



EECAS NEWSLETTER

East of England Civic & Amenity Societies

Issue: Summer 2012

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

Message from the Chairman

Civic Voice strategy awayday

On 4 August I was among some 20 people invited by the new Civic Voice director Steve Graham to meet with the trustees to discuss the organisation's future strategy. Although it has many things on which it can congratulate itself, particularly lobbying at national level, there was quite a lot of feeling that some significant changes are needed. This is my own selection of some of what was said:

- The membership of the civic societies is ageing and dwindling.
- Nearly half of the civic societies in the country are not members of Civic Voice; they need convincing that joining would help to make them more effective
- The trustees should be more actively involved; each should take responsibility for some aspect of the work, advised by an informal panel
- There should be a more active informal regional structure, and clusters of interest groups
- Civic Voice must be independent — grass-root — networked — accessible

Economic benefits of the environment

Apart from the benefits to our health and enjoyment, we need an attractive historic and natural environment so that business can recruit and retain highly-qualified staff against global competition. We have plans to organise a workshop in Ely on Saturday 13 October — among the speakers will be the regional directors of English Heritage and the National Trust. Details from Nigel Bell, planning@cambridgeppf.org. Meanwhile, Natural England has issued an extensive [report](#) on the economic benefits of green infrastructure, for example to health, community cohesion, climate change mitigation and water supply security. Also, the Department for Communities and Local Government has published a [report](#) on the likely significant environmental effects of the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy and Environmental Strategy. Please see below for full details.

Historic Environment Forum

A dozen regional directors of organisations including the National Trust, English Heritage and CPRE meet every three months in the Historic Environment Forum. Among the things we were told at the meeting on 12 June were

- The Heritage Lottery Fund's new strategic framework will be finalised next April. It is piloting a new scheme for awards in the range £3k to 10k.
- English Heritage is increasing its emphasis on the [Heritage at Risk](#) programme. It has recently published a new [good-practice guide](#) for local heritage listing.
- The National Trust's national chief executive Fiona Reynolds will soon be moving into the region as Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Visitor numbers at both National Trust and English Heritage properties have been severely reduced by the weather, so reducing resources available for conservation.

- Essex, Ipswich and Cambridge have recently lost conservation officers. English Heritage is running master classes for authorities that have lost conservation resources.
- Our attention was drawn to [Volunteering England](#), which helps organisations and volunteers to get together. It has several local centres in our region.

The Port of Felixstowe

As the country's leading container port, Felixstowe is of importance to the economy of the whole country, including Northern Ireland. This is why it is crucial that the A14 be improved -- at a recent visit to Felixstowe with the East of England RSA I learnt that, because goods nearly all need to be delivered to their final destination by road, if it is nearer than Birmingham it is not economic to take them from the port by rail. We learnt also that 45% of the incoming goods are manufactured in China!

Smart cities

Cambridge, Chelmsford, Norwich and Peterborough are among the 27 cities that have been [invited by the government](#) to bid for money to install ultra-fast broadband. The benefits for entertainment are obvious, but the challenge is to make an impact on business and the economy. At a workshop on "Smart Cities" in London last autumn, a speaker from Cisco told us that he had helped a town in Spain reduce its energy consumption by 40% through the widespread use of sensors.

Localism Act

The government has set up a useful [web site](#) on neighbourhood planning and on community rights to

- build small-scale, site-specific projects without going through the normal planning application process
- challenge to take over a council service they think they can run differently or better
- bid to buy and take over the running of local assets that are important to them

Impact of clock changes

My attention has been drawn to a [paper](#) by four academics in the Cambridge University Department of Engineering about the impact of the UK changing to European time in the winter months. Usually the arguments for this change are based on road safety issues, but the Cambridge engineers calculate that there would be energy savings of at least 0.3% in the winter months, leading to a reduction of about 450,000 tonnes of CO2 emission.

Historic Environment Forum

On 6 March the region's Historic Environment Forum was told that the [Heritage Lottery Fund](#) is still looking for good applications for funding, and that the National Trust intends offering to civic societies places on its training courses for volunteers.

We were told that the New Anglia LEP (Norfolk/Suffolk) has been appointed the [Green Economy Pathfinder](#). It will address

- Energy - incorporating case studies on; localization/off grid, nuclear, and offshore.
- Low Carbon Innovation and Finance - incorporating energy/resource efficiency.
- Natural Capital - incorporating landscape, wildlife, leisure and recreation, local food and tourism.

