

NEWS FROM WAVENEY DISTRICT COUNCIL FEBRUARY 2006

in touch

WITH WAVENEY

Heading in the right direction

Praise for the Council in Audit Commission report.

Green Giants

Waveney storms up the recycling 'league tables'.

Time marches on

Extensive repairs on Beccles clock faces completed.



Waveney District Council
Serving the Community



Green Giants

Waveney District Council has made fantastic progress up the 'league tables' that measure authority's achievements in recycling.

Waveney District Council has made outstanding progress in its efforts to become a 'greener' authority according to national figures published recently.

Having been rated 307th in a league table of local authorities for recycling in the period 2003-04, Waveney has shot up the table to 22nd in the country with an impressive 34.26% of all household waste recycled.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has produced the table of data showing household waste recycling and composting rates for English councils from April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005. They include the recycling rate (dry recyclables), composting rate (green waste) as well as the total amount of combined recycling and composting for the year.



"This progress proves how seriously we view the importance of looking after our environment"

Councillor Ken Sale

These figures are even more satisfying when you consider that Waveney was still only part way through introducing its proactive recycling scheme during this period. Just 66% of households were actually covered by the scheme in May 2004 and yet Waveney still climbed the

table to become one of the country's leading recycling authorities.

Now, according to Portfolio Holder for the Built Environment, Cllr Ken Sale, Waveney have greater targets in their sights.

He said: "These figures reward the hard work undertaken by the Council and its communities. Recycling plays an essential role in our 'green' strategy and this table proves how seriously we view the importance of looking after our environment. But we will not stand still and with almost every Waveney property now involved in the scheme we want to be in the top 10 nationwide for the period 2005/06."

Such a target is achievable, according to Cllr Sale, in spite of the suspension of Waveney's garden waste recycling service over Christmas which, he explains, will only have a modest affect on the figures at that time of year.

He said: "The suspension ensured that a large number of freighters did not have to collect what amounts to very little waste and this, in turn, allowed for essential maintenance of the 18-strong fleet, thereby saving possible off-road time later in the year when there would be far greater demand.

"The ODPM figures should leave no-one in any doubt as to our commitment to recycling and this suspension, though not ideal, is a practical and pragmatic solution to a situation that needed addressing."

For more information about recycling in Waveney call the Recycling Helpline on 01502 523561 or go to the Council's website: www.waveney.gov.uk

Best Value survey

A Waveney District Council survey could soon be dropping on YOUR doormat.

Approximately 5,000 households in the local area will shortly be asked to take part in a 'Best Value' survey to measure the satisfaction of residents and service users with the quality of services delivered by Waveney District Council. The survey will also gauge residents' satisfaction more generally with a range of 'quality of life' issues in the region.

User satisfaction surveys play a vital role in understanding what people think about local services - what's working and what's not - and Waveney wants to listen to YOU. Answers will be sought on a wide range of questions covering topics such as waste collection, recycling, transport, recreational venues, customer services and more.

Surveys such as these also provide valuable data about how views of local services change over time, including people's preferences and expectations. This information can help us shape, deliver and improve local services around the needs and wishes of our communities.

So if a survey drops on to your doormat - don't miss your chance. This is a real opportunity for you to have YOUR say. We will listen to everyone and look forward to the responses.

Useful Numbers

Town Hall, Lowestoft	01502 562111
Beccles Local Office	01502 713113
Bungay Local Office	01986 892176
Halesworth Local Office	01986 873162
Southwold Tourist Information Centre	01502 724729
Abandoned Vehicles	01502 523361
Blocked Drains (Office Hours)	01502 523468
Blocked Drains (Out of Hours)	07770 267055
Car Park Enquiries	01502 523377
Central Control	01502 515435
Council Tax Enquiries	01502 523435
East Point Pavilion and Tourist Information Centre, Lowestoft	01502 533600
Fly Tipping	01502 523468
Housing Benefit Enquiries	01502 523436
Housing Repairs	01502 523593
Marina Theatre Box Office	01502 533200
MOT Station	01502 565626
Pest Control Service	01502 523101
Refuse Collection	01502 523460
Waveney Sports & Leisure Centre	01502 569116

Opening Times

Main Offices

Mon - Thurs
8.30am - 5pm
Fri
8.30am - 4.30pm

Local Offices

Mon - Thurs
9am - 1pm & 2pm - 4.30pm
Fri
9am - 1pm & 2pm - 4.00pm

East Point Pavilion and TIC, Lowestoft

Winter
10.30am - 5pm
Summer
9.30am - 5.30pm
Waveney Leisure Centre, Lowestoft
Waveney Valley Pool, Bungay
Ring for a timetable.

Heading in the right direction

A report by the Audit Commission has praised Waveney District Council suggesting a bright future ahead for the people of the region.

Waveney District Council has received an encouraging report from the Audit Commission following a recent Progress Assessment review.

The report presents an analysis of the Council's progress in the period following last year's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and compliments Waveney for its better focus, streamlined priorities, good progress in priority services and for the profound effect of a new management team.

The Commission also believes that there is now better visibility both inside and outside the Council, that performance is being managed more effectively and that difficult decisions are being faced and dealt with.

Although the Commission suggests that it is taking time for residents to feel tangible outcomes, it recognises that Waveney is now clearer about what needs to change and is working hard to make it happen.

The Commission also confirmed that this overall improvement ensures Waveney will not be subjected to a Progress Assessment for under-performing Authorities in the Spring.

After the disappointment of last year's assessment, which categorised the Council as "weak", Leader Cllr Mark Bee believes these findings prove that Waveney is heading in the right direction.

He said: "The original CPA indicated that a lot of hard work was required to

improve services and this assessment shows that the hard work is beginning to pay off. There is clearly still much we need to do and no-one will be resting on their laurels, but I believe Waveney residents can feel more confident that their Council is making genuine progress in its ongoing efforts to create a safe, clean, attractive and prosperous environment for all our communities."

Chief Executive Glen Garrod is equally encouraged by the Commission's findings.

He said: "The positives in this review far outweigh the negatives and after last year's assessment we have every reason to be encouraged by the latest findings. It shows that we are putting the necessary infrastructure in place to genuinely improve outcomes for the people of Waveney."



"After last year's assessment we have every reason to be encouraged by the latest findings."

Chief Executive, Glen Garrod

"There is still much to be done to reach the high standards we set for ourselves and for our communities but I am certain that we are heading in the right direction with good people and partners capable of delivering the necessary improvements."

"And with early, un-audited, figures for 05/06 already showing significant improvement in performance, this, in tandem with the report, presents clear evidence of an upturn in the Council's fortunes."



