

# Eastern Daily Press

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## Prime minister's pension pledge will come at a cost

So, David Cameron has pledged to retain the "triple lock" guarantee of minimum annual pension rises of 2.5pc until at least 2020, if the Conservative triumph in next year's general election.

Given the survey by former Conservative Party deputy chairman Lord Ashcroft, which painted a rather gloomy picture for the Tory's chances of securing an overall majority next time around, it is little wonder the Prime Minister has made the pension commitment the first plank of his party's manifesto.

Lord Ashcroft's poll found more than one in three people who voted Conservative last time around do not intend to do so next year, with half saying they will vote for the UK Independence Party.

Clearly, Mr Cameron knows full well he needs to do something about that and he will hope that the pension promise will endear his party to the older population.

But, if it does woo back disaffected more mature voters, it could come at a cost.

The protection, Mr Cameron acknowledged, has been made possible by "difficult decisions" such as extending the retirement age, meaning millions in their 30s and 40s will wait longer to get a pension.

And that could cost the Conservatives younger voters, as a generation questions whether it is right that they should be punished to protect the parents they see enjoying comfortable retirements.

That said, don't expect to see Labour or the Liberal Democrats opposing the "triple lock". They all know older people are more likely to head to the ballot box.

## More cause for concern

The figures alone are cause for concern: for each of the last three years, the number of serious incidents, and the number of unexpected or avoidable deaths, in the East of England Ambulance Service have risen.

But these are not just statistics. Behind each one of these numbers, there is a person and a family, like the relatives of Peter Nelson who are demanding answers after he died from a brain haemorrhage following a two-hour wait for an ambulance in Blakeney two months ago.

These are troubling times for the ambulance service, as our Ambulance Watch campaign has highlighted time and again, and Norman Lamb MP is right to say the service needs to improve dramatically.

It now has a new part-time chief executive who clearly understands the seriousness of the situation. Now he needs to take serious action to turn it around.

## Strange way to get fit

It may seem a bit bizarre (and some might even say wasteful) for £60,000 to be spent on tagging Norwich lampposts and getting people to compete against each other to walk and cycle the most.

But, whatever the merits of the Department of Health handing out almost a quarter of a million pounds to encourage people to leave their cars behind, if the money had not gone to Norwich City Council it would have gone elsewhere.

So we may as well make use of it and try to get people fit.

## READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

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■ A day with the seals at Horsey as seen by Roy Harvey. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication, visit [www.iwitness24.co.uk](http://www.iwitness24.co.uk)

## Five reasons to make you more cheerful about change

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All languages change through time. Older people can find that annoying. People don't like change. It's very irritating to get used to something and then suddenly find you have to get used to something else. It still annoys me that I can't drive up Prince of Wales Road and round Castle Meadow.

When it comes to linguistic change, there's nothing we can do about it. You can feel how unhappy that makes some people feel by looking at the letters columns of the EDP. It's not always easy to feel positive about changes in your own language, like 'fing' and 'bover'.

So I've been compiling a list of things about language change that we can all can try and feel happy about. Here's my first attempt - Linguistic Change: Reasons To Be Cheerful, Part I.

1. English and German are different languages. We're happy about that, aren't we? Would you want it otherwise? Two millennia ago they were the same language - West Germanic - and if it hadn't been for different changes occurring in different places, we wouldn't have had our own language.



■ Listen out for fans' voices when Norwich City play Hull. Picture: PAUL CHESTERTON/FOCUS IMAGES

2. Old English had three grammatical genders and five grammatical cases. There were six ways of saying 'ship(s)' depending on the grammar: scip, scipes, scipe, scipu, scipa, scipum. Linguistic changes that have taken place in the last thousand years have removed these complexities - which must surely mean that English as a Foreign Language courses are shorter and cheaper than they would have been...

3. If it wasn't for linguistic change, people in the south of England would still pronounce 'paths' to rhyme with 'maths', and 'budding' to rhyme with 'pudding', like northerners do. Isn't it rather fun that there's now a difference? Such distinctions

can be useful, too, when Norwich are playing Hull and you want to know which supporters are which.

4. If it wasn't for language change, there'd be no such thing as the Norfolk dialect. Our dialect is distinctive because of changes that have taken place here that haven't taken place elsewhere - and vice versa. When we say "Come you on!", we're using an older form that's been lost elsewhere. When we make 'road' and 'coat' rhyme with 'good' and 'put', we're using an innovation which is all our own.

5. And - one more good thing - we no longer have to go around pronouncing the K in Knapton.

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The wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times.  
James 3:17

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