

Norfolk Agenda

The newsletter for Council Staff

New Saturday School Programme at Roots of Norfolk

Roots of Norfolk, our rural life museum at Gressenhall is joining forces with BTCV, Norfolk Smallholders Training Initiative, East of England Apples and Orchards Project and others to launch an enticing new programme of Saturday Schools. Housed in Georgian workhouse buildings on a beautiful 50 acre site, the museum is an attractive and inspiring place to learn. All courses include access to the museum and grounds after the course has finished until closing that day, plus teas, coffees and lunch in the museum's Mardlers' Rest Cafe. Located in the very centre of the county, close to the A47, the museum is easy to get to and has ample, free parking. Courses cost £24.

Learning Lift Off, the union funded education programme, has 2 free places on each course to offer specifically to NCS staff who are members of GNB, UCATT, Unison, AMICUS and T and G. Just call Learning Lift Off on 01603 224250.

- For more information or to book call 01362 869251, email gressenhall.museum@norfolk.gov.uk or go to www.norfolk.gov.uk/tourism/museums/nrlm

- 5 April** Discover the Ins and Outs of the Workhouse
- 26 April** Introduction to Woodland Management
- 24 May** Wildlife Gardening
- 14 June** Introduction to Smallholding
- 21 June** Willow Weaving
- 5 July** Discover How to Trace your Family History
- 26 July** Willow Weaving
- 13 Sept** All about Apples
- 20 Sept** Tree Identification
- 4 Oct** Discover Norfolk Migrants and Emigrants in the 1830s and '40s
- 11 Oct** Homeopathy for Animals

If you would like 'Norfolk Agenda' in an alternative format please contact the Communications Unit on (01603) 222964 (minicom 223833) and we will do our best to help.



Better communications - Bite sized training courses on the way

If you are keen to know how to brush up your writing or produce the perfect publication, a series of courses could be just the thing for you.

The Communications Unit is adding to its useful online 'DIY communication' tips by working with Corporate Training and Development to develop the following 'bite-sized' courses:

- Making good communications work for you**
How to plan a communications event, and really get your activity noticed.
- Producing press releases**
How to spot news that will interest the media, and to use existing systems to get it out.
- Responding to media enquiries**
What to do when the media want to talk to you about your event, or if a crisis hits
- Producing quality publications**
Leaflets, plans and newsletters - making them

readable, cost effective and tips on distribution.

- Using plain language**
Turning councilse into something that everyone will understand.
- Writing reports.**
Keeping them simple, relevant and readable

The courses will run for two hours each from 11am, with a light lunch provided, and cost around £50 per person..

If you are interested in finding out more about any of these courses - without committing yourself at this stage- please contact Alison Smith in the Communications Unit by e-mailing alison.smith.cex@norfolk.gov.uk and state which course or courses you would like to take if they were available.

- Check out DIY Communications at <http://intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/cex/communications/diy.htm>

Facing the Budget Facts

Given the size of this year's Council Tax rise, anyone working for the Council might be asked why this has happened.

The following budget facts are worth bearing in mind:

- Half the 15.9% increase in the county's Council Tax demand is because £16 million in grant has been removed by the Government and redistributed to northern authorities.
- Of the total budget of £692 million, increases of nearly £50 million have been forced upon the Council by national decisions and Government policies over which we have no control.
- Public consultation, including a community discussion day held by Mori, showed people wanted key services protected, not cut.
- The 15.9% rise works out at an increase of £2.32 each week for a Band D property.

Key features of the agreed budget include:

- £4.4 million extra each year to Social Services, including increased funding for residential homes and to avoid the need for further transfer of home care to the private sector
- An extra £2.5 million for Education, which received a below-average Government grant settlement
- £445,000 to support a 20% increase in library opening hours. The closure of Bradwell and Lazar House libraries was confirmed, but closure options for three others were dropped.
- A museum 'mothballing' option was also dropped, and the immediate future assured for the West Runton Elephant Project, the Norfolk Biological Record and the Museums Exhibitions Officer post.

Cabinet changes

Alison King, Leader of Norfolk County Council has announced changes to her Cabinet Team.