Councillor Mark Bee

Welcome!

Waveney Leader Cllr Mark Bee has his sights set on a great year ahead for the District Council and its residents.

Hello everyone and welcome to this latest edition of In Touch Magazine. This edition aims to bring you up to date with the Council's initiatives and achievements at the beginning of what promises to be a challenging and exciting year for everyone.

Prior to Christmas we received an encouraging report from the Audit Commission about the Council's progress and you can read more elsewhere on this page. Suffice to say that this report shows we are starting to get things right and we are confident that YOU will feel the benefits.

Fantastic recycling figures indicate our commitment to looking after the environment and the building of a breathtaking new Offshore Renewable Energy Centre in Lowestoft will offer a real boost for Lowestoft and its people. Read on to find out more.

We have also included a piece on the introduction of state of the art computer systems to benefit residents, details of other regeneration projects and information about exciting forthcoming events. I am sure that this latest edition will be both an informative and interesting read. I hope you enjoy it!

College boost

An exciting relationship between Waveney District Council and Lowestoft College is aiming to secure a prosperous future for business in the region.

Efforts to end Suffolk's brain drain and satisfy the skills needs of the county's business community are being helped by a partnership between Lowestoft College and Waveney District Council.

As a Learning Centre Hub, the College will be an important part of University Campus Suffolk, which is expected to take its first students in 2007.

The Council is backing the University for educational development in Waveney as well as supporting the College's expansion which will include a new engineering training centre.

Waveney has sold some land to

accommodate the engineering development and is looking at the possibility of opening up the Waveney Sports and Leisure Centre to students as they work their way through college.

Cllr Wendy Mawer, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Environment, said the Council was supporting the expanding college in other ways, primarily by working with the local business community.



"The College's development will help promote the economic regeneration of Waveney and Suffolk."

Councillor Wendy Mawer

She said: "We recognise as a local authority that the College's development will help promote the economic regeneration of Waveney and Suffolk.

"But we need to develop the skills that



Lowestoft College.

businesses need for sustainable regeneration in areas like renewable energy and electronics. We are working to identify what businesses need and helping to set the educational priorities necessary to satisfy that need. We are raising business awareness of the purpose of University Campus Suffolk, how business feeds into it, and what role business will play in the future."

Healthy option? Have your say

Waveney and Great Yarmouth - a healthy option.

Important and far-reaching changes to the way Waveney's health services are planned and managed mean that Waveney Primary Care Trust (PCT) will soon be replaced by a larger organisation.

Just what form that organisation will take is not yet settled but the Strategic Health Authority (SHA) in Cambridge is now carrying out a formal consultation on two options for the future:

● Option 1 places Waveney within a Primary Care Trust covering the whole of Suffolk.

● Option 2 creates a Primary Care Trust for Great Yarmouth and Waveney and another one for the rest of Suffolk.

So why is this such a crucial moment for

our health care? After all, services will still be delivered locally.

MPs for the area - Bob Blizzard (Labour) and John Gummer (Conservative) - point to Waveney being underfunded and marginalised under past county administrations. They want decisions on the health needs of the population, and financial control for strategic commissioning, to continue to be as local as possible.

They support Option 2, the creation of a Great Yarmouth and Waveney organisation, on the grounds that both areas are already linked in so many ways.

Waveney and Great Yarmouth PCTs work together as a natural health economy. They have jointly invested in health, social services and social enterprise, sharing posts and management of services. Local doctors work closely with them in developing

health services and public involvement is much higher than in other areas.

The new Urban Regeneration Company covers Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft and the two PCTs say that a Waveney and Great Yarmouth PCT would be better able to tackle their shared health inequalities and deprivation.

Following discussions with the four Group Leaders, Waveney District Council Chief Executive Glen Garrod has expressed support of Option 2, the Great Yarmouth and Waveney PCT.

He said: "We view our local PCT as a strategic partner in improving life to our communities. We are fully behind our Waveney health partner that there should be one organisation for Waveney and Great Yarmouth - a sub-regional Primary Care Trust. We do not support the Strategic Health Authority's perspective that there should be a county-wide PCT. We have an agreed position on this with our neighbouring authority Great Yarmouth Borough Council and all political parties."

Your views are very important, contact Waveney PCT on 01502 719 563 for details of the SHA consultation arrangements. Consultation ends on March 22.

Benefiting Bungay



Bigod Castle, Bungay.

Waiting for buses in Bungay town centre and walking down to the Visitor Centre at the historic Bigod Castle will soon be a much more enjoyable experience if a new revamp is approved.

Access to the 12th century castle and its Visitor Centre is currently via an alleyway off the Market Place next to Swansons pub.

But visitors and local people have complained that the triangular area and bus stop should be refurbished because they don't provide a suitable access to the Visitor Centre, which was created by Bungay Castle Trust.

It was also undermining the impact of previous work carried out around the Buttercross so Suffolk County Council,

Waveney and Bungay Town Council are currently consulting the public on the Bungay Enhancement Programme.

The scheme will see the introduction of Yorkstone paving similar to that laid around the Buttercross and a new bespoke bus stop with information boards. Bungay Town Council will have the use of one side of the board to give details of initiatives such as the town's tourist trail.



"This can only be good for the Town"

Councillor John Groom

Ward Councillor for Bungay, John Groom said: "We've looked at the plans and the whole town council was very pleased with them. Anything that brightens up a corner that is in need of a new look can only be good for the town."

Time marches on at Beccles

Time is marching on again in Beccles town centre after experts completed repairs to three decaying clock faces in the market town's church Bell Tower.

The 100-year-old clock faces disintegrated just after a major refurbishment to the ancient landmark Bell Tower was finished and there was no more Heritage funding to put them right.

Since then the cash has been found and clock restorer Simon Michlmayr has successfully restored them.

Beccles Town Councillor Dougie Peck was delighted with the restoration.

He said: "It's absolutely splendid. They've done a fantastic job in rebuilding the wooden frames and the original faces

of the clocks. It's just a shame it took such a long time to find the money to do it."

Simon Michlmayr, of Norwich-based clock and watchmakers S. Michlmayr & Son, said the work was necessary because the clock was no longer safe.

The metal dials, which weigh 200 kilos each, were removed and completely restored.

"It's absolutely splendid - they've done a fantastic job"

Town Councillor Dougie Peck

The outside surrounds, or bezels, were renewed, treated and left open to the weather to prolong their life and the translucent glass replaced with perspex and built into the structure to add strength. This has allowed more of the original materials to be used to give the dials more authenticity.

