



EECS NEWSLETTER

East of England Civic Societies

Issue: March 2010

Message From The Chairman

You will all know that the organisation that will replace the Civic Trust will be launched on 17 April and is to be called **Civic Voice**. All civic societies are encouraged to join it so as to receive support on local planning and policy issues and provide a strong voice to lobby and campaign on the national policies and issues that you cannot change locally. See <http://www.civicsocietyinitiative.org.uk/>

In our region, the regional assembly **EERA** is due to hold its last meeting on 12 March and, following its consultation on the regional plan up to 2031, will be recommended to adopt essentially scenario 1, the least intensive of the four scenarios it had offered. Among other things,

Thames Gateway – includes parts of Essex
Milton Keynes - South Midlands, which includes Luton and Bedfordshire;
and London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough

are proposed as growth areas. In addition, Haven Gateway, King's Lynn, Norwich and Thetford have been identified as Growth Points. Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth; King's Lynn and West Norfolk; the remote rural areas of Norfolk and Suffolk and the Fens are all identified as priority areas for regeneration. Rackheath, near Norwich, is proposed as an eco-town. See <http://www.eera.gov.uk/meeting-and-events/advisory-group-meetings/regional-planning-advisory-group/1785> agenda item 2.

Meanwhile, the **Conservative Party** has put forward its view that the regional planning consultation was premature and unhelpful and should be discontinued. It would produce planning policy statements, but not force them on local democracy. Unlike at present, local authorities would be allowed to retain for a number of years any additional council tax resulting from new developments.

We have put together an interesting **meeting on Rivers in Towns**. It will be hosted by the Ipswich Society at the University of Suffolk on the **Waterfront at Ipswich on 17 April** and all members of civic societies in the region are invited to attend. Register with gladys.jones@virgin.net and see below or [click here](#) for details. **PLEASE BOOK NOW!**

As chair of EECS, I am a member of the region's **Historic Environment Forum**, along with representatives of organisations such as the National Trust, CPRE and English Heritage. Our concern is to make planners, politicians and others more aware of the need to take account of the historic environment. To that end we have produced a flyer which may be of interest to you; it is reproduced at the end of this newsletter.

As a trustee of the civic society in Cambridge, I recently organised a meeting at which some 130 local people gave their views on new tall buildings in the City. The short account of the meeting in this Newsletter may be of interest to you as, while the meeting focused on Cambridge, the issues must be similar in other towns.

Peter Landshoff: pvl@damtp.cam.ac.uk



Rivers in towns

How can a town make good use of its river?

Saturday 17 April at 10.00 for 10.30 am

Meeting hosted by the Ipswich Society at the Waterfront Building, University Campus Suffolk, Ipswich IP4 1QJ, including a brief tour of the water front.

Map & Directions at:

<http://www.ucs.ac.uk/contact/findUs.aspx>

Speakers:

Brian Human (Historic Towns Forum): **Making water your friend**

Philippa Noon (Cam Conservators): **Leisure pressures on rivers**

Alec Hartley (Norwich Society): **Lessons from Norwich**

Jenny Mant (River Restoration Centre): **Lessons from the Thames**

James Baker (IBC Greenways Project): **The River Gipping in Ipswich**

Stephen Earl (Great Yarmouth): **Problems solved and unsolved at Yarmouth**

Roger Valentine (Environment Agency): **A waterspace strategy for Bishops Stortford**

Roger Estop (Chelmsford): **Revealing rivers**

Anne Mason (Heritage Lottery Fund): **Some HLF river projects**

Cost £15 including sandwich lunch.

If you wish to attend this event, please email gladys.jones@virgin.net with your name, organisation, email and postal address, phone number, and any special requirements.

If no email, contact CambridgePPF on 01223 243830 (Nigel Bell or Carolin Göhler).

This is the third event in the series "Keeping our region special", organised by the East of England Civic Societies (EECS) and the East of England RSA.



Tall Buildings In Cambridge – Workshop for local people

A seminar on the issue of '**Tall Buildings in Cambridge**' was held on 3rd March 2010 at the Centre for Mathematical Sciences in Wilberforce Road, Cambridge. There were a number of short talks, followed by workshops, at which over 130 local people contributed their views and took part in lively debate on an issue which will affect all who live and work in or around Cambridge.

The workshops generally agreed that 'Tall Buildings' was a relative term and that it was better to talk about 'taller buildings' in the city. While there seemed little support for taller buildings within the historic city core, there was a variety of views on taller buildings at other locations in the city.

There was general agreement that any new taller buildings must be sympathetic to their context and position, that they should have a 'sense of place' and be of high quality both in their design and materials. They must also be sustainable, environmentally-friendly and connected to sufficient established infrastructure; particularly public transport.

It was also felt that any proposals must enhance their locality sufficiently to be able to attract widespread community support.

The seminar was organised in response to Cambridge City Council's announcement that they are preparing a Tall Buildings Strategy, known as a Supplementary Planning Document, in 2010 and are interested in the views of residents on this subject.

The presentations used at the seminar can be accessed by [clicking here](#)

Or accessing: <http://www.damtp.cam.ac.uk/user/pvl/TALL/>.

Further transcriptions etc are being finalised and will be available on www.cambridgeppf.org

The event was organised and supported by: **Cambridgeshire Horizons, Cambridge City Council, Cambridge Past, Present & Future, RSA, University of Cambridge and the Federation of Cambridge Residents' Associations.**

New EECS Website On-Line



The new East of England Civic Societies' website is now on-line at:

<http://www.cambridgeppf.org/eeecs/>

The site holds PDF copies of all the EECS Newsletters, notes of past events held and full details of future events.

Conservative Party release Planning Policy Green Paper.



