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Tougher sentences could help families of road victims

The loss of a loved one on the road is devastating for all that know and love them.

And the grief of family members can be deepened due to what can sometimes feel like insufficient jail terms for those who cause death by dangerous driving.

For years campaigners and those close to victims of road crashes have called for tougher sentences for killer motorists and now their voices could be about to be heard.

The government has announced a consultation on criminal driving sentencing, with proposals including introducing life sentences for causing death by dangerous driving and life sentences for careless drivers who kill while under the influence of drink or drugs.

If they are introduced, these tougher sentences will of course not bring back those that have lost their lives in such tragic circumstances, but they might just provide those left behind with a greater sense of justice having been done.

A harder line approach to sentencing those who cause death on our roads might also have a deterrent effect of preventing people from driving in ways that would put the lives of others at risk, because they are afraid of losing their liberty.

There is no doubt the sentencing of drivers who kill has become something of a dilemma for both the courts and society as a whole.

Certainly something needs to be done to strike a balance between the role of the courts to punish and the needs of the families that have suffered loss at the hands of dangerous drivers to see, and feel, that justice is done.

Essential lifesaver

It used to be that a pack of plasters and a cold flannel were the key components of a school's first aid kit, but not any more.

Times have changed and the family of Briony Evans-Brown are counting their lucky stars that they have.

The 12-year-old is today starting her first day back at Sir John Leman School in Beccles just three months after collapsing there when she suffered a cardiac arrest.

Thankfully for Briony and her family the school has two defibrillators and quick-thinking staff were able to use the life-saving equipment to help resuscitate the Year 8 pupil before the paramedics arrived.

It has since emerged that staff had been on a refresher course on how to use the defibrillators just three days before Briony collapsed.

Briony's parents are understandably delighted with staff for helping to save their daughter and now want to campaign for every school in the country to have a defibrillator and trained staff.

One can only hope their dream becomes a reality to ensure youngsters in other schools have the same chances of survival should the worst ever happen.

Fitting tribute to Star

He was a true Star of Norfolk and now he will be remembered forever at a Norfolk beauty spot.

Sid Everett, of Mattishall, raised almost £200,000 for charity – including the RNLI – before his death, aged 93, last year. The Barnham Broom-born fundraiser, who enjoyed holidays in nearby Northrepps, became the first person to be posthumously honoured at the EDP Stars of Norfolk and Waveney Awards when he received the Volunteer of the Year title last year. And now a bench has been dedicated to him next to the lifeboat station at the end of the pier in Cromer in what is a fitting tribute to the fundraiser. Benches like this are so important, as revealed by Sharon Griffiths on the following page.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ A fox caught on camera in the early hours of the day near Holt by Brad Damms. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

On the trail of how Snailgate became Calvert Street

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Many readers will know where Calvert Street is in Norwich: it runs from Colegate northwards to the inner link road. Before that monstrosity was built, cutting Norwich-over-the-water into two, Calvert street used to stretch somewhat further north than that.

It's called Calvert Street after the distinguished Norwich citizen, John Calvert, who owned a house in the street in the 18th century. Calvert was Sheriff of Norwich in 1741. But it's a very ancient street, so this raises the question of what it was called before Calvert built his house. You can answer this for yourself by walking along Calvert Street and noting that there's a house there, on your left as you head out of the city, called Snaylgate House. The fact is that for hundreds of years before Mr Calvert appeared, the street had been called Snailgate.

That sounds like a pretty odd name, doesn't it. Perhaps it's no surprise that local people decided they would prefer Calvert to Snail. But where did the older name come from? We know that the gate part of the name was simply the Old Danish word for street: that part of Norwich was strongly associated with the ninth-century Danish invasion and subse-

■ Snails were the inspiration for the former name of a street in Norwich.



quent settlement. (The Cole in nearby Colegate may be from the Scandinavian man's name Koli.)

But why snail? Well, the name may quite simply have derived from the fact that, at some early period, there were lots of snails to be found there. But it could also be that a family lived on the street whose name was Snail – that was a known surname, originally applied to people who were rather slow...

Interestingly, though, there was also a period of time when the street was known as Snackegate. Prof Karl Inge Sandred, the expert on Norwich street names, calls this

a "corruption" of Snailgate. But it is not easy for a linguist to see how this could have happened. Why would speakers stop saying snail and start saying snacke?

I wonder about another possibility. The Snackegate name is first recorded as being used in 1620; and one thing we know about Norwich at the beginning of the 17th century is that the city was full of refugees, the Strangers from the Low Countries who at one point formed nearly 40pc of the population. Dutch and Belgian experts tell me that one of the words for snail found in older Dutch dialects was snek.