

Bad drivers to blame

GLYN D J LINDER, Shirley Close, Frettenham. The proposed 'improvements' on the Acle straight have certainly created plenty of debate among EDP readers. Yarmouth county councillor Mick Castle made some valid points, but his anger, at readers who blame the motorists, seem somewhat misplaced in my view. I regularly use that stretch of road and can comfortably get from Acle



■ The proposed improvements to the Acle Straight are a major topic of debate. Picture: LIBRARY

to Yarmouth in 10 minutes without having to resort to overtaking. I see idiots weaving in and out of traffic dangerously, on a regular basis, to get there in nine minutes instead of 10. They are the problem, Mr Castle. One final point regarding business links which he refers to. He does again make some valid points, but lousy drivers are on the dual carriageway only 10 minutes after leaving Yarmouth, at the Acle roundabout.

No pros, only cons

JOHN WELLINGS, Harvey Lane, Norwich. Pedestrianisation of All Saints' Green is pedestrianisation for its own sake and the whim of planners, without considering the pros and cons. There is only one shop, John Lewis, in All Saints' Green and pedestrians already have access to the store by existing crossings. People only normally need to cross All Saints' Green at John Lewis or at the traffic lights. There are no pros for this proposed pedestrianisation, but there are points against. The existing system works well, so to put all the traffic that currently uses All Saints' Green to access Queens' Road would more than double traffic in Ber Street and lead to queuing causing more air pollution in Ber Street and Flitkegate. This is in the area adjacent to young children at Notre Dame School. There will also be congestion at the new mini roundabout. I rather think that planners have lost or mislaid their common sense, by relentlessly pursuing a policy that does not make sense in this case.

Source of morality

E BARKHUIZEN, Albaric Road, Gorleston. In his letter (EDP December 28) Mr Hill says humanists, who deny God exists, get their morality from "basic humanity and human

Press freedom is too valuable to be cast aside so carelessly

JIM WILSON, Low Road, Keswick. I wonder how many of your readers appreciate the threat level to their EDP and to a free press if the government decides to implement conditions contained in Section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013. Currently, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport is holding a public consultation on whether the press, after some 300 years of freedom, should be placed under a form of state control underpinned by a Royal Charter. The implication, should Section 40 be made law, would be to force every newspaper in the land - national, local, daily or weekly, to submit to state regulation by joining an official regulatory body

called Impress. Impress has been largely funded by Max Mosley, a leading member of Hacked Off, a campaign group opposed to press freedom in the form it has existed in this country for centuries. Failure to sign up would mean a newspaper would have to pay all the legal costs of anyone bringing a libel action against it, even if the newspaper won its case because the complaint was proved groundless, or the court ruled the report was in the national interest. Any newspaper, whatever its financial standing, would be unjustly saddled with crippling bills despite having proved the honesty and accuracy of its reporting. In short, the proposal is to bring



■ Max Mosley, who has largely funded the press regulatory body Impress.

In a law that allows the guilty to punish a newspaper which exposes their wrongdoing. It would spell the death knell to investigative reporting whether at local or national level. Most newspaper organisations have unsurprisingly declined to be subject to such drastic unjust legislation. Instead, following the Leveson inquiry, they have signed up to the Independent Press Standards

Organisation, which is not state controlled but oversees press regulation described as the toughest in the democratic world. Run by a former judge, it is empowered to impose fines of £1m on papers that fall short of its high standards. Unlike the government's chosen alternative it does not twist justice for those who reject its state terms in a way surely unacceptable to any right thinking person. Press freedom is the hallmark of a democratic country. It is far too valuable to be cast aside carelessly.

■ Editor's note: the EDP and its sister newspapers have made their concerns known - for more details see <http://tinyurl.com/2jn3cn>

Village will suffer when NDR opens

COLIN FOX, Liburne Avenue, Norwich. The front page headline, (EDP December 27) and a two-page report by Dan Crimmer and editorial in the same paper, warn of the possibility of a delay to the opening of the NDR owing to cold weather. I trust this is not a smoke screen by the contractors to raise the cost again? One would hope that they will be looking to improve their efficiency and the county council contracts manager, Ian Taylor, will be looking even harder. I have witnessed four men and two trucks putting up a sign on Marrett's Way, informing pedestrians of a temporary closure to the path. The sign was so big, that when erected, most of the sign was buried in the foliage of the overhanging trees and could not be seen any way. On several occasions I have seen traffic light operatives on the various road crossings, horizontal in their huts, in full view of the public and more importantly, at weekends, as much of the heavy plant stands idle. I fully understand that the workers are entitled to some time off, but surely other workers could be brought in to keep the scheme running. The editorial also relates to people living in the Plumsteads and Horsford in particular having to endure the frustration which is



■ The Norwich Northern Distributor Road (NDR) taking shape. Picture: MIKE PAGE

caused by road closures, diversions and delays. In respect of Horsford, I think they are also going to suffer when the NDR is open. The direct route to the village, ie the Holt Road, is being severed by the new road and the old road left mainly redundant except to service a few properties. Meanwhile, traffic leaving Norwich via Cromer Road, will, I assume, be expected to join the NDR, travel

less than a mile to the Drayton Lane roundabout and then turn off right into Horsford, rejoin the B1149 and continue their journey from there. I have a feeling that anybody living in Horsford, leaving the city, will continue on the A140 Cromer Road to the Horsham St Faith junction and turn left into Church Street and into Horsford that way, thus avoiding the junctions on the NDR. Obviously the reverse journey will be treated in the same way. I hope

I am wrong but that is how I see it, perhaps somebody will put me right? Finally in the EDP of December 28, it says that Norwich City Council want to go ahead with 'improvements' to the Sweet Briar Road/Dereham Road roundabout, starting in September 2017. Why can't this wait a few months until the NDR is complete thus saving, at least some, frustration for the beleaguered motorists?