The Olympic Torch will travel slowly all round our region from 3 to 9 July, and a busy [programme](#) of events in the region for the Cultural Olympiad has already begun.

Transport

Cambridgeshire County Council is taking the lead in persuading the government to upgrade the A14, because its link to Felixstowe Port is crucial to the economy of the whole country. Also, the Highways Agency is using its power to ban developments that would cause further congestion on the road. It seems to be inevitable that part of the cost be paid by a developer, in return for receiving an income from tolls to be charged on upgraded parts of the road. The remainder of the money might come from [community infrastructure levies](#), [Section 106 agreements](#), and the EU.

On 9 March I attended the Regional Transport Forum, which is composed of portfolio holders and officers from the counties and unitary authorities which are the local transport authorities. Although the government has disbanded most of the cross-region bodies, largely replacing them with the LEPs, the Forum agreed that for transport there is a strong case for continuing region-wide cooperation. The government is consulting on devolving to local transport authorities control of decisions and budgets for major local transport schemes in their areas. This is to be done on the same geography as the LEPs, but the local authorities agreed that, although the LEPs can give advice, as elected bodies they must take the responsibility.

We were given a presentation on the extensive preparations for the disruption to transport that will be caused by the Olympics. Most affected will be Hertfordshire and Essex, as two of the Olympic venues are

- Lee Valley: white water rafting
- Hadleigh Farm: mountain biking.

In addition, from 3 to 8 July the Torch will make slow progress through every county in the region.

Green Belt

An issue that has come up in Cambridge, is that a company of major importance needs to expand, and if it is not allowed to expand into the Green Belt there is a danger that it will leave. On the other hand, the Green Belt is important for providing a well-defined boundary to the City, so helping prevent it from mushrooming outwards, and for keeping it an attractive place to live, which business regards as important for attracting highly-qualified staff against global competition. There is also need for there to be interesting things to do, so what should be the attitude towards a proposal to build an 8000-seat football stadium in the Green belt?

Of course, similar issues arise elsewhere. For example, the [Radlett Society](#) is campaigning against an energy from waste incinerator and an enormous rail freight terminal.

Local Plans

Spurred on partly by the threat from the proposed National Planning Policy Framework, many local authorities have begun to frame their Local Plans for the next two decades. This involves a huge amount of detail - the 2006 Cambridge Local Plan covered 96 policies. And local authorities are under an obligation to consult their neighbouring authorities. Civic Societies surely need to contribute to the process, but the amount of work is potentially daunting. Also, the [Localism Act](#) requires the drawing up of registers of community assets, where again civic societies surely have an interest but again this will mean more work.

Local Enterprise Partnerships and skills

Many of the LEPs seem to be getting off to a slow start, partly because their board members are unpaid and have other, full-time, jobs, and partly because of lack of money to take on staff. One of the duties of a LEP in our region is to try to rectify the serious shortage of staff to serve our knowledge-based economy. The [Wolf report](#) drew attention last summer to the fact that much of what is taught in schools will not get jobs for the students, and there has recently been publicity for so many of our schools being rated "satisfactory", which actually is not good enough. A [workshop](#) I organised identified as a remedy an urgent need to bring schools and business together, as at present knowledge of the world of work is seriously lacking in schools. Also valuable is for people from the outside world to help run discussions and projects in schools.

Heritage assets

A meeting in Norwich organised by English Heritage on 17 February publicised the [Heritage Counts website](#). It contains a lot of useful information, for example a check-list to help organisations that want to increase community involvement in heritage. There is also a [link](#) to the web page giving information about heritage assets in our region. We were told that, although English Heritage has suffered a budget cut of 30%, its grants budget is still there, and it is setting up a Heritage at Risk team for the region.

National Planning Policy Framework

The government's proposed new [National Planning Policy Framework](#) aims to simplify the planning rules but has attracted a lot of opposition because of its stated aim of favouring the needs of business. A couple of months ago I wrote a [letter](#) to the region's MPs, along with the regional directors of the CPRE and the National Trust. A dozen or so responded. They included Andrew Lansley, whose reply was maybe

not what we would have wanted, but at least indicated that we had given him cause for thought. The CPRE and the National Trust are keeping up the pressure.

City growth

According to a [report](#) issued on 23 January, Cambridge, Norwich, Peterborough and Ipswich are among the 10 cities in the country with the fastest-growing populations.