Beccles church tower.



Artist captures spirits of Lowestoft

An impressive new landmark sculpture is set to catch the eye in Lowestoft Town Centre.

Graceful images of birds in flight have been chosen to capture the essence of Lowestoft after a combination of public voters and a panel of judges agreed the winning design for a new landmark in Station Square.

Spirits of Lowestoft is the work of blacksmith artist Charles Normandale, who is based at Burnham Overy in Norfolk.

"I think it will be a focal point where people arrange to meet each other."

Councillor Pat Hawes

The stainless steel abstract sculpture, which is based on an initial design of swans in flight, will be erected on the Yorkstone paved area in the square. It will be uplit at night and at five and a half metres high, will be highly visible to people driving down London Road South and arriving by train or taxi.

Thirty-five artists entered a competition to create a design which would be both a landmark and a meeting place. It had to be emblematic of Lowestoft today and

Winning design by Charles Normandale.

represent the changing face of the town looking forward to the future but without turning its back on the past.

The judging panel from Suffolk County Council, Waveney District Council, the Chamber of Commerce, Lowestoft College Arts Department and the Civic Society were given the daunting task of whittling the 35 down to four before the public and the panel were invited to vote for their favourite.

And, independently of each other, both chose Charles Normandale's design.

Councillor Pat Hawes, who was chairman of the selection panel, said: "A majority of both the electorate and the panel picked the winning design independently so it was both a democratic and unified decision. I think it will be a focal point where people arrange to meet each other."

The landmark is expected to be installed in June before which two local middle schools and two high schools will be invited to get involved with the design and construction process through an education programme taking place early in 2006.

The installation will be funded as part of the Waveney Sunrise Scheme, a partnership scheme delivered by Waveney District Council, Suffolk County Council and the Lowestoft and Waveney Chamber of Commerce, with additional funding from the European Regional Development Fund and the East of England Development Agency.



Royal Plain fountains - award-winning spectacle.

Fountains find favour

Fountains in Lowestoft have beaten off stiff opposition to land a regional tourism award.

The Fountains in Lowestoft's Royal Plain, complete with impressive light displays, are now award-winners having been one of six attractions shortlisted for this year's Sunrise Coast Tourism Innovation Award.

They were up against: the Lion House Enclosure at Suffolk Wildlife Park; the Main Street Development at Pleasurewood Hills; Lowestoft Town Management Partnership's Sunday Fundays; Corton Coastal Access Scheme; and SLP's Lowestoft Wind Turbine (Gulliver).

However, the fountains emerged victorious.

Collecting the award Paul Moss, Waveney Sunrise Scheme Project Manager, said: "I'm extremely proud to accept this award on behalf of the scheme. It is very nice to have the scheme recognised in this way and to be able to play a fundamental part in encouraging tourism to the area."

Asa Morrison, Waveney's Tourism Officer, said: "The Royal Plain Fountains have been a real hit with adults and children alike. As the evenings drew in the light displays were even more spectacular at dusk."

"The Royal Plain Fountains have been a real hit with adults and children alike"

Asa Morrison, Waveney's Tourism Officer

Kevin Gee, Chair of Waveney Tourism Forum, and Councillor Wendy Mawer, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, presented the award at the Annual Sunrise Coast Tourism Conference 2005, which was held at the Hotel Victoria, Lowestoft.

The award was developed as a project of the Waveney Tourism Forum Management Advisory Group to recognise outstanding innovative and outstanding contributions to tourism in Waveney. Sunrise Coast Tourism Marketing Partners 2005 voted for the award.



Lowestoft Air Festival

Lowestoft's Seafront Air Festival will celebrate its 10th anniversary with its biggest and best show yet.

Lowestoft's Seafront Air Festival is 10 years old and after last year's highly successful event, which attracted some 350,000 people over two days, this year's event promises to be one to remember.

Flying displays for this spectacular event on July 27/28 won't be confirmed until March but the main event sponsor, Unilever Ice Cream and Frozen Food, is on board again.

The two fantastic days of entertainment start at 10am on Thursday, July 27, when the fun fair, amusements and wide variety of market stalls, that line the promenade and Royal Green, open for business. The seafront will be equally busy the following day, with more fun on the prom and in the skies.

There will also be a food village, beer tent, and other food outlets lining the

Esplanade and around four hours of flying displays from military and civil aircraft during each afternoon.

When the flying is over, Lowestoft Esplanade will come alive with music and entertainment and a spectacular firework display at 10pm on Thursday will mark the end of the first day's festivities.

For the second year running, the responsibility for organising the festival is in the hands of a new company, Lowestoft Seafront Air Festival Ltd - an independent and voluntary business support group working in partnership with Waveney District Council.

This non-profit-making company is limited by guarantee for charitable purposes and those involved give their time voluntarily to run the event.

It costs around £250,000 to stage an air festival and it can only go ahead with support from businesses and the general public.

Higher levels of donations will be needed to cover the cost of the 2006 event and the company hopes that all the local and national businesses that supported the 2005 festival will again get behind this popular family attraction in 2006.

Members of the public, as well as voluntarily donating £1 per adult at the event, can show their support by becoming a Friend of the Air Festival for a £10 annual membership fee.

For further Air Festival information visit: www.lowestoftairfestival.co.uk

For details of how to support the Air Festival as a business sponsor or corporate friend, contact Keith Moughton on 01502 523398.



Become a Friend of the Air Festival & receive special offers from Hughes Electrical and other selected local businesses.

For just £10 annual membership subscription, you and your family can become Friends of the Air Festival and for your valued support you will receive:-

- A Friends of Lowestoft Air Festival certificate
- Access to the Lowestoft Air Festival Website - Exclusive "Friends" pages
- A Souvenir Programme*
- Two Friend of the Air Festival Badges*

(*Both of these will be posted to you in July prior to the Air Festival)



Friend of Lowestoft Air Festival

I would like to become a "Friend" and enclose my cheque for £10
Please make cheque payable to Lowestoft Seafront Air Festival Ltd
(Please print clearly as the name(s) shown below will appear on the certificate)

Surname (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other)

Forename

Address

Postcode

Date E-mail Address

Please return this completed form and your cheque for £10 to:
Friends of Lowestoft Air Festival, 41 Tennyson Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1PS

www.lowestoftairfestival.co.uk

Lowestoft welcomes opera classic

Puccini's beautiful and tragic love story La Bohème supplies some of the most sumptuous sounds in opera and it's heading to the Marina Theatre, Lowestoft.

