



EECAS NEWSLETTER

East of England Civic & Amenity Societies

Issue: June 2011

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

Message From The Chairman

Land Use

Two or three years ago I attended an all-day meeting of an organisation called Landscape East, where agriculture was not mentioned all day. The previous year the then government had issued a document on food security, in which growing our own food got little or no mention. Farmers are being encouraged to convert part of their land to wildlife habitats, and our region has more than one project to convert large areas of agricultural land to other ecological uses. The debate on the balance between agriculture and the environment is now being encouraged by the new Natural Environment White Paper, <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/whitepaper/>, in which the government promises to “work with the farming industry to reconcile the goals of improving the environment and increasing food production”. A few days before, the Secretary of State for the Environment had launched the findings of the UK National Ecosystem Assessment, the first analysis of the UK’s natural environment in terms of the benefits it provides to society and continuing economic prosperity.

Local Enterprise Partnerships

These matters are, of course, particularly important in our region. The new Local Enterprise Partnerships are committed to creating a very large number of new jobs, as many as 160,000 for the Greater Cambridge and Peterborough LEP alone, and this will need a lot more land to be devoted to houses and to business premises. We need to convince the LEPs to give attention not only to increasing our home-grown food supply, but also to preserving and enhancing the region as an attractive place in which people want to live so that we can compete most effectively for the very scarce resource of the highly-skilled people needed to operate our knowledge-based economy.

Future Housing

We already have a serious shortage of homes. Many factors other than increased economic activity are additionally leading to a rapid increase of the region's population. Among them is the quite alarming (to most of us) increase in life expectancy. Recently the Office for National Statistics announced that a quarter of under 16s can now expect to live to 100. At a recent meeting of a new organisation called Future East, we shared our experience of the difficulty of getting planners and developers to think of the need to design homes and communities to allow us all to stay out of care homes for as long as possible. This does not need a lot of money to be spent, just getting people to think about simple things that should be done. See <http://www.damtp.cam.ac.uk/user/pvl/PLANNING OUR FUTURES/>

[A14](#)

My own most recent attempt to bring this to the attention of developers met with the response that they have other more important things to think about, particularly the problem of the A14. The new government's decision to cancel its £1 billion A14 upgrade has led to the Highways Agency placing severe restrictions on any new development that would cause traffic to increase on its more congested parts. The A14 is of considerable national importance: it carries traffic from Felixstowe to and from all over the country, even Northern Ireland. And the combined capacity of the Felixstowe and Harwich container ports is planned to nearly double over the next decade or so, while work has begun to develop the former refinery site at Shell Haven in Thurrock, Essex into a new world-class container port. The Department for Transport is supposed to be leading a study on how to upgrade the A14 without spending a lot of money, but my own view, having worked for the last 6 years with the region's local transport authorities and the Highways Agency, is that at best this will lead to only a small contribution to solving the A14's problems.

[Localism Bill](#)

The Localism Bill is going through parliament and it is time to begin to try to generate enthusiasm among communities for generating their neighbourhood plans. Otherwise, there is a danger that this will be left to business. In Cambridge, we are organising a teach-in in the evening of Thursday 14 July. Details are below and at:

http://www.cambridgeppf.org/documents/poster_14.7.11.pdf.

All are welcome, but please register with planning@cambridgeppf.org.

[Energy Use](#)

According to the BBC farming programme on 10 June, this year some areas of the region already have a 100 mm rainfall deficit. Compare this with last year's total rainfall of 527 mm in Cambridge, for example. Whether or not this is a manifestation of climate change, it seems sensible for us all to make a real effort to use less energy. In any case, the Climate Change Act of 2008 requires the country to reduce its carbon emissions by a huge 80% by 2050. Although there has been a lot of emphasis on making new homes highly energy-efficient, this will have very small impact: it is existing buildings that we have to worry about. A fifth of our houses are more than 100 years old, and less than a fifth are under 25 years old, according to a recent talk by Helen Mulligan,

http://www.cambridgeppf.org/vision/2/mulligan_19.5.11.pdf. The obstacles are considerable: a discussion by a group of the RSA identified the main ones as cost and the lack of consistent trustworthy advice. And if we spend the money we save on fuel in our houses on other things, we may actually cause more carbon emission, particularly if it is on increased air travel. See http://www.cambridgeppf.org/vision/2/rsa_13.4.11.shtml