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

Peter Landshoff: [pvl at damtp.cam.ac.uk](mailto:pvl@damtp.cam.ac.uk)

Chairman, East of England Civic and Amenity Societies

Seminar: The Economic Benefits of the Environment

“How improving and protecting our historic and natural environment boosts the local economy.”



**SATURDAY 13TH OCTOBER
2012 AT ELY CATHEDRAL
CENTRE**

**REGISTRATION
10 - 10.30 AM
FINISH
3.30 – 4 PM**

Speakers include: **Tony Juniper**: to be confirmed • **Richard Powell**: East of England Director, National Trust • **Greg Luton**: East of England Director, English Heritage • **Andrew Balmford**: Professor of Conservation Science, University of Cambridge • **Sophie Cabot**: Engagement Manager, Norwich HEART

Cost: £10 individuals (or £15 couples) by cheque payable to ‘Cambridge Past, Present & Future’(to include coffee & tea). There will be a break for lunch to visit Ely’s shops, cafes and Markets.

Venue: The Etheldreda Room, The Cathedral Centre, Palace Green, Ely, Cambs CB7 4EW. Located opposite the main entrance to Ely Cathedral – please note Ely has excellent train links.

Travel information: <http://www.elycathedral.org/visitors/travelling.html>

Parking information: <http://www.elycathedral.org/pdf/carparkingposter.pdf>

Book in advance - contact: Nigel Bell: planning@cambridgeppf.org or (01223) 243830 Ext 205

After the Seminar there will be an opportunity, for those who book early, to visit Ely Magistrates Court, a Grade II* listed building:



This Georgian building contains a Grade II* listed courtroom, with a Magistrates' bench, dock and upper galleries with original fittings and joinery, for more details see:

http://www.pastscape.org/hob.aspx?hob_id=1550331

Training Courses held by English Heritage



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Some excellent training courses are listed in this year's programme – including protecting Heritage Assets and their setting. For full details follow this web link:

<http://www.helm.org.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.11473>

Planning for Sustainable Cities



The research team Urban Futures has developed interactive tools to help urban designers analyse the resilience of things they are doing today in the name of sustainability, such as incorporating grey water recycling into a housing development or creating cycle paths across a city. The on-line tool has been developed using four UK-based scenarios for the year 2050 and is applicable to sustainability solutions being implemented in the UK. However, the user can add alternative scenarios or additional aspects to the existing scenarios and in this way can tailor the tool to any context. A step-by-step guide to using this Tool (Designing Resilient Cities: a Guide to Good Practice) can be purchased from [BRE](#) and is available on [Amazon](#).

The Urban Futures Interactive Tool was developed by the Urban Futures research team as part of a four-year project that started in May 2008, funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC, see www.epsrc.ac.uk). The project consortium was led by Professor Chris Rogers at the University of Birmingham and included researchers from Birmingham, Exeter, Lancaster, Birmingham City and Coventry Universities.

<http://www.urban-futures.org/>



The Harwich Society's Seasonal Museum Openings

Opening Times and further details can be found here:

<http://www.harwich-society.co.uk/flash2007/index.html>

Registered Charity Number 261798

OPENING HOURS for the Summer Season:

THE REDOUBT

Large Fort (180 foot diameter) surrounded by a deep moat built 1808 to protect the Harbour from Napoleonic threat Many fine military exhibits on show

Open every day 10.00am to 4.00pm
Admission £3.00 - Accompanied children free

HA'PENNY PIER VISITOR CENTRE

including "The New World Exhibition" and collect a free copy of THE HARWICH MARITIME TRAIL LEAFLET

Open every day 10.00am to 5.00pm - Free Entry

LIFEBOAT MUSEUM

Tells the story of the lifeboat in Harwich since 1821
Open Wednesday to Sunday 11.00am to 3.00pm
Admission £1.00 - Accompanied children free

MARITIME MUSEUM

Three floors of maritime exhibits, fine views of the Harbour from the viewing area
Open Tuesday to Sunday 10.00am to 4.00pm
Admission £2.00 - Accompanied children free

RADAR TOWER

Open the first Sunday in the Month
2.00pm to 4.00pm
Admission £1.00 - Accompanied children free



The Independent Panel for Forestry Reports

In the wake of the government's decision to cancel the proposed sell-off of England's forests, an Independent Forestry Panel was established on 17 March 2011 by the Secretary of State, Caroline Spelman, to advise on the future direction of forestry and woodland policy in England and the role of the Forestry Commission in implementing it.