Moldova's Chisinau National Opera is one of the few companies from the former Soviet Union to retain its own orchestra, chorus, soloists and ballet and it will be in town on Wednesday, May 31.

Written in 1895, *La Bohème* is a classic tale of Parisian love and loss, featuring famous arias such as *Your Tiny Hand is Frozen*, *They Call Me Mimi*, and *Muzetta's Waltz*. Puccini himself was said to have been moved to tears after writing the tragic ending to the story.

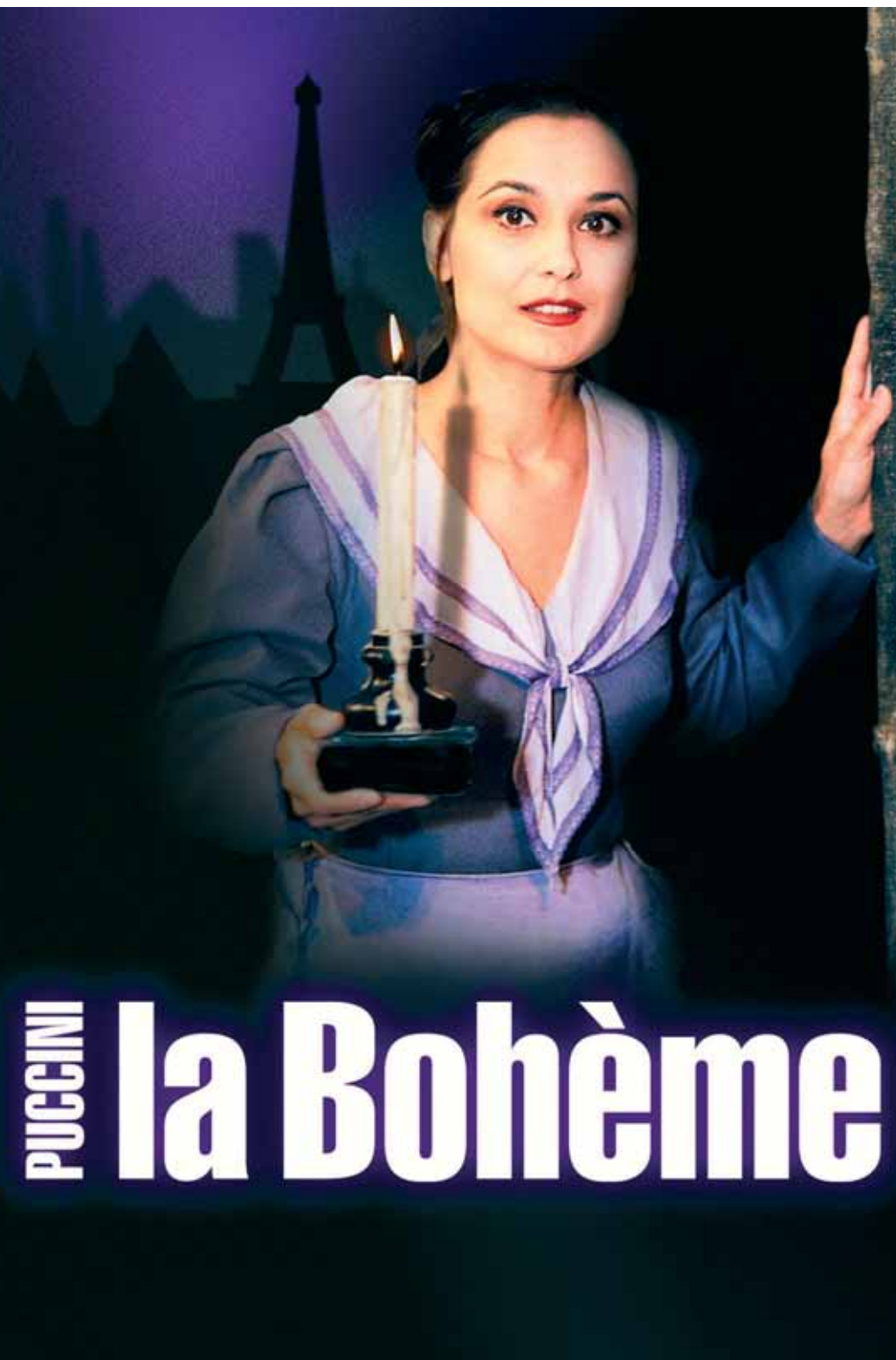
The set reflects Bohemian art of the late 19th Century, with a stunning Cubist design backdrop and costumes by Alexandr Krivoshein, one of Russia's leading designers, who has worked at the Bolshoi and Kirov.

The Chisinau National Opera was formed in the mid-1940s, but came of age as a fully-fledged professional company in 1956 and was eventually ranked as one of the top ten Soviet opera companies, alongside the Kirov and Bolshoi. Built during the Soviet era, the opera house has superb equipment and facilities in a prominent building in the heart of Chisinau, the capital of Moldova.

The company has enhanced its reputation abroad with foreign tours, particularly to the UK and Ireland, and its productions feature soloists from many countries.

Ellen Kent's production of *La Bohème* at the Marina Theatre features the soprano Irina Vinogradova in the lead role as Mimi and the soprano Rosa Lee Thomas, who sang in Ellen Kent's opera productions at the Royal Albert Hall. Also performing are soprano Elena Gherman and the young soprano Maria Tsonina, who won the Vienna Opera House Young Opera Singer Competition.

The international tenor Ruslan Zinevych, who performed with Pavarotti, will sing Rodolfo alongside the Ukrainian tenor Oleh Lykhach, who returns after his highly praised performances in *La Traviata* and the *Barber of Seville* in 2002.





Spring highlights at the Marina

Music, comedy, illusion and a thriller with more twists and turns than a corkscrew are among the spring highlights at the Marina Theatre, Lowestoft.

Derren Brown brings his special brand of magic, suggestion, psychology and showmanship to the stage on Sunday April 23, in addition to a host of top names from the world of entertainment.

Here's just a selection of what you can look forward to:

Fri March 3 **The Circus Of Horrors**

Fri March 17 **Phil Cool**

Sun March 19 **The Paris Can Can**

Tues 21 & Wed 22 March
Two - A comedy by Jim Cartwright

Fri March 31
Charlie Landsborough in Concert

Sat April 1 **The Australian Bee Gees**

Sun April 2 **The Manfreds**

Sat April 8 **Freddie Starr**

Sun April 9 **Sooty**

Mon April 17 - Saturday 22
Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Sun April 23 **Derren Brown**

Mon April 24 **Jim Davidson**

Wed 26 - Sat April 29 House Guest
- A Thriller by Francis Durbridge

Sunday 30 April
A Night At The Musicals

In addition to top live entertainment, the Marina is home to Lowestoft's best value night out. Regular film showings on the Marina Big Screen are priced at just £2.50 per ticket.

