

# Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY  
SINCE 1870

## Young people must not be targeted as the cuts continue

The financial pressure that has been applied to Norfolk County Council is enormous. And we understand that plugging a £189m budgetary hole is not possible without causing some pain.

But, not for the first time, one of the targets for the knife is post-16 students. And it is hard to understand how it can be justified, at least morally.

Young people are recognised as being the keyholders to unlocking a prosperous future for Britain. Yet we are part of a society that has left one million 16 to 24 year olds out of work, education or training.

To then consider reducing their travel subsidies to make the annual cost rise from £468 to £850 and from £351 to £638 for those from low-income families is ill advised and potentially damaging.

Many young people have to make knife-edge decisions about whether they can afford to stay in education after leaving school. And the danger is that this change, if agreed, will make the decision for some of them.

The knock-on effect of that is declining skills and education among the coming generation: the last thing that we need at the moment.

But, more importantly, the impact is demoralisation and disenfranchisement for young people, who we should be nurturing, not alienating.

The plan has not yet been passed, which is why it is important for students and future students to get together and make their voices heard loud and clear by those at County Hall who will make the decision.

Hopefully, they will listen.

## We must root out racism

We have, thankfully, come a long way since the days when black footballers were greeted with bananas and monkey chants.

Top-level football is now a multi-cultural experience, and the vast majority of supporters have either moved with the times or grown up in a far more enlightened era.

But the disgusting comment made on a Facebook page designed to encourage banter between Norwich City fans shows that this issue has not been stamped out.

While the rapid response from other people using the page was admirable, the initial comment leaves a bitter aftertaste. Chris Hughton is a decent man, and he will handle this latest insult with his usual dignity. But he should not have to put up with it.

If any complacency has crept in, this incident demonstrates the battle to root out racism must continue.

## Bitter-sweet memories

Scriptwriters work hard to create tear-jerk storylines. But often life beats art hands down – as is the case with the story of Lucie Gipson and Sgt Raymond Burrows.

Mrs Gipson's memories of parting with her childhood sweetheart as he went to war, and never seeing him again, remind us of a reality that is not so far behind us – and still true to some whose loved ones are involved in modern conflicts. Time has clearly not wiped out some bitter-sweet memories. We hope that she is able to achieve her dream of laying flowers at his grave.

## READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

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■ It's one of the finest buildings in all of Norfolk and David Brooker has certainly captured all the majesty of Blickling Hall, near Aylsham, and its grand entrance. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit [www.iwitness24.co.uk](http://www.iwitness24.co.uk)

## A world of many flags but English is the world language

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Trudgill



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This August I spent a week teaching on a linguistics summer school on the Greek island of Lesbos. (I dare say that sounds idyllic, but I'd like you to know that it was very uncomfortably hot, at 40C.) Doctoral and post-doctoral students came from all over the world: Venezuela, USA, England, France, Spain, Belgium, Holland, Austria, Albania, Turkey, Japan...

And everybody spoke English.

Of course the Venezuelan and the Spaniard might greet each other in Spanish. The Belgians and the Dutch might chat in Dutch. But the classes, presentations, discussions, announcements, meals – absolutely everything official or communal was conducted in English.

There was never any discussion about whether this was going to happen or not. It's what always happens these days at truly international meetings. English is the world language.

It's important to realise, though, that this isn't because English is in any way superior – all languages are wonderful, and English is no more or less wonderful than any other. English became the world



■ Flags of all nations – but, for a variety of reasons, English is a common ground for foreign speakers.

language for economic, military and political – not linguistic – reasons.

The situation came about as a result of the British Empire's many decades of economic and political domination of the world and, later, the same kind of dominance as exercised by the USA – which had itself become English-speaking as a result of colonisation by the British Empire...

This state of affairs has now become so entrenched that it's not going to change. Some people have developed a facile view that English will be replaced by Chinese as the world language. It won't. There's no reason why it should. Far too many millions of people in every part of the world have invested so much time and

money and effort in acquiring and speaking and writing and printing and teaching English that this situation is here to stay.

It's very useful to have a language that everyone can use as a lingua-franca. When Finns go on holiday to Greece, they don't expect Greeks to speak Finnish to them. They expect – and get – English. If a Spanish professor gives a lecture at a Japanese university, they won't do it in Spanish or Japanese, but English. If a Pole falls in love with a Dane, English is very likely to have been involved.

But there are disadvantages. Especially for us British. Of all the people involved on the summer school, I was the most useless at speaking foreign languages. Because I didn't have to.

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Trust the LORD always, because  
the LORD, the LORD alone, is an  
everlasting rock.  
Proverbs 26:4

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