On 4 July 2012 the Independent Panel on Forestry published its Final Report which calls for England's woods and forests to be re-valued for all the benefits they provide. These include areas for recreation, clean air, clean water, and habitats for wildlife. They also lock up carbon, provide shade and can help reduce flooding. Wood is the raw material for timber frame buildings, furniture, flooring, fuel, and of course paper. The report calls for a revival of a woodland culture that appreciates how important trees are for people, for nature and the economy.

The report also makes clear that the Panel believes the public forest estate is a national asset, which should remain in public ownership. The Panel recommends an evolution of the Forestry Commission. The new organisations should have greater financial freedoms and investment to generate even greater benefits for people, nature and the economy.

The Report can be found on the Panel's web pages here:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/reports/>



Saving the Community Public House

Public houses in the UK are under threat with the rate of closures currently running at 16 a week. In Cambridge nearly a quarter of pubs have been lost in the last decade. CambridgePPF has been lobbying and campaigning for the last two years or so, along with Cambridge CAMRA and others, to try and halt the closure and redevelopment of community pubs in the city. While various reasons have been cited for their decline, including cheap supermarket deals and the smoking ban, in Cambridge there is a more pressing reason; which is the high short-term profit that can be made from the redevelopment of a pub, and its associated land, into housing.

Most of the pubs in the city are owned by large 'PubCo' property chains and breweries which have no interest in selling them to any market rivals in the event that they, or their tenants, are unable to make them a success. The

large pub chains are also largely in hock to venture capitalists who wish to see them maximize short-term profits. These are the same PubCo property companies that snapped up public houses from breweries wholesale when they were forced to divest themselves of their large pub estates by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in 1989. Two of the largest 'PubCo's, Enterprise Inns and Punch Taverns, recently revealed combined net debts of £5.2 billion.

It would seem fair enough that if the owners claim a pub is no longer viable, and should be redeveloped, then they are asked to demonstrate this to actually be the case. There are plenty of new small breweries, entrepreneurs, community groups and other businesses that would be prepared to buy and run a public house if it were offered at a realistic market value, as a pub business, and not at an inflated development land value.

The City Council should consider planning protections such as those which already exist in rural areas of the county, where a village pub is under threat: Which is that the pub must have been demonstrably marketed, realistically priced as a pub business, for a sufficient period of time before any change of use or redevelopment be considered. This would allow other businesses, or groups prepared to run the pub, the opportunity to take over the business. It also potentially guards against any deliberate 'running down' of the business by the owners, in order to justify redevelopment, because by doing so they would be reducing the market value of their own business.

These measures require any application to redevelop a pub to include a demonstrably independent survey of its real business value. This hurdle is necessary if we are to guard against property companies simply making a quick profit at the expense of the community a pub serves and is justified by provisions within the government's new 'National Planning Policy Framework' which state that Planning Authorities must "*guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce a community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs*" (Paragraph 70).

CambridgePPF has liaised with the City Council on, and welcomes, the moves they have made towards creating an 'evidence base' in advance of introducing measures to protect the City's Pubs. In the meantime, CambridgePPF will continue to oppose the loss of potentially viable public houses that serve their community.

Nigel Bell – Planning Support Officer at CambridgePPF

Cambridge City Council's new draft "Interim Planning Policy Guidance on The Protection of Public Houses" can be found here:

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/background-documents/protection-of-public-houses.en>

BRINGING BOATS BACK TO THE RIVER CITY



As I reported in EECAS's October 2010 Newsletter, the Wensum River Parkway Partnership has been trying in the past three years to devise strategies to bring life back to the River Wensum as it flows through Norwich.

It could hardly have been a worse time to try and make people think collectively about spending money in pursuit of a long-term goal. But we're still here, with all four partners (Norwich Society, Norwich Heritage Economic and Regeneration Trust [HEART], the City Council and the Broads Authority) still on board, and a surprising number of achievements under our belt.

One goal achieved recently, after picking our way carefully through the planning process - complicated by the fact that the City Council and the Broads Authority share responsibility for the river and its banks - is the submission of plans to build the final stretch of riverside walkway (between Duke Street and St George's bridges, if you know Norwich) for approval in the coming months.

