

Norfolk Agenda

The newsletter for Council Staff

Pulling in the same direction



No quarter was given in the first ever Planning and Transportation tug-of-war competition, held outside County Hall one balmy summer evening.

Over 100 staff from the department and their partners May Gurney and Mott MacDonald

took the chance to work off any pent up aggression, with an impressive display of pulling power.

The P&T Laboratory team emerged victorious, with a creditable performance by the Departmental Management Team (until they were nobbled).

2

number count down to October 1st

0844 800 8014 Social Services 0844 800 8013 Trading Standards

For the very first time people in Norfolk have one Social Services and one Trading Standards number to call to get information and advice and access a wide range of services.

Social Services and Trading Standards are the first two departments to be involved with the new Customer Service Centre, which goes 'live' on October 1st. *Turn to centre pages for full story.*

Ambition on the Agenda

Most people agree

Norfolk is a very special place to live with a unique environment and good quality of life. But what should it be like in 20 years time?

Norfolk County Council is involved in a partnership with district & parish council, health, police, voluntary and business organisations to consider this.

"**Norfolk Ambition - A Community Strategy for the county of Norfolk**" is it's first attempt at a plan to make sure Norfolk keeps its distinctive

qualities, whilst developing a vibrant economy and improving our quality of life.

The partnership is looking at three big challenges we need to address to build a better Norfolk for 2023 ...

Raising aspirations and achievement Norfolk and its people have great potential to succeed and create excellent opportunities for themselves

Rural and urban communities We must focus on solutions which benefit both rural and urban communities.

Making Connections

Considering infrastructure, both physical - roads, rail, sealinks - and virtual through IT. We also need to find ways of improving communication between people.

You can look at the Norfolk Ambition website and add your views now,
www.norfolkambition.gov.uk

How would you like to see Norfolk develop and improve? What part can you play in making this county a great one?



Norfolk County Council

Vocational Career Counselling

In this constantly changing working environment where do we go for information, advice and guidance? No need to go external, this service is available to all Norfolk County Council Employees and is free.

In the 21st century it is no longer the norm to expect a 'job for life', planning is an important part of career development and although covered in your appraisal, our aim is to guide you into taking responsibility for your own career, should you require it.

The service is confidential and flexible, so we fit in with your needs

The service includes:

Career Development

- Planning a career path
- Review of personal attributes
- Looking at transferable skills
- Action planning for a period of 3/5 years

Interviewing Techniques

- Application forms
- CVs
- Advice on interview techniques
- Mock interviews with feedback

Tips on where to start in career development

Many people have already taken up the opportunity and feel that we have supported them in their development needs, these are some of the quotes.

"I am starting a new job with Cultural Services after 13 years in the same job, you have helped me change my life"

"I just want you to know how grateful I am for all the help and support I received from your colleague and I really do

believe I would not have been offered the job without that help."

Remember when Team Development was a day out of the office, a jolly and you had a good time? You get back to the office to the 178 emails and the comments 'alright for some' and you think Hey! Why bother?

Team Development

Well the Team Development day has undergone a change, for the better. Unfortunately you still have to put up with the good time, but it comes with a price. The price is:

- A better understanding of your strengths and how to use them
- An insight to your team members (nothing personal)
- The direction of the team
- Action planning
- Measure your progress
- Assist in the change process