Check local press for details or call 01502 533200.

Joseph to amaze at the Marina

The Marina Theatre, Lowestoft, presents one of the biggest shows in its one hundred year history on April 17 when Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat hits the stage.

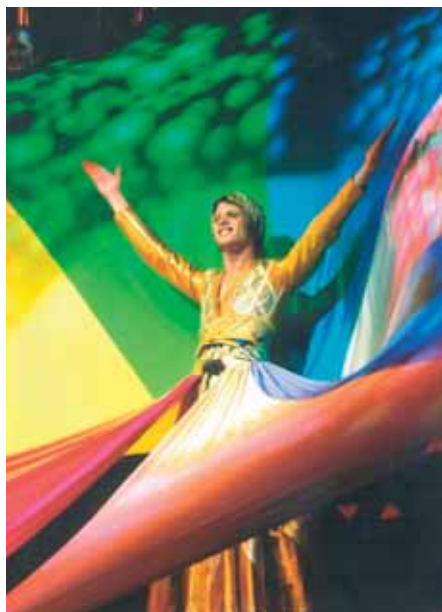
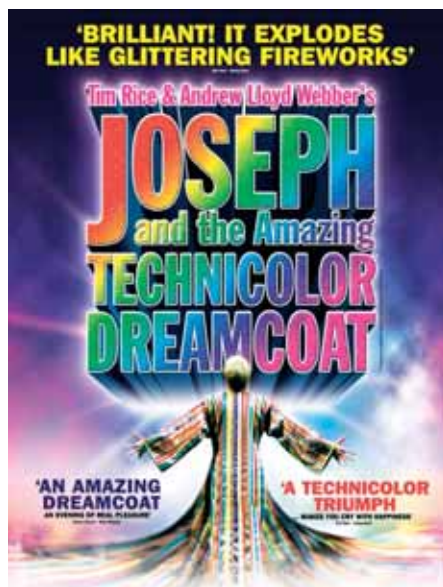
Created by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber, Britain's top touring show will have a six-day run at the Edwardian Theatre.

Bill Kenwright's production of Joseph continues to enjoy huge success across the country, with standing ovations at every performance. Boasting the liveliest, most energetic company of singers, dancers and actors you'll ever see, Joseph is brimming with non-stop action and laughter

Retelling the Biblical story of Joseph, his eleven brothers and the coat of many colours, the production marked the beginning of the legendary partnership between Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, who went on to write Jesus Christ Superstar and Evita together. With a score that includes "Close Ev'ry Door To Me", "One More Angel" and the unforgettable "Any Dream Will Do", Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat reveals the brilliance behind this partnership and the reasons for its phenomenal success.

Bill Kenwright, one of the world's leading theatrical producers said: "It is hugely important for my company to establish new relationships with theatres and audiences that we have not visited before."

Contact the box office on 01502 533200.



June start for energy centre

Construction of an Offshore Renewable Energy Centre begins shortly providing a source of 'green' energy and offering a real boost to the local economy.

Construction of the Offshore Renewable Energy Centre (OREC) at Ness Point could make Lowestoft the offshore wind capital of Britain, according to Portfolio Holder for the Built Environment, Cllr Ken Sale.

He said: "The offshore renewable energy centre will be a tremendous boost for regeneration in the region and over the next few years will make the town the hub for businesses linked with this new industry."

The East of England Development Agency has provided £3.65 million towards the OREC, with other contributions coming from European Regional Development Fund Objective 2 (£2.3 million) and Waveney District Council (£250,000). Suffolk County Council contributed land valued at £50,000.



"The Centre will be a tremendous boost for regeneration in the region."

Councillor Ken Sale

Construction work on the 2,947 square metre building is due to begin in June and will take about 17 months. An official opening is planned for Spring 2008.

Its eye-catching design and proximity to the Ness Point wind turbine, constructed

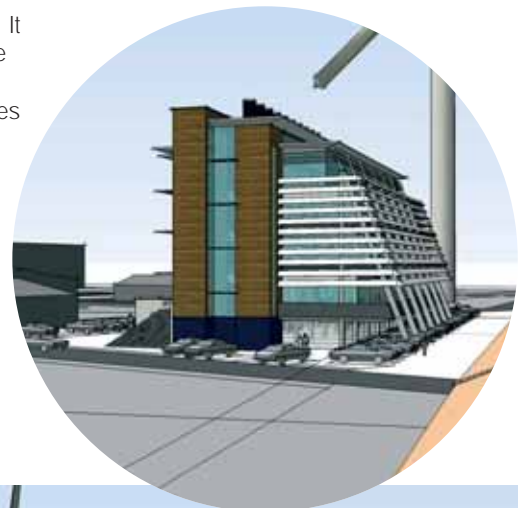
by Lowestoft-based SLP Engineering, will make the building a landmark for the area, focusing attention on the town as a regional and national centre for the offshore renewable energy industry.

The centre will have facilities for staging exhibitions and small conferences, and an area to promote knowledge-sharing between companies and organisations. It will also feature flexible open-plan office accommodation over three storeys, designed to attract innovative companies working in the field of offshore renewables.

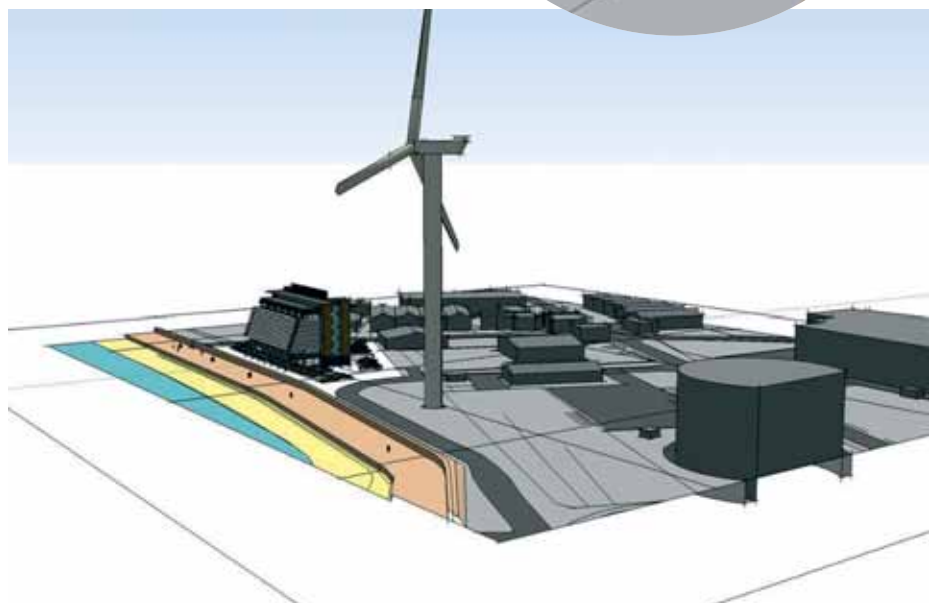
The town's credentials as a leading energy centre have been further enhanced by the announcement that Lowestoft College has become the UK's first Centre of Vocational

Excellence for Offshore Technology.