Roy Banham
is the Cabinet Member for Waste Management and the Environment



Tony Tomkinson
is the Cabinet Member for Economic Development



Shaun Murphy
is the Cabinet Member for Libraries, Museums, records and the Arts

Mrs King said: " *All Members of the former Cabinet have worked very hard since we took control of the council and I would like to pay tribute for the valuable contribution that they have made.*"

Success for NPS



Mike Britch, MD of NPS

NPS (Property Consultancy) Ltd - a private company wholly owned by Norfolk County Council - is celebrating after winning two prestige contracts with local authorities in London and Luton together worth £2 million a year.

The company has been appointed to provide technical and day-to-day maintenance support for Kingston Council in London for the next three years, taking over in April from the current provider Serco. All existing Serco staff will transfer to NPS.

.....continued on page 2

Have you got a story for the next issue?

If so phone 01603 222843, or email: christine.birchall.cex@norfolk.gov.uk



Norfolk County Council

Q&A

Lisa Christensen

joined Norfolk County Council as Director of Social Services in October last year. She came from the London Borough of Lambeth where she was Executive Director, Social Services and Health. Lisa is married with two daughters.



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

A. I wanted to work in the public sector because I have a strong belief in public service values. I wanted to work in health and social care because all of human life is there - both in terms of staff and users. I didn't plan to be a director (I planned to be an air hostess, ballet dancer, farmer and author at various stages between the ages of 5 and 18 - still have hopes re the last option) - but love it although the responsibility is a little daunting at times.

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

A. I was a scale 2 admin assistant in the Borough Architect's dept of Islington Council.

Q. What are your first impressions of Norfolk?

A. Big sky; big beaches; owls at night; welcoming and supportive Members, colleagues and neighbours; pride amongst residents

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

A. Any of the suffragettes who fought for my right to vote, and paved the way to equal rights in this country.

Q. What really makes your blood boil?

A. Abuse of power

Q. What is your idea of happiness?

A. Playing Monopoly with the children, with a glass of whisky and a box of marzipan chocolates to hand

Q. What do you never leave home without?

A. Reading glasses (recently!), lipstick, money and mobile phone.

*Continued from page 1.....*NPS has also won a two-year contract with Luton Borough Council to deal with its property needs.

NPS, which has a turnover of £13 million a year and which employs more than 300 staff, will open offices in both Luton and Kingston as a result of winning the contracts.

Expert technical support will be provided from the NPS head office at County Hall.

It will take the number of NPS offices in the South and East to 10 and Managing Director, Mike Britch, says the company is well placed to win further contracts in the future.

He said: *"Both these contracts were won in open*

competition and I am delighted that we were able to prove to both Authorities that we could deliver a first class service at a reasonable cost to the taxpayer.

"Much of the profit we make is ploughed back to the County Council to help fund services such as education and social services, so our success is good news for council taxpayers in Norfolk."

A share of any profits flows back to the Authority in the form of 'dividends' although NPS is able to retain what it needs to grow.

NPS is chaired by our Chief Executive, Tim Byles, with a two senior officers and a county councillor making up the other board members.

If you are considering using the **pre-school nursery** in the grounds of County Hall, due for completion in January 2004, the operators want to gather your views. A survey will be placed on the Corporate intranet marketplace soon, or you can request a survey form from Kid Ease by phoning (01256) 698019

COOL BABY COOL!

BURNING ISSUES!

Did you know...

- Lighting an empty office overnight wastes enough energy to heat water for 1,000 cups of coffee
- A photocopier left switched on overnight wastes enough energy to make 5,300 A4 copies
- A PC monitor left switched on overnight wastes enough energy to laser print 800 A4 pages

At the PDC we are taking these facts seriously! Members of the PDC's 'Green Team' launched their campaign for environmental awareness following an engaging presentation to colleagues in December 2002. Volunteer 'green reps' from each office came forward to encourage and advocate environmentally-friendly practices. This was backed up by an energy audit which was carried out by John Cobb of Norfolk Property Services highlighting the areas where improvements could be made.

The Professional Development Centre steps lightly towards eco-centre status!

Advisory Service colleagues are taking the initiative to examine and improve their environmental performance as part of a commitment to our Environmental Policy. There is a strategy behind the activity and much emphasis is being placed on reducing waste and energy.

BEHAVE!
10 simple steps to sustainability...