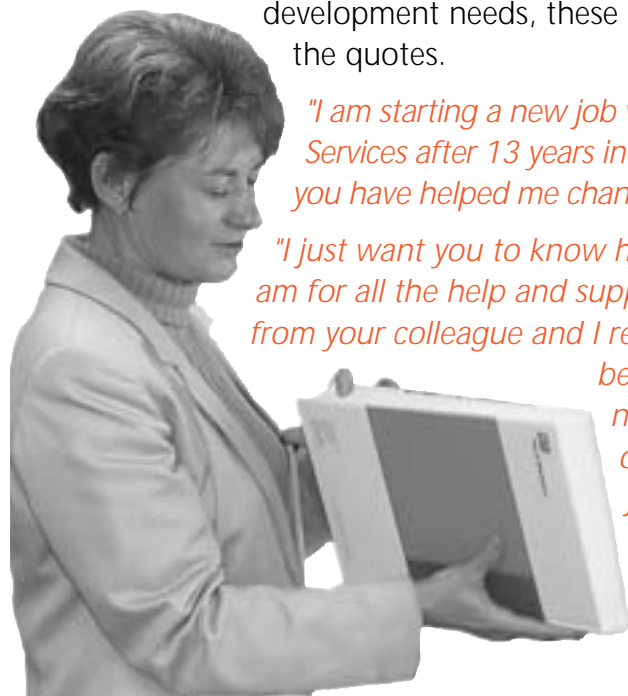
What it can do for your team

From a new team getting to know each other and developing a common purpose and ground rules, to a strong team building mutual commitment and accountability, the focus is on the relevant issues. We offer a variety of events and the right approach will depend on your objectives.

How's it done?

Depending on the extent of the team insight required, we can offer from the profiling and feedback, with advice on how to use what you have learned, to a two-day teambuilding course, packed with team activities, feedback and action planning. We will tailor the experience to suit your needs.

For more information about Vocational Career Counselling or Team Development Contact Lin Smith on 01603 222246



I felt that the 2 days came together better than I could have hoped for, all of the team members benefited. We are a very open group of people and the two days got the most from us. The non-confrontational approach got us to tackle some difficult issues.

I was impressed.

John Baldwin

*Risk and Insurance
Manager*

As a manager I found the whole exercise very enlightening and useful. The whole team has enjoyed the process and continue to talk about it. They found it a very helpful and a very positive experience.

Sheila Watson

*Area Museums
Officer*

It means that people have emerged from the whole process feeling stronger and prouder, more valuable and more valued. Exactly the way it should be.

Andy Mash

Headteacher

Managerial Adviceline

8 am to 9 pm, weekdays (excluding Bank Holidays)

Freephone 0800 085 3805

You may not be aware that Norfolk Support Line service operates a helpline which is especially for managers.

If your work for Norfolk County Council means that you have responsibility for others, you can contact a trained advisor to seek advice on dealing with "people issues".



Why not increase your level of service?

Our Adult Education Basic Skills

team is currently helping employees in a wide range of organisations and businesses across Norfolk to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

We provide help and support for all levels of staff, including middle and senior management. Employees may just need to improve their spelling, grammar or

punctuation, or be shown how to layout out a letter/memo/minutes or write a report. Perhaps some of the estimates or calculations they have made recently may be wildly out or are they struggling to convert to metric. They may need support in completing other qualifications too.

The Norfolk Brokerage Scheme has been set up by

the Learning & Skills Council to encourage employers to help and support their employees in the workplace, and government funding has been provided

If any of your employees need to brush up their skills why not call Margaret Matthews, Basic Skills in the Workplace on Tel: 01603-222131 (ext 2131 for County Hall) for further information.

autumn

Events at Holt Hall

Fungus Forays Weekend Course
At Holt Hall Field Study Centre
10th, 11th & 12th October, 2003

Come and join us for a weekend of fungi hunting as we go in search of elusive and varied fungi.

The weekend will include:-

- Get to know your mushrooms !
- Compare species.
- Know what is safe . . . and what is not !
- Taste and try some of the cooked edible species.
- Look at the diversity caused by habitats and soils.
- Discover the life history of a fungus.



Autumn Birdwatching Weekend Course

At Holt Hall Field Study Centre
10th, 11th & 12th October, 2003

A fun and informative weekend for those who want to relax, look at and appreciate birds and enjoy their environment. It is particularly suitable for beginners

The weekend will include:-

- Autumn visitors and passage migrants.
- Visits to sites on the North Norfolk Coast.
- A boat trip to Blakeney Point.
- Woodland, heathland and saltmarsh habitats.
- Night walks and evening sounds.