The college has secured more than £1 million to inject over the next two years into offshore training in areas such as maintenance, process control, instrumentation and computer technology.



Artist's impression of how Waveney's Offshore Renewable Energy Centre will look.





Endeavour House, headquarters of Suffolk County Council in Ipswich.

Waveney campus latest

Progress is being made on a project which will both create a new base for the Council and improve customer access for Waveney residents

Plans for a £40 million state-of-the-art building to transform public services throughout Waveney are making real progress.

Waveney Campus, as it is currently known, will be the new joint base for Waveney District Council, Suffolk County Council and CEFAS (Centre for the Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences), which is now based in a former hotel on Pakefield Cliff.

It would house some 1000 people in 15,500 square metres and be modelled on Endeavour House, Suffolk County Council's recently built corporate headquarters.

And it will be built on one of two possible Lowestoft sites – the former Shell base at Commercial Road or the Riverside Business Park.

As part of the same project Waveney

will be improving customer access points in Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth, Lowestoft and Southwold and it is currently talking to Suffolk County Council, the police, Job Centre Plus, health authorities and other central government agencies about establishing a presence in these centres.

Cllr Wendy Mawer, Portfolio Holder for Economic Regeneration, described it as an "exciting" project which would provide Waveney with an "iconic" building capable of inspiring further regeneration in the district.

She said: "In a recent external audit we were told that our premises were not fit for purpose and it wasn't an efficient way of operating so we have formed a partnership with CEFAS and Suffolk County Council to relocate. The building will be of the highest environmental standards and will lead to cost savings and efficiencies.

"The project will be funded by loans and grants and savings will be made through sharing services with the other partners.

"This project will improve customer access points by modernising facilities and bring in a number of partners to try and provide more comprehensive public services in each of the locations."

As a bonus the move would free up a wide range of office accommodation including CEFAS' Pakefield site and Lowestoft Town Hall, which stands in five acres of land.

Cllr Mawer said a business case is currently being prepared for the new building and potential partners are getting together to discuss the new access points. It is hoped it will be completed by 2008.



"This project will improve customer access points by modernising facilities and bring in a number

of partners to try and provide more comprehensive public services."

Councillor Wendy Mawer

The project had received support from the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

She said: "It's the first time local government has got together with central government to provide such a facility so it will have national prominence."



"I can see only benefit coming from this because it will result in safer car parking particularly in the

multi-storeys."

Councillor Stephen Ardley

have approximately a five-minute walk to work.

This strategy would keep town-centre traffic moving, attract more shoppers, support town-centre businesses and maximise the use of car parks on the outskirts of the towns in areas such as Alexandra Road and Belvedere Road in Lowestoft, and Blyburgate in Beccles.

Cllr Stephen Ardley, Portfolio Holder for Operations and Facilities, said: "I can see only benefit coming from this because it will result in safer car parking particularly in the multi-storeys. It will not only enhance security because we have added provision for evening parking to support our local attractions like the Marina Theatre and Hippodrome, but it will also improve out-of-season parking for local residents."

Waveney District Council wants YOUR views on these plans - get in touch by calling 01502 523379.

Parking shake-up to increase security

Car parks in the district are to receive important investment for the benefit of residents and visitors.

Britten Centre car park.

More than half a million pounds is to be invested into car parking in a bid to bring extra security to multi-storey parking, upgrade the facilities and a new approach to a perpetual town-centre problem.

Lowestoft's two multi-storeys at Battery Green Road and the Britten Centre are to get extra security measures and increased supervision as part of a scheme to make the facilities more user friendly.

There will be electronically monitored ticket machines and alarms, more car park inspectors and security work to prevent unauthorised access.

Off-street parking has been fully

reviewed and a new zonal approach to Town Centre car parking developed in conjunction with Suffolk County Council's Traffic and Parking Strategy, has gone out to public consultation.

If this three-year scheme wins public approval, it would see most town-centre car parks in the area become short stay, with longer-stay car parking provided within a short walk of the town centre.

The reason for this is that lot of town-centre space is being blocked all day by people who are at work. Under the zonal approach they would be using car parks further away from the centre so they would

Beccles takes the plunge

Beccles is a step closer to welcoming brand new multi-sport leisure facilities.

A campaign in Beccles to pull the plug on its ageing outdoor pool and replace it with top-class leisure facilities has taken a dramatic step forward with the identification of four potential sites.

The hunt for an alternative to the Puddingmoor swimming pool has moved on rapidly since the pool was only saved from closure in the summer by a last-minute compromise between Waveney and its insurers.

Now the search for a suitable site has been narrowed down to four, one of which, Common Lane, has already been reported in the Press.

The proposed new facility will include:

- An all-weather hockey pitch
- All-weather soccer zone
- 25m indoor swimming pool
- Fitness suite
- Aerobics studio
- Other community facilities

Draft plans have been drawn up which will form the basis of an extensive public consultation exercise. Funding for the project is proposed from private sources as well as sporting bodies and other partners.

Working together will be key as the project identifies the best site and the most sensible funding mix. Without essential funding from other sources the project will not be viable.



"We will be doing all that we possibly can to ensure that a robust funding package is put together to make this

project a reality."

Councillor Mark Bee

The news brought a collective welcome from councillors.

Leader of the Council, Mark Bee, said: "The area is in desperate need of additional community facilities. We will be doing all that we possibly can to ensure

that a robust funding package is put together to make this project a reality."

District and Town Councillor, Jack Walmsley, stated: "The people of Beccles and the children in our schools deserve a pool that will be open all the year round. The rest of the planned accommodation will give Beccles some of the best sports provision in the county."

And Beccles District and Town Councillor, Chris Punt added: " We have an opportunity to progress the indoor pool and sports complex. This is an excellent opportunity that must not be missed. I am personally prepared to put my time and effort into achieving this goal for the current and future generations of Beccles and District and welcome positive input from anybody."



