining on the Ipswich Road

The previous Newsletter, N128, indicates some of the other concerns. (It can be found at https://yarevalleysociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/N128-July-2026.pdf.) There we urged you to attend the pre-planning application consultation on the proposals at the Keswick Reading Rooms on the 7th of July 7. The local response was tremendous. Roads were blocked with traffic, and some people gave up trying to reach the venue. The general view seems that the consultation raised more questions than it answered.

Data Centre Research Team

Actions still being taken by various groups reflect the strength of opinion against the proposals. While these actions will help to make people aware of the proposals, the really serious work will begin when, or if, a Planning Application is published. The application can be expected to have a lot of complex detail which will need to be analysed and responded to in an effective way – all within a window of possibly as little as 21 days. To prepare for this eventuality YVS has assembled a Data Centre research Team. The Team's members have a wide range experience and expertise. They are in process of creating a Database grounded in reliable research that can be used to prepare a strong case to defend the wildlife of the Valley and its green space for relaxing recreation. It will cover all the issues raised in our N128 Newsletter and more.

The Site viewed from the Northeast. The removal of what would have been mature tall screening trees on the Ipswich Road does not augur well for what might be in the Planning Application

A big thank you to those who have joined the Team and also to all who have sent emails to contribute to the Database. If you have firm evidence of the existence of endangered wildlife in Danby Wood, on Marston Marsh or on Eaton Common please let us know at yvs@yarevalleysociety.org.uk.

Once the database has developed sufficiently it will be made available online at https://yarevalleysociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/260902-Year-Valley-Society-Data-Centre-Team-1.pdf as a work in progress. In the meantime, instead of the Database you will find an excellent overview of the issues that need to be addressed. The overview was provided by a supporter of the Team, Adrian Porter.

Once in place, the database will be available to be used by anyone preparing their own response to the Application. Tell your friends and neighbours!

AGM 2026

Thank you so much for a well-attended AGM in June even though it was a) rather warm and b) the night of an England World Cup match against Croatia!

Those present heard a heartfelt plea from the Committee for not only new members to spread the word about our beautiful space, but also for members to consider joining the Committee. It's an open secret that we are finding it difficult to cover all the bases these difficult times present. The current Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer and Secretary were all re-elected. All of us would very much welcome new input from other members old and new.

We were delighted to be regaled by the tale of the chase and eventual success of the joint bid by UEA and YVS for funds to reinstate, improve and upscale the Boardwalk along the Yare leading from UEA Broad to Strawberry Field. Justine, Orla and Tom from UEA told us about the history of the funding bid, the background to the environmental works and what has been happening so far ahead of the main build this Autumn/Winter and the hugely anticipated re-opening in Spring 2027.

This has been a truly wonderful project to be a part of and the team at UEA worked so diligently and with such understanding of the varied needs of the valley that each meeting for the Committee was a total pleasure to be a part of.

Colney Hall Planning Application

Back in June, just after the AGM, a planning application was received by South Norfolk District Council for a "*Screening Opinion pursuant to Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) for proposed Specialist retirement village and integrated care community*"

In simple terms this is a request by an applicant to be able to NOT provide an Environmental Impact Assessment regarding a potential development. If you would like to look in to this further the application reference with South Norfolk is 2026/1846

Many organisations, including your YVS, made representations stating the various reasons why any proposed development on the Colney Hall site should absolutely necessitate an Environmental Impact Assessment. Being bounded on three sides by the Yare chalk-stream is quite a resounding reason in itself!

Within a few weeks (and before the Screening Opinion had been decided) a full application had been submitted for 119 specialist later life living units (restricted to occupiers aged 55 and over) and an 80-bed specialist dementia care home. The reference with South Norfolk for this application is 2026/1959.

Again, and with reiteration, MANY organisations (including your YVS) have objected to this application including the local NHS who have drawn attention to the fact that another care home is under application only a mile or two up the road which will draw on the same scarce resources… albeit under a different council's jurisdiction (the Bartram Mowers site on Bluebell Road with Norwich City Council)

Please do look at these planning applications and consider informing the Councils of your views as they materially affect the ability of the Yare valley to do its job - taking care of the surroundings, keeping our land safe from flooding and our eyes, ears and the river itself free from pollution.

Eaton Eco Fair 19th September 2026

The Yare Valley Society will again have a stand at the Eaton Eco Fair. Come along and give your support. You will find us in the Church on Saturday 9.30 to 2.00 pm.
Amongst other things, it will be a chance to talk about the proposed Data Centre and hear about how we are preparing for the expected Planning Application.

If you know of firm evidence of the existence of endangered wildlife in Danby Wood, on Marston Marsh or on Eaton Common please come along and tell us.

See you there!

With all that is going on at the present time our small committee is under great pressure to meet the demands made upon it. Please consider giving your support by offering to join us.

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