

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Tweets saga detracts from the important matters at hand

It's the curious case of the tweet in the night.

For fans already reeling from defeat earlier in the day which made relegation increasingly likely, the last thing they needed was uncertainty around the future of chief executive David McNally.

But that's exactly what they got.

Whether this was an ill-timed reaction to social media comment, a case of his account being hacked or that he quit then changed his mind, we still don't know. Unfortunately Norwich City spent yesterday declining to comment, ensuring the saga, debate and uncertainty would rumble on.

It is sometimes easy to forget how far Norwich City have come in a short period of time. It was, after all, only a few years ago the Canaries had sunk to their lowest level for five decades and was even at risk of financial ruin.

The turnaround was down to the efforts of many people, including Mr McNally, and for that reason, when things take a turn for the worse, the City board have earned the patience of supporters.

That doesn't mean, however, they are beyond criticism. A lot of people pay a lot of money to follow their favourite team and should be afforded the right to have their say.

This season those dedicated fans have had more reasons than anyone would have liked to grumble. And whatever happens in these final seven days of the season questions need to be asked as to how some of these mistakes occurred.

But, while there remains even the slightest flicker of hope the Canaries may yet escape another relegation, the time for such action is once the final ball has been kicked.

Sorry sagas like this just detract from the more important matter at hand, which is why it is concerning neither the chief executive nor the club has come forward to clarify the situation.

Success for schools

Three years ago, Ofsted's chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw asked "why is education so dire in much of Norfolk?"

Since then, there has been a lot of work.

The proportion of schools with the top Ofsted grades had lagged 13pc behind the England average, but analysis of the latest inspections in Norfolk has shown it has closed the gap.

A total of 85pc of schools in the county were now judged "good" or "outstanding" – equalling the most recently published national average.

There is rightly scrutiny for Ofsted, and critics ask whether it is a fair yardstick to measure a school's performance.

But teachers and children's services workers admit that in this instance work was needed and there has been a significant improvement. This is a great achievement, and credit must go to the school staff and families of children who helped this happen.

We must not settle for average, though. Let's build on these positive foundations, and allow Norfolk's children to succeed.

Speed camera calls

Speeding in residential areas is a real concern.

For some people in Costessey it is such a problem that 20mph average speed cameras are required in West End, ahead of an anticipated surge in traffic from the Norwich Northern Distributor Road (NDR) which could amplify the issue.

Many will see this enforcement proposal as a draconian measure, and it has yet to be approved. But it goes to show that the saga of the NDR is far from over.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ A blaze of golden yellow gorse in full flower on Kelling Heath was captured by Richard Brunton. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

Ditching a vowel - and its effect on the Norfolk dialect

Peter
Trudgill

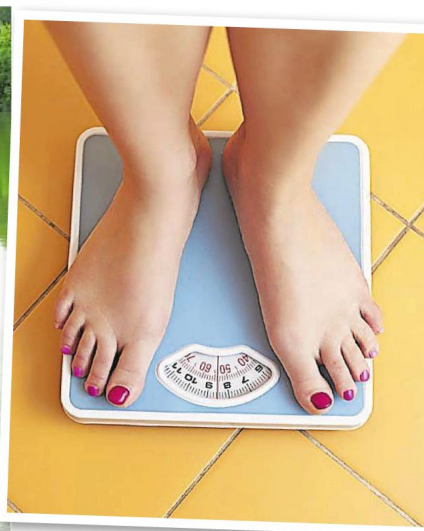


email: newsdesk@archant.co.uk

In Norfolk, until recently, we used to have two different vowels corresponding to the single long "a" vowel of most other kinds of English. This is because, up until the 17th century, all forms of English used to have two different vowels. Most dialects then gradually lost the difference between the two, while we kept it. It's mostly possible to tell which word had which vowel by looking at the spelling. This is because the spelling reflects the original Medieval English pronunciation.

In the old Norfolk accent, words which are spelt with ay, ai or ei – like day, may, praise, maid, raise, eight, weight – were pronounced with a diphthong (a vowel which begins with one sound and ends with another). Our vowel in day sounds rather like it begins with the short "a" vowel of cat and ends with the long "e" vowel of me. It's not very different from the way these words are pronounced in other parts of southern England.

But words like gate, face, tape, lake, safe, which are spelt with a e, were pronounced with a pure vowel (a monophthong). This vowel was rather similar to the one used in these words in some dialects of northern Lancashire and Yorkshire. Norfolk dialect writers normally spell it as ear or



■ Over the years we have come to pronounce wade and weighed the same.

Pictures: LIBRARY

air: "fairce" = face; but this spelling can be rather confusing for people like Scots or Americans who pronounce the r in words like fear. Perhaps the best way to describe the vowel is to say that it's rather like the short "e" vowel of get, only longer: gate is pronounced like a longer version of get.

So in the Norfolk dialect, pairs of words like the following were not pronounced the same: daze and days, made and maid, wade and weighed, gaze and gays, gate and gait, graze and greys, place and plaice, tale and tail.

Nowadays, most people use the diph-

thong in both sets of words, so that daze now has the same vowel that was originally used in days.

This has led some Norfolk dialect supporters to erroneously write the Norfolk dialect using incorrect spellings like dairze for days and plaired for played. These are mistakes of a kind which are called "hyperdialectisms" – trying to speak or write the dialect but overdoing it!

A good way to avoid this hyperdialectism is to remember the different spellings, as in the phrase "he'a bin wanderen around in a dairze for days".