Sports centre revamp

£450,000 is being spent to modernise and improve the changing facilities at Waveney Leisure Centre.

Swimmers and keep-fit fans are in for a real treat when a scheme to replace 30-year-old changing facilities at Waveney Sports and Leisure Centre is completed.

Attendance at the Water Lane centre is expected to soar as the "wet" and "dry" changing rooms are given a complete facelift with modern lockers, showers, shower cubicles and flooring.

Cllr Stephen Ardley, Portfolio Holder for Community and Operations, said: "This is a complete refurbishment. We are gutting these changing rooms, taking out everything that's in there and putting back new modern facilities with easy to clean and maintain surfaces.

"We will have new energy efficient lighting controlled by an electronic

management system so that we save electricity. There will also be new shower and sanitary fittings designed to conserve water usage"

Cllr Ardley is delighted with the project, which will involve unisex entrances, separate changing areas for male and females, family cubicles and disabled facilities.

He said: "The present centre was built in 1976 so the approach and the technology is 30 years old - it doesn't matter how much we clean it the place still looks tatty. I think when this is all finished everything will look spot on and when word gets around I would expect it to attract more people."

The project is expected to take six or eight weeks and should be completed around May/June but the sports centre will stay open as work progresses. There may however be a certain amount of inconvenience to customers which is regrettable but unavoidable.

The changing rooms are the next stage in a series of improvements to the sports



Waveney Sports Centre is being refurbished from top to bottom.

centre.

The kitchen has recently had a £25,000 revamp with new floors, walls, and stainless steel surfaces and £150,000 has been spent renewing sections of the roof.

As part of a rolling three-to-four-year programme the worst sections of the flat roof have been replaced using a resin-based material, which has included replacing the old glass roof lights with double-glazed polycarbonate units. This material is the same as used on Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre.

The material, which comes with a 15-year guarantee and can be revived for a further 15 years by a covering of resin, gives extra insulation and prevents the condensation which has been a long-running problem at the centre.

New play areas

Communities are benefiting from investment in modern play facilities.

Play areas are proving popular thanks to new investment and an innovative new scheme.

Carlton Meadow Park is a new £244,000 facility which caters for all ages by providing areas for youth activities like five-a-side football, basketball and skateboarding, a teen shelter, junior play

equipment, a picnic area and a 'trim trail' for people wanting to shed a few pounds.

Cllr Stephen Ardley, Portfolio Holder for Community and Operations, said: "This is the first time we've approached play areas in this way - they would traditionally have been split into four separate areas.

"It is self-policed by the community through the parish team which was set up by the Parish Council. This was very much a partnership approach with the Parish Council, Parish Team, the developer (Persimmon), ward councillors, the local

New-look play areas are proving a real asset.



community, and ourselves playing an active role from design right through to completion.

"The end result is that the community of Carlton Colville have the facility they want and can be proud of and potential problems of vandalism and graffiti have largely been designed out.

Carlton Meadow Park is now the district's biggest play area but the most used is Nicholas Everitt Park in Oulton Broad, where £90,000 has been spent on a purpose-built pre-school area, landscaping and upgrades to a shelter and toilets.

At Kessingland, the Parish Council has worked with the District Council and Suffolk County Council to move and improve the car parking and play area on Church Road.

"The new play area is a real asset to the area."

Kessingland Parish Council Chairman Liam Martin

Parish Council Chairman Liam Martin said the new area was a real asset as it was right next to the car park as people went down to the beach and he was looking forward to it opening after the last bits of fencing and landscaping were completed.

Planning made easy

A wide ranging modernisation programme will allow planning applications to be submitted online - at any time of day or night.

Waveney's planning system is going online in the first stage of a major Local Authority Modernisation Programme (LAMP) involving the total replacement and integration of computer systems for several key service areas.

Planning, Building Control and Environmental Services systems will fully integrate with each other and with a new

Planning Portal.



Land Charges system. Additional benefits will include a corporate geographical information system and much improved access to services via the internet.

The first of these to be delivered is the ability to submit online planning applications through a link to the national Planning Portal.

Accessed directly from the development control/planning pages on the Waveney website the planning portal itself is a one-stop shop for planning information and services online.

With helpful hints and tips along the way it guides applicants through the process and makes sure they have filled in all the relevant sections avoiding the possibility of incomplete forms having to be returned.

As well as there being a tool to help calculate planning fees there is an option to purchase site maps and to attach supporting documents or drawings.

The whole package, including the fee, can then be submitted online (via notification by email that confirms when an application has been received) or applicants can print off what they want and submit it by post to the local Planning Authority in the normal way.

Local Development Plans can also be viewed and the volume of a planned room can be calculated. In fact everything you need to know about planning regulations and how they affect you is available.

Cllr Ken Sale, Portfolio Holder for Built Environment, said: "This is an exciting first step in what we are trying to deliver over the next few months, a totally flexible and integrated system that will improve public access to services whilst making them more efficient."

"This enables the submission of planning applications 24 hours a day, seven days a week and builds on the improvements to the planning service that we have already put in place."

Councillor Ken Sale

"The public will see a noticeable difference in service delivery as the various elements of the LAMP project are rolled out during 2006. The planning portal link is a great example of this as it will enable the submission of planning applications 24 hours a day, seven days a week and builds on the improvements to the planning service that we have already put in place."

State of the art system

A brand new computer system has been installed to improve Waveney District Council's Revenues and Benefits service.

Waveney District Council is delighted that the implementation of a brand new Revenues and Benefits computer system is nearing completion and kindly asks residents to be patient whilst the final adjustments are made. The computer system is up and running, however there are still some modules to be added and several routines to be tested.

The implementation requires all customer records to be transferred across to the new system and therefore it has been necessary to restrict access to both systems whilst the conversion is taking place. However, careful arrangements have been put in place to ensure that payments continue to be made to all existing customers, so tenants and landlords should not be affected.

The implementation of the new system is

as a result of Government funding which was granted in order to assist the council in improving its services to the residents of Waveney.

The grant has funded two systems: a core benefits system and a document imaging system, which will enable all documents to be scanned on arrival at the office. This means that officers working on claims will be able to do so electronically, resulting in quicker, more efficient ways of



"The introduction of a new system is a fundamental part of the process of continuous improvement."

Councillor Bruce Provan

working and improvements in the processing times of claims. It is intended to have both systems fully functional by early Spring.

