

# Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY  
SINCE 1870

## Good to see that common sense has prevailed over fines

The issue of fines for parents of children who skip school has been a thorny one for some time.

This has particularly been the case in Norfolk, which has traditionally been one of the most vigorous users of the powers to hit parents with financial penalties.

It could be argued that those powers have been used too readily, leaving the authorities open to accusations it was being too stringent at a time when finances are tough for many families.

The biggest issue many parents had with the previous system was that it was too black and white and not enough consideration was being given to individual circumstances.

News today that Norfolk County Council has softened its stance is to be welcomed, therefore.

The latest figures show the number of fines given to parents in 2015/16 have seen a considerable fall, with the reason given that those pupils with general good attendance are no longer being automatically punished.

Common sense has prevailed and it will certainly be heartening for Norfolk parents to know that in such circumstances they will be given more of a chance to present their case.

This has to come with a word of caution, however, because it's vital the message still gets through to parents that the education of their children matters and they have a duty to get them to school.

For that reason, persistent absenteeism should still be taken seriously and punished, where appropriate.

However, well done to the authorities for at least trying to strike a fairer balance.

## When will this end?

It's almost been a year since the EDP launched its Mental Health Watch campaign – and hopefully in that time it has achieved some of its core aims to reduce the stigma, raise awareness and fight for improved services.

However, there remains one area of major concern, where still more needs to be done to bring improvements. That is the scandal of out-of-area-placements, which is what it is called when patients have to be sent out of the region for treatment.

Such placements are normally the result of the region's mental health service struggling to cope with demand.

And while improvements have been made to the figures, scores of people are still having to face the turmoil of being sent away from their friends and family during what is probably the toughest time they have faced.

And as the poignant words from young Alicia show today this is a completely unacceptable state of affairs.

The mental health service deserves some sympathy, the chronic under-funding it receives is well documented.

However, they, the commissioning groups and the government need to get their acts together and find the money somewhere to stop this from happening.

## Fantastic achievement

As the Olympic Games got under way, thousands of people were attempting to achieve their own sporting goals by taking part in yesterday's Run Norwich.

The achievement of those who completed the city centre course should not be under-estimated.

For those to whom running does not come naturally, completing such a distance is akin, in scale, to the challenges potential Olympians have to overcome.

Yesterday's Run Norwich was all about setting individual goals and making them happen.

Meanwhile, it's fantastic thousands of pounds were raised for good causes at the same time.

A big "well done" to everyone who took part.

## READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

# iwitness24



■ Lee Ackers took this picture called Daisy After The Rain in Mundford. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit [www.iwitness24.co.uk](http://www.iwitness24.co.uk)

## You can speak the language - but can you speak headline?

Peter  
**Trudgill**



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

**Y**ou must know English, otherwise you wouldn't be reading this newspaper. So what do you make of this English sentence: "Tribes Homer Barrage Salvages Split"?

That was a headline I came across some years ago in an American newspaper. I reckon that for most British people it's almost totally incomprehensible.

People sometimes say, when talking about learning a foreign language, that they only want to learn enough to be able to read the newspaper headlines. In fact, reading the headlines is just about the last thing you'll be able to do when learning a language. The vocabulary may be different from what you've encountered elsewhere. Telegraphic style is used, with words omitted. And, if you're a foreigner trying to read a British newspaper, including this one, you'll have to cope with all the puns the editors enjoy using.

But the most serious problem is the amount of background knowledge that journalists, and particularly headline writers, are normally able to assume on the part of their readership. That's why you probably weren't able to understand the headline in my first paragraph, even if you did know all the words.



■ Baseball has its own language - even headlines need a glossary, says Peter Trudgill.

Here's the background you need. That headline appeared in the sport section of the daily newspaper published in Cleveland, Ohio. The Cleveland baseball team are called the Indians, and are informally known as the Tribe. A homer is a home run, the baseball equivalent to a six in cricket. Barrage refers to the fact that the Cleveland batters hit a whole series of home runs.

But what about "salvages split"? Vast distances are involved in teams travelling to away games in the USA, so when a team arrives in a city, they normally stay and play a number of matches there, not just one. Sometimes they play two games on the same day, one immediately after another, called a "double header". This is

what had happened in the case of the match referred to in this headline. The Indians were playing two games on the same day and, having lost the first one, they won the second – as a result of the barrage of home runs. So they managed to save the "split": that is, the two teams split the games between them.

We always need background information to understand what's being said, but with headlines we need even more than usual. I wonder what Americans would make of "Canaries Go Nap At Town".

■ Prof Trudgill's latest book is **Dialect Matters: Respecting Vernacular Language**, a collection of his EDP columns, published by Cambridge University Press.