

Norfolk Agenda

The newsletter for Council Staff

Didn't we do well

Staff from Norfolk County Council carried the torch for Britain's public sector workers at this year's UK and Ireland Corporate Games - to some considerable success.

A team of 34 limbered up to pit themselves against the private sector muscle of giants such as Hewlett Packard, Unilever, Waitrose and the Nationwide Building Society. We came away with 4 2nd place medals beating both Norwich City Council and North Norfolk District Council in the medals table.

More than 5000 participants descended on Norwich for the 9th annual games at the UEA and other venues around the County between June 28th and 30th. The event was destined to pump around £2million into the local economy.

Mike first out of the water almost a minute's lead. Now the rush starts, but here's Frank with the lead group! How can I keep up this pace?

Mike Auger (Triad) Charles Auger (cycling) Frank Holmes (swimming) Derry Kelleher (Running)

As the only team sporting Viking helmets we were naturally hoping to paddle our way across UEA Broad to victory *Dragon Boat Racing Captain: Nick Smith*

Staff praised by Inspectors

In the last edition of Norfolk Agenda the imminent visit of the CPA (Comprehensive Performance Assessment) inspectors was highlighted.

Although we must wait until September to hear how we have done initial feedback on the visit is very good.

We have been told that CPA Inspectors were particularly impressed with the quality of our staff, who they found to be enthused about their work and honest about where we could and should do things better.

Norfolk Show Success

Norfolk County Council Fire Service stand won 2nd prize in the Public Sector category at the Royal Norfolk Show, narrowly beaten by the NHS (see centre pages for more information)

... it was good fun, We'd be happy to compete again next year in Newcastle!
Squash: Tim Venes/Patrick Saunders



**The team is pictured in party mood, with the dragon boat members dressed in Viking Helmets to put the frighteners on the opposition!*

Pickcheese, Billy Wise and Bum Barrel

For anyone who's ever needed to know the collective noun for a group of frogs, or the identity of a Joey Spadger - help is at hand!

Step forward talented Headteacher Steve Palin, who in-between working at Peterhouse Middle School in Gorleston, has produced a series of strikingly beautiful and informative books on an array of feathered and furry creatures.

With a background in art and design, Steve has put his considerable skills to good use over the years - publishing twelve work books for Encyclopaedia Britannica and a set of commemorative tea cards for PG Tips.

In the last few years, he has written and illustrated two books that explore the collective nouns of animals, explaining how terms such as an 'unkindness of ravens' originated.

His latest effort, Pickcheese, Billy Wise and Cobble, explores long forgotten folk terms for birds - such as the Devil Screech for the Swift, and the Bum Barrel for the Long-tailed tit!

Steve says 'My books are intended to be a celebration of the richness and folklore associated with birds. They are not intended to be academic or analytical, but fun.'

For more information on ordering copies of the books, please contact Steve on (01692) 651009

(N.B. A group of frogs is an army. A Joey Spadger is a Sparrow)



Have your say on the Hospital Access route

Widespread public consultation on possible road access to the new Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and the growing Research Park, has begun.

And as an employee of Norfolk County Council your views on this issue are very important.

A special Task Group of councillors and MPs, set up by Norfolk County Council, has selected six possible options - now that a direct link from the A47 Southern

By-pass has been ruled out by the government's Highways Agency.

The consultation closes on 9 August 2002.

To take part in the consultation:

- call the leaflet hotline 01603 222143
- Visit the web site - www.norfolk.gov.uk/consultations/norwich_hospitalandresearch_park.htm
- If you have any questions about the road access options themselves, contact: Marie Gales Tel - 01603 767530

Q&A

Tim Malynn



Tim Malynn, Director of Planning and Transportation joined Norfolk County Council in April. Formerly Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration at the unitary Luton Borough, Tim is married with an eight-year old daughter.

Q. What inspired you to follow your current career path?

I do not ever recall waking up one day and thinking "I want to be a Director of Planning and Transportation" but I do recall my interest in construction (which was probably triggered by building sandcastles on Margate beach as a child).

Q. What and where was your first job in Local Government?

I started as a trainee Civil Engineering technician at the GLC, London.

Q. What are your first impressions of Norfolk?

*As a County - what a wonderful place, but boy is it difficult to get anywhere!
As a Council - a very professional outfit with an excellent reputation.*

Q. Which person in public life do you most admire?

This is very difficult as there are so many but I suppose if I was to boil it down to one it would be Richard Branson - he has achieved so much and still has his feet on the ground.

Q. What really makes your blood boil?

People who deliberately mislead you.

Q. What is your idea of happiness?

Sitting on a sunny beach with my family and a bottle of beer.

Q. What do you never leave home without?

My keys - if any of you have forgotten them you will know why they are so important!

E Government Update



Councillors approved the draft Contact Strategy at their meeting in May, so work is now underway looking in detail at how the strategy can be made to work - and what it will cost.

