

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Yes, it's tough going but please spare a little cash for charities

There are few of us that have not been hit in some way by the grinding economic conditions over the last four years.

Whether it's lost jobs, lower wages, less financial support or the higher cost of living, all have had to take a hard look at their costs and decide what we can afford. In that sense it is a predictable, though no less upsetting situation that charities in Norfolk and Waveney find themselves in.

Today the Eastern Daily Press reveals that three quarters of Norfolk's charities have reported a drop in public donations; with some reporting a 25pc fall. Parliament last night passed a new law which should see charities able to claim back an extra £100m a year from the tax man, a positive step which will boost their finances.

Of course, it will not make up for the state funding that charities and voluntary organisations have lost as the government slashes spending in a bid to reduce national debt.

While we understand the tough decisions all of us are having to make at the moment, there is no escaping the fact that Christmas is around the corner and that means two things.

Firstly it means the temperature is dropping lower every day; the most vulnerable among us, particularly the elderly, are at greater risk. It is for that reason that this paper backed the Surviving Winter campaign to raise money to help keep people warm.

Secondly it means that this is a time of year when charities bank on our goodwill, on receiving our donations. So if you can spare any amount of money, no matter how small, there are charities waiting for it who can put it to good use.

Taking the right road

With the country struggling to shake off economic stagnation, news of a major road project in Norwich should be welcome.

We have been waiting for the Northern Distributor Road (NDR) for years and it now brings the promise of jobs and investment when we need them most.

There is also the matter of an overall £1.3bn boost to the county's economy once it's finished; just the kind of adrenaline shot the city and its people need.

With such prizes at stake there is a temptation to push ahead with the project no matter what. But to do so haphazardly would bypass other things we hold dear; fairness, accountability and freedom of speech.

For those reasons it is vital we not only get the road we want, but that we get it in the right way. That means giving everyone a chance to have their say.

Questions need to be asked, for example, about what the impact will be on neighbourhoods due to the planned NDR's failure to connect to the A47 in the west.

It is only by taking on all information, hearing all voices, that we can hope to make the best informed decision.

A natural treasure

Norfolk's coastline is rightly revered by visitors and locals alike as it is a haven for natural beauty.

Nowhere is this more apparent than at Horsey beach where those taking an autumn stroll will be able to feast their eyes on its ever-increasing population of grey seals. This year's pupping season has started earlier than ever before, meaning there are likely to be a number of pups nestling up to their mothers on the sandy shore and grassy dunes as winter approaches.

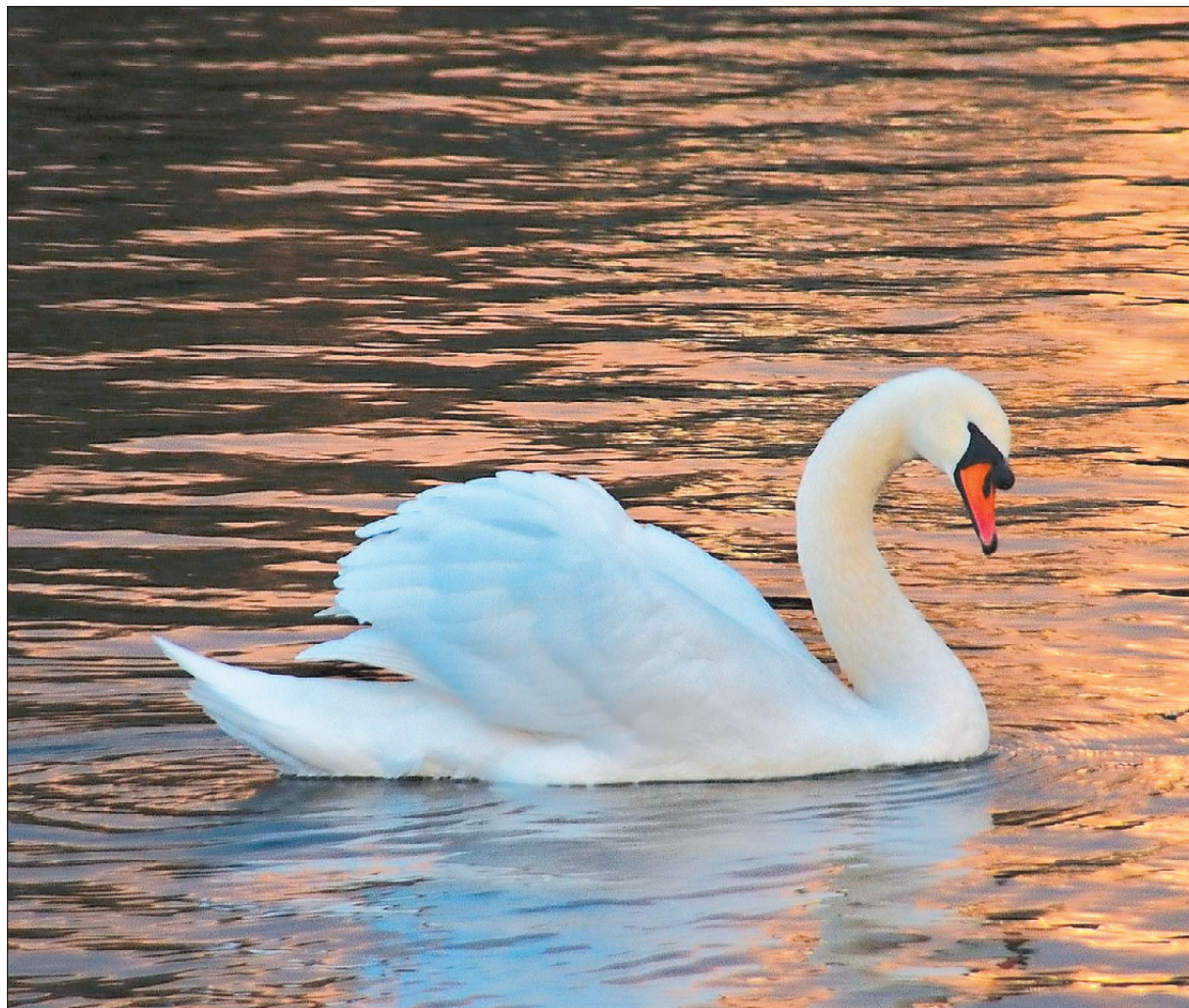
And while this is undoubtedly a wonderful sight to see, those visiting the beach should heed calls by the Friends of Horsey Seals (FHS), which was founded to ensure well-meaning onlookers do not disturb them, to admire them from a safe distance.