The Benefits Service has been going through a service transformation since a

"poor" BFI report in 2003 and has implemented many new working practices in order to provide a better service to the public. For example, in October 2004 the team was processing new claims in 99 days. By reviewing work practices and re-engineering work streams this was reduced to 32 days in November 2005.

Councillor Bruce Provan, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Social Inclusion, understands there may be some mild inconvenience for residents, but believes that long term advantages will make the whole process worthwhile.

"This is an exciting time for the Benefits and Revenues Service in Waveney" he said "We embarked on an ambitious improvement programme following the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (www.auditcommission.gov.uk) inspection in 2003 with the intention of becoming one of the very best performing authorities in the country by 2007.

"The introduction of a new system is a fundamental part of that process of continuous improvement, and I am delighted that our service partner IBS, has pulled out all the stops to minimise disruption to customers before we go live." **Should you have any questions about the new set-up, please call Adrian Mills at Waveney District Council on 01502 523692.**

Rachel gets results

Waveney District Council is making great strides in its efforts to deal with anti-social behaviour.

Anti-Social Behaviour Officer Rachel Tucker fronts a team that deals with anything that might cause alarm, harassment or distress - everything from verbal abuse and racial harassment to petty vandalism and loud noise..

Many agencies are involved in trying to control such behaviour but it's Rachel's job to make sure they work together effectively. She does this through the Anti-Social Behaviour Networking Group, which meets once a month under her chairmanship.

The group comprises 20 individuals including representatives from social services, police, Waveney's Housing Department, social landlords (housing associations), education welfare and environmental health.

"The group is not about putting ASBOs on individuals it's about getting to the root of the problem and dealing with what causes it"

Rachel Tucker, Anti-Social Behaviour Officer

The group exchanges information about anti-social behaviour that is causing concern. Members of the group can refer individuals to the group for special discussion. Three new referrals are discussed at each meeting to try to find an appropriate solution.

Rachel said: "The group has gone from strength to strength and we have had a great deal of success in the past especially with regard to social landlords and their referrals to the group.

"When individuals are referred to us we discuss the case and decide what action to take. If it's a youth the behaviour might be related to non-attendance at school so we get the education welfare service involved."

Legal tools in the team's armoury include exclusions from play areas, injunctions with powers of arrest, prosecution or confiscation of noisy stereos/televisions, acceptable behaviour contracts and anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs). As a last resort those living in social housing can be evicted from their homes if they fail to modify their behaviour.

Rachel said: "The group is not about

putting ASBOs on individuals it's about getting to the root of the problem and dealing with what causes it, although some of the cases we have dealt with have resulted in eviction, prosecution and ultimately, even imprisonment, so it's most certainly not a talking shop.

"If we get to the point where we have to use an ASBO, it is a sign that our preventative efforts have failed. We focus on the individuals causing trouble but part of my role is to ensure that the group considers the victim's rights too."

Telephone Rachel Tucker on 01502 523111 or email: rachel.tucker@waveney.gov.uk



Some of the confiscated hi-fi equipment.

Reducing the volume

Waveney takes noise pollution very seriously and has made important progress on behalf of affected residents.

Council staff were burning the midnight oil this summer in a bid to stop noisy neighbours pumping up the volume on their hi-fi equipment and making residents' lives a misery.

Councillor Ken Sale, Portfolio Holder for Built Environment said: "Noise is one of the worst pollutants because it causes stress, loss of sleep, high blood pressure and in extreme cases, outbursts of serious violence. It's difficult to deal with because it leaves no measurable signs, so we can't visit the following day to assess it. That's why Government guidance requires us to provide an appropriate response outside normal office hours."

The department expects to deal with about 700 complaints of noise nuisance

this year, of which 30 to 40 will result in some form of legal action, ranging from serving an abatement notice to prosecution and from confiscation of amplification equipment to the making of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.

The problem is especially severe in the summer when music fans take to the great outdoors or open their windows. Unfortunately those trying to quietly enjoy a little relaxation or sleep also open their windows to enjoy the fresh air and the result is predictable.

Waveney has responded with an evening service. From May to September it's available from 7pm to 1am on Fridays and Saturdays and from 7pm to midnight on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Details of how to use this service are available on the Council's website www.waveney.gov.uk

You can also call 01502 562111 the Town Hall out of hours and follow instructions to record a complaint.

Engaging with YOU

The Council wants to improve its consultation with local residents and has come up with some interesting new ideas.

Markets stalls and 'meetings on demand' are just two ideas being considered as part of a campaign to oil the wheels of community consultation in Waveney.

The council has identified public consultation as an area of its activities that needs to get better, said Council Leader Mark Bee.

He said: "We need to improve our community engagement and be more inclusive in our decision making so that we have a much greater dialogue with town councils and parish councils in the future."

To that end Waveney has enlisted the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) to find new ways of connecting with the community and establishing new channels of communication between the public, parish councils, police, local authorities and other agencies.

SALC Chief Executive Mary Mitson-Woods said: "We want to look at new ways of doing things and we have come up with some quite interesting ideas. Maybe we don't need meetings at all, maybe we can have a stall at a market which will allow people to talk to us about their concerns.



"We need to improve our community engagement and be more inclusive in our decision making."

Councillor Mark Bee

"We could meet less often but in smaller areas or let the community call the meetings when they have a problem like graffiti or vandalism. People want things done when they have a problem and if they can get results by working with Waveney District Council and Suffolk County Council it would be quite revolutionary."

**Intouch readers with ideas on how to improve consultation can contact SALC on 01473 833713
email: adminsalc@btconnect.com
website: www.onesuffolk.co.uk/SALC**



Trailer fitted with a kitchen and bathroom.

Making an informed choice

Waveney officers have hit the road to explain what the proposed transfer of council homes to a housing association really means.

Waveney's campaign to inform tenants of the pros and cons of switching the management of their homes from the council to a stand alone housing association has taken to the road.

In January tenants received a formal offer document that explained the

additional benefits and services if they vote to transfer their homes to Waveney Valley Housing Association - a new, locally based, not-for-profit registered social landlord.

Staff are travelling around the district answering questions, addressing concerns, and explaining all aspects of the proposed transfer in a trailer fitted out with a kitchen and bathroom of the quality that would be used in modernised homes should tenants vote in favour of transfer.

At the end of the consultation process, in the Spring, there will be a tenant ballot when more than 50 per cent of those voting must say "yes" for the transfer to take place.

If tenants vote against the transfer the houses will stay in Council ownership and financial constraints will mean a less ambitious programme of improvements.

How to get in touch

Let us know what you think of this publication

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Waveney District Council
Serving the Community

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