- Turn off lights when not in use - especially in toilets, kitchens and corridors
- Save money and energy - monitor the heat in your office and turn down radiators if possible (speak to your caretaker)
- Place water-filled plastic bottles in toilet cisterns to reduce the amount of water used (over a third of water in a domestic household is flushed down the loo!)
- Use the double-sided facility on your printer (or ask if this can be set up)
- Try printing out in draft mode to save on toner
- Re-use the reverse side of paper for printing drafts, telephone messages, etc.
- Re-use as many envelopes as you can
- If you can't re-use an envelope, take care in addressing the new one so that the recipient can!
- Recycle all paper and cardboard which can't be re-used
- Give someone a lift to work!

Little steps go a long way to making a difference



L to R: Gill Seaton, Rob Lodge, Fred Corbett, Mags Goddard

- If you want to make strides towards an environmentally-friendly office and would like help in getting started, please contact Anna McCarthy or Gill Seaton at the PDC on 01603 433276 or email:

anna.mccarthy.edu@norfolk.gov.uk or gill.seaton.edu@norfolk.gov.uk

Also, don't forget to check out www.esinet.norfolk.gov.uk/envawards - the new Norfolk Schools' Environment Awards website which is now live!

For any other queries relating to environmental education, email Susan Falch-Lovesey, Manager of Norfolk Environmental Education Service, on susan.falch-lovesey.edu@norfolk.gov.uk

CREAM CRACKERS...

Our Communications team overcame challenges from Cambridge University and the Antarctic Survey to win the PRCA award for the Best In-House Team in the regional Institute of Public Relations Cream Awards. After taking the In-House Team gold award, the Council's team added a second to their collection when 'Norfolk Matters', the stakeholders' newsletter distributed to parish councils, MPs, school governors, other authorities and partner organisations, gained a silver award.

Love bug

Hearts were fluttering at the Norfolk & Norwich Millennium Library during February as staff were bitten by the love bug.

Those feeling short on inspiration for Valentine's Day were able to hot foot it to the library where a team of local poets waited with pens at the ready. In exchange for a small contribution to the We Care appeal.

Another Star guest was Mills and Boons writer Kate Hardy who gave a free talk on how to write successful romantic fiction.

Competitions including 'Draw what you love the best!', and an 'In Love with Literature' quiz were featured during the month.

As were a selection of books on the theme of love including books on the war brides who married American servicemen in the Second World War, romances set during the War, confidence-building self-help books and guides to personal relationships.

Partnership in Excellence



The outstanding way Norfolk and Cambridgeshire have worked together to establish joined-up early years and childcare services in the Fens has been recognised with a Partnership in Excellence Award.

Emneth nursery has become the focal point for the development of a range of services, and joining together has opened up funding opportunities through Sure Start and the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative. Nearly 600 children, some living in very isolated communities, stand to benefit.

The award, in the 'Making the Most of Partnership Working' category, was presented by Cherie Booth QC to Marcelle Curtis, Head of Early Years and Childcare Strategy, and Gill Heaford, Vice Chair of the Norfolk Partnership, together with colleagues from Cambridgeshire.



County Emergency Planning Officer Roy Elflett found himself between Minister Elliott Morley (left) and the Duke of Edinburgh during a highly successful conference organised to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1953 floods. Sir Timothy Colman, Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk, is on the right.

Norfolk County Council - Size Matters!

The Electoral Commission's Boundary Committee for England will be carrying out a review of Norfolk County Council's divisional boundaries this year. The Council is currently reaching a view on whether there needs to be a change in the number of elected members - there are currently 84.

Once this has been done, the Council will prepare detailed draft proposals for how the divisional boundaries could look, for submission to the Committee.

Any groups who submit their own proposals to the Boundary Committee are asked to copy their suggestions to the County Council, so that they can be put on public display.

The Council aims to have its draft proposals prepared by early April. There will then be widespread consultation which will run until May 9. The Council will pass its submission to the Boundary Committee following a full Council meeting on 7th July after which the Committee will carry out its own consultation process.

- Anyone with questions is welcome to contact the following staff at County Hall: Greg Insull (01603 223100) Ian Lambert (01603 222620) or Paul Anthony (01603 222934).

UK Youth Parliament Elections 2003

The 2003 election for Norfolk's representatives on the UK Youth Parliament saw 7,172 votes cast for the 22 candidates - a 59% increase in voting compared to last year (4,501).