The course fee for both weekends is just £125 per person. This includes, sherry reception on Friday evening, all meals, tea/coffee, accommodation, and tuition.

Please contact: Mr. David Bean, Admin. Officer,
Holt Hall, Kelling Rd., Holt, NR25 7DU.
Tel: 01263 713117 Fax: 01263 712396
e-mail: office@holthall.norfolk.edunet.gov.uk
for a booking form and full details.

Steaming on to **Save the Children**

Save the Children will be organising an excursion on the Sheringham to Holt steam railway on Saturday 4th October.

The morning excursion Sheringham, includes a fish and chip lunch, and return tickets are £12.50 adults, £8.50 children. The afternoon trip from Sheringham includes afternoon tea. Return tickets cost £10.00 for adults, children £6.00.

For tickets or more information please ring Ian on 01485 572625 or Mike on 01485 601208

Save the Children is the UK's leading international children's charity working to make a reality of every child's right to a happy, healthy and secure childhood.



Norfolk County Council @ your service

Sept 2003

3x easier...

....for people to contact us in the future

It's been an exciting summer for improvements to our services that will help make it easier for people to contact us.

The customer service centre is now taking people's Trading Standards calls and general enquiries, and will soon see Social Services Reception and Referral staff moving in.

Our website has been re-launched to give access to more information and online services than ever before.

Our council information centres are being revamped and more are being added by the end of the year so that people can speak to someone face to face about our services.

These three ways for people to contact us are at the heart of our aim to modernise and improve

our services for a 21st century audience. Soon, people will be able to find out about our services in whichever way suits them best. This might be 24 hours a day through our website, in person by speaking to our staff or by phoning the service centre for help with a query.

Turn over to **3x easier...cont.** for a pull-out page showing our plans for improving services.



Photograph www.johnbirdsall.co.uk

ONE number for Social Services 0844 800 8014 - your number's up!

For the very first time people in Norfolk are set to have one social services number to call to get information and advice. Staff will be on hand to give information about the wide range of Social Services we provide.

Social Services joins Trading Standards as one of the first two services to go in to the new Customer Service Centre.

The move is a big change for social services, with Reception and Referral teams covering

North Norfolk, South Norfolk and Norwich and the out of hours Emergency Duty Team joining forces at the new site at County Hall.

Some 40 social services staff are moving into the Customer Service Centre with the new number up and running in October. Reception and Referral staff at King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth will also be covered by the number.

Karen Knight, Service Improvement Manager, for Social Services said: *"It has meant a big upheaval for staff in terms of the new location. It has also meant forming a new team and new ways of working and the staff have really risen to the challenge."*



3X easier...cont

Who's going into the Customer Service Centre?

Staff from Trading Standards and Social Services Reception & Referral will be the first people in the centre at the very front line of our service to Norfolk people.

They will be offering people specific information about their services and the centre will also be taking general enquiry calls on behalf of the council.



Preparing to take people's calls

Regular training and support will be offered to all centre staff. Department staff not based in the centre will still have a huge role to play in talking to the public as more involved calls will be referred to them for their help and expertise.

Service centre operators will be supported with the latest, up-to-date information about our services. This information will soon be updateable through our intranet site by people from every department, as a central store of information about our services is created for the first time.



New recruits prepare for the move into the Customer Service Centre

Social Services prepares for a move

Simon Shreeve and Lee Cook are two members of the Norwich Reception and Referral Team who will be moving into the Customer Service Centre.



Simon Shreeve

Simon talks about the move: *"We have been involved in preparations for the move for a year. It hasn't been easy at times, and will mean a lot of co-operation and change from all the teams who will be moving in to work in one place."*

Lee adds: *"I think the principle of having one number for people to call for information will make it much easier for them to be able to contact us, wherever they live in Norfolk. There are still some areas we are working on, such as how we will continue to offer the face-to-face service we know some of our clients prefer. We are all committed to make the move work for the benefit of Norfolk people."*

To read more about Simon and Lee's experiences, visit the e-Service intranet site.