WORDS FOR LIFE

I am the one who made the earth and created people to live on it.
Isaiah 45:12



READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY



RICHARD WOODHOUSE

MAJESTIC: Swan in the River Yare at Brundall If you would like to submit a picture for this feature, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

Those coastal folk really knew their sanfer

PETER TRUDGILL

email: newsdesk@archant.co.uk



My maternal grandparents came from north Norfolk, so our family knew all about coastal foods like samphire.

We knew it was pronounced "sanfer" – not "sam-fire", as less fortunate people call it; and we knew you served it with malt vinegar and white pepper, not melted butter like posh people.

But we didn't know the word came from French "Saint Pierre", which is short for "herbe de St Pierre", 'Saint Peter's herb' – Peter was the patron saint of fishermen.

My paternal grandparents were city people, and they knew about different foods.

One of these was what people elsewhere call "brawn" or "pork cheese" – my American wife calls it "head cheese", a literal translation of German "Kopfkäse".

We got it from the butcher's. It consisted of bits of meat from the head and other parts of a pig, in aspic, with onion, pepper and other spices. We'd eat it cold with vinegar and mustard.

But my Norwich grandparents had a special, very ancient word for it. I don't really know how to spell it. Norfolk has a special vowel which dialect speakers use in words like "church" and "first".

Sidney Grapes couldn't decide how to write it – in The Boy John Letters he spells "church" both "chuch" and "chatch", even



COASTAL FOOD: Samphire picking in Blakeney circa 1900.

though it doesn't rhyme with "much" or "match" – it's somewhere in between.

My grandparents' word had this vowel, so I'll write it "swad", even though it doesn't rhyme with "bad" (or "bud").

"Swad" isn't in any normal dictionaries, but I did find it in the English Dialect Dictionary, spelt "sward". The EDD shows the word all over the North and Midlands of England.

The Norfolk variant is cited as "swerd, swad, schwad", meaning 'the hard, outer rind of bacon'.

But there are two subsidiary meanings for Norfolk, from Sydney Cozens-Hardy's 1893 book "Broad Norfolk": 'a Norfolk dish composed of the rind of pork, seasoned,

rolled up tight, boiled and eaten in slices' and 'a kind of brawn, pork-cheese'.

Norfolk people have had this word for fifteen-hundred years – it's from Anglo-Saxon "sweard", 'bacon rind'. And it obviously goes back to the days when our Germanic ancestors were still living on the continent – the German word is "Schwarte", and in Dutch it's "zwoerd".

In the West Frisian language of northern Holland, the language which is most closely related to English, the word is "swaard". Which, come to think of it, sounds pretty much like "swad".

■ Richard Watts' column will appear tomorrow.