The election took place during the week 20th Jan to 23rd Jan, and 44 young people - 16 more than last year - put themselves forward as candidates. The number of candidates was reduced to 22 through a hustings day, where each candidate made a speech and then a vote was taken to find the final short list to appear on each ballot paper.

28 schools and colleges acted as polling stations, on increase of 8 on 2002.

16,500 ballot papers were issued, therefore the turnout was 44%.

The following were elected as members of the UK Youth Parliament

- North Norfolk (North Norfolk Constituency) - **Adam Blyth** (North Walsham High)
- South East Norfolk (South Norfolk Constituency) - **Daniel Boast** (Long Stratton High)
- West Norfolk (West Norfolk Constituency) - **James Miller** (King Edward VI, K.Lynn)
- Central Norfolk (Norwich South Constituency) - **Sarah Reynolds** (Norwich School)

The following deputy members were elected:

- North Norfolk (Mid Norfolk Constituency) - **Ruth Doubleday** (Fakenham High)
- South East Norfolk (Gt Yarmouth Constituency) - **Greg Guthrie** (Cliff Park High)
- West Norfolk (South West Norfolk Constituency) - **No candidate elected**
- Central Norfolk (Norwich North) Joint Post - **Laura Watling** (Taverham High) and **Peter Mason** (Norwich School)

All members will provide a direct link for Members of Parliament to the UK Youth Parliament.

The elections were organised by Norfolk County Council, and Council Leader Alison King was delighted with the upsurge in interest among young people. *"A healthy democracy needs active citizens, so this is a very good sign for the future. I am sure that the successful candidates will find it fascinating. Perhaps it will inspire some of them to go into politics in later life - I certainly hope so."*

Image conscious

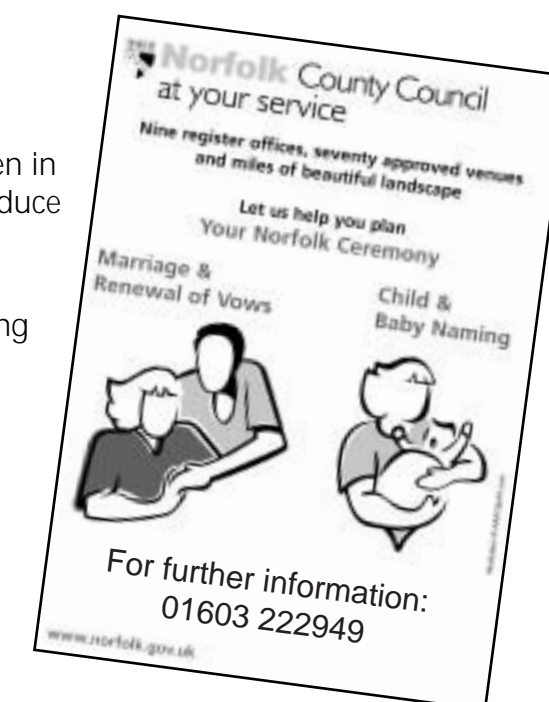
The question of photography and video recording of children in schools continues to vex head teachers and others who produce printed or web material.

Last summer our 'Safe Use of Images' guidelines for schools and others were produced to cover photography or recording for publication - anything from a Year R photo in the local newspaper to the school's own leaflets and website.

Since then, the question of whether parents should be allowed to photograph or video record school events, such as gymnastic displays or school nativity plays, has emerged as another issue.

Our guidelines are therefore being revised to take account of this, and to pick up suggestions made.. Once complete, the intention is to distribute the guidelines to all schools. In the meantime, the original version can be found on the County Council intranet site. Go to the Chief Executive's Department pages, click on the link for Communications. The guidelines are within the Media and Public Affairs Information section.

<http://intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/cex/communications/media.htm>



Ofsted success for Norfolk Schools

Several schools in Norfolk were published in the latest annual report by Ofsted for 2001-02

Norfolk has five schools in the 'good schools' category:

- All Saints Church of England Primary School, Great Ryburgh
- Gayton Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School, King's Lynn
- Homefield Voluntary Controlled Church of England First School and Nursery, Bradwell
- Larkman Community First School, Norwich
- Neatherd High School, Dereham

The report also names six Norfolk schools that came out of special measures in 2001-02: Breydon Voluntary Controlled Church of England Middle School, Belton; Greenacre First, Middle and Nursery School, Great Yarmouth; Neatishead Voluntary Controlled Primary School; St Michael's VA Middle School, Norwich; The Admiral's Junior School, Thetford; Costessey High School, Norwich.

