

Chairman's Report 2014

Andrew Salisbury writes as follows:

I must begin my report by saying that it is very satisfying to have such a dedicated committee. I especially wish to thank Alison Ward our secretary for the way she has looked after our newsletters and business meetings. Her common sense, dedication and perfection in all she does have been appreciated by all.

The biggest thank you must go to the dedicated people who deliver our newsletters. This is a tremendous help to us as it keeps us in touch with our members and saves postage as well.

In some ways this has been a quiet year with few applications to build.

Norwich City Council are developing a large site in Bowthorpe some of which is close to the Yare river. We were concerned that insufficient thought had been given to making the site attractive from the river and the Council took on our views and modified the plans to make a softer more attractive aspect.

The University put in plans to develop Earlham Hall and the area near it. Earlham Hall is being restored and the new site seemed to us to be worthwhile and did not impinge on the river valley. We did however have very strong concerns about the use of the car park. This is used extensively by those walking in the park and the original university plan was to make over the car park to the university. After some consultation and representations by us and planners a satisfactory solution has been reached which allows visitors to the park to use the car park and allow short stay visitors to UEA to use it as well.

Cringleford has produced a local plan and it is an excellent publication. Our only concern was that there was insufficient emphasis on river walks in the Cringleford Parish and we responded accordingly. The Cringleford Plan has been accepted and is now part of the planning process. It is more difficult for developers to build in a way which does not conform with the local plan. The society was invited to the opening of the new and spacious village hall and we took the trouble to put on a display to show the work we do. It was by far the best display and we have the display here this evening.

The Norwich Research Park is mainly quite away from the river except at Colney Hall. We have kept an eye on the Park but only so far as it impinges on the river valley. We

were invited to a meeting with Dr Nick Goodman in which he put forward the NRP plans for the future. This has resulted in John Thurman attending the NRP Management Liaison meetings.

We were consulted by the NRP over an application to place an underground cable linking the NRP and UEA for the benefit of both. This has been carefully thought out and we did not object but rather encouraged the venture which has virtually no impact on the river valley. The University continues to expand and we have been warned that there is still a possibility that the Yare Valley river crossing may still be sought. We need to keep vigilant over plans the university has for encroaching on the river valley.

We have invited local politicians to our committee meetings and so far have had Garry Wheatley, a Cringleford South Norfolk Conservative Councillor, Simon Wright South Norfolk Liberal Democrat MP, Adrian Ramsay the Green Party national deputy leader and Bert Bremner a Norwich City University Ward Labour Councillor. This has been a useful addition to our usual activities.

An application on the Bartram site for the Old Saddlery for a change of use from retail to children's nursery has been passed by the City Council. There were very strong concerns especially about safety and traffic considerations expressed by some of the councillors at the planning meeting at which I attended and spoke. Some members of our committee were worried that further developments could take place on the site and that the project could be the thin edge of a wedge leading to more piecemeal developments being allowed. Since then an application has gone in to ask for a portacabin behind the Saddlery.

There are plans to change the road layout where the Mulbarton Road meets the Ipswich Road. It appears that the idea is to divert the Mulbarton Road to meet the Ipswich Road at the Tesco traffic lights which would allow some development towards the city. This is in its early stages.

At present there is a lull in building applications but this will not last. We have a committee ready and willing to respond to any proposals that could affect the landscape and recreational use of this lovely valley which is so important for this area.

We just wish that one or two extra committee members from Cringleford or Keswick would come forward. We are not an awesome bunch, meeting about four times a year, and you would be very welcome indeed.