

News

Newsdesk ☎ 01603 772443

For reviews of restaurants, pubs and bars in the Norwich area, don't miss the **Weekend** section of your Norwich Evening News every Saturday.

Expert forecasts tough times for firms as numbers going bust rises

A Norwich-based business expert warned that more firms in the region could be about to go under than thought as figures show a rise in insolvency rates.

The Insolvency Service said the number of companies going bust continued to rise both on a quarterly and yearly basis, but the number of firms entering administration fell by almost 11pc on the previous year despite firms such as Habitat and Jane Norman appointing administrators.

But Matt Howard, from PKF Accountants & business advisers, said that trends identified in the latest national insolvency figures could already be out of date. "I expect it to get worse when the debt collectors get back to work after the summer break and the currently under-staffed HMRC steps up its tax collection," he said. "There is also another quarterly business rent pay day at the end of September, which may prompt more casualties."



New lease of life:
City of Norwich Athletics Club using the old track.
PHOTO: STEVE ADAMS

Athletes bring old track back to life

A dilapidated Norwich running track which has been unused and neglected for almost 30 years has been brought back to life by a dedicated bunch of runners.

More than 60 volunteers from the City of Norwich Athletics Club have cleared, cleaned and weeded the track so they can continue their vital training during the athletics season.

The track, on the site of the old Henderson Comprehensive School off Tollhouse Road, West Earlham, in the west of the city, is not known to have been used since at least the mid-1980s, but the club was forced to temporarily relocate their training sessions there after the University of East Anglia announced plans for a five-week refurbishment of its track, which started on July 18.

Helen Stubbs, who is a sports hall coordinator for the club and whose daughter has been a member for two and a half years, said: "When we first got here, the track was in a real state. We had to get an army of volunteers including members and their parents to sort it out. The jobs included clearing, general cleaning and weeding.

"It's now in a much better condition, but the quality of the surface is not what we're used to – it's made of cinder so the athletes are cautious on foot.

"The off-track amenities aren't there, but luckily we've

managed to borrow a toilet unit for everyone to use. There's no shelter for anyone though.

"It's unfortunate that we've had to move, but the track at the Sportspark definitely needed refurbishing."

Richard Polley, vice-chairman of the club, said: "It is something our youngsters have never experienced, but for some of the older ones it is a step back in history."

He said that it was good for the members to train on different surfaces, but they were keeping their fingers crossed that the rain would stay away as it was not an all weather track.

He said that even after the UEA track was back in use they were hoping to continue to hold some of the club's training sessions there.

Mrs Stubbs accepted that the runners are lucky to have found access to a track at all though, as the Henderson is the only one of its kind in the city other than the Sportspark.

She added: "If we wouldn't have been able to use it, the next closest one would have been in Great Yarmouth and it would have been unfair on our athletes to have to travel that far for training. At least we're able to continue working with the athletes, albeit in conditions we're not used to."

The fortunes of the field athletes have been affected

more, with the club's hammer throwers being forced to train as far afield as Bury St Edmunds.

She said that the area couldn't accommodate the throwers.

Director of the Sportspark Keith Nicholls said: "The athletics track is currently undergoing essential refurbishment to reinstate heavily worn areas, retexture the whole surface to provide an improved running surface, jumps and throwing run-ups.

"Any track repair work will unfortunately cause some inconvenience to athletes but we have made great efforts to programme this at the end of the season to minimise the effect on performance.

"We did advise the club that this facility was a possible temporary venue and think that CONAC has shown great initiative in bringing this disused resource back into use to help them through this period."

→ For more information about the club go to www.conac.org.uk

→ See Monday's Evening News for a feature on the first anniversary of ParkRun, Norwich's free running club held at Eaton Park.

→ Do you have a community story for the Evening News? Contact the newsdesk on 01603 772443 or email newsdesk@archant.co.uk

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Repair work on A11

Motorists heading along the A11 are being warned that a stretch of the road will be closed overnight on Monday while resurfacing and repair work is carried out.

The work being carried out on behalf of the Highways Agency, will involve a full closure of the southbound carriageway between Mundford Road roundabout (A134/A1066) and Brandon Road roundabout (B1107/A134) from 8pm until 6am.

Southbound traffic will be diverted off the A11 at the A11/A1075 Watton/Thetford roundabout.

Drivers can follow the A1075 into Thetford, and back to the A11 at the Brandon Road roundabout.

Fundraising at stores

Two Argos stores in Norwich will be officially reopened today after being given a fresh new look.

As the St Stephens Street and Longwater Retail Park stores are reopened, volunteer fundraisers will be collecting for the Teenage Cancer Trust. The charity is about to open a unit at Addenbrooke's Hospital, in Cambridge, to provide specialist care for young people with cancer from across East Anglia.

At the store openings, there will also be a limited number of offers to the first customers into the new stores.

→ For more information on the charity visit www.teenagecancertrust.org

Free bus available

A free bus will be available for people wanting to cross Lowestoft's Bascule Bridge when it closes this weekend to allow essential maintenance work to take place. Engineers will be working on the bridge between 8pm tomorrow and 6am Sunday as part of the routine works. The work means the bridge will be closed to traffic.

But a free bus service round the diversion route will be provided for pedestrians wishing to cross the bridge during the closures.

A clearly signed diversion will be in place for motorists.

Actress book signing

Actress Liza Goddard will be heading to Norwich later this month to talk about her new autobiography.

Ms Goddard, who now lives in Norfolk, is best known for her role as John Nettles' nemesis in the popular BBC detective series Bergerac.

She will be signing copies of her book *Working with Children and Animals: The Autobiography of Liza Goddard* at Waterstone's in Castle Street from 11am on Saturday, August 20.

→ For more information or to book tickets, telephone Waterstone's on 01603 767292.

Open air meeting

Norfolk Quakers are holding an open air meeting today to mark the anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima.

The meeting will be a reflective event, starting with silence, where anyone who feels moved to speak can do.

It will be at the Feet of Sir Thomas Browne, Hay Hill, near St Peter Mancroft Church, from 11.30am-noon.

At 3pm they will gather at the Peace Pillar in Chapelfield Gardens to lay flowers.



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