

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Questions should be asked over the scale of these payments

One of our most in-depth projects in recent years begins today, a five-part series looking at the subject of public sector pay.

The series has come on the back of hour after hour spent carefully analysing annual accounts, as well as use of the Freedom of Information Act.

This paper has often reported on some of the eye-watering figures handed out to those in power within the public sector, whether it be through pay increases, so-called 'exit packages' and pensions.

But what we intended to find out with this project was just how regularly such payments come about and, above all, whether they represent good value for the taxpayer.

The findings have been a real eye-opener and over the next five days be prepared to read about six-figure redundancy payments, big pay rises and a worrying amount of money spent on restructure.

The big question those who make decisions need to ask themselves is: how is the scale of some of these payments decided upon?

Why should a public chief executive get £100,000 for leaving their post and not £50,000? What makes it right for some of those in 'interim' roles to get almost twice the normal pay for that position?

Our intention with this series is not to suggest those in charge of delivering vitally important services shouldn't be well rewarded. Of course they should.

But in an era when budgets are being slashed across the public sector it's vital taxpayers can be reassured tough decisions about cash are being made at the very top and the bottom.

Visit Broads museum

The intricate network of Broads which meander around Norfolk and Suffolk is often said to be the jewel in our region's crown.

Whether you consider its booming tourism industry, its unrivalled beauty or simply its place as a source of pride for those living in the area, it is a statement that is hard to deny.

So it understandably gives the Museum of the Broads a tough job to do – how to explain so much history, and future, in just a few exhibitions?

But they manage to cover it in astounding depth, with its team of both staff and volunteers working tirelessly to keep visitors happy.

Its latest exhibition looking at high streets in our Broads towns and villages is one which will surely garner attention. With its collection of photographs, recordings and unusual items, it reflects on years – and shopping habits – now past.

While it is important to celebrate hard-working groups in our communities across the county, taking the time to visit the museum is a must for anyone who loves and wants to support the Broads.

We must show respect

Respecting the police is, for most, an obvious choice.

So to hear that an officer was kicked and spat at by a drunk man while she was doing her job is disgusting. Knowing that it happened during a crackdown on alcohol-fuelled crime makes it even more galling.

Most of us would happily avoid the city's clubland during the weekend, as we would countless other threatening situations.

But our region's officers' nine to five – and many hours beyond – is dealing with testing, emotional, frightening and, in some cases, life-threatening situations.

Yes, it is their job. Yes, they chose to do it. But the least we can do is show them some respect.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ The sun came out for a few minutes at a moody Baconsthorpe Castle. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk.

Picture: FAY NEALE

Look at Bunyan, Defoe and Coleridge– that'll learn you



Peter
Trudgill

email: newsdesk@archant.co.uk

William Shakespeare was "a master of English"; and he is "widely regarded as the greatest writer in the history of the English language". So it's interesting for us here in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire to look at his English grammar.

Look at what he wrote in one of his most famous plays. As You Like It, where Rosalind says: "You must not learn me how to remember". He has a similar usage in The Tempest, where Caliban declares: "The red-plague rid you for learning me your language". And in Troilus and Cressida, Ajax commands: "Learn me the proclamation!"

This is interesting for us because, these days, if a Norfolk dialect speaker uses the verb learn in this way, they are likely to be told that it is 'wrong'. Not "learn me how to remember", schoolteachers might instruct, but "TEACH me how to remember". Publishers and editors will say the same thing: it's 'wrong' to write about learning somebody something.

Now it's obviously true that learn is not used in this way in modern Standard English. But what exactly is wrong about it? Some people argue that it's wrong since you are muddling



■ According to older forms of English, these pupils might say: "Learn me some facts." Picture: PA

up two different concepts.

But in Norwegian the verb "å lære" means both to learn and to teach. The same situation occurs in many other languages, and nobody gets confused. Nor do we in Norfolk, or the many other dialect areas where learn is used in this way: you can learn something from somebody, or you can learn somebody something. The grammar makes it clear what is meant.

In our dialect we preserve an older form of the English language, where teach just meant 'to demonstrate': teach has the same historical root as the modern German verb zeigen 'to show'. The current situation in Standard English, where you

can only learn something FROM somebody and you have to TEACH somebody something, is relatively new.

John Bunyan, the author of Pilgrim's Progress, wrote: "my Father might learn me to speak". In Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Defoe used the phrase: "having learned him English". And as recently as 1801, in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, we find the sentence: "They learn us to associate a keen and deep feeling with all the good old phrases".

In Norfolk, many people are still happy to follow Shakespeare and Coleridge and use good old phrases like "that'll learn 'em".