Those numbers again in full

The new telephone numbers for the two services that start in the Customer Service Centre are:

0844 800 8013
0844 800 8014

Trading Standards
Social Services Reception & Referral

2 ● Speaking to people in person

We have four Council Information Centres where people can speak to our information officers face-to-face about our services, and services offered by other organisations such as district councils.



Guy Thorold and Clare Glenn work at our Aylsham Council Information Centre, which is

based at Aylsham library.

Like our staff who will be working in the Customer Service Centre, they are faced with a huge variety of enquiries, many of which are about district council services.

Guy says about his job: *"My work can be very varied. I hold a wide variety of information and leaflets, and can also help with benefit claims, issue bus and rail passes and take council tax payments."*

If I don't know the answers to a question, I can usually ring someone who can help, or occasionally I will use the Intranet or Internet to find the information.



Many of the people who use the centre find form-filling and dealing with officialdom quite challenging, especially if they are elderly, and very much value the direct help I can give. People also like the central and convenient location of the service; they often combine a visit to me with a shopping trip."

We will be improving the four centres shortly, and increase our support to centre staff by offering online access to the latest information and leaflets through the intranet. Customer service training will also be given to the staff as part of our overall aim to continuously improve our standards of customer service.

3 ● A site for sore eyes

Even a quick glance at our website recently would make you think that something looks different about it.

In fact, the site has had a serious overhaul to make sure that the information is up to date.

Because more and more people prefer to find out about our services online, with 24 hour a day access whenever they need it, we have made the site quicker and easier to use.



Louise Metz, corporate web manager, would like to hear your comments on our new web site

Some of the services available online include:

- Report forms so that people can fill in a form and send it to us with details of pot holes, faulty street lights, blocked drains to name a few
- Applying for jobs
- Taking part in consultations
- Renewing library books

More services will be available online over the coming months.

We want to know what you think of our new website so please visit www.norfolk.gov.uk and give us your views.

Norfolk People *put us to the test*



To find out just how well we deliver our services to the many different groups of people who live in Norfolk, we thought we would give them a chance to find out for themselves.

In August, we spoke to a range of groups from people with learning difficulties, people whose first language isn't English, people with visual impairments, deaf people, older people and young people.

To improve how we make our services available to these groups, we set them the task of calling us, visiting us and contacting us through our website. Look out for what they said about their experiences in the next edition, or see the e-service intranet site for details.

79.1

is the magic number

We now have good cause to celebrate as the number of services we offer electronically has weighed in at just over 79%.

Our e-Government target is to make all possible services available electronically by March 2004, and the latest figure shows that we are well on our way.

The reward for making more of our services available electronically is not only better services for staff and customers, but greater freedoms

and a financial incentive from Government for meeting our target.

Councils across the country are all working to meet the 100% figure, but we have signed up to a Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA), which means we have agreed to meet the deadline a year early, by 2004.

For more information, contact Tim Anderson on (01603) 224279 or e-mail tim.anderson@norfolk.gov.uk

FIMS IS GO!

The FIMS project (Financial Information Management System) remains on track to go live next April.

FIMS will provide accurate, up-to-date financial information to staff across the council through new software on their desktops.

We are now at a crucial stage in the project with work going on to find the most efficient way of carrying out our most important

financial transactions. Staff from different departments are working together to create this standard way of working across the Council with the new Oracle software.

Key departmental staff will test the system in November and December and departments will also be involved in the coming months in planning and preparing training for users of the new system.