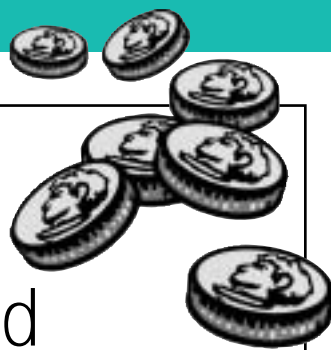
The contact strategy is for all of us. It is all about customer focus - putting our customers or clients needs at the heart of everything we do. It means that however people choose to get in touch with us - by phone, fax, email or in person, they get a consistently helpful and friendly response and high quality service.

Information about timings and costs will go to Cabinet in September for decision. If the plan gets the go-ahead, changes to the way we deliver our services will begin by April 2003.

An operational 'E-Board' has been set up to lead on the programme. Chaired by Alan Tidmarsh, it comprises Sue Rossiter from Education, Paul Adams from Social Services, Bob Summers, Director of Finance, Steve Holland from Trading Standards and Joanna Hannam from Communications. It meets weekly and will report regularly on progress.

The contact strategy is on the intranet. For further information contact Joanna Hannam on 01603 222969.

Taking money for granted



These days local authorities have to be more skilled than ever before in finding ways of funding projects. Here in Norfolk we have considerable expertise in some areas, such as Private Finance Initiative applications (where we won an award), but there may still be opportunities that we are missing.

One problem is that applying for grants can be seen as too daunting and difficult and with an uncertain outcome. But help is at hand in the shape of a new External Funding Guide!

Going under the title of 'Guidance on all stages of applying for and managing a grant,' it does exactly what it says on the cover, drawing upon the experiences of people who have been through it all before. Don't forget that you will have to provide evidence to support the grant claims and that this will need to be audited. So talk to your auditor early. The guide will soon be posted on the Intranet, but can be obtained by contacting Howard Jones on (01603) 222832

Raising the FLAG

Looking at ways we can improve customer satisfaction has led to the establishment of FLAG (Front Line Action Group).

The group draws together representatives from all departments. It is looking at the way we handle complaints and collect the many compliments we receive about staff and what we do with this information. It is also looking at how staff are trained in customer care and seeing how this can be improved and extended to all front line workers. It is also considering better ways of monitoring levels of public satisfaction with what we do and how we help staff to be kept well informed in order to improve their work.

For more information about FLAG contact Jennifer Falconbridge in the Policy unit on (01603) 223942

NCC makes new commitment to good Race Relations

In the 26 years since the Race Relations Act of 1976 was passed, Britain has become more culturally diverse. During these years the public debate about race relations has become more prominent, but in 2000 the Government felt that further impetus was needed if discrimination was to be tackled head-on.

The Race Relations Amendment Act was the outcome. This requires all public bodies to draw up a Race Equality Scheme setting out their intentions and proposed actions for eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting race relations.

Norfolk County Council's Race Equality Scheme, approved by Cabinet, was published on the County Council web-site on 31 May 2002.

Putting Norfolk First at the Norfolk show

'Putting Norfolk First' was the theme of Norfolk County Council's displays when the Royal Norfolk Show made a welcome return after two years on June 26th and 27th. This year, different departments combined to create colourful and lively stands that were enjoyable, as well as informative.

For example, the Council's Education and Cultural Services created a stand which had something for people of all ages - from pre-school toddlers, to parents looking for childcare, and anyone wanting to find out more about libraries and adult education. A performing area ensured that something was always happening - from circus science to story telling.

Road Safety featured the ever-popular Olly Day Road Safety Magic Show, and, sharing the same pitch, Waste Management launched a 'Slim Your Bin' roadshow, with displays on wormeries and composting, paint recycling, real nappies and the story of glass recycling.

The Fire Service teamed up with ambulance service colleagues to show their work and received the keys to a new fire engine (see story)

* The Chairman of the Council, Colleen Walker, officially received the Queen's Jubilee Baton on behalf of the County when it reached the Show between on July 26th. Following the ceremonial acceptance, Mrs Walker was presented with a miniature replica of the baton which will remain on display at County Hall.

Three brand new fire engines, together costing well over £500,000, were handed over to Norfolk Fire Service at the Royal Norfolk Show.
The three Scania appliances, which meet all the latest health and safety regulations as well as Norfolk's specific requirements, carry up to seven fire fighters in safety.
The appliances will be stationed at Sprowston, Gt. Yarmouth and Thetford.

Riding, cycling and rambling around Norfolk has been made easier with the launch of Norfolk County Council's new Countryside Access website.
A simple click of a mouse now opens up hundreds of miles of paths and beautiful trails just waiting to be explored across the county.
The website, which can be found at www.countrysideaccess.norfolk.gov.uk, was launched by Chairman Colleen Walker and has been developed with the help of the Countryside Agency's Rural Recovery Fund.



Norfolk Social Services celebrates National Award

Norfolk Social Services has won a top MS Society award for partnership working.

Ours was the only social services department in the country to receive the new Measuring Success Award, which recognises partnerships that are providing an excellent service for people affected by multiple sclerosis.

Diane Proctor, of the Norwich MS Society branch, nominated Laurie A'Court, Principal Development Officer at Norfolk Social Services. The award was presented to Norfolk Social Services and the Norwich branch of the MS Society. It was accepted by Diane, Laurie and Annie Moseley, Strategic Planning Officer, in Birmingham on June 12.

