

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Important that private information remains just that

By their very nature, the people that our local councils deal with the most are often among the most vulnerable members of our society.

Be they children in care, adults with learning disabilities or families struggling to keep up with the rent on their homes, councils help a great number of people.

And, in their efforts to help those people, the councils often have to hold a great deal of personal information about them.

What the councils should not then do, however, is allow that information to be lost, misused or shared inappropriately.

In fact, the Data Protection Act enshrines in law that they have an obligation to prevent that happening.

It is essential that councils do their best to meet those legal responsibilities. If they do not and people's personal information and private details get into the wrong hands, it can be extremely distressing.

Of course, every now and then, something will go wrong. Laptops or files may be stolen. And human error can lead to mistakes being made.

Norfolk County Council fell foul of the watchdog – the Information Commissioner – in 2012 when it was fined £80,000.

That was because a social worker hand-delivered highly sensitive child welfare information – to the wrong address.

To be fair to the council, it does seem to have taken the criticism which followed on board, improving its training and putting up posters urging staff to think before they send emails.

Welcome marriage laws

While having the freedom to choose your life-long partner may be something many of us take for granted, it is a right taken away from tens of thousands of people in the UK every year.

In the most tragic cases, these can see people turned into domestic slaves by day and sexual slaves by night. In Norfolk, between summer 2010 and the end of last month, there were 63 incidents of honour-based abuse reported to police, of which 11 were reports of potential forced marriage and two reports of forced marriage.

Today, a new landmark law has come into effect, criminalising forced marriage, something Norwich-based charity Freedom has long campaigned for and which has won the backing of Norfolk police. Give your support, and salute the bravery of women who have spoken out.

Animal magic in action

The crucial role of wildlife rescue centres is clearly demonstrated in today's heart-warming story of Bev the tawny owl.

With her bright eyes and healthy wing, let us hope she enjoys soaring in the Norfolk sky. But without the dedication of volunteers such as vet Faye Bethell, Bev might not have had such a speedy recovery.

Centres such as the Seal and Bird Rescue Trust are vital to helping valuable wildlife and should be heavily supported.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ An alert squirrel appears to be pointing out that there's a leaf in the water dish in this charming photograph taken at Waxham by Anne Marks. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

So, Mr Gove, do you really know what an adverb is?

Peter
Trudgill



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I'm sorry to keep going on about Mr Gove, but his less-than-well-informed views on language really are very tiresome.

It wouldn't matter so much if he wasn't the secretary of state for education but, as you've probably noticed, he is.

Mr Gove has got a thing about adverbs. He thinks pupils in our schools don't know what an adverb is. I'm not at all sure he knows what an adverb is either. It's a tricky issue.

The magnificent 1,800-page Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language says that "the adverb class is the most nebulous and puzzling of the traditional word classes". I'd be very surprised if Mr Gove could help with this puzzle.

When we were at school, we were told that an adverb is a word which modifies a verb, as with "quickly" in "she runs quickly". This may be what Mr Gove believes too. But as the Comprehensive Grammar suggests, adverbs are a lot more complicated than that. Adverbs can also modify adjectives, clauses, sentences and other adverbs. An example of an adverb modifying a sentence is "naturally" in "Naturally the sea's warm – this is August in Lowestoft"; and an example of an adverb modifying another adverb is "very"



■ Does secretary of state for education Michael Gove know what an adverb is, asks Peter Trudgill.

Picture: LIBRARY

as in "Lowestoft Town played very well".

But I think I know what Mr Gove is obsessing about. He's not interested in adverbs like aboard, about, abroad, afterwards, almost, already, always, anyway, around, aside, away. He is fixated on adverbs which are derived from adjectives by adding -ly, such as accidental-ly, actively, annoying-ly.

This can only be because he has a deep and irrational prejudice against local dialects. He is terribly irritated by the fact that, unlike Standard English, English local dialects generally don't construct adverbs from adjectives in this way. Dialect speakers typically use the same

form for adjectives and adverbs: she's a quick runner, she run quick; he's a nice speaker, he speak nice.

And why shouldn't they? It's not a mistake. It doesn't mean that dialect speakers don't know what an adverb is. It just means that in the grammar of, say, the Norfolk dialect, we make no formal distinction between this particular type of adverb and the corresponding adjective. And we are not alone – this is exactly what happens in many other languages too, such as Dutch, German and Norwegian.

So Norfolk dialect speakers should not fear Mr Gove, even if he do talk very fierce.

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Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.
James 1:4

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