

BRIEFING

Pensioner, 72, is found safe

A PENSIONER who discharged himself from Colchester General Hospital and sparked a major police search across Essex has been found safe.

Joseph Preston, 72, from Clacton, left the hospital against doctors' orders shortly after midnight on Sunday despite only having had surgery on Thursday.

Officers were contacted just before 11pm on Sunday by a farmer in Langham who found Mr Preston on his property. Mr Preston was taken back to Colchester General Hospital where he was treated for the effects of the cold weather.



STOLEN: The two vases taken from the shop in Frinton



Antique vases stolen

Police have released photographs of two antique vases stolen from a shop in Frinton.

The Moorcroft vases, worth about £650, were taken from Art Deco Antiques on Connaught Avenue. They were stolen between 10am on Tuesday, December 29, and 3pm on New Year's Eve.

The vase with the blue and white pattern is about four inches high and worth approximately £200. The other is number 130 of a limited edition of 150 and is worth about £450.

Anyone with information should call Walton police on 0300 333 4444 Crimestoppers 0800 555111.

New concern over threat to lighthouse

CLOSURE BID: But opponents say it could be vital

By Craig Robinson

MORE concerns were raised last night after it emerged an historic landmark that has been guarding the Suffolk coast for more than 200 years could be shut down.

Orfordness lighthouse has been under threat from a fast-eroding coastline in recent years and now it has been recommended for closure.

The latest five-year review by Trinity House, which manages lighthouses around England, Wales and the Channel Islands, has said the listed building, which has guided ships since 1792, may no longer be needed.

Captain Roger Barker, the authority's director of navigation, said that as technology advanced the reliance on the traditional system of lighthouses around the coast has

diminished. It plans to discontinue all navigational aids at Orfordness, instead increasing the range of the Southwold lighthouse from 16 to 24 nautical miles.

But opponents to the plan claim the lighthouse could still prove a vital navigation tool if electronic systems failed.

David Andren, chairman of the Alde and Ore Association, which exists to preserve the Alde, Ore and Butley Creek rivers and their banks, said: "At our meeting last April one of our members was told by Trinity House that because of the risks of relying on the use of the GPS, lighthouses remained a vital secondary means of navigation. Most of us maintain a visual check on notable landmarks such as lighthouses. While Trinity House say that Southwold lighthouse is an alternative,

the curvature of the coast and distance away make it a much less useful landmark than the lighthouse on Orfordness.

"Certainly it is important for all small boat sailors entering the Deben and Alde and Ore and I suspect even much larger vessels entering Harwich would do a quick visual check to see that their GPS positioning systems and the bearing on the Orfordness lighthouse confirmed nothing was amiss."

Mr Andren said the association would submit its own comments to Trinity House before the consultation deadline of January 29.

Responses to the proposals should be sent to Navigation Directorate, Trinity House, Tower Hill, London, EC3N 4DH or email navigation.directorate@thls.org.

craig.robinson@eadt.co.uk



UNDER THREAT: Orfordness lighthouse

Photograph: MIKE PAGE

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