

# Eastern Daily Press

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## Time for hospital chiefs to consider cut in parking fees?

We all know that money is tight in the NHS.

However, hospital bosses must never use car parking charges as a way of generating extra income from patients and their families.

Today's story about the record sums received from parking fees at Norfolk's three main hospitals reveals that all NHS trusts have different charging structures and different rules on who qualifies for free or reduced rates.

It is reassuring to know that the majority of hospitals on our patch have systems in place to ensure patients, who are routinely attending outpatient appointments or people regularly visiting loved ones who are in hospital for a long time, are not left out of pocket by parking charges.

But how often do drivers know about these discounts? And could hospitals do more to help?

Setting parking charge levels is a delicate balancing act for NHS chiefs to ensure that the cost of maintaining car parks is covered by fees and that drivers do not abuse the system.

Figures show that the three acute hospitals in Norfolk received more than £3m in parking income in 2013/14 after paying more than £800,000 on maintenance.

NHS parking charges can be a contentious issue, but officials say that all parking profits are ploughed back into other hospital services and patient care and that their rates are comparable with other local trusts.

However, in light of the profits made from parking, should hospital boards start considering a reduction in fees or extending discounts and exemptions to other groups?

## Respect is due to fallen

More than a decade after Britain intervened in Afghanistan, combat operations have been formally ended.

Former head of the army Lord Dannatt said we should be proud of what we have done – while not forgetting those who were killed in the dangerous operations there.

A total of 453 British forces personnel or Ministry of Defence civilians, several from our own region, died while serving in the troubled country. Was their ultimate sacrifice worth it? Only time will tell. If in 10 years we can see a stable, peaceful, democratic Afghanistan playing its part in the fight against terrorism then the British intervention may be deemed a success. We hope that will be the case. But whatever the eventual outcome, nothing should detract from the respect we feel for the work of our armed forces in such treacherous conditions.

## Joining the Ebola fight

The Ebola crisis in west Africa may seem far away.

However, that hasn't stopped hundreds of NHS workers from taking the brave decision to volunteer to help control and contain the deadly virus, which has already killed thousands of people.

Norfolk-based ambulance manager Pete Simpson was the latest NHS worker to join the fight against Ebola in Sierra Leone at the weekend to help run a command centre in Freetown. Well done Pete – and best of luck with your latest volunteering mission.

## READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

# iwitness24



■ Rock formations on the beach at Hunstanton, taken by Alan Thorpe. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit [www.iwitness24.co.uk](http://www.iwitness24.co.uk)

## Language changes around us - there is no right or wrong

Peter  
Trudgill



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If you mention to English people that there are two versions of the past tense of the verb "to light", some are likely to want to know which one is right.

Is it wrong to say "I lighted the fire"; or is it a mistake to say "I lit the fire"?

I have a different question. Why does one of them have to be wrong and one of them right? How about: they are both right? Why can't they both be perfectly legitimate alternatives? Americans say "sidewalk" and we say "pavement", but we don't claim that we are right and they are wrong, do we?

It would be foolish if we did. Variation in language is normal. We should accept this for the fascinating fact that it is, and not keep trying to make judgements about "correctness".

But we can't blame people if they're worried about whether to say "burnt" or "burned".

They've been made nervous about it by their schoolteachers.

And you can't blame the teachers either: They were made nervous about whether they should say "in the circumstances" or "under the circumstances" by the people who taught them.

For the last 300 years we have been



■ I lit the fire or I lighted the fire...? Both are right in Peter Trudgill's book.

browbeaten by a gang of interfering pedants who think they know how to speak our language better than we do, even if we have been speaking it all our lives!

Their problem is that these pedants are offended by variation.

Alternatives make them uneasy – it must be a kind of neurosis they are suffering from. Variability upsets their sense of order, perhaps.

They try to deal with this by employing one of two strategies.

One is to announce that all the variants except one are 'wrong'. Well, we didn't authorise them to tell us what was right and wrong, did we?

Their other strategy is to claim that, if there are two variants, they must mean different things.

American pedants are even worse at this than ours are.

Believe it or not, they have invented a "further-farther" rule. They declare that "further down the road" is wrong because – well, I won't bore you with the details, it's not worth it.

Let's worry about something important – there are children starving out there. If anyone wants to know which is right out of 'this is different from that', 'this is different to that', or 'this is different than that', we have a good Norfolk answer for them: all on'em.

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The Lord is my light and my  
salvation. Who is there to fear?  
Psalm 27:1

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