

BRECKLAND

Council staff must 'clock off' to smoke

A new smoking policy which sees Breckland Council workers made to "clock off" each time they take a cigarette break began yesterday.

The proposals were drawn up after a staff survey revealed a degree of resentment among the workforce about the amount of time some colleagues spent enjoying their vice during business hours.

As of yesterday, all 280 staff members at the council's Dereham offices will have to clock in and out for cigarette breaks.

William Nunn, Breckland Council leader, said it would be an extension of the council's existing flexi-time scheme and would not really make a difference to most workers.

He said: "This policy has been introduced following thorough consultation with staff and it merely formalises what more than half our staff who smoke have been doing for a number of years.

"Our flexible working system allows smokers to take smoking breaks without affecting the amount of time spent working and this brings fairness for all."

The policy will initially run for a six-month trial period and will be enforced with disciplinary action.

When councillors voted to adopt the policy last month, it attracted worldwide attention.

National newspapers, ITV's Loose Women, BBC Radio One and media in America and India all reported on the story when news of the plans first emerged.

But Mr Nunn said: "We are far from the first council to have introduced a policy such as this and, to be honest, we have been slightly surprised at the huge amount of media coverage it has received."



READING SPACE: Sarah Moss and her six-year-old daughter Melissa enjoy a book in the new garden.

GREAT YARMOUTH

Library garden to be a space for community

Great Yarmouth library officially opened its new garden at the weekend, which has been created for and by the community. With a vegetable patch, compost bin and even a totem pole, the community garden has been created over several months and involved more than 100 people. The garden project, called Growing Together, has been funded by £50,000 from the Working Neighbourhood Fund and aims to give local people

the chance to learn new skills and gain confidence with a view to getting back into work. The garden is being developed to create a community space and at the same time have the chance to learn about, among other things, gardening, construction skills and healthy eating. Although much of the planting has been done, next month traditional Norfolk varieties of apple and cherry trees will also be put in. Speeches were given by Tony

Tomkinson, chairman of Norfolk County Council, Michael Blank, chairman of the Middlegate Community Association and Paul Cheeseman from the Working Neighbourhoods Fund, which was followed by a presentation on the benefits of composting by master composter Ayeshia Hammond. The ribbon was cut by the town's mayor Michael Jeal. There was also the first screening of a documentary film made about the creation of the garden.

Picture: BILL SMITH

CROMER

Rescue team needs three new volunteers

Cromer's coastguard rescue team has three vacancies and is looking to recruit local people to fill them.

The team is part of the emergency services, involved in search and rescue operations at sea and around the coast. Rescue teams, made up of volunteers, are provided with search and rescue equipment, protective clothing and uniform, and are trained to a very high level in a wide range of skills including search techniques, first aid, communications, leadership, and driving 4x4 vehicles.

Applicants should be reasonably fit, aged at least 18, with a full driving licence, live within four miles of the Cromer base at Middlebrook Way and be able to respond to emergency calls at any time. They also need permission from employers to attend emergency incidents.

Call station officer Dave Stow on 01263 513895 or 07909 221465 for details or visit www.mcga.gov.uk or www.cromercoastguard.co.uk

WATTON

Arrests made after street fight

Two men and a teenager were arrested in Watton High Street when a row turned violent on Saturday.

Police are appealing for witnesses after the fight broke out near the Crown Hotel at around 11.40pm. The men, both local and in their 30s, and the youth have been bailed until next month while inquiries continue.

Witnesses should call PC Damian Shailer on 0845 456 4567 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

NORWICH

Beer festival chief carries on in 2011

The 33rd Norwich Beer Festival has been hailed a success after ale lovers turned up in their thousands to sample the best beers the region has to offer.

St Andrew's and Blackfriars Hall in Norwich was the place to go for beer lovers across the county and the continent last week.

Festival-goers were able to sample more than 230 cask-conditioned real ales, at least 75 of which were brewed in Norfolk, as well as taking in the 12th Cider and Perry Exhibition, with more than 25 varieties from East Anglia and the West Country.

But it was a dark beer from North Yorkshire that most people were talking about after Mrs Simpson's Thriller in Vanilla, produced by Brown Cow Brewery from Selby, was voted the beer of the festival by visitors.

It will take a few days for the exact numbers to be calculated, but Martin Ward, festival organiser, said he was very pleased with how this year's event had gone.

By PETER WALSH

He said: "We've had some positive feedback this year, which is great because normally we don't get that sort of thing and just get moans and groans.

"We can't really say at the moment how many people came as we haven't crunched any figures but would say its on a par with last year. We had customers from Australia and Denmark who came along and really enjoyed it."

Mr Ward said that staff tried to ensure that visitors had just as good a range and selection of beers at the end of the week as they did at the start of it.

He added: "The feedback from staff and customers has been that it went really, really well."

The clear-up, which started after the last pint had been served on Saturday night, went on right through until Sunday afternoon.

And with the operation now completed, attentions have turned already to next year's festival.

Mr Ward said: "When I said thank you to members of staff that helped out, everyone asked if I was doing it again next year.

"I said 'maybe' and they said 'yes you are' so we will start long-term preparations."

The festival, which has become a diary date for all beer lovers over the past three decades or so, introduced third of a pint glasses for the first time.

Punters were able to buy festival glasses and T-shirts at the event, and were also able to get their tankards engraved, in between drinks.

This year's event supported Norwich Door To Door, a charitable organisation whose objective is to enable social inclusion for severely disabled children, disabled adults and older mobility-impaired people who are on low income and find they are unable to use mainstream transport or the volunteer car schemes.

For more details about the festival, visit www.norwichcamra.org.uk/festival

Eastern Daily Press
Festival of Carols
Tickets On Sale Now!
In aid of the EDP We Care Appeal
Wednesday, December 8, 2010.
St Andrews Hall, Norwich.
Doors open 6:45pm.

Don't delay - book your tickets today!
Tickets cost £8.75.
Fill in the coupon below, call 01603 772175,
visit the EDP Norwich front office
or buy online at www.edp24.co.uk.
Hosted by national BBC broadcaster - Canon Roger Royle

EDP Festival of Carols Ticket Application Form

Complete the details below and send this form to EDP Festival of Carols, Front Office, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich NR1 1RE. Please include a stamped addressed envelope.

Please send me tickets for the EDP Festival of Carols on Wednesday, December 8, 2010. I have enclosed a cheque made payable to Archant Norfolk Limited for £

Name

Address

..... Postcode

Telephone number e-mail

Please note: If you have any special seating requirements please call 01603 772175.