Forthcoming EVENTS

NCC Sports and Social Club

Saturday September 20th @ 8.30pm

STILL ROCKIN

60'S NIGHT with Live Band

Back by popular demand

Saturday October 4th @ 8.30pm

JULIE DEE

A return visit for this excellent entertainer

Saturday October 11th @ 8.30pm

VAL & ALAN'S GAMES NIGHT

Do You Like a Gamble

then join us for a fun night

+

Music by Freddie's Disco

Friday October 31st @ 8.00pm

CHILDRENS HALLOWEEN PARTY

This year on Friday (Half Term)

FANCY DRESS

All Welcome

Games and Prizes

Freddie's Disco will provide the music

November 20TH - 22ND

Norfolk County Council Sports and Social club beer festival

Nov 20th Cawston Brass Band

Nov 22nd Eli the 2nd - Irish Band

Look out for the posters with more details.

Making A Difference Awareness Week

10th - 14th November 2003

Risk & Insurance are holding their 3rd risk awareness week in collaboration with a number of council departments, focusing on the theme of well-being.

There will be a variety of sessions ranging from half day workshops to 15 minute head massages as well as other linked activities. The sessions will be open to all county council employees. A full programme of events will be available shortly

If you want more info on risk awareness week now please contact Mandy Knowlton-Rayner on 01603 223822.

30,000 + you?

More than thirty thousand students can be found on three thousand courses run by our Adult Education Service each year at over three hundred venues across Norfolk.

This September could you be one of them?

Adult Education caters for an astonishing range of people's needs. *"It's not just the traditional evening classes, although they're popular as ever. We also offer computing, modern languages, health, personal development and business courses leading to accredited and often prestigious qualifications"*, says John Aitken, head of Adult Education

You can get a free brochure by phoning 08457 446633

Or search the course data base online at:

<http://www.esinet.norfolk.gov.uk/pacs/adulteducation/search.asp>

Library footnotes

Spotted by our eagle eyed Librarians in **Wymondham** - famous American Humourist and Travel writer **Bill Bryson** in town, our staff even have a signed note to prove it. They report their only regret is that they shut before they could drag him in to the Library. *"otherwise he'd still be in our basement autographing books. Whether he'd written them or not..."*

Attleborough Library had a good start to the annual Summer Reading Maze challenge for Norfolk children : *"We've been getting lots of people in through the door and some borrowers we haven't seen in years. In fact, someone has just returned some books that were ... 23 years and 8 months overdue"*

Partners in Crime

Striving for a safer Norfolk

Norfolk County Council is a key player within the crime reduction agenda. We work with some of the most vulnerable people in the community and we have unique access to young people through our services. In the last

edition we outlined the key social issues known to increase the likelihood of criminal behaviour and in this issue we give some examples of what different departments are doing to reduce crime and disorder in their own areas.

ITEM 1

Education Department

Much of the work sets out to influence attitude and behaviour. Our work in schools means we know the risks which can lead young people into crime. Through schools and adult learning centres, we also reach parents and the wider community. We are;

- Increasing access to Early Years education
- Offering literacy 'catch up' programmes
- Providing advice and guidance for young people in partnership with Connexions
- Delivering basic skills courses with NACRO, the crime reduction charity, and the Probation Service

ITEM 2

NPS Property Consultants Ltd

Being able to live and work safely is a key aspect of successful estate management. In the design, management and maintenance of NCC's property portfolio we:

- Promote safe environments to avoid opportunities for crime
- Use landscaping to make buildings safer and to deter unauthorised access
- Assess risks in an area before we build, and design to reduce them
- Work with Police Crime Prevention Officers

ITEM 3

Planning and Transportation Department

Street lighting is a good example of how we are helping to reduce crime as research has identified that 'good lighting aids the reduction of street crime as well as burglary'.