[Olympics](#)

At the meeting on 7 June of the region's Historic Environment Forum, we were told that the region will host two Olympics sports, mountain biking at Hadleigh Farm in Essex and white-water canoeing at Broxbourne. The region will also host six Torch Relay evening celebrations, at Peterborough, Norwich, Ipswich, Chelmsford, Cambridge and Luton. The Torch will take circuitous routes between these locations and so visit many other places and nominations are welcomed for people to take part.

See www.risingtothechallengeeast.co.uk/ for an overview of what will be happening in our region and information on how to get involved. Note that, if you want to organise something, it might be possible to get funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund: See www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/whatwefund/2012Olympics/Pages/2012Olympics.aspx.

Historic Environment Forum

Among other things that were mentioned at the Historic Environment Forum were:

- According to its new regional director Richard Powell, the National trust is devolving power down to its property managers, helping them by operating an internal consultancy. Among the priorities are bringing places to life, for example by removing ropes, and getting closer to nature. In particular, the MyFarm project will help people reconnect with farming and learn more about how food is produced.
- This year's theme for Heritage Counts is Big Society and Heritage. The Environment Agency will produce a two-page document for the region and invites case studies reflecting successes. Contact Natalie.Gates@english-heritage.org.uk by the end of June.
- Concern was expressed at local authority cuts in archaeology and conservation. These will take serious effect next year. Meanwhile, in its National Heritage Protection Plan, English Heritage undertakes to make best use of its resources so that England's vulnerable historic environment is safeguarded in the most cost-effective way at a time of massive social, environmental, economic and technological change.
- The Heritage Lottery Fund's regional budget this year is £8.6 million, of which about £6 million is for grants of over £50k.

Please feel free to email me about issues that concern you.

Peter Landshoff: pvl@damtp.cam.ac.uk
Chairman
East of England Civic & Amenity Societies



Sudbury Society Exhibition

Sudbury Society is holding an exhibition in the Sudbury Library (Market Hill, Sudbury) from 25 June for a week, maybe longer, as their contribution to Civic Day and in collaboration with the library. The exhibition will celebrate the Corn Exchange, which escaped demolition thanks to a local campaign and was converted in 1968 into the main library; gaining a Civic Trust Award in 1971. The Society is making an Architectural Award for its fine restoration. The campaign led to the formation of the Society in 1972.

Contact: Stephen Thorpe - 01787 881661 - stephenjthorpe@btinternet.com

Teach-in on localism and planning

Thursday 14 July at 6.30 for 7 pm

Centre for Mathematical Sciences, Wilberforce Road

Cambridge CB3 0WA

Introductory speakers:

- Kelvin MacDonald** (University Department of Land Economy)
- Patsy Dell** (Head of Planning Services, Cambridge City Council)
- Sean Traverse-Healy** (Cambridgeshire CPRE)

Breakout groups: *Neighbourhood plans: how can the citizens of Cambridge and the surrounding villages take advantage of the planning provisions of the new Localism Bill?*

Meeting closes 9.30 pm



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Email planning@cambridgeppf.org

Alternatively, telephone Nigel Bell 01223 243830 x 205

The Moon Under Water?

The poet Hillaire Belloc (1870-1953) wrote:

“When you have lost your inns, drown your empty selves, for you will have lost the last of England.”

Public houses are in trouble. Pub closures are still running at 25 a week and there are now more villages without a pub than with one. In the city of Cambridge 16 pubs were lost between 2002 and 2010 and many others in the city are currently closed or under threat. Many reasons are cited for this; including supermarket discounts, increased home entertainment, exorbitant rents by pub companies and the high taxes levied on alcohol. However, in Cambridge there is a more pressing issue, which is the imbalance in the market that means public houses, with their associated car parks and gardens, will almost always be worth more as development land than as businesses. The community pub is especially under threat and we have been losing them in large sections of the city while drinking is concentrated in larger and more impersonal establishments in central areas.

