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**News in brief**

# Look out! Puppet Man has a new line-up of helpers

**SNAPSHOT**

The city's infamous Puppet Man street entertainer has two new friends after a toy shop gave him two new puppets following a letter in the Evening News branding him an inbred dullard.

He's undoubtedly Norwich's most loved entertainers and now the infamous Puppet Man has enjoyed a revamp.

The popular street performer has two new additions to his cast of colourful characters thanks to bosses at Langley's toy shop, in the Royal Arcade.

Basil the fox and Suzy the squirrel will join performer David Perry during his performances at the bottom of Hay Hill, which regularly bring amazed shoppers to a standstill.

The donation came after the Puppet Man's talent were brought into question on the letter pages of the Evening News.

Mr Perry, a familiar face in the city centre for more than a decade, was named one of the 25 Faces of Norwich in a competition organised by Castle Mall, leading to an angry letter from an anonymous reader who branded him a "dullard, in a backwater of inbreeding".

However, this sparked a series of letters in support of Norwich's Puppet Man and bosses at Langley's wanted to go one better and help him to improve his act even further.

Shop manager, Chris Goulding, said: "I think Puppet Man adds fun to the streets of Norwich, he puts a smile on hundreds of people's faces every day. We thought some of his puppets were looking a bit tired and felt it would be nice to help him update his collection."

The newcomers will appear alongside Puppet Man's regular characters, Mick the dog, named after Mick Jagger, and Brenda, named after his wife.

Mr Perry, 64, who lives in Norwich, said: "Some people don't like my singing. I was pleased to get the new puppets. I've named the fox



**Entertainer:** Norwich's much-loved puppet man, David Perry, with his new friends, Basil the fox and Suzy the squirrel, which were given to him by Langleys. He is joined by Langleys manager Chris Goulding.  
PHOTO: BILL SMITH

## City characters

→ Marigold, right, rose to fame in the city after his days were spent standing by Grapes Hill directing traffic. His pièce de résistance was the bright yellow rubber gloves he wore. Rumours still circulate as to the fate of the popular traffic director.



→ One of Norwich's loudest Big Issue sellers took to the streets a few years ago singing "can I interest you in a Big Issue", but the vendor was moved on after complaints about noise.  
→ Do you know what happened to Marigold? Contact Lucy Bolton on 01603 772429 or e-mail lucy.bolton@archant.co.uk

Basil and the squirrel is his girlfriend Suzy. Basil likes to dance to the Beatles and Suzy sometimes makes an appearance. Basil was a relation to Basil Brush and now he's been made to work on the street he's not happy about it."

Using a karaoke machine, the puppets dance while Mr Perry sings over songs by Elvis and the Beatles.

Over the years Norwich's Puppet Man has built up a cult following.

Fans have uploaded films of him to the video-sharing website YouTube and he appeared in a series of post-cards, claiming to capture unappreciated parts of the county.  
→ Is Puppet Man an embarrassment or an icon? Write to Letters, Evening News, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich, NR1 1RE or e-mail eveningnewsletters@archant.co.uk

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## Spending on track

Spending at Norwich's City Hall was back under control, civic leaders have insisted, as the council signed off its accounts on time – for the first time in two years.

Last week, the first meeting of the council's new audit committee – set up to keep a closer eye on the finances – heard that the financial situation had improved on earlier forecasts and the accounts would be signed off on time.

The news marks the end of a fraught financial position for the authority which last year hit the buffers after spending shot nearly £2m into the red.

A report by Barry Marshall, head of finance, said that spending totalled £18.3m – some £4.1m less than originally planned.

## Crews fight van blaze

The eastbound carriageway of the A47 near Norwich was closed for more than an hour yesterday lunchtime after a van caught fire. The incident happened on the fly-over above the A11 roundabout at Cringleford at about 1.30pm. Two fire crews from Norwich put out the flames which left a thick pall of smoke above the carriageway.

## Fire at cathedral

A fire at Norwich Cathedral on Saturday evening was stamped out by a firefighter using his foot.

The alarm was raised at 5.55pm by cathedral staff after a wicker waste bin caught fire. Two fire engines attended the building off Tomland but the size of blaze meant they did not even use an extinguisher. No damage was caused to the cathedral.

## Man hurt in attack

A man suffered serious injuries after being attacked outside the Compleat Angler pub in Prince of Wales Road, Norwich. The 20-year-old was taken by ambulance to the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital after the assault which took place at 1.20am yesterday.

## Nurse struck off after putting patients' lives at risk

A nurse at the James Paget University Hospital who put patients at risk by failing to cooperate with colleagues and keeping sloppy records has been thrown out of the profession.

Louise Stanton, 42, had bundles of patient records in her car and made inadequate notes on dateless scraps of paper, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) heard on Monday.

Stanton could not tell her boss at the Gorleston hospital if she had treated any of their patients.

Her former manager, Julia Hunt, said: "Obviously it posed a risk to patients."

Striking Stanton off the professional register, chairman of the NMC panel Ann Kelly said: "In failing to work collaboratively with her colleagues, abiding by changes

introduced to improve patient care and cooperating with new systems, the registrant has seriously breached the required standards.

"The registrant's conduct put patient safety at risk."

Stanton, from Bradwell, did not attend the hearing in London but was found guilty of misconduct for failing to work in a cooperative manner between March 2001 and June 2003.

MEMO

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