

# Eastern Daily Press

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SINCE 1870

## Power to the people could slow down deaths on our roads

Few subjects divide opinion as much as speeding on our roads.

Some argue that speed kills, and that limits should be slashed to reduce deaths and serious injuries.

Others are convinced that it is bad driving, not necessarily fast driving, that is the problem. And they find the trend towards slowing traffic hugely frustrating.

The argument will always go on. But one thing is certain – too many people's lives are being ended or destroyed in East Anglia by road accidents.

That is why it is important to take seriously Richard Bacon's plea to Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin to give residents the right to have speed limits reduced in their parishes.

Not every plea will prove to be convincing. But, more often than not, it is the people in communities who have the information and understanding to know what is right for them.

They are the ones who live day after day with speeding motorists. They are the ones who worry about crossing roads, and fear for their children's and grandchildren's safety.

A "community right to reduce speed" has the potential to ease people's fears. But it must not become a nod-through process, which sees lower limits introduced where no change is needed. To be taken seriously, it must be robust.

However, too many speed limits must be better than too few.

For getting to your destination a little more slowly is infinitely preferable to not getting there at all.

## Let it glow, please

What a difference a day can make. From sunshine on Saturday, to fierce downpours on Saturday, the weekend weather showed it's unpredictable nature.

In truth, though, it isn't unpredictable: it's typical British weather. And the response to it from people in our region was typically bullish.

On Saturday, countless thousands turned out in their summer clothes, fancy dress and evening dress for sun-soaked events including dwile flonking, Wells Carnival, Southwold Lifeboat Day and the Last Night of the Proms at Blickling Hall.

Yesterday, people weren't put off, as plenty more donned their raincoat for a succession of other events.

That's the spirit we have come to expect. But please, Mother Nature, could we be excused from any more chances to demonstrate it? Instead, we'd like wall-to-wall sunshine for a few weekends to come.

## Should do better, City

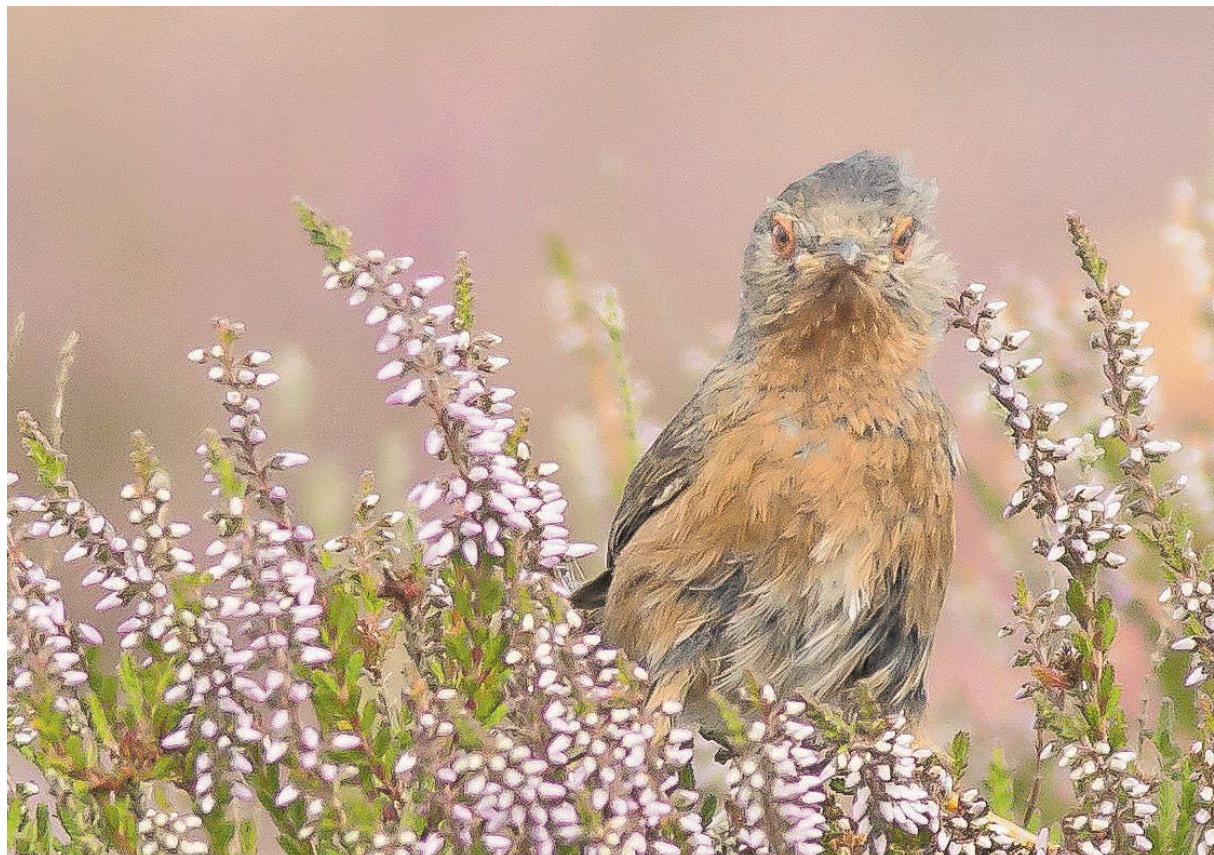
It was only the first of 46 league matches for Norwich City. But the 1-0 defeat at Wolves was a touch too reminiscent of last season for some observers.

