



Pictures: BILL SMITH

NORFOLK

MP calls for government fuel concessions

A powerful picture of fuel poverty in rural Norfolk caused a political spat at Westminster last night.

South West Norfolk MP Christopher Fraser won an adjournment debate on the plight of local pensioners and low-income families as petrol and heating bills soar.

He said that in more isolated communities, a quarter of households were now in fuel poverty – double the regional average. And with a majority of homes in his constituency having no access to gas, the near-doubling of heating oil bills in the past year had been crippling.

He called for the 2p increase in duty due in October to be abandoned and for cuts in the Warm Front programme to help vulnerable households with heating to be reversed.

In a testy exchange minister Malcolm Wicks said that £20bn had been spent since 2000 on alleviating fuel poverty and that the issue remained a government priority.

He announced that a scheme to switch impoverished households to alternative energy – such as ground source heat pumps – would be piloted in the east of England.

Afterwards Mr Fraser said “that probably means nowhere near Norfolk”.

NORWICH

‘Thought-provoking’ student art on show

Colourful paintings, futuristic computer games and thought-provoking installations are just some of the weird and wonderful items on display at Norwich School of Art and Design’s end-of-year exhibition.

About 350 students graduating this year are involved in the show, which incorporates work from all degree courses, such as graphic design, fine art and contemporary textile practices.

Sue Tuckett, art school principal, described the event as a celebration of the graduating students’ work.

She said: “End-of-year exhibitions are the culmination of students’

undergraduate study, and provide them with the opportunity to bridge the gap between being a student artist or designer, and part of the professional art world. The event is one of the largest student arts and design exhibitions in the east of England and the breadth of work on show indicates the broad range of courses offered at the school.

“Our students are renowned for their innovation and creativity and the show promises to be an inspirational and thought-provoking experience for all who visit.”

Rebecca Court, 22, who achieved a

first in a BA in fine art, is exhibiting a multi-disciplinary installation that looks at what has been lost in London’s East End as a result of development for the 2012 Olympics.

She said: “I have never been involved in a show of this scale before and it is a fantastic experience. It is a good platform for us to prepare for next year.”

The show is open to the public from today until Wednesday, 10am to 5pm on weekdays and 10am to 4pm on Saturday. Admission is free.

■ For more information visit www.edp24.co.uk/dailylinks

ON DISPLAY: Two of the exhibits featured in Norwich School of Art and Design’s end-of-year exhibition.

Left, part of *The Ship of Fools* by Samuel Halstead.

Right, Rebecca Court with 2012, her installation documenting the development of the Olympic site in east London.

FELBRIGG HALL

Tree death of boy was ‘unforeseeable’

The National Trust yesterday said it could have done nothing to prevent the unforeseeable death of a schoolboy crushed by a branch from a tree on one of its Norfolk estates.

Daniel Mullinger, 11, had been taking part in an orienteering exercise at Felbrigg Hall, near Cromer, when a 23m-long branch fell on him and three other pupils.

The two-day inquest at the Assembly House in Norwich was told a teacher heard a loud crack, which she compared with “the creaking of a door in a horror movie”.

She shouted at the children to run but a branch fell, killing Daniel instantly and injuring fellow pupils.

Heathland School in West Bergolt, Essex, had taken 59 children to the National Trust estate during a five-day trip to the nearby Aylmerton Field Studies Centre, which it had visited annually since 2002.

The jury at the inquest was told the National Trust has a responsibility for trees at Felbrigg, and a policy of inspection and management.

The tree was in an area classed as “medium risk” and staff checked the area more frequently than National Trust guidance requirements.

Forester Richard Daplyn, who works at Felbrigg, said the area of the tree was last formally checked during a walk around the site six months before the incident and no

By LAURA DEVLIN

defects were found. However, an arboriculturalist who inspected the tree afterwards believed it was in poor condition and should have been regarded as high risk.

He said the branch fall could have been down to high winds before the incident, rain and a phenomenon known as “summer branch drop”.

But another arboriculturalist, Richard Ravencroft, said the tree appeared to have good vigour and the branch fall could have been down to a problem that had built up over a number of years and which would not have been visible during inspections from the ground.

Returning a verdict of accidental death, the jury ruled that “this field trip was appropriately organised and supervised by the school and the local education authority”.

Greater Norwich coroner William Armstrong said: “Daniel died in a well-organised and carefully planned trip. He was in the conscientious care of responsible teachers and he died as a result of an unforeseen accident.”

“Daniel was a special little boy, a much loved son and brother.

“We can only hope, as his family mourn his death, that they are comforted by the many treasured memories of a lovely little boy.”

Fellow pupil Harry Bowen, 11, who

still uses a wheelchair as a result of the accident, hugged Daniel’s mother, Wendy, after the verdict. Katie Farthing, 11, and Max Farley, 10, were also injured.

After the hearing, Peter Griffiths, regional director for the National Trust, said: “None of us in the National Trust can imagine how very difficult the past two days have been for Daniel’s family – having to relive the tragic accident at Felbrigg last year, nor the pain and suffering that they must have experienced during the last 12 months.

“Our hearts go out to them and the parents of Harry Bowen and the two other children who were injured. We hope that the inquest will have helped them gain an understanding of what happened that tragic day.

“The National Trust is keenly aware of its responsibilities to minimise risks and keeps its procedures under frequent review.

“To that end, we note that the experts in this case have agreed that our policies and procedures were in accord with accepted industry standards, and, after what the coroner has described as a comprehensive investigation, North Norfolk District Council has stated that in their view this was an accident that was not foreseeable.”

Daniel’s parents declined to comment.



Claiming incapacity benefits but want to work?

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Graduate Skills Workshop

Are you a recent graduate?

Are you looking for the 'right job' in Norfolk?

Do you need to brush up your job-search skills?

Do you need tips on networking?

Would you like to meet some Norfolk employers?

If you answer **YES** to any of the above, then the **GradsNorfolk Skills Day** may be of help to you.

On Thursday 10th July, GradsNorfolk, in partnership with Norwich School of Art and Design, City College and UEA are running an afternoon of employment workshops for recent graduates living in Norfolk, **regardless of where you studied**. There will also be an opportunity to meet local employers for networking and advice.

Places are limited. For more information & to register for this **FREE** event please contact Adrienne.Jolly@uea.ac.uk