- We are preparing a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) bid to improve street lighting
- We help developers create high quality, safe and attractive housing
- We design footways and cycleways to help people feel safe
- We work to improve safety on public transport through direct access links, better lighting, visibility of waiting areas and providing emergency call facilities

ITEM 4

Cultural Services

- Promotes multi-cultural understanding and celebrating diversity
- Provides local community spaces in towns and villages
- Targets resources and information about themes such as bullying, drug misuse, health and family issues to young people
- Provides services to local prisons to help prisoners with a range of learning, literacy, self-development and communication skills
- Distribute Arts grants to help young people develop skills and increase their self-esteem



ITEM 5

Norfolk County Services Ltd

As an employer of over 4,000 staff across Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridge the biggest influence we have is the opportunity to maximise an individual's life chances by:

- Adopting a proactive approach to recruiting ex-offenders
- Improving our staffs' skills and job opportunities
- Developing our award winning 'Learning Lift Off' project to improve peoples' basic skills.

ITEM 6

Department of Finance

- Advises on making premises safer places to work in and less vulnerable to criminal damage
- Helps schools to improve access controls to protect both pupils and staff
- Funds security initiatives at our premises
- Has developed a corporate motor policy to promote better and safer driving
- Is raising awareness of risk management and advising on how to deal with risks

ITEM 7

Fire Service

Norfolk Fire Service is working closely with a number of partners to reduce crime and disorder in Norfolk:

- Crucial Crew:-
Involves Fire, Police and Ambulance services with other safety agencies, to encourage 11/12 year olds to stay safe
- Works with younger children who have an unhealthy fascination with fire
- Delivers fire safety education to children in all key stages of the national curriculum



- Educates young people about the implications of fire setting and making hoax calls
- Reduces malicious calls by identifying the sources and targeting them with publicity and education.

ITEM 8

Social Services Department

We work with some of the most vulnerable people in the community including older people, children, asylum seekers and people with disabilities.

We aim to help people lead safe, fulfilled and healthy lives reaching their full potential.



We:

- Work with families to care for children in need, provide foster carers or residential homes for those who can't live at home and support adoption for children who need new families
- Work with Youth Offending Teams, the Drug Action Team and others to make sure that children and young people receive proper care from the County Council as their 'corporate parent'
- Support young people leaving our care to live safe and independent lives
- Work with Police Crime Prevention Officers to train our care staff in how to give practical safety advice to those who use our services
- Train our staff to avoid confrontation and reduce risks of violence to themselves

If you would like 'Norfolk Agenda' in an alternative format please contact the Communications Unit on (01603) 222843 (minicom 223833) and we will do our best to help.



agenda questionnaire

Norfolk Agenda was launched in October 1999. It is designed to keep you up to date with key corporate work and developments, and also showcase some of the work of different departments and their staff.

The magazine is produced by the Communications unit with help from colleagues in all departments. We provide one copy for all councillors and most members of

staff, except schools who get a set number of copies depending on their size.

This year we are reviewing Norfolk Agenda, and as part of that review we need your views. Please help by taking a few minutes to complete and return this survey to the **Communications Unit , Room 522 County Hall, or by fax 01603 226002. The Survey is also online at intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/cex/communications/agenda.htm**

Which Department do you work in?

How old are you

under 25 ☐

25-34 ☐

35-44 ☐

45- 54 ☐

55 or over ☐

How long have you worked for Norfolk County Council ?

Do you read Norfolk Agenda regularly

Yes ☐

No ☐

If you read it do you find it (tick all boxes appropriate)

Interesting ☐

Informative ☐

Helpful/Useful ☐

Well designed ☐

Poorly presented ☐

Neither interesting or dull ☐

Dull content ☐

If you don't read it why?

Do you think a corporate staff newsletter should be about (tick all boxes appropriate)

What's going on in Local Government ☐

What's going on at NCC ☐

What's happening in departments ☐

People/events in the council ☐

What NCC is doing in Norfolk ☐

Other (please describe below)

Do you think the balance of content is right in Norfolk agenda

Yes ☐

No ☐

How would you change Norfolk Agenda?

Thank you for your help

Have you got a story for the next issue?

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