



## A taste of Covent Garden with city street performances

■ Head Out, Not Home for the free street entertainment in Norwich. Australian Conrade Rivalland entertains with his Brucie Show at Timberhill. Inset, Groovapolitan entertain with their music

Pictures: DENISE BRADLEY



The Head Out, Not Home programme of free entertainment has begun.

Over the next 10 weeks the streets of Norwich will be transformed into a performance space akin to that of London's Covent

Garden. There is lots more entertainment to come during the summer extravaganza organised by Norwich Business Improvement District (BID) and Norwich and Norfolk Community Arts (NORCA).

Head Out, Not Home aims to encourage people to stay in Norwich on Thursday evenings to enjoy late-night shopping and the city's bars, cafes and restaurants. Stefan Gurney, Norwich BID's executive director,

said: "It's great that we can bring a flavour of London's Covent Garden and a vast array of local acts to the streets of Norwich. Thursday nights during the summer in Norwich are not to be missed."

## Annual retail sales up despite slowdown in summer sales

The city's high street retailers have reported a fall in summer sales, but figures are up overall for the year so far.

Footfall in Norwich was down 2.5pc in June to 1,662,415 compared to the same time last year, but overall the year is up 5.2pc.

It comes as the retail sales balance for the year to July fell for a second successive month.

The Confederation of British Industry survey of 117 firms showed 21 more reported sales were up rather than down, whereas last year the number was 29.

Stefan Gurney, executive director of the Norwich Business Improvement District, said end-of-season sales figures were lower

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than last year. "The warmer weather was having an effect. More people were going out to experience the wider offer of the city rather than just the retail offer."

However, he said most shops had reported a good year so far, with overall sales figures higher than 2014.

John Maddocks, owner of Aurum Jewellers on Bedford Street, in Norwich, said while sales were up on last year, the last couple of months had been tough.

"The last two or three months have been slower than we would expect. I spoke to my suppliers

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**Stefan Gurney,**  
Norwich Business  
Investment District

and they are saying the same. It seems to be a general trend.

"I have no idea why it is," he said.

"Roadworks around the city are a nightmare. I think a lot of people can't be bothered to come to Norwich at the moment."

Howard Archer, economist at IHS Global Insight, said consumers may be "taking a bit of a breather" after robust spending in the first half of the year.

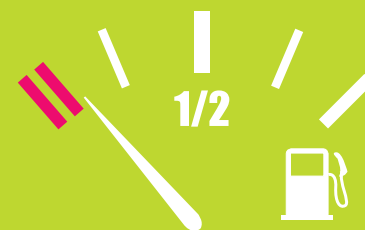
While footfall in shops for the last couple of months have been lower, the tourist industry has reported a spike.

Pete Waters, from Visit Norfolk, said: "Accommodation providers are reporting sales are up.

"Everybody we have been talking to says they are having a good season."

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