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BRIEFING

Airing cupboard sparked blaze

FIREFIGHTERS have tackled a blaze which started in an airing cupboard.

The fire brigade was alerted at about 8am on Saturday to the incident in a first-floor flat in Wilding Court, Portland Crescent, Woodbridge.

A crew from the town's fire station and another from the Colchester Road fire station in Ipswich discovered the blaze was caused by a time switch in the cupboard.

They fought the flames to extinguish the fire and bring the incident under control by around 8.15am.

Sat-navs are stolen

Windows were smashed and two sat-nav systems were stolen in a trio of car thefts in rural Essex.

Thieves caused £600 of damage in the three incidents, which happened in Strumer and Steeple Bumpstead near Havehill, between November 9 and 11.

Anyone with information about these incidents is asked to telephone 0300 3334444.

Kill threats charge

An Essex man has been charged with affray and making threats to kill following a disturbance on Saturday night. John Kelly, 25, was charged after police responded to an incident in Cock Green, Felstead, where he lives. He will appear at Chelmsford Magistrates' Court today.



STEPPING OUT: From left, youngsters Nat Swift, Cordelia Swift, Rose Dorber, Francesca Scott, Flora Fergusson, Edie Elwes, Robin Fitzgerald and Izzy Fergusson at the halfway point of their 10km walk

Photograph: SIMON PARKER

An ACE fundraiser

CHILDREN aged between six and 12 did their bit to raise money for their counterparts in Africa on Saturday by taking part in a 10km sponsored walk.

The eight youngsters joined adults on a stroll from Eastbridge, near Leiston, to Walberswick.

The walkers took to the road to generate funds for ACE Africa, which helps deprived children in Kenya and Tanzania.

The idea of walking 10km was a symbolic one as that is the distance many children in east Africa have to walk to school

each day. Clare Elwes, one of the walk's organisers, said: "We look on target to raise £2,000, which we are really pleased with."

ACE Africa (Action in the Community Environment) is a non-profit organisation which helps to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS on the lives of the millions of orphans and vulnerable children living in rural communities of east Africa.

Anyone wishing to donate to ACE Africa's work can do so by logging on to www.justgiving.com and typing in ACE Africa.

Indian millionaire could buy Pontin's

PAKEFIELD: Dubai Royal Family might be involved in buying business

FEATURED PROPERTY



£570 pcm

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By Peter Cripps

AN INDIAN millionaire could buy Pontin's, the chain of holiday camps that collapsed into administration, according to reports.

Bhanu Choudhrie and his family's investment vehicle C&C Alpha Group could team up with the Dubai Royal Family to buy the business – including the Pakefield site in Suffolk – for up to £15million, it is claimed, securing 850 jobs in the process.

Mr Choudhrie told a Sunday newspaper that he wants to keep the existing management team in place and expand the business. They are set to have discussions with administrator KPMG today.

The administrators are optimistic of finding a buyer and have pledged to keep running all five sites – in Brean Sands in Somerset, Camber Sands in Sussex, Pakefield, Prestatyn Sands in Wales and Southport on Merseyside.

The Indian entrepreneur said he had looked at the business six months ago when Pontin's chief executive Ian Smith was searching for potential investors.

C&C Alpha Group has a vast portfolio of investments, ranging from award-winning spa hotels in India and Mauritius to a portfolio of hospitals and care homes in the UK.

Jane Moriarty, of administrator KPMG, said she had received numerous expressions of interest from third parties. A sale process was likely to take two or three months, she added.

KPMG plans to appoint a leisure operator this week to help them run the business and has pledged to honour all bookings. It catered for 5,000 guests at the weekend. None of the 850 staff has been made redundant.

Pontin's slide into administration has come as a surprise because more people have been taking holidays in the UK rather than abroad because of the weak pound. The company was bought by Ocean Parks for £46m in 2008, who closed a site in Blackpool last year.

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