

## Norwich Evening News

### Stanley staff show value of our community pubs

The best pubs are like great friends: there during the good times and there for you during the bad.

The value of our community pubs was shown once again on Wednesday night, when the Stanley pub turned into an emergency shelter for the evacuees of the Knowsley Road house fire.

Barman Dan Allen was locking up when he saw the fire engines arriving, and immediately reopened the pub to shelter the families, some of whom had young children with them, on a freezing night.

We'd like to raise a glass to the Stanley, and all the other pubs at the heart of communities around Norwich, which we support through our Love Your Local campaign.

We all know the benefits they bring those around them – being community hubs, fostering friendships, driving local economies and even, research has shown, raising house prices – yet times are still tough for our pubs.

The warmth and generosity shown by the Stanley was some solace on an already traumatic night for everyone involved – and another reminder of just how important our pubs are.

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We already have the coffee shops and the music scene to compete with Seattle, but very soon Norwich could also have an "innovation hub" to rival the American city, according to an expert in the field.

Mal Fletcher, who lectures and broadcasts on innovation leadership for the think tank 2020 Plus, believes the city has many of the right factors to position itself as a magnet for innovators alongside the likes of Seattle, Cambridge, Eindhoven and Zelenograd but what is needed is leadership to push it forward.

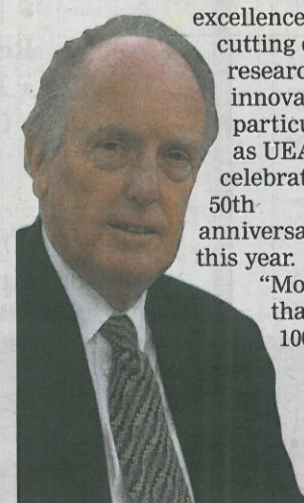
"Innovation is always born out of connections between existing ideas and if ideas are going to connect, people must connect in an atmosphere of trust. That process begins with leaders who can take the long view, creating a generous culture in which inventive people flourish, for the common good," he said.

Mr Fletcher believes the combination of relatively high graduate retention rates, quality of life, and grants for research in cutting-edge areas such as genomics make Norwich a perfect candidate – something many of the city's education and enterprise leaders agree with.

Prof David Richardson, pro-vice-chancellor for Research, Enterprise and Engagement at the University of East Anglia, said: "I am delighted that Norwich is being recognised as an international centre of

excellence for cutting edge research and innovation – particularly as UEA celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

"More than 100,000



**Innovation powerhouse:** The Seattle skyline at night. PHOTO: THINKSTOCK



# Could Norwich be the new Seattle?

students have graduated from UEA and I am very pleased that the city's graduate retention rates are acknowledged by Mr Fletcher, alongside grants for research."

Prof Richardson believes a £26m project to expand and develop the Norwich Research Park will help cement the city's position as a leading international research hub.

Matthew Jones, Norwich Research Park's chief operating officer agreed. He said: "Recent government investment has kick-started the development and expansion of the Park which will increase our offering to commercial occupiers and allow us to nurture

collaboration between business and academia."

But former Norwich MP Ian Gibson, pictured, who was also Dean of the School of Biological Sciences at UEA, believes it will take leadership to make Norwich an innovation hub. "We need to be thinking about it more along the lines of the way people would in America. We need a go getter philosophy rather than what we see which is people who find reasons why it would not work."

Dr Gibson, who worked at the University of Washington in Seattle before moving to UEA, has been a long term campaigner for Norwich to become a science city.

"I think we need a completely new initiative with a figurehead willing to keep people together and keep the vision going. We need someone prepared to take risks to succeed and that is what we don't have at the moment," he said.

Norwich City Council should hear any day whether a bid submitted to government last month to be part of the second wave of City Deals – giving it the ability to unlock new and innovative ways to drive growth – is successful.

→ Mr Fletcher will be speaking about Creating Innovation Hubs at a 2020Plus Event in the city on Thursday. For more details visit <http://2020plus.net/Norwich>

## Other innovation hubs at home and abroad

→ Seattle – perhaps best known for being the birthplace of Bill Gates, Nirvana and Starbucks. Its economic revival began in the 1980s when new software, biotechnology and internet companies started up or moved into the city increasing its population by almost 50,000 between 1990 and 2000. More recently, it has moved into "green" industry.

→ Cambridge – Undoubtedly at the forefront of the high-tech industry, Cambridge is known as "Silicon Fen" a play on Silicon Valley in the United States. As well as the world renowned Cambridge University, the city is also home to many software and bioscience companies.

→ Eindhoven, Netherlands – In 2011, Eindhoven was named world's most intelligent community

although it was years earlier that it emerged as the capital of Dutch industrial design. Several initiatives to develop, foster and increase a knowledge in this high-tech environment have taken place, including a cooperative initiative between local government, industry and the university. → Zelenograd, near Moscow – a centre for electronics, microelectronics

and the computer industry in modern Russia, it was specifically developed as a reflection of Silicon Valley in the US. It is home to the National Research University of Electronic Technology (MIET). There are two areas in a special economic zone – a main area for new plants and research centres and a technology park which mostly houses MIET spin-off companies.