

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Driving test delays are felt more keenly in areas such as ours

For many people, learning to drive is a rite of passage.

It often represents the first real taste of freedom for many youngsters who have had to rely on their parents to ferry them from place to place.

And while it may be some time before they are able to afford to buy their own car, that time is usually a milestone for the independence it brings.

But in rural areas such as Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, the ability to drive is so much more than that.

It is vital for the local economy to enable people to travel to and from work and to ensure they can stay connected in rural areas, particularly where public transport does not provide a viable alternative form of transport.

So it is of great concern to hear that learner drivers in our part of the world are facing some of the longest waiting times in the country to take their practical tests.

In Norwich, it is currently a 16-week wait, while in Lowestoft and Bury St Edmunds learners are facing a 15-week delay and in Kings Lynn it is 10 weeks. The average waiting time nationally is 6.7 weeks.

The situation is causing frustration for learner drivers and driving instructors alike.

Learning to drive requires a significant financial commitment and the delays are increasing that financial burden and forcing driving instructors to take their students to test centres further afield.

Worse still, the delays come at a time when it has been revealed some bus services in Norfolk are facing the axe.

It is important, particularly in rural areas, that everyone can access their chosen mode of transport. Delays in driving tests are not acceptable.

The bus is vital to many

For many in our region, their chosen method of transport is the bus.

It is no exaggeration to say that, for them, bus travel can be a lifeline. Among those who rely, in particular, on buses are the young and the elderly.

For the latter group, such transport links can bring independence and help stave off isolation.

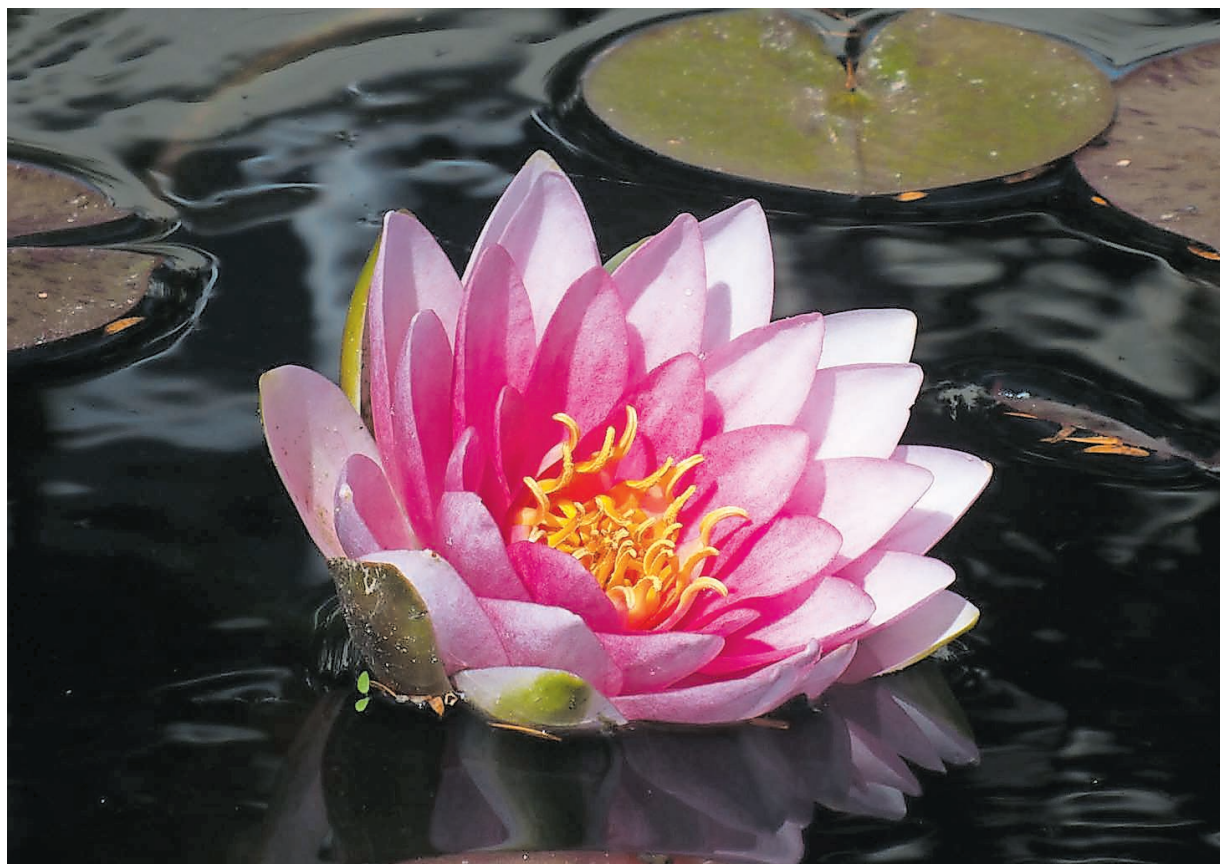
So it is troubling that we also report today that some services are apparently threatened. As we have already argued, good transport links are what keep our region moving. That separate services between Norwich and Stalham and another within the city itself are facing closure is a concerning development. The car may have become the dominant form of transport in our rural corner of the country, but we must not forget the bus, and all those who use it.

