



Yare Valley Society Newsletter

Issue 83

May 2011

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 23 JUNE 2011 at 7.30 pm

CRINGLEFORD PLAYING FIELD PAVILION
(off Oakfields Road)

Following the short AGM

PROFESSOR PHILIP JONES
Director of Climatic Research Unit, UEA

***'OUR CLIMATE IS CHANGING AND
WHY WE ARE RESPONSIBLE'***

Non-members welcome on payment of £2.50 at the door

Draft Localism Bill

The new Localism Bill which is presently going through its initial stages has caused the committee some concerns. It was agreed that we write to our local MPs. Below is a copy of the letter which we sent.

“Our main concerns about the proposed bill are about issues which overlap or extend wider than a defined “neighbourhood”. This applies to the valley of the river Yare and particularly to the section from Harford to Bawburgh. This affects several county parishes and city wards. Decisions about developments at the University of East Anglia, any part of the Norwich Research Park and other sites such as Bartram Mowers in Eaton can affect Cringleford, Colney, Keswick, Eaton, Earlham and Bowthorpe and also a wider community for whom protection and development in the valley are important concerns.

“It is important that any new system acknowledges that some important developmental, environmental, ecological and recreational issues go beyond narrowly defined neighbourhood boundaries. The management of such issues should be made both clear and transparent and be firmly decided by the local communities. It is not clear how this is addressed in the draft bill and we would ask for clarification on this point.

“Could a neighbourhood or community be smaller than an urban ward and will a referendum be open to anyone on an electoral roll? We would also like to know if there are differences between “neighbourhoods” and “communities” and what the differences are. We would wish to be reassured that the definition of a “neighbourhood forum” would exclude the possibility that a small group of vested interests could become a “forum” and impose a scheme that did not have the support of the majority of local people.

“We would appreciate your comments on these points.”

At present we are awaiting a reply from Richard Bacon and have received a comment about issues from Simon Wright. The issues are quite complex and most of the decisions about the Localism Bill are still being decided.

Application to build where the Yare meets the Wensum

An application has been entered for building on this site. Not all the site is available for building as it is low lying. The density of the buildings is a concern for the Society even though the area is outside our usual remit. Below is a copy of our letter which was sent to the City Council, the South Norfolk Council and the Broads Authority.

“We are pleased to see that it has been accepted by the proposed developers that the rivers and river valleys are of great importance not only for their visual landscape and aesthetic value but also for their recreational value. We hope that the cycle way is given priority over development on other parts of the site.

“The area is outside our usual remit but we are not convinced that the application improves the management of the adjoining County wildlife site. The area in the north east corner not only is contaminated but is also particularly intrusive into the Yare riverside especially when viewed from Whitlingham. The development would have a detrimental environmental and visual impact on the Broads Area especially as the proposal has buildings of four to eight storeys high. This must surely be considerably higher than the previous industrial buildings.

“It appears that the site would be considerably over developed in the areas where building is possible and would replace the ‘country’ local landscape character of the river valleys with much more urban aspects especially as viewed from the Whitlingham Broads and the cycle routes.”

On-going discussions continue about sites available for development

Below are some sites over which we have concerns:

Bartram Mowers

The City Council has repeated its assertion that there should be no extra buildings on the Bartram site. We wrote supporting the Council view.

UEA Land between Suffolk Walk and Bluebell Road

The university master plan has identified that this site may be needed to meet growth needs up to 2030, most likely for residential uses. ... This site allocation plan runs to 2026. It asserts that

“the visual setting of the southern elevations of the Prospect must be protected

“the sloping topography of the site, which presents an opportunity for the use of innovative, sustainable design to minimise the visual impact and maximise environmental performance

“respect the settings of adjacent listed buildings and the Broad

“protect existing planting where appropriate” public access.... must be retained

“since the proposal involves the loss of existing open spaces, any development must include the opening up of new areas for public access to compensate. This could be the Strawberry Fields or land to the south of the river Yare”

We made the comment that most of the points made in the UEA submission spell out clearly and unambiguously that this site should remain undeveloped.

“It is an essential part of the parkland setting near the Broad and the visual setting of the southern aspects of the Prospect undoubtedly would be impaired.

“Opening up the Strawberry Field or other land in the valley would not ‘compensate’ for the intrusion of development into the site south of Suffolk Walk because these areas are already open and integral elements of the valley. Improved access is already highly desirable.”

The City Council put forward a plan in which all the building is close to the Prospect and leaves the Broad and its open aspect unaltered.

Earlham Hall

We made the points that:

- 1) There was no mention of additional car parking or of restricting car parking to those using the park
- 2) It is important that the use of the Hall itself is clearly stated in any planning submission
- 3) Their last comment should read “Environmentally sensitive design is absolutely essential in this parkland setting.”

Exciting wildlife sightings

Colin Forbes reported that last year, they saw as many as five cormorants sitting in the trees on the island in the Yare in Eaton. At Christmas time they witnessed an otter splashing around and thought that there might well have been another one in the vicinity. For the first time, at the beginning of March, they saw an egret at the edge of the river. *It is always interesting to receive news of members’ wildlife sightings.*

Walks in the valley

Norfolk Health Walks are advertising the following walks in the valley: Friday 27 May Eaton; Tuesday 31 May Bowthorpe Marsh; Friday 10 June Earlham: Bluebell Road and Yare Valley Walk; Tuesday 14 June Earlham Park Walk; Monday 27 June Earlham: River and Broad; Friday 1 July Eaton; Monday 11 July Marston Marsh; Monday 1 August Earlham Park Walk; Friday 5 August Earlham: Park and Broad; Monday 15 August Eaton. For full details, please contact Karen Hopes 07825 833538, or e-mail cityhealthwalks@gmail.com, or look at their website www.activenorfolk.org/fittogether

Articles, comments and letters for possible publication in future newsletters can be sent to Alison Ward 20 Brettingham Avenue Norwich NR4 6XG or yvs@talktalk.net