The spirit was not necessarily lacking, but that spark of quality was. As was an elusive goal to give us all something to celebrate.

It's far too early to be disheartened, though. Hopefully, the match was just part of the bedding-in process for the team, and things will improve next time out.

## READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ A beautiful female Dartford Warbler calling her mate just resting in the top of the pink heather. The picture was taken at Dunwich heath by Frances Crickmore, who said: "They are a very elusive bird and you are so lucky to photograph one." If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit [www.iwitness24.co.uk](http://www.iwitness24.co.uk)

## Children should not feel insecure about natural speech

Peter  
Trudgill



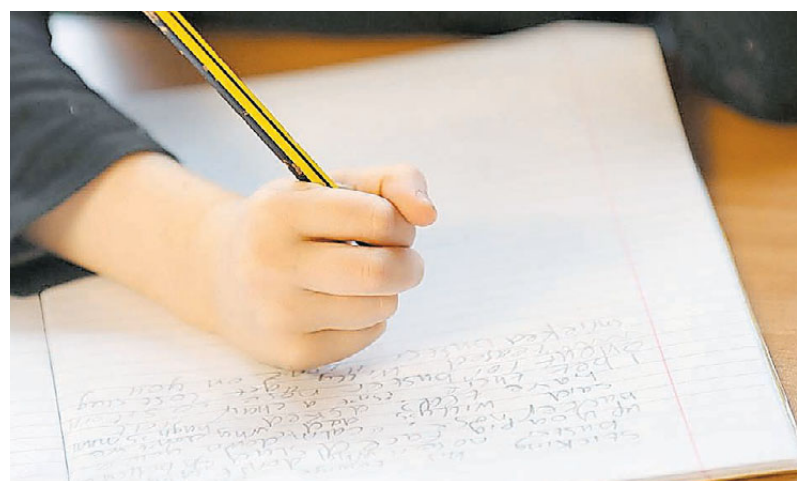
email: [newsdesk@archant.co.uk](mailto:newsdesk@archant.co.uk)

Some while ago, we saw in the newspapers that the headteacher of a school in Middlesbrough had taken the extraordinary step of writing to parents urging them to "correct" their children's English.

Did she really think that would make any difference? Children quite rightly and naturally speak like their peers, not like their parents, and most certainly not like their teachers.

It's amazing the extent to which people who know nothing about language are willing to believe they are actually authorities – this teacher was clearly someone who did not know very much. She arrogantly informed parents that you "is never plural". I'm sorry, but if I bump into Russell Martin and Wes Hoolahan at Thorpe Station and tell them "It's nice to meet you" that IS plural. But what she was referring to was the fact that the Middlesbrough dialect, very intelligently, has followed Wes's Irish English example in distinguishing between singular and plural you and yours.

The headteacher said she was not asking children to change their dialect. But she was. Astonishingly, she instructed parents – even though she must have known most of them say it themselves –



■ Learning dialect is as important as learning to read and write Standard English.

that it's wrong to say "nowt". What on earth makes her think that? Nowt is a word which has come down to us over more than a thousand years of English language history – it's the same as nought and naught. Millions of people in the north of England say it – and will continue to say it however many letters they get from headmistresses. Nowt is part of their local dialect.

Her justification was that she didn't want her pupils to enter the world of work without knowing about Standard English. Well, of course not. But why would they? She is, we hope, teaching them to read and write the Standard English dialect in her school. It's actually very interesting in the

classroom to contrast local dialect grammar with Standard English.

What isn't interesting for children is to be told that the way they speak is "incorrect". Making children feel insecure about their natural speech is no way to produce articulate adults.

Instead of wasting her time writing interfering letters to parents, this headteacher should inform herself about language structure so she can talk about it in an analytical, non-judgemental way.

Happily, our well-informed Norfolk teachers already do this, as we have learnt in our excellent sessions with FOND in local Norfolk schools. Maybe we should open a branch of FOND in Middlesbrough.

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Those who listen to instruction  
will prosper; those who trust the  
Lord will be joyful.  
Proverbs 16:20

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