A timely reminder

How fitting it was that, on a weekend during which the mercury climbed higher and higher, our beaches hosted a series of events highlighting the work of our marine rescue services. On days like the high summer ones we are currently enjoying, there is quite simply no place better to be than on our coast. Our beaches are beautiful and they are conveniently close. But they also carry the risk that the sea always presents. So we give thanks for the vigilance of our lifeboat crews.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ Martin Seunke came across this beautiful waterlily in Lowestoft. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

How did our fine city get its name? It's all about directions

Peter
Trudgill



email: newsdesk@archant.co.uk

You might never have wondered why Norwich is called Norwich, but it is actually an interesting question, not least because the answer is not entirely clear.

The oldest Old English form of the name of our capital city was North-wic.

The wic part was an Anglo-Saxon word meaning a dwelling-place, farm, hamlet, village, or town. It was a word which the Germanic peoples had borrowed very early on from the Romans, from Latin vicus 'village, farm-house'. That much is clear.

But what about the north part. Why was it called that? North, yes – but north of what?

The Swedish place-name expert Professor Eilert Ekwall thought that it might be because Norwich had a northerly position in East Anglia, and specifically because it was north of the other major settlements of Dunwich and Ipswich.

Other scholars, however, including the Swedish expert on Norfolk place-names Professor Karl Inge Sandred, believe that there is a more local explanation.

According to researchers, there were four original Anglo-Saxon settlements on the banks of the River Wensum: these were, many of them think, Westwic, Conesford,



■ Trying to get to the bottom of why Norwich is called Norwich.

Coslany, and Northwic. Westwic was south of the river, in the region where Westwick Street now is. Conesford was to the east of Westwic.

The name meant King's Ford – in Old English it was cynings-ford. No one is absolutely sure where the ford was, but it might well have been where Bishop Bridge is now. Coslany was across the river north of Westwic – we still have Coslany Street and Coslany Bridge. And Northwic lay east and north of Westwic. Because of the angle of the river, it was also the northernmost of the settlements, and so it was called 'north' for the same reason that Westwic was called 'west'.

Northwic probably became the largest of

the settlements because it was located on the banks of the Wensum at its highest navigable point, and in the area where the two major roads intersected: the north-south road along the route of King Street-Magdalen Street; and the east-west road along the route of St Benedict's-Bishopgate, with the main gathering place being the market on the site of Tombland. Eventually, because of its greater importance, the Northwic name was extended to cover the whole settlement as the four areas expanded and fused into one.

As for the name Coslany – that is a much more complicated story. I will leave that for another Monday.

looking for GOD.com

Can any of you add a single hour to
your life by worrying?

Matthew 6:27

tlc

tlcnorwich.com