



Yare Valley Society Newsletter

Issue 75

October 2007

ELAINE TUCKER

Many of you will have learned of the sad news that Elaine Tucker, chairman of the Yare Valley Society until earlier this year, died on 4 August 2007. She was a delightful, caring, amusing person who put endless time and energy into the organisations with which she was connected, whether it was Holy Trinity Church, Cringleford Parish Council, Books Plus or the Yare Valley Society.



Elaine was born and brought up in South Wales, where she gained her professional Town Planning qualifications after graduating with an honours degree in geography from London University. At the Service of Thanksgiving for her life, we learned that she was the first woman to win the national George and Amy Pepler award for professional practice. During the fourteen years when she was chairman, our Society benefited greatly from this expertise. Her reports as chairman and 'Summary of Activities' which she presented at each AGM are good indicators of the amount of time and application she spent on matters connected with protecting the valley. She was an excellent envoy of the Society at meetings but particularly at planning committee meetings and planning appeals. At all times, she was extremely well prepared and put forward the arguments to safeguard the valley in a gentle and courteous but firm manner. Under her chairmanship, the Society grew to over 400 members and has become widely recognised and respected by local people, planning authorities and developers alike.

Her lasting memorial is the beautiful green space of the river valley, easily accessible to walkers on the fringe of the city. Her energy, wisdom, persistence, and wonderful Welsh charm, played a vital part in protecting this area, and her infectious enthusiasm for the cause has ensured that the Society will continue her work.

As a mark of gratitude for all Elaine's work, the committee in conjunction with the Norwich Fringe Project is planning to put a seat in the Yare valley together with a tree and commemorative plaque. If any members would like to make a donation towards this, please send your contribution to the YVS treasurer at 9B Poplar Avenue, Norwich NR4 7LB, or to any committee member (cheques made payable to the Yare Valley Society).

The cross-valley road link at UEA

The University is expected to make a planning application soon for the controversial bus link between UEA and Colney Lane.

Several discussions have taken place between UEA and community stakeholders (including our Society) about the idea in principle and about various alternative routes. An environmental impact assessment is being carried out.

Local opinion is divided. Our Society, many local residents, the Norwich Society and some Councillors oppose the link because it would further erode the green space of the valley by increasing noise, light and traffic in this tranquil area. Other residents, bus operators and some Councillors favour it because it would reduce journey times between UEA and the Hospital/ Research Park and reduce congestion on the Earlham Road.

Our view is that a better solution is to avoid the Fiveways roundabout by allowing 2-way bus operation on University Drive. We regret that the recent changes there were not sufficiently well resourced to accommodate buses.

The cross valley route which seems the most likely (least worst) subject of a planning application, follows the present roadway from the Sainsbury Centre, to a newly strengthened river bridge and, possibly, a new bridge for cyclists and pedestrians. Then, a widened carriageway takes the present route towards the Institute of Food Research and a new road skirts the IFR boundary to join Colney Lane at a new junction opposite the John Innes Institute. Other routes are still 'on the table' and members who want more detail could contact either John Thurman or John Elbro.

When plans are submitted (to both City and South Norfolk Councils) we will make our views very clear and hope individual members will do the same. There are important principles at stake and we regard the scheme as the thin end of a dangerous wedge.

Greater Norwich Growth Point Area Green Infrastructure Strategy

Sorry about the heading – but that is what it is known as! Here are some brief explanations:

Norwich Growth Point: In 2006 the Government identified the Greater Norwich Area as a growth point area. The draft East of England Plan sees the built up area of Norwich increasing in population from the present 200,000 to 280,000 by the year 2021. The government recognises the population growth will put pressure on the natural environment, and to anticipate this, the government has promised money for improvements to the “Green Infrastructure”.

Green Infrastructure: is “a natural life support system providing benefits for people and wildlife” It includes natural and managed greenspaces, together with the links

between greenspaces provided by footpaths, cycleways, green corridors, and waterways.

The Yare Valley Society has been involved in early consultations, and has submitted details of three projects that would improve the Green Infrastructure:

- **The Yare Valley Walk** – To complete the walk from Bawburgh Mill to Whitlingham Country Park;
- **The South Norwich Cycle Loop** – To link the National Cycle route on Marriot’s Way via the UEA and the Yare Valley to Whitlingham Country Park where it would rejoin the National Cycle Route.
- **The Yare River Parkway** - To establish a unified management of the river corridor’s wildlife and recreational assets, and of their relationship with the adjacent urban and rural areas.

Will our projects be included in the Green Infrastructure Strategy? Wait and see – the Strategy will be out for public consultation by the end of the year.

Colney Research Park Guidelines

The committee has responded to a consultation by South Norfolk DC on draft Guidelines for the development of the Research Park at Colney, which includes land around Colney Hall.

We have welcomed the approach which provides for substantial landscaping and screening for the main part of the Park, south of the Watton Road, which does not impinge directly on the Yare valley. We have, however, reiterated our view that we are not convinced that any significant development at Colney Hall can be undertaken without detriment to the setting of the Hall or intrusion into the valley landscape. The Guidelines provide strict criteria for any development at the Hall, and in the Rose Garden and Walled Garden, which is welcome, but we believe the Guidelines for development at the Pumphouse and, particularly, the Plantation should be more restrictive. The risk of intrusion into the valley landscape is most serious at the Plantation and it will be important to define a limited area, with provision for a substantial and effective tree screen and the maintenance of tree planting and landscaping within the 'envelope'.

The Guidelines also contain a reference to a "potential improved sustainable link" across the valley between the UEA and the Research Park. We have pointed out that any significant "improvement" to the existing cycle/pedestrian link would be a damaging intrusion into the valley and therefore not "sustainable" in terms of the Government's definition.

Stop Press: We need a newsletter distributor in the Leng Crescent area. Can you help? Please ring 452330.

Articles, comments and letters for possible publication in future newsletters can be sent to Alison Ward, 20 Brettingham Avenue, Cringleford, Norwich NR4 6XG