

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

More work needed to stop rising cost of crime in rural areas

Huge swathes of our region are rural, with acres of agricultural land covering the counties.

Particularly in Norfolk and Suffolk, the farming industry is world-class, employing about 112,500 people and said to be worth £2.2bn.

And with increasing investment in its technology and equipment, it is unsurprising that it is growing more and more attractive to thieves.

But to hear that the cost of rural crime to Norfolk alone has jumped by 39pc to almost £1m is a surprise – a steep rise that does not reflect the stability of the national picture.

Experts believe the rise can be put down to the growing use of social media, which allows offenders to quickly, and at the click of a button, source buyers for their stolen goods.

While Norfolk police does prioritise tackling rural crime – it has a designated unit and Operation Randall – clearly more needs to be done.

Those in the industry have encouraged fellow farmers to consider additional security – as the value of equipment and tools begins to rise, so perhaps must our investment in protection.

And as our police and crime commissioner Lorne Green says, it is important to remember that the theft of goods is not the end of it.

It is about the hard-working people whose livelihoods are knocked, the costs that go into getting back to square one and the families shoved in the midst of it.

We all need to pull together – if you see something suspicious, don't delay and call 101.

Dedicated volunteers

They are volunteer rescuers, who are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, across our coastline.

These hard working, dedicated volunteer coastguard rescue officers – who respond to maritime emergencies and those on the Broads – are unpaid as they help keep people safe.

But with the latest figures showing a marked year-on-year increase for coastguard rescue teams in Norfolk and Suffolk, some key safety advice has been issued so that locals and holidaymakers can enjoy the summer season.

According to the latest figures, the Lowestoft and Southwold coastguard rescues teams have already surpassed the number of call outs they received in the whole of 2015, while the north Norfolk sector is 15 per cent up on call outs – and it is only halfway into the season.

From missing person searches, water rescue calls or mud rescues, coastguard teams work with all the other emergency services – remaining on call 24/7 to go to the aid of whoever needs their help. These dedicated volunteers, who are keeping us safe, deserve our gratitude.

So remember in an emergency on the coast or the Broads, dial 999 and ask for the coastguard.

Attention young drivers

It is often all too easy to criticise the younger generation and to forget that we were all young once.

So we should applaud the honesty of someone who is prepared to admit his inexperience in the hope it will serve as a warning to others before it's too late.

Thomas Semmons has just come out of hospital after crashing his car.

He spent nine days being treated for the numerous injuries he suffered and is thankful they were not worse. He is 18 and has been driving for just eight months.

Let's hope others learn from the experience he has shared in the EDP today and his message helps to make our roads safer for all of us.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ A heavy sky between showers at Cromer captured by Peter Jarvis. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

The ins and outs of using 'then' and 'than' in our language

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Than was originally the same word as then, the time adverb. How it came to develop its modern usage in phrases like "This is bigger than that" is not clear, but it might have been via expressions such as "this is big, then that (is next biggest)". But we don't know because that all happened 2,000 years ago in our parent West Germanic language. Our sister language Dutch also has the construction "Dit is groter dan dat." Dutch dan means both then and than.

In today's English, than is a conjunction – it joins two parts of a sentence, as in "He can speak English better than she can speak Greek".

But some people think than can only be a conjunction. They believe we should say "He is taller than she" because that is an abbreviation of "He is taller than she is", with than being a conjunction linking the two parts of the sentence. And they reckon it is wrong to say "He is taller than her".

It is true that some people do occasionally say things like "He is better than I", and "They are cleverer than we", which sounds strange to most of us. More people write such sentences than say them, particularly Americans, but in my view



■ Wes Hoolahan of Norwich City in action – some authors writing about his skills in a formal style might say 'Wes Hoolahan, than whom no one is more skilful', explains our columnist.

Picture: PAUL CHESTERTON/FOCUS IMAGES

these forms are not normal English.

The fact is that such people have got their grammatical analysis wrong. Yes, than is a conjunction. But it is also a preposition. After prepositions in English, we use the object forms of pronouns, not the subject forms. We don't say "from I, to she, with we, for they"; we say "from me, to her, with us, for them". In exactly the same way, we don't say "bigger than I, than she, than we, than they". In normal English, speakers say "bigger than me, than her, than us, than them".

Than is a preposition in many other languages as well. In Danish, the word for than, "end", is also a preposition taking an

object pronoun: better than me is "bedre end mig".

You can also tell that than is a preposition in English from the way in which, in very formal styles, some authors use the object pronoun whom after than: "Our best player is Wes Hoolahan, than whom no one is more skilful".

If you meet someone who believes that than is not a preposition, please say you know better than them.

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