A Conservative Party Green Paper on planning policies entitled 'Open Source Planning' was published in February 2010.

The full Green Paper can be viewed here:

http://www.conservatives.com/News/News_stories/2010/02/New_homes_and_jobs_through_Open_Source_Planning.aspx

A Local Government Association (LGA) summary briefing on the paper can be accessed here: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/8682564>

Make your views heard and comment directly to authors of the Paper.

Launch of Civic Voice.

Following the closure of the Civic Trust in April 2009 a new organisation is now being created to represent the civic movement and support civic societies: 'Civic Voice' is being launched on Saturday 17 April (2010) at the Building Centre, Store Street, WC1E 7BT in central London. The event will run from 10.30am for 11am until 4pm. All civic societies registered with the Civic Society Initiative and its partners are invited to this unique occasion which will start a new chapter in the proud history of the civic movement.

You can book onto the launch event at: <http://www.civicsocietyinitiative.org.uk/launch.html>

An exciting programme is planned for the day including guided walks around Camden by Camden Civic Society. A display featuring London Forum's 21st Anniversary and an area dedicated to individual society work. Griff Rhys Jones will be attending.

The day will also include opportunities to help shape Civic Voice's priorities and to meet the newly elected Board. Further details will be provided through updates of the website and in email bulletins. The registration fee for the launch is £10 which makes a contribution to lunch costs.

Civic societies joining Civic Voice before the end of March will receive a free place at the launch. You can book onto the launch event at:

<http://www.civicsocietyinitiative.org.uk/launch.html>

Contact 'Civic Voice' at info@civicvoice.org.uk or telephone 0151 708 9920

Next Seminar and Workshop - Conservation Areas at Risk

This is planned for summer or early autumn 2010 together with the AGM. And to be held in Cambridge. It will cover Conservation Area Management and how to enhance such areas and we will be able to learn from professionals in the field.

Details will be posted in the next newsletter – if you are interested to receive a notification of the event, please contact Nigel with your contact details.

Workshop planned to consider 'The Housing Needs Of Older People'

EECS and the RSA are planning a workshop to consider how the housing needs of older people might be better planned for. With an ageing population, and ever greater numbers of people living in single person households, how can older people be better catered for by developers? Are there sufficient suitable properties being built for people whose families have grown-up and left home?

If you have any useful ideas on this topic, or have examples of good practise that you think should be considered, please contact:

Peter Landshoff pvl@damtp.cam.ac.uk

Nigel Bell planning@cambridgeppf.org

Vacancy for EECS Bedfordshire representative

Please note that the EECS representative position for Bedfordshire remains unfilled. If any Civic Society in the county would like to propose someone to be considered for co-option to the Committee, would they please contact the Chairman;

Peter Landshoff pvl@damtp.cam.ac.uk

The EECS committee is currently:

County Representatives

Cambridgeshire: Peter Landshoff (also Chairman)

Essex: Jo Edwards

Hertfordshire: Andrew Sangster

Norfolk: Alec Hartley

Suffolk: Susan Sollohub

Bedfordshire: *position vacant*

Other Members: Terry Betts (Hon.Treasurer) & Carolin Göhler (Hon.Secretary).

Editor:

Nigel Bell – Telephone: (01223) 243830 x 205

(Nigel usually works Tuesday and Wednesday – if unavailable, please leave a message)

e-mail: planning@cambridgeppf.org

We'd love to hear from you and your local group. Please e-mail or call us with updates from your area as well as other hot topics from the Region.

Please submit any articles or stories latest by 16th May 2010.

“We shape our buildings and they shape us.” Winston Churchill

What is the historic environment and why should I care?

The historic environment is our past, present and future. It adds quality to our daily lives, to where we live and work. It is our open door to the past. It is whole landscape and streetscape. It is individual buildings and artefacts. It is at the heart of our love of both home and beauty. Almost everyone, when asked, agrees that our historic environment is valuable for what it gives us and what it tells us about ourselves. It enriches our lives.

What do I need to know about historic places in the East of England?

Our history plays a vital role in shaping our future. Here are a few thoughts:

- Valuing the historic environment can start at school and many heritage organisations provide free school visits to their sites. History forms a core part of school curriculum and leads to a better understanding of how the past can shape our present and future.
- Traditionally-built buildings often are more sustainable because of their use of local building materials. They are usually built at efficient densities within settlements, helping achieve “walkable” neighbourhoods. Historic areas are a model for low-carbon living.
- Old buildings can fall into disrepair. They can be sustainable and can provide economic, social and aesthetic benefits by us bringing buildings at risk of loss back in use. This, in turn, can help generate a sense of pride in neighbourhoods, breaking down cycles of neglect and reinvigorating community spirit.
- Local planning authorities are at the fore-front of protecting our historic places. They have a statutory planning function for listed buildings and conservation areas, maintain historic environment records, and they also have a discretionary role to provide museums. Local authorities are encouraged to engage with partners to meet their statutory and other legal responsibilities and to maximise their impact on the historic environment.
- The East of England is facing at least four major, current pressures which will damage the historic environment and for which there is a duty to minimise that damage: climate change, coastal erosion, food security in the agricultural industry of Britain, and development pressures for housing and economic growth. All of these areas provide opportunities and threats for our historic environment. With careful planning we can ensure we respect our past achievements to leave this legacy for the future.

How can I make a difference?

You can help by advocating the benefits of the historic environment to local decision-makers. Support the thinking behind the ideas listed above and champion them locally and nationally, so that the historic environment plays an integral role in our sustainable future. Use the facts and figures we provide about the historic environment which can be found at:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/hc/server/show/nav.008007001>.

Most of all, keep our heritage at the top of the agenda!