Lacking in vision

CHARLES THIRTE, Beeston Common, Sheringham. In these difficult times of austerity

and cuts, I am increasingly concerned how Norfolk County Council manages their finances, through taxes raised from Norfolk's electorate. The scandalous payout

of £34m in compensation on the scrapped King's Lynn Incinerator scheme, to a company who never laid as much as a brick, culminating with an incomplete report (EDP, December 31) into the actions of decision making councillors is totally unacceptable. On the back of this comes the sheer folly of paying a consultancy firm £124,000 to run an assessment and development centre 'to test' the top 120 officers at County Hall (EDP, December 12). This so-called investment in



■ The proposed site for the King's Lynn incinerator. Picture: IAN BURT

leadership programme is designed, they say, "will assess and develop skills and attitudes senior officers require." Surely this begs the question, why needed when they should already have the skill, knowledge and ability to lead and control in an ever-changing market place? I suspect this venture could lead to the creation of more highly-paid positions which at this time are unaffordable, so please think again. Note the same 'elite' in County Hall are now lecturing parents about getting their children to school safely (EDP, December 15) while proposing to cut almost 40 lollipop patrols across Norfolk, to save a paltry sum of £150,000 per year. I cannot comprehend the thinking behind this ludicrous and dangerous proposal. It seems to me the above exemplifies a governing body lacking in priorities, vision and good housekeeping.

A cure for obesity?

MIKE JOZEFIAK, Hungeate Street, Aylsham. Obesity is growing in the UK and other civilised cultures and billions of pounds are made annually out of selling obese people various diets designed to bring the 'customer' back to their desired weight. Fat people are often the butt of jokes about their looks and the clothes they have to wear, not their supposed lack of self-discipline in not having the will power to eat less and exercise more. The commonly held view is that people become fat because they eat too much per se, or consume the wrong kind of food. While this is probably true for a majority of overweight people, we also do hear fat people claim that they don't eat all that much, they go to the gym but, inexplicably, still put weight on. "Yeah, yeah, that's what they would say" is the common response. It is however rather simplistic just to dismiss this as them being in denial and that they should pull themselves together and just get down to eating less.



This festive bouquet was painted in the 1930s by the East Anglian master Sir Cedric Morris, teacher of Lucian Freud and Maggi Hambling. Such a New Year image already carries the promise of spring. Sir Cedric was a great iris-breeder as well as a brilliant painter, and this example of his twin genius sold at a recent Christie's auction in London for a sensational £93,750.



■ The New Year is often a time people resolve to eat less and more healthy, but could obesity be caused by more than a lack of exercise and over-eating? Picture: DANIEL LEAL-OLIVAS

However, as with the old adage about walking for a mile in someone else's shoes before condemning them, all is not always what it seems at face value. An Indian doctor specialising in

obesity came upon a chicken virus that made chickens fat. Chickens in the lab given the virus, put on weight, especially in the abdomen, while chickens not infected remained at their normal weight,

both groups being fed the same amount of food. Another group of mixed infected chickens and healthy ones resulted in the majority of uninfected ones also gaining weight. This led him to test his obese human patients for antibodies to a variation of the chicken virus, a correlation which he duly found. Could obesity be a viral infection? So it would seem there are grounds for treating obesity as not simply just an eating disorder or lack of willpower, certainly not for everyone, which may give hope to those desperate to prevent death from obesity complications. Maybe hope is on the horizon. More information can be found here <http://tinyurl.com/gsk6t84>

SIR CEDRIC MORRIS

TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK!

Here are a few things to remember when you write:



- Give a full postal address and daytime phone number, please, even on emails.
- Please keep letters short and write on one side of the paper only.
- The editor welcomes contributions but reserves the right to amend and edit as necessary.
- We regret we cannot acknowledge receipt nor guarantee publication of the many letters we receive.
- All letters are considered and our aim is to carry a cross-section of views.
- Material accepted for publication in the EDP may also be published on the internet.

Our sea defences

D KING, Boughton Drive, Rushden The Norfolk coastline has been under threat for many years, but sea defences were built and have been largely effective. Why then do the powers that be feel that the time has come to let the sea claim the low-lying land around the coast? To me it's pure madness. People are set to lose their homes, others their livelihoods, their village and community apart from the farmland being surrendered to the waves. Eventually the sea will have to be halted, by which time the coastline will be much longer and vastly more expensive to defend. There are two petitions for the public to sign one in some outlets around the coast, the other online, at petition.parliament.uk/petitions/167171. If you have a problem in the link, search for Fight for Funding for an effective coastal defence scheme. It's the online petition which requires 10,000 signatures to make the government take notice. Why then have the vast majority of Norfolk people failed to sign it? Don't they care?

Thought for the day

The more man meditates upon good thoughts, the better will be his world and the world at large. Confucius