

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Give us confidence mobile coverage is being addressed

Few people will be surprised to hear that 12 clusters of Norfolk "not spots", where the mobile phone signal is so bad that even emergency phone calls cannot be made, have been identified. Indeed, many people may be surprised that the number is not larger.

The terrible mobile phone signal in many parts of Norfolk and Suffolk has long been a cause of concern. It is not just a minor inconvenience, as some may have assumed a few years ago, but can literally be a matter of life and death when someone is unable to contact the police, fire or ambulance services.

It matters hugely for businesses as they and their audience use their phones to research shops and products, place orders and ask questions. If customers cannot communicate with a business they will simply go elsewhere – something we already have evidence for.

And in our counties, where rural isolation is such a concern, proper mobile phone coverage is a way of putting people back in touch with the wider world, whether it is to find out about vital services, or socialising with family and friends.

So last year we launched our Let's Get Connected campaign, to build up the evidence we need to push for proper coverage.

It is therefore good to see that the government's Mobile Infrastructure Project has gone some way to recognising the problem we face. But that is not enough. We need to have confidence that something will be done, and for that, we need to be told where these 12 "not spots" are, and what is being done to get them connected.

Heading off problems

Social workers in our schools? What is Norfolk coming too?

That is how some people will react. And it is true that it is a crying shame that it has come to this.

However, with parenting and children's behaviour such a challenge, and the number of children in care on an apparently inexorable climb, something has to be done.

With prevention clearly better than a cure when it comes to troubled children, this is an eminently sensible move: putting social workers where they can make a difference, rather than just mitigate problems that are already running out of control.

It will not be the sudden cure for the county's looked-after children ill.

But action is better than reaction. And, after so many recent problems for Norfolk children's services, that is exactly what is required.

Can we have some more?

Well, that was worth waiting for, wasn't it?

After too many weeks of damp, dank, drizzly, mizzly and miserable weather, a weekend of warm sunshine was just the ticket.

It put smiles on faces, got us out of our homes and into the great outdoors – and provided an early boost to the coffers of our tourist businesses.

Let's hope it is a shining portent of things to come.

looking for GOD.com

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Matthew 5:8

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tlcnorwich.com

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ This smashing picture of a butterfly enjoying the sunshine was sent to us via iwitness24.co.uk. Why not visit the site if you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP.

Dialect names for a donkey avoid the rather ruder word

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There is a phrase, well-known to older Norfolk people, which is supposed to be exchanged, when in foreign parts, with any new acquaintance you suspect of also being from our area. You have to say: "Ha' your far gotta dicka, bor?" The other person then establishes their East Anglian credentials by giving the correct reply to this question. Do you know what it is?

The question translates into Standard English as: "Has your father got a donkey?" Dicky is simply our local dialect word for a donkey, and the English Dialect Dictionary shows this word as occurring only in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire.

But where did "dicky" come from? We all know that men and boys who are called Dicky are officially named Richard. But why would donkeys be referred to by the familiar form of a male first name? Well, there is another similar example: a widely used children's word for a donkey is "neddy" – Neddy the donkey. That, too, is a familiar form of a man's name – Edward.

In Scotland, Northumberland and Cumberland, there's yet another local



■ Would you know how to reply if someone asked you if you had a 'dicka'?

Picture: LIBRARY

word for a donkey derived from a male name: "cuddy", from Cuthbert. And, according to the English Dialect Dictionary, eastern Suffolk also had the word jeremiah for a donkey, though I've never heard that.

This is all a bit puzzling, until we start to examine the origin of the word donkey itself. Where did that come from? We're not entirely sure. But the Oxford English Dictionary has a suggestion which I like because it fits in very nicely with Richard, Edward, Cuthbert and Jeremiah. This is that donkey derives from the man's name Duncan. This supposition is strengthened by the fact that we know that donkey used

to be pronounced "dunky", to rhyme with monkey.

So what is going on here exactly? Why have all these familiar forms of men's names been used to refer to a donkey? The answer is that they are all jocular nicknames which were used to avoid saying something else. I'm not going to spell it out – this is a family newspaper, and some readers might be having their breakfast. But donkey is first recorded as having been used in the late 1700s; before that the usual word was "ass".

By the way, the correct response to the Norfolk question is: "Yis, and he want a fool to ride 'im – will you come?"