

An update on all things Young Planner related as 2011 gets underway.

A successful Xmas social took place on 8th December with a good turnout of Young Planners, plus one or two additions! We started with a few drinks in Franks Bar, Norwich before heading to the Nazma Curry House for a very nice alternative to the round of Turkey dinners in December. We then finished up in the Kings Head with a range of real ales. It was great see a well-supported event including one or two new faces.

You will have seen e-mails from myself around Xmas with regard to the RTPI seeking views on the Localism Bill from YPs. Unfortunately the very short turn-around to fit into the House of Commons timetable, together with the timing over the Xmas period made it very difficult to get responses. Nonetheless, comments have been put forward from the region to inform the RTPI's response.

In terms of proposed events for this year, ideas are currently being considered and I would hope that those of you on the mailing list would have already received additional information by the time this article is published. As detailed last year, it is intended that an Ecology event will take place in the spring and we are also likely to have a more general social event at the Riverside Bowling Alley in Norwich. There will also be an APC event later in the year at an appropriate time to coincide with a submission deadline as well as the Xmas Social.

I am conscious that aside from the APC event, which is done on a more regional basis as it is guaranteed to have significant interest, YP events in the Region do have something of a Norwich focus. This is somewhat inevitable given that this is where YP events in the region began to be held from late 2006 when Rob Hobbs took over as young planner representative and is a location where we can guarantee a good level of attendance. Events have been held in Cambridge, Hertford and Ipswich in recent years but the dispersed nature of the region and its town and cities, together with the less than wonderful transport links does make it more difficult for events to take place on a regional level. It also requires young planners to come forward and volunteer to organise events. Therefore if you have an idea for an event in your part of the region, I would be more than happy to promote it through Orient Express, e-mails, the RTPI website and Facebook. The RTPI should also shortly be publishing a toolkit for setting up YP events. It may also be easier for some YPs to attend events in London and if you would like to be included in the mailing list from the London Network, please let me know and I can provide further information.

My last article in December last year, advised on updates to the APC "Blue Book" Guidance. This is still a work in progress and unfortunately I am unable to provide any further updates at this point in time. However on the APC, I have been advised that the most recent deadline at the end of January was the busiest since the process began.

One more general matters, the Young Planners Steering Group will be taking place in London on Thursday 12th May. If you have any particular issues you would like to raise, please contact me at graham.bloomfield@bidwells.co.uk