Cambridge Past, Present & Future believes that the provision of community pubs is essential to promoting local community, reducing car use and encouraging sensible drinking. We also believe they are often vitally important to local heritage and a ‘sense of place’. That is why we have been lobbying the City Council with a view to planning protection for community pubs being included in the new Local Plan. This has happened elsewhere; Merton Council, for instance, has a planning policy that excludes a ‘change of use’ unless the applicant can show that the pub is no longer economically viable, has been marketed at a realistic price for two years and that there is alternative provision in the local area.

Cambridge Past, Present & Future hope that the unique national institution that is the community pub will soon be afforded some extra protection in the City, before they become as elusive as Orwell's ideal city pub 'The Moon Under Water'. In the meantime we will continue to campaign to protect the City's historic and community pubs from unwelcome redevelopment.

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/food_and_drink/article5890533.ece



East of England Landscape Typology

The East of England Landscape Character Typology draws on a range of data including local Landscape Character Assessment, Historic Landscape Characterisation, biodiversity, and rural settlement datasets as well as data generated through consultation.

Definition – **Landscape character types** (LCT) are landscapes with broadly similar patterns of natural and cultural characteristics found in a range of locations. Whereas landscape character areas are geographically discrete areas of one landscape type, or in some methodologies may contain several different landscape types.

Use the interactive map to explore the East of England Landscape Framework together with aerial photography, local authority boundaries and National Character Areas.

It gives useful descriptions of landscape areas highlighting the diversity of the region. Look also at resources and glossary pages.

This very interesting and important work will help to understand the regional landscape diversity and support aspects of the planning process. For details see:

<http://www.landscape-east.org.uk/>

[EECAS Seminar on 'Big Society & Localism' - May 2011](#)

A full report on this seminar is now available on the EECAS website at:

<http://cambridgeppf.org/eecs/documents/ElySeminar7May11.pdf>

The EECAS page <http://cambridgeppf.org/eecs/> also has links to the presentations.

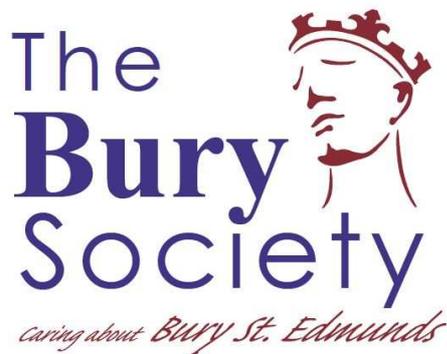


Peterborough Civic Society

Summer Visit To Wisbech

On Sunday 10 July there is a visit to the Octavia Hill's Birthplace House in Wisbech. Meet in Somers Road car park (off South Brink) for a 2 pm start. There will be a £4.50 charge. Please contact:

Grace Taylor on 01733 263127 or e-mail: gf.taylor@ntlworld.com



Registered charity 263230
Founded 1971

News from Bury Society

The Bury St Edmunds Society presented awards for work which enhanced the town during its annual general meeting on June 2nd. One was for the apex entertainment centre on the arc retail development, designed by Jim Greaves of Hopkins Architects, and the other for the decorated vaulted tower of Bury Cathedral. Mr. Greaves said he was honoured by the society award and commented that it was one of a number received so far. Mr. Parsons receiving the recognition for the quality of the interior of the tower said it reflected the skills of a team of designers and craftsmen. Winners of a society photographic competition entitled 'My Bury' received their awards.

The quality was exceptionally high, said the organiser.

The new society chairman is Mr. Alan Jary, replacing Mrs. Sarah Green.

Contact: Susan Sollohub - news@burysociety.com

From a Queen to a Tsar - of Shops...

Mary Portas has been appointed by Prime Minister David Cameron to lead an independent review into the future of the High Street. The purpose of the review is to identify what government, local authorities, businesses and individuals can do to promote the development of more prosperous and diverse high streets.

To give your views on these issues complete the form at:
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SR5KNW5> or e-mail: highstreets@bis.gsi.gov.uk.

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(I usually work Tuesday and Wednesday – if unavailable, please leave a message)

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Please e-mail or call me with news and articles from your area.