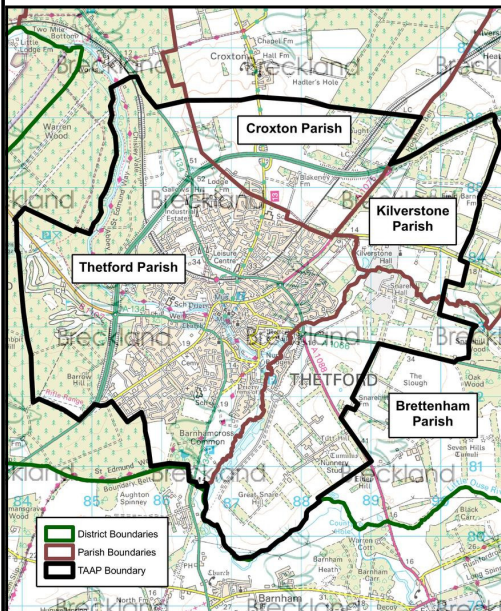


## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I recently attended a primary school governors' meeting to discuss the proposed new primary school provision required for the Thetford North Development or the SUE (Sustainable Urban Extension) as it now being called. I assume it can't be called Thetford North as it is all being located in Croxton and Kilverstone parishes and there are no plans to move the town's boundary to the logical boundary of the bypass. It became apparent at this meeting that there is a lot of frustration being experienced by residents about the whole Growth agenda, a view shared by many in the Society. The indicative plan of bolting on the new settlement, however they play lip service to the ideals of a community that looks to Thetford, just isn't

going to be delivered. Transport along the Croxton Road and Norwich Road feeding into the one arterial road we have in the town is not going to make the town a better place and however we wish for quality jobs for residents, the failure to secure funding for the Thetford Enterprise Park's infrastructure and Jeyes deciding to move their managerial positions to Cambridge does not bode well for the future. Thus we will have new houses for commuters with little desire to be part of a greater Thetford community. We aspire to better facilities and we are told these will be paid for by developer contributions; as it stands no developer is going to achieve the required selling price for houses to deliver the contribution required and turn in a profit. The fear then is, if we are so



Thetford Area Action Plan Boundaries

committed to building houses to meet the targets, then the developer is let off the contribution to make building viable and we have no money for facilities. The £6.4 million growth point monies which were allocated to the period 2008-11 were not sufficient to address the decades of under investment in the town and unfortunately there is no pot of gold on the horizon. I like many would have preferred to have seen the town grow organically, whilst we get to grips with managing the town the size it is. I don't like to be so negative and have tried to remain objective about the whole growth issue seeking to embrace opportunities it may have offered. However, as we reach the end of the planning stage with the Thetford Area Action Plan being finalised and submitted to the Inspector in the summer, it would seem that our destiny is already determined.

Changing the subject, as a follow up to the Society's help with Radio Norfolk's Treasure Quest programme we were invited to talk about the Society on Radio Norfolk and in January we had a good 20 minutes of air time promoting the Society and Thetford in general.

May I make the annual plea for members to start thinking about writing articles for the magazine, I think you would all prefer a little less about the Wrights this year!

## Future Activities

### Meetings

All at the United Reformed Church at 7.30pm unless stated

- Apr 5<sup>th</sup> David Osborne – Education In Thetford
- May 3<sup>rd</sup> Danny Jeffrey—The Church of the Holy Sepulchre
- Jun 7<sup>th</sup> Paul Stancliffe—The Work of the BTO

### Outings & Events

- Mar 23<sup>rd</sup> Marble Hall, Norwich - trip full
- June 12<sup>th</sup> Strawberry Tea – offers of help to make cakes or scones welcome
- July 23<sup>rd</sup> Barbeque at St Audreys, courtesy of Paul Clark - 6pm start
- July 27<sup>th</sup> Sandringham flower show - coach and entrance - cost £21
- Sept 15<sup>th</sup> Buckingham Palace - coach and entrance - cost £39

**Please let Wendy or Pat know if interested as coaches have to be confirmed.**

- Oct 8<sup>th</sup> – Society Quiz - URC.
- To book any of these events contact either: Wendy Raphael on 01842 755962 or 07712347822 email [wendyraphael@gmail.com](mailto:wendyraphael@gmail.com) or Pat Smith on 01842 752854 email [pms42@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:pms42@tiscali.co.uk)

### Other Forthcoming Events in Thetford

- April 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Thetford Players' Tavern Time - Carnegie Room 7.30.
- April 23<sup>rd</sup> St George's Day Concert - Carnegie Room 7.30.