Alec Byrne Cabinet Member for Education congratulated the schools:

"I am delighted for these schools and would like to congratulate them all for their hard work and dedication."

A vision of the future

Imagine Norfolk in 2023. What is our economic, social and enviromental future and what do we want it to be? That was the job of 180 delegates from our own County Council, all Norfolk's district councils, health and voluntary organisations and members of the Youth Parliament, at county's first Strategic Partnership working conference on February 28th. Their job was to draw together aspirations for the future of Norfolk, helping to produce the county's first Community Strategy which will be published by the end of March before going out for wider consultation to be refined and adapted over the coming months.

Food&Agriculture Conference success...

Low income, deteriorating capital, falling commodity pricesthe future for our farms and rural business appears a bleak one.

But the overriding message emerging from this community is that farmers are not merely sitting back and letting themselves be overtaken by events - they are keen to hone their existing businesses and derive income from new sources.

This point was driven home on Friday 31 January when over 120 delegates braved difficult driving conditions to attend the 'Shaping the Future' Food and Agriculture Conference at Easton College, organised by our Economic Development Team

The conference also attracted some forty delegates from Norway on a week-long trade mission to Norfolk as part of Norway Week.

The delegates spanned the rural business sector with small producers and larger farming businesses networking with producers and retailers to find new ways to boost business. Feedback from attendees was very positive.

Workshops addressed issues such as diversification, access to grants, funding and support and food safety, demonstrating how new ideas can be brought to fruition.

Delegates went away with a common message from all speakers to find a way of not just coping with change but to exploit and enjoy it:

Can you help?

As a Norfolk County Council employee working for Social Services at Attleborough Day Services, Can you help me?
I hope to take part in the Bike The Nile sponsored cycle ride in aid of Age Concern this October. It will involve cycling 400km across Egypt over eight days. I have to raise £2,500 in sponsorship - £2,000 of it before July. Please would you consider me in this worthwhile cause by making a donation.
Thank you.

Marina McKay mckaymarina@hotmail.com
Tel 01953 603807 Mobile 07713258285

Could you help with a collection amongst your colleagues during Save the Children week, April 27th - May 3rd?
The charity is looking for support and asking if members of staff are willing to take official collection packs.
For further information contact Chrissie Murphy on (01449) 760306 or email c.murphy@scfuk.org.uk

I am running the London Marathon on 13th April 2003 in aid of Whizz Kidz. Whizz Kidz is a national charity that purchases mobility equipment (such as wheelchairs and tricycles) for disabled children. I am hoping to raise £1500 and any donations or sponsorship from your readers would be very gratefully received. Cheques can be sent (made payable to 'Whizz Kidz') care of the school where I teach - the address is:

Anita Wilson, Bawdeswell Community Primary School, Fakenham Road, Bawdeswell, Norfolk, NR20 4RR

THANKYOU Nicaraguan Scholarship Christmas Appeal

Just before Christmas staff were asked through the intranet marketplace site to help support our twinned city in Nicaragua, whose Mayor had spoken to our Chairman Colleen Walker about the educational needs of children there. Although education is free in Nicaragua, children need to supply their own uniform and school materials before they can attend. £60 per year means a child can attend school. Many thanks to all those who donated to this scheme - the response from throughout the County Council has been superb!

Strategic Core (Education)	109.60
Psychological Service at St Margaret's House	46.00
Pupil Attendance Service	117.00
Admissions	25.00
Lifelong Learning/NYCS/Adult Ed	40.00
Bridge Maintenance Team (P andT)	11.00
EYDCP (St Andrews House)	12.00
EYDCP (South and East)	15.00
Trading Standards	80.00
Finance (4th floor)	96.92
Planning/Buildings (Education)	38.75
Comms and Policy (CEX)	20.00
Individual donations	75.00
Overall total	686.27

This means that as a County Council we have financed 11 scholarships.
Before Easter we will be inviting schools to join us in raising money for the scholarship scheme.

If you are collecting money for charity, or making an appeal for a good cause send details to Christine Birchall - room 522 County Hall or by email christine.birchall.cex@norfolk.gov.uk for possible inclusion in the May issue of Agenda.