

News

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No notice: Arvind Matkar outside his newsagent's shop in Castle Meadow.
PHOTO: JERRY DAWES

Newsagent's anger over street closure

A newsagent on Castle Meadow has spoken out on the city council's "negligent" decision to close the road for two weeks of repairs with little warning.

The road will be closed from today until September 6, while Red Lion Street is also shut until early Monday morning.

Arvind Matkar, who runs the popular paper shop in the shadow of the castle, said he received no warning of the closures from Norwich City Council.

He returned from holiday on Wednesday morning and found out about the work when speaking to drivers outside his shop.

"They said 'we're not going to go through the Castle Meadow, we're going to be detoured'," he said.

"It's going to affect my trade really badly. People using the buses going home, they are my customers.

"I'm going to stay open but I don't know what's going to

happen. It's a hard time as it is and the council are giving us more of a hard time."

He said that he got no warning from the council, which did not send letters or inform any shopkeepers on the street of the plans.

Because of this he has had to quickly change stock orders and staff rotas.

"The council's completely negligent, or they don't care about traders. We pay good rates, they should look after the shopkeepers," he said.

Mr Matkar opened the shop 17 years ago when the Castle Mall was in the early stages of construction, and said that he had seen a lot of changes since then. But he had never had to go through anything which could affect trade as he feared the closures may.

David Whibley, assistant manager at electrical store

Maplins on the same street, said: "It's going to cause a bit of a problem. We'll see a big dip. People come here because they get off the bus."

The work to repair potholes on the street and ramped crossings is being carried out by May Gurney and is expected to cost £60,000.

A diversion for northbound traffic will run through Queens Road, Bracondale, King Street and Rouen Road, while southbound traffic will be directed through Agricultural Hall Plain, King Street, Cattle Market Street, Golden Ball Street and Westlegate.

Pedestrians will be able to use the pavements throughout the work.

Norwich City Council was unavailable for comment.

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Gaza flotilla survivor to speak in Norwich

A speaker who was aboard an aid ship bound for Gaza that was attacked by Israeli forces in May will be speaking in Norwich next week.

The flotilla, organised by the Free Gaza Movement, the Turkish Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (IHH), was carrying humanitarian aid.

The six ships of the flotilla departed on May 30 carrying 718 people from 37 countries.

Israel asked to have the cargo inspected at the port of Ashdod

and items permitted by Israel delivered by land but its request was refused.

Israeli commandos then raided and seized the ships in international waters of the Mediterranean Sea.

Sarah Colbourne, who was aboard the Mavi Marmara, will describe her experiences at a showing of a film about the attack. She said she was woken at 4.10am to see "small dinghies bristling with guns and the Israeli military speeding towards the ship."

Nine people were killed in the

attack, and dozens of others injured, including seven Israeli commandos. Ms Colbourne said she personally saw four dead bodies laid out, including one man who was shot in the head.

The 30-minute film produced by ReelNews tells the story of what happened from the point of view of survivors. Cameras and phones from people onboard were impounded, but some footage was smuggled out.

→ The event will take place on **Wednesday at The Cube at The Forum at 7pm.**

Working mum makes the shortlist for national award

A Norfolk mother has been shortlisted for a national award which recognises working mums.

Beckie Clifton, who runs Jo Jingles music and dance classes for babies and pre-school children in the Norwich area, was one of more than 400 people to be nominated for the Mum and Working 2010 awards. She has made it on the shortlist for the Franchisee of the Year Award category.

The mum from Long Stratton purchased the Jo Jingles franchise, which runs classes in and around the city, three years ago.

She said: "I am delighted to have been nominated for the Mum and Working Franchisee of the Year Award. I love my job, it gives me time with my son, great pleasure, a sense of achievement, satisfaction and of course a steady income. To win the award would be the icing on the cake."

More than 400 nominations were made this year and there are six categories to recognise working parents, flexible employers and parents in business.

The judges are now reviewing all shortlisted entries and the finalists will be announced at the end of September.

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Community picnic held for boaters at Thorpe

Families are being reminded they can join in a community picnic in Thorpe St Andrew this weekend.

The Thorpe Island Residents' Association has organised the informal event at Thorpe Green, in Yarmouth Road, in a bid to improve the relationship between its members living on boats opposite the green and the wider community.

The event is taking place between 2pm to 5pm today.

There will be a suggestion box at the event so that people can put forward ideas on how to improve the appearance of the island from the green.

Jason Hales, chairman of Thorpe Island Residents' Association, said local businesses had supported the day by offering prizes for the best suggestions.

He said: "There will be a meal for two at the Bull Inn, and Krazy Daizies florist has donated some flowers too."

City Boats have also offered a low rate for two day boats so that the association will be able to ferry families across to the island if they would like to have a look around.

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