

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

The PM must move to bring certainty to migration issue

Official figures which chart changing population patterns across our region will not come as a surprise.

Many of our children and grandchildren will have friends from school who have moved here from elsewhere in the world; walk down some of our high streets in our region and you hear a multitude of languages.

In our hospitals, care homes, research labs and many successful businesses, there are many people who were born elsewhere who have migrated to our region.

Our communities are increasingly multicultural.

In the lead up to the European Union referendum, the freedom of migrants to arrive and leave the European Union was up for public debate.

A vote to leave the European Union was a signal to our elected leaders that people are unhappy with the status quo.

What the alternative to the status quo will be is not yet clear. For those migrants who are part of our communities the future looks uncertain.

The prime minister must move to give them, and the public services and businesses who rely on their skills, certainty as soon as possible.

In carving out future rules there will be a fine line to tread between ensuring that we acknowledge and appreciate the contribution the people who have chosen to live in the UK make in both economic and cultural terms, but also ally fears about pressures on services that come with population increases. This is a subject which will remain on the agenda in the weeks and years ahead.

These figures paint a picture of what is happening now. But a question mark remains about the future.

Simply not acceptable

It is deeply troubling to hear a judge say that he and his colleagues are avoiding imposing unpaid work because of problems with the system.

Where is the justice when somebody can be convicted and sentenced for a crime, ordered to do unpaid work and then, on an incredible 41 occasions, simply not turn up?

It also seems remarkable that "shopping with his mum" was deemed an acceptable excuse for an offender not doing the unpaid work they were ordered to do.

Sodexo, the company which runs the Community Rehabilitation Service for Norfolk and Suffolk, is the worst performing in the country.

When then justice secretary Chris Grayling effectively broke up the probation service and privatised vast chunks of it, there were warnings of what would happen. Unfortunately, it seems the naysayers were right to raise concerns.

To be fair, steps are being taken to tackle this. The Ministry of Justice insisted on an action plan and Sodexo say its performance has "improve significantly".

It is essential that performance continues to improve, so we can all have confidence in this system.

Time to laud Nelson

Nelson is a name that stirs our souls and calls to mind heroism and victory.

At Birmingham on Saturday, Norwich City were far from heroic, stirred no souls and rarely looked like seizing victory.

So it is time for Nelson – Nelson Oliveira. The striker has the perfect name and we can only hope that he has the same unerring aim as his 19th century namesake, the Admiral.

For a day one goal glut has become a rather depressing drought for the Canaries. The shortage of strikers is clearly to blame, so over to you, Nelson – your supporters expect.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iWitness24



■ Seagulls at Walberswick, by Anil Vohora. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iWitness24.co.uk

Banter - or just plain rude. It depends on the situation

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We hear quite a lot about banter these days, especially in sporting contexts. A footballer may complain that an opponent has said something insulting to them. The opponent's defence is that what was said was not intended as an insult, it was "just banter".

Probably all cultures employ banter, but it seems that some cultures use it more than others. It's certainly very common in British society, and some people reckon that it's more common amongst men than amongst women. A difference between cultures might explain why misunderstandings can occur in our multi-ethnic English Premier League.

The late Geoffrey Leech, who was Professor of English Linguistics at Lancaster University, provided some important insights into banter. He pointed out that, in social interaction involving language, a number of principles are understood by everybody to be in operation. One of these is the Banter Principle.

Banter is mock-impoliteness. It's a way of stressing group solidarity. The Banter Principle is based on the following idea: We are good friends so we don't need to be polite to one another. If I insult you, you will understand that it's a joke,



■ Banter or rudeness? Your colleagues may have different takes on that. Picture: THINKSTOCK/PA

which will prove what good friends we are. But it can go further than that. Because the only people you can be rude to without giving offence are people who you like and respect, then by extension you might be rude to someone you don't know very well in order to show that you like and respect them... On the surface, banter is offensive, but deep down it signals friendship.

This extension generally works well here, where the Banter Principle is well understood, but I know from personal experience that there are parts of the USA where people don't get it and think you're just being rude. They don't perceive the "mock" bit of mock impoliteness, even if you are smiling.

Another of Leech's insights was to point

out that there is also an Irony Principle. Irony is the opposite of banter: If banter is mock impoliteness, then irony is mock politeness. On the surface, irony is polite, but deep down it's intended to offend, or at least offer criticism. "That's right," we might say ironically to someone who's supposed to be working, "you have a nice rest!"

The Banter Principle counterpart of that would be to say to someone who has been working flat out for 14 hours "Taking things easy today then are you?"

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