



EECAS NEWSLETTER

East of England Civic & Amenity
Societies

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Website: <http://www.cambridgeppf.org/eecas/>

Message from the Chairman

Civic Voice subscription

On 16 January several of the former Civic Trust regional chairs met with some of the Civic Voice trustees. The main purpose of the meeting was to give advice on the level of subscription member societies pay to Civic Voice. Concern was expressed at the current level, which was said to be high compared with comparable organisations and was felt to be deterring a significant number of societies from being members. On the other hand, it was recognised that Civic Voice needs the income, and the Board has now decided not to make any change to the subscription level for the coming year. When Civic Voice was formed, its then director abolished the old regional structure. There is now talk of reviving it in some form, and it was agreed to have another meeting to discuss this.

Historic Environment Forum

Some of the things I learnt at the January meeting of the Forum:

- The new strategic framework for the [Heritage Lottery Fund](#) kicks in in April, but some calls for applications are already open. Existing programmes have been renamed: there are opportunities for small, medium or large grants, as well as various special initiatives.
- The [Historic Houses Association](#) intends making the public more aware of opportunities to visit its houses and gardens.
- The interaction of our Local Enterprise Partnerships with third-sector and heritage organisations is variable. The [Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP](#) has a volunteer/social-enterprise sub-group, and the [New Anglia LEP](#) is working with the Norfolk and Suffolk [Local Nature Partnership](#).
- The Regional Spatial Strategy, whose life had been prolonged as a result of legal action, formally ended its life on 4 January. A recent [report](#) by Lord Matthew Taylor recommends creating new guidance for areas introduced by recent planning reforms, such as the Localism Act and the National Planning Policy Framework.

East of England is an Innovation Leader

Along with SE England, our region is among the 41 EU regions that appear in the recent [Regional Innovation Scoreboard](#). The most innovative regions in the EU are typically in the most innovative countries: Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Finland. In Germany, 12 out of 16 regions are innovation leaders. In Finland 3 out of 5 regions and in Sweden 5 out of 8 regions are innovation leaders.

Safety and alcohol

I spent 30 November at a meeting at Addenbrookes hospital with experts from the NHS, the police, local authorities and the licensed trade, discussing alcohol and its effect on community safety and on road accidents. The main theme of the meeting was making better sharing, and use of, data. Among the points made:

- Addenbrookes has been designated as the major trauma centre for the East of England. It was created because in the UK trauma patients have a 20% greater chance of dying than in the US. Up to 800 people every year receive major traumatic injuries in this region.
- Country roads are particularly dangerous. Cycling increases life expectancy, in spite of the risk of accident.
- Resisting pub closures is a mistake. Usually they close because they have been badly run for several years. Alcohol consumption outside the home has decreased considerably, because of affordability and the smoking ban.
- 7000 people in Cambridgeshire aged 18 to 75 are "alcohol dependent".

Heritage Counts

This year's Heritage Counts was launched on 21 November. There is a [summary for the East of England](#).

Incorporating wellbeing and behaviour change in policy decisions

Some points from a lecture given by former Cabinet Secretary Gus O'Donnell:

- "Behavioural economics" is in its infancy. Taking account of how people make decisions can have huge pay-offs.
- 70% of illnesses result from what people do to themselves, so a larger fraction of the health budget should be allocated to influencing behaviour. Mental illness is a big issue. If people can be got back to work sooner they pay income tax rather than costing the health service money.
- [Happiness data](#) from the Office for National Statistics show that people with access to the countryside are happiest, and the quality of the built environment has a significant impact. People hate commuting, or being in a room with their boss. People who volunteered to help with the Olympics found it had dramatic effect on their happiness level.
- A cost/benefit analysis needed to decide airport strategy has to face how to put a value on noise, and on time needed to travel to the airport. In evaluating the benefit of high-speed rail, one must realise that shorter journeys give less time for business people to catch up on their work.
- How does one value the future relative to today? This comes into decisions on climate change and on how much to save for retirement.
- Persuading people to be more honest with their tax returns and claims benefits can give huge savings. It turns out to be more effective to make them sign their declarations at the beginning of a form rather than at the end.
- Tax payment is speeded up if people are told that others in their locality have already paid, and if the demand is not in a brown envelope.

A new [report on national well-being](#) was published on 21 November.

Please feel free to email me about suggestions and issues that concern you

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Chairman, East of England Civic and Amenity Societies

The Economic Benefits of Conservation Areas.



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Research commissioned by English Heritage and carried out by the London School of Economics (LSE) in 2012 has proved the value of conservation areas. The extensive research found that houses in conservation areas sell for a premium of 23% on average and that there is also a premium (albeit less) for properties outside conservation areas closely located to a conservation area. They also found that amongst Conservation Area residents that there was no universal negative attitude overall toward planning regulations. See:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/research/social-and-economic-research/value-conservation-areas/>

Ash Die-back has hit the Eastern Region Hardest.



Forestry Commission

The Forestry Commission has produced web pages providing useful information on Ash Die-back, including how to identify infected trees. See: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara>

It is clear that a very large proportion of the notified outbreaks in the wild are located in the eastern region, as can be seen from their map:

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/UK_outbreak_map-13-02-25_Map2b.pdf/\\$FILE/UK_outbreak_map-13-02-25_Map2b.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/UK_outbreak_map-13-02-25_Map2b.pdf/$FILE/UK_outbreak_map-13-02-25_Map2b.pdf)

Protecting the Greenbelt



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
Standing up for your countryside

The CPRE are running a campaign against the loss of Greenbelt land to development, they say that: "Although the Government's National Planning Policy Framework appeared to maintain protection for Green Belts, they are increasingly coming under threat as a result of pro-development and economic growth policies in the document.

"References were made to the need for 'significant weight' to be placed on the need to support 'economic growth', together with suggestions that planning controls like Green Belts are an 'impediment' to such growth. Local authorities

are also coming under pressure from Government Planning Inspectors to allow building in the Green Belt to meet new targets for supplying land for housing.

“CPRE and our network of local branches are campaigning to protect our existing Green Belts and even create new ones. We are challenging the misguided idea that building on the Green Belt will solve the housing shortage and create economic growth.”

Details on the Campaign can be found on their website at:

<http://www.cpre.org.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-planning/green-belts>

A ‘Parliamentary Briefing’ on Greenbelt issues can be found at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/sn00934.pdf>

The Norwich Society Creates a ‘Local List’ of Significant Buildings.

The
Norwich
Society



The Norwich Society have been working on a Draft Local List. This is a record of buildings in the City that, although not officially ‘listed’ by English Heritage for their national importance, are of local significance. All the buildings selected contribute to their area’s sense of place by a combination of their architectural or historical significance, or by being of use to the

community. Some are local landmarks. Over the past three years teams of volunteers have compiled a list of buildings drawn up with the help of one of the City’s Conservation Officers. English Heritage has approved the methods, and a panel of experts has reviewed the draft list. They now hope that the list may be adopted by the City Council as part of the emerging Local Plan.

Please see their webpage at:

http://www.thenorwichsociety.co.uk/html/local_listing.html

From the e-Newsletter Editor:

Please e-mail or call me with news and articles from your area for the next issue:



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