

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Focus is on housing crisis – and we want to hear from you

We often hear the housing crisis discussed – on the television, in government and in the pages of newspapers around the country.

And while it seems there are no end of statistics on the housebuilding shortfall, the cost of the average deposit and rising rent, the human faces behind the numbers are often lost.

This week, we will try to bring those faces back to the fore as we run a series of housing features on various problems in our area.

With an issue so complex, there are areas we won't be able to cover – and that's where we turn to you. We want to hear your experiences and how you have been affected by the market.

For many, the overriding worry is arguably the difficulty getting on the housing ladder.

In the past, the dream of owning a home was one that, for most, was within grasp, offering a nest egg for the future, a place to raise a family and a sense of security.

Today, that dream is slipping away for thousands of people in our region.

It is in large part down to a prolonged shortfall in housing which has seen house and rent prices rocket and even led to a spike in homelessness.

Today, we reveal that a vision to build more than 37,000 homes in greater Norwich is behind schedule – with a rush to hit the 2026 deadline expected.

It is vital that councils and developers meet the target, so the future generations have a brighter outlook and so that the dream of owning a home is once again a reality.

Challenges lie ahead

As our health service becomes increasingly focused on treating people out of hospital, the region's community trust faces a big challenge.

In the last few years Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust (NCH&C) has been one of the most consistently performing health organisations in East Anglia.

It's vital that this remains the case.

For every person treated at home instead of hospital, the NHS saves much-needed money.

And home is where most patients would rather stay, instead of a busy ward.

The challenge for NCH&C will be to keep up with the demand, as our region's population sees a rise in elderly residents.

To manage that demand – and not let it affect quality and waiting times – the trust will need to continuously find new ways of treating more patients equally quickly and effectively.

And of course – commissioners must ensure the trust is given adequate funding to meet the growing number of patients.

You did the region proud

It is no easy task to run a marathon – and that is why every runner from our region should be proud of their efforts yesterday.

Not only have they achieved an impressive feat of human endurance, they have gone on to raise thousands of pounds for various good causes.

Charles Cousens, from near Lowestoft, is one runner who stood out from the crowd this year.

To finish one London Marathon is an incredible achievement, but at 73 years of age he has now competed in every single race since the event started in 1981.

Mr Cousens and the countless others who competed yesterday from East Anglia have done the region proud.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ The sun sets over Sandringham, the Queen's Norfolk residence, in this picture by Laura Baxter. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

Wesker knew you can speak Norfolk and be eloquent

Peter
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Sir Arnold Wesker has died, aged 83. In the recent EDP obituary, he was described as "a well-known playwright". When I was in my last years at school in the 1960s, he would have been called THE well-known playwright. He was very famous.

But for some he was infamous. Wesker was an East End Jewish boy who campaigned for working people's rights, including rights to access to high culture. For many of us he was a bit of a hero, so it was a wonderful thing when he came to talk to our Inter-Sixth-Form Society. In those days of single sex grammar schools, one of the strongest motivations for attendance at meetings was to get to know members of the opposite sex. But Arnold brought the young people in because they really wanted to listen to him. He even stayed afterwards and went for coffee with some of the keener sixth-formers. Arnold had spent lots of time in Norfolk and married a Norfolk girl, so he clearly felt very much at home with a bunch of local 16 to 19-year-olds.

One of the ways in which Wesker's political views meshed with his writing could be seen in how he reproduced the speech of ordinary people in his dramas. He portrayed lower-class people being



■ Prolific playwright Sir Arnold Wesker, who has died aged 83.

Picture: PA/STEFAN ROUSSEAU

eloquent, as he knew from his own background they often were. And he presented Norfolk country people being articulate and expressive. From his time here, Wesker knew that speaking Norfolk in no way renders you incapable of eloquence.

He knew this not least from working on a Norfolk farm – and in the kitchens of the Bell Hotel in Norwich. This was an experience he drew on in his famous play *The Kitchen*, which was also made into a film. I saw it in the Noverre cinema, not far from the Bell.

His most famous play was – is – *Roots*, which was performed on the West End stage and all round the world. In it, a Norfolk country girl called Beatie returns from London, waiting for her middle-class liberal boyfriend who never turns up. As she waits, she gradually emerges from under his influence and finds her own voice.

And it's a Norfolk voice. "Blust," she says, "you don' wanna take no notice of what them ole papers say about the workers bein' all-important these days – that's all squit!"