Salt solution is a success

Icy roads may seem a long way off, but P&T is celebrating a success story for its winter gritting services after winning a national award.

The department won the Public Private Finance Award for Best Transport Project (below £20m) for its pioneering salt storage facilities. The judges said they were impressed by the scheme's innovative qualities and the way it "stretches the

boundaries of the possible in PFI."

PFI is the Private Finance Initiative, which enables private investment to be used for public facilities and services.

P&T began exploring the possibility of a PFI-funded project in 1997 and in March 2000 signed a £7.3million contract for 20 years with Salt Union Ltd, which is Britain's biggest industrial salt company, based in Cheshire.

Around 9,000 tonnes of salt are spread around the county each year and the contract covers the supply of salt and its storage in seven new, environmentally friendly domes built across Norfolk.

Committed to Quality

Norfolk County Services Ltd - which employs more than 4000 staff across the county - has become one of the biggest firms yet to scoop a new and prestigious award for quality.

NCS staff are hard at work each day in Norfolk, keeping the county's open spaces and schools clean and tidy, as well as providing catering services for schools and health care establishments and services such as printing and street cleaning in places such as North Norfolk.

Now their hard work has been rewarded with news that the company has been awarded the new ISO 9001:2000 Quality Standard Certificate by Lloyds Register Quality Assurance Ltd - a sign that NCS is committed to quality.

Q&A

Anne Gibson



Anne Gibson joined Norfolk County Council as Head of Personnel in May. She comes from Surrey County Council where she was Organisational Development Manager/Joint Head of Corporate Personnel. Anne is married with two young sons.

Q. What inspired you to follow your current career path?

A. *Believing that people can develop themselves and be supported through development to do the best they can.*

Q. What and where was your first job in Local Government?

A. *Graduate Trainee for Surrey County Council. (The Assistant County Personnel Officer who interviewed me said afterwards - of my Scottish accent - he couldn't understand what I was saying but it sounded impressive!)*

Q. What are your first impressions of Norfolk?

A. *I grew up near the sea and the Norfolk coastline is one of the big benefits of being here for me.*

Q. Which person in public life do you most admire?

A. *Nelson Mandela - his compassion and believe in the best of human nature.*

Q. What really makes your blood boil?

A. *Prejudice and inequality.*

Q. What is your idea of happiness?

A. *A day at the beach with my family, followed by a glass of Baileys and a Chinese takeaway!*

Q. What do you never leave home without?

A. *Telling my children I love them.*

Can YOU Survive the RNIB Challenge????

On the 14th & 15th September 2002 the Royal National Institute for the Blind dare you to take the challenge of a lifetime at Pentney Lakes, near Kings Lynn.

The challenge is to survive the weekend. You will undertake a series of 'workshops' on survival skills by day and, at dusk you will be given your missions for the night.

Beware.... The instructors will be trying to

capture you. If three of you are caught you are eliminated.

The winners will be the team with the highest points gained from their missions. The RNIB need a £25 registration fee and then you must raise £1000 to bring with you on the day.

Their aim is to give you some memorable days and raise £30,000 to help people with serious sight problems.

For more information call Louise - 01760 441048 louise@rnib201.fsnet.co.uk or Nikki - 01603 722308 nradcliffe@rnib.org.uk

Take a STEP towards helping your local community

Following the launch of the Specials Through Employer Partnership scheme (STEP) to encourage Norfolk employers to sponsor staff to become Special Constables, Norfolk Constabulary has appointed a full time Project Manager to boost the numbers of Specials in Norfolk.

Norfolk County Council is taking part in the scheme which, since it was launched last year, has attracted six new Specials (one so far from NCC), and has eight others hoping to join soon.

The role itself is a far cry from the traditional image of being a "Special Event Constable." Norfolk Specials are an integral part of the force involved in duties ranging from traffic duties, crime reduction initiatives, court attendances and plain clothed patrols in addition to community patrols. They have the same powers as regular officers and authority to drive police vehicles whilst on duty.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the scheme can contact Dave Story, STEP Project Manager on 01953 423683 for an informal chat.



Life in the Fast Lane

Fast Lane Training Services is an independent trading unit within the Council and it offers a full programme of courses for Council and external staff who work in highways and related services. The list on offer includes the New Roads and Street Works qualification, Winter Maintenance training, the Highways Maintenance NVQ and specific courses such as Manual Handling and the Use of Abrasive Wheels.

FLTS are based at the Training Centre at Watton and have conference and meeting facilities available for hire - call 01953 884975 for more information.

Jubilee Honours for Staff

Four former County Council staff members were among those honoured in the Queen's Jubilee Birthday Honours List.



William Cox, who recently retired after a total of 40 years in the Norfolk County Council Fire Service, was made an MBE.

Sue Cara, formerly part of the Adult Education team in Norwich was made an MBE.

Professor June Thoburn, from the University of East Anglia's School of Social work, and a former Norfolk Social Worker herself, was made a CBE.

Christine Ferris, Principal Fire Control Officer, has been awarded the QFSM (Queen's Fire Service Medal)



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