

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

A welcome pledge to shore up battered coastal defences

It is now six months since the worst tidal surge for 60 years battered huge swathes of our coastline, devastating homes, businesses and sensitive natural habitats.

When the damage was surveyed in the days and weeks that followed, it became clear that our flood defences, too, had been badly affected, so today's pledge that work to shore them up will be completed in time for winter is to be welcomed.

As Charles Beardall of the Environment Agency says, it is not a question of if the next sea surge will come, but when. It is vital that our defences are ready.

However, the agency's pledge also comes with a warning that some areas will not be restored. There are very difficult decisions to be made to balance the financial costs, the number of people affected, and the importance of habitats. There are no easy answers.

The effects of the tidal surge were felt all around our coastline, and this week we will be taking the opportunity to see how these communities are rebuilding their lives, six months on. In December, we pledged that we would not forget these people, and would stand with them in the months to come.

The night of December 5/6 showed some of the worst that mother nature can do, but the aftermath showed some of the best that human nature can achieve.

More than 200 families and businesses have now received direct help from the £330,000 that generous EDP readers have so far donated to our flood appeal, and during the week we will be telling the stories of some of these beneficiaries.

A community united

The last week will live long in the memory of anyone connected to Fakenham.

Not only because the town was hit by the most devastating fire it has seen in living memory, but also due to the phenomenal way in which the community has rallied round to support those affected.

People from all walks of life are striding out together in unity to ensure Fakenham moves forward from the huge blow it has suffered.

That was evident yesterday, one week since the fire, at Fakenham Parish Church's poignant thanksgiving service and at Fakenham Racecourse where race-goers were urged to back the EDP's Let's Fight for Fakenham campaign.

The EDP will relentlessly champion the causes of those who need help and we appreciate your support.

Fantastic football

It was wonderful to see so many young people enjoying a veritable feast of football over the weekend.

Soccer on the Sands has grown into a fabulous event and the wonderful weekend weather made this year's event on the beaches at Great Yarmouth particularly memorable.

Well done to Norfolk FA and Great Yarmouth Borough Council for putting on a fantastic and fun weekend of football.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ It's full steam ahead on the Mid-Norfolk Railway as the Scots Guardsman loco arrives at Kimberley Station, near Wymondham. David Baker sent us this image, but if you would like to submit a picture for possible publication on this page in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

We're not lazy... dropping syllables in pronunciation is correct

Peter
Trudgill



email: newsdesk@archant.co.uk

There are lots of place names in the EDP distribution area which look from the spelling as if they have three or four syllables but are actually correctly pronounced with only two.

The most famous are Costessey, Happisburgh and Wymondham. But there are many more: Tacolneston (Tacklest'n), and Lowestoft (Lowst'ff) are just two of them.

Other Norfolk place names have lost their two-syllable status in recent times, as people who were not local enough to know the right name have been increasingly influenced by the spelling. Wiveton has already succumbed – it used to be Wiff'n. And Letheringsett has now gone to having four syllables – I was going to write “gone back to”, but that would not have been correct. Within living memory people called it Larns'tt, but that had descended from the medieval three-syllable form Laringset.

One place fighting to preserve its two-syllable name, in the face of the current tendency towards longer spelling pronunciations, is our famous west coast resort town Hunstanton. Wikipedia gives its pronunciation as Hunston. So does the Oxford Dictionary of English place names.



■ Enjoying the beach at Hunstanton... or is it Hunston?

Picture: MATTHEW USHER

And they are right.

But other people are getting it wrong and calling it Hun-STAN-t'n. We can understand why they do that – it's because they've been influenced by the written form. But, happily, lots of Norfolk people are still calling it Hunst'n, and we understand why they do that too – it's because that's what it's called! There could, after all, be no other reason for pronouncing it in that way.

It is true that, in the distant past, Hunstanton did originally have three syllables. Twelve hundred years ago, it was called Hunstans-tun, meaning the homestead of Hunstan. Hunstan was a man's name – it also occurs in Hunstanworth, in Durham. But through

natural processes of sound change, this three-syllable pronunciation eventually and quite naturally acquired a more reduced form, Hunst'nt'n, which was later further reduced to Hunst'n. Even that must have happened long ago, though, since there's an English family name Hunston which derives from the name of the town – although it may also derive from Hunston in Suffolk or Sussex.

But notice that, even if the three-syllable form had survived naturally into modern times, it would most certainly not have come down to us as Hun-STAN-ton – that's a modern mistake. If you did feel inclined to try to preserve the authentic old three-syllable pronunciation, the way you should say it is HUN-st'n-t'n.

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May God... allow you to live in
harmony with each other by
following the example of Christ
Jesus.

Romans 15:5

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