But our latest proposals, published just before Christmas, should give us fresh impetus for the coming year. These take the form of a discussion paper on how to repopulate the river with small craft, and provide the bankside attractions that will make the Wensum thrive again after a century and more of neglect, this time as a major tourism and heritage attraction rather than an industrial waterway.

The paper (titled "Bringing Boats Back to the River City"), asks the question why we have a live City but a dead river – no day boats, no rowboats, punts, canoes or paddleboards. Unlike Cambridge, Ely, York, Bath and many other cities and towns in Britain, Norwich has little in the way of regular river traffic. The Wensum flows through one of England's most

historic and thriving cities, but generates little in the way of boating business, activity or enjoyment. What a waste.

We mean to be aspirational, to think long-term and assume that eventually money will become available for the kind of joint public/private effort that will be needed. The aim is to create a vibrant, thriving and economically self-sustaining waterfront and waterborne culture which adds to and draws strength from Norwich's huge international drawing-power as a centre for good living, leisure, heritage and tourism.

The paper looks at the pre-conditions for such an achievement – continued and effective dredging and an agreed and standardised moorings policy, for example. It also suggests a number of opportunities that can be created or will arise with further development along the river.

Chief among these (also most expensive, complicated and frankly difficult to realise) would be development of the site at New Mills on the western boundary of the mediaeval city, where a dam and sluices terminate the tidal part of the Wensum.

Here a lock and portages could be built to link the two halves of the Wensum sundered for nearly a millennium, using the basin for hire of small craft and fixing on the fantastic industrial archaeological resource of a unique Victorian pneumatic pumping station as the centre of a heritage and leisure complex.

We also suggest (among other things) the commissioning of a multi-purpose craft for use as a playboat, as a floating classroom and for heritage tours, and investigation of the potential for a Waterfront Alliance of leisure businesses – pubs, clubs, and so on – to organise joint promotions and encourage small craft custom.

In coming months this paper will be used, we hope, to spark discussion among a variety of interested bodies and reach a broad consensus on the way forward. It has already been discussed, and approved, by the Broads Local Access Forum and the Norwich City Centre Partnership. There is a long way to go yet, but I believe we have made a good start.

Alec Hartley, Norwich Society, Chairman, Wensum River Parkway Partnership.

<http://www.thenorwichsociety.co.uk/pdfs/Small%20Craft%20Paper%203rd%20rev%20%2028.11.11.pdf>

**The
Heritage
Alliance**

HERITAGE ALLIANCE UPDATE

has a regular e-newsletter containing a plethora of news and articles. This is an excellent means to be up-to-date on heritage and other environmental issues. Make sure you have signed up to receive regular updates.

See: <http://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/heritage-link-update-e-bulletin/>

IPSWICH SOCIETY'S NEW CHAIRMAN



At its AGM on April 25th, the Ipswich Society welcomed John Norman as its new Chairman. Recently retired after nearly 40 years in education, John was Lecturer and Head of Department in the School of Construction, and more recently Project Manager for the Suffolk New College Building Programme. A long-standing Ipswich Society Committee member and previous Vice-Chairman, he is well-known to members through his contributions to the Newsletter and active participation in Society events. John has long been pro-active at the Ipswich Society's flagship event – the Annual Awards Evening, using his experience in built environment awards (he is an assessor for the CIOB Construction Manager of the Year Award, Adjudicator for the Suffolk RIBA Annual Awards and Assessor for the Civic Trust Awards). As Chairman of the Suffolk Architectural Heritage Trust and Trustee of the Suffolk Building

Preservation Trust, he has links throughout the County and is keen to foster a closer working relationship between the Ipswich Society and other Civic Societies in Suffolk.

Caroline Markham
Hon. Sec. Ipswich Society
www.ipswichsociety.org.uk

Message from the Editor:

We now have re-vamped the EECAS e-news and are using a free on-line e-newsletter system. This has many benefits including actually reaching the membership of EECAS, without it being treated as spam, as well as enabling it to be easily forwarded to other people and new readers to sign up directly.

Nigel Bell – Telephone: **01223 - 243830 x 205**

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

E-mail: planning@cambridgeppf.org

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

Please limit your submission's text to a maximum of 500 words (brief snippets are preferred), and state author name and Civic Society etc. you represent. It is helpful if you can also provide a logo and / or picture (max 300 pixels)..

The next e-news issue will be in Autumn 2012 – so please send these by 15 September 2012 at the latest.