For details of the many other events in the town visit the calendar of events on [www.exploretHetford.co.uk/events](http://www.exploretHetford.co.uk/events) or check in the *About Thetford* magazine.

Contact Tourist Information at Belmont House, 20 King Street, Thetford (01842) 751975 or email [info@leapinghare.org](mailto:info@leapinghare.org).

## ACTIVITIES REPORT

### Meetings

January: David O'Neal -  
History of Bridgham  
February: Pauline Quadling-  
Riversdale  
March: Barbara Miller -  
Norwich Cathedral



Proposed Power Plant at Mundford Road

## ENVIRONMENT

### The Thetford Area Action Plan

The Society's response to the consultation process of the Final Draft of the TAAP covered five pages and was submitted to the Planning Policy Team at the end of February. A copy can be viewed on the Society's website: [www.thetfordsociety.org.uk](http://www.thetfordsociety.org.uk).

All comments to the Planning Policy Team can be viewed at: [http://breckland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/draft\\_final\\_taap/draft\\_final\\_thetford\\_area\\_action\\_plan](http://breckland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/draft_final_taap/draft_final_thetford_area_action_plan).

### St Mary the Less

- Loose masonry on the tower prevented the North Aisle roof being completely covered.
- The owner has instigated an appeal to the Secretary of State against Breckland's refusal to grant him planning permission for a residential conversion.
- A mystery group of tomb guerrillas have carried out some remedial work on the listed tombs.
- We will lobby both English Heritage and Breckland to carry out further work to slow the deterioration of the building.

ITV Anglia visited and filmed inside the Church and then interviewed our Chairman. A programme regarding disused Churches was to be screened in the Spring.

We then met with representatives from English Heritage and Breckland and discussed the plight of the building, the listed tombs and options of which there are few.

**River Corridor:** We have been in contact with the Town Council and Breckland regarding works that have been carried out along Spring Walks and on Common Land between the Rivers Thet and Little Ouse near Nuns' Bridges which may have a negative impact on the trees and wild flowers in these areas. Breckland's Tree Officer has now written to Breckland's legal team stating that the work along Spring Walks would not have been granted permission had it been sought. We shall watch developments.

**Ramsey Close:** The Society has supported local residents and the Thetford Garden and Allotment Club in their desire to stop Breckland from selling a former play area in Ramsey Close for building land. The Society was represented at Dereham when the Cabinet members were lobbied and again at the Town Council meeting. The land has a covenant attached to it which states that the land should only be used as a play area. The Town Council has now decided to write to Breckland to ask that this area be transferred to the Town Council together with the other play areas. We have written supporting this request.

**Sale of Forestry Land:** We opposed this proposal and wrote to our MP. Fortunately, the Government, for the time being, saw sense and withdrew the proposal.

**Litter along the Railway:** We continue to encourage and nag Network Rail to carry out their statutory duties with regard to this issue. Bill Bryson is also on the rail litter campaign so we have an influential ally.

**Biomass Power Plant along Mundford Road:** This monstrosity will be discussed at a County Planning Meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> March. We have prepared a paper and will be represented at the meeting opposing the siting of this industrial unit in the Brecks where it will tower over the forest and will blot the landscape vistas from Gallows Hill and Croxton. We are working together with Croxton Parish Council in opposing this particular site for this Plant.

**Heritage Street Lighting:** The removal of this type of lighting was stopped and now the MTF Heritage Thematic Group has allocated monies so that any replacements will be in the accepted style.

**Academy/Forum/Bus Interchange:** The 'Forum' idea has been shelved as the monies allocated to the Academy were insufficient to fund the town centre site as well as the other new buildings required. The Academy is looking to locate all teaching on one site either the North Campus (Rosemary Musker) site or another being explored closer to the town centre. It is assumed that the South Campus (Charles Burrell) site will be sold for housing. As the Anchor site is no longer required for the 'Forum', Breckland will be exploring the options to develop the Anchor and riverside car park, as the moving of the Bus Station to St Nicholas Street/Minstergate area is slowly being taken forward. Land assembly has yet to be completed, although the design for the refurbished 'Cosy Carpets' building is being finalised. This building will not form part of the Bus Station and unfortunately no inside waiting area or cafeteria will be provided.

**Market Place roundabout:** This is nearing completion but the necessity of the design of the lights and signage does nothing enhance the feature disappointingly.

**Haling Path:** Works are underway along the Halving Path improving the revetments and pathway between the Town Bridge and the inner relief road bridge.

The Society's **River Corridor** group will begin again after Easter. Anyone wishing to get involved contact Digby Smith on (01842) 760369.



The Interior of St Mary the Less



The Ramsey Close Protest