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## Festive trail launches on smartphones

A seasonal, interactive trail has been added to the Discover Norwich smartphone app.

Launched to coincide with the city's Christmas tree trail, users can get clues to the locations of the trees and interesting festive facts to their phones.

The app can detect when users are within 3.5 metres of a tree and then checks them in to that site. There is also a built-in QR code reader to complete each trail-point. The app keeps a record of progress throughout the trail and enters anyone who has visited all 15 points into a competition, with the chance to win prizes worth thousands of pounds.

More trails are due to be added to the app in the new year, including an ale trail, Easter egg hunt, hidden treasures trail and GoGoDragons.

Executive director of Norwich Business Improvement District (BID) Stefan Gurney said: "This is an exciting development for Discover Norwich and is an excellent way for people to explore the city whilst using the app to digitally record their trail progress and enter the competition.

"We look forward to developing the app further and to increasing the number of trails available to users of the app and visitors to the city."

# Former minister praises college

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A former education minister has praised Norfolk's first university technical college after meeting students who commute for up to two hours to attend it.

Lord Baker, who is now chairman of the Baker Dearing Educational Trust, is a champion of vocational education and UTCs.

He said he visited the site of the UTC Norfolk, on Old Hall Road, Norwich, four years ago and it was a huge, empty factory building. But he said it had been transformed into one of the most spacious UTCs he had seen.

The college has a particular focus on skills for the energy and advanced manufacturing sectors, and has strong links with employers including Lotus, KLM UK Engineering and CLS Offshore.

Lord Baker, who was education minister under Margaret Thatcher, said: "It's quite clear talking to these youngsters that it is a unique institution. They could not get it at their other schools."

He said that, because of the shortage of engineering skills in the employment market, none of the UTC's students would need to apply for job seeker's allowance when they left. His visit came two days after a speech by the chief inspector of



■ Lord Baker meets students during his visit to University Technical College Norfolk.

Picture: SIMON FINLAY

schools Sir Michael Wilshaw, calling for equal respect for academic routes and vocational training. He also challenged employers to play a greater part in vocational education.

Lord Baker said Britain should

have had UTCs 50 years ago, and it was playing catch-up with countries such as Germany and Austria.

Asked if he thought there was a need for another UTC in Norfolk, Lord Baker said: "Let's wait and see.

I would think there's probably scope for another one, probably with a different specialist subject."

→ Do you have an education story? Email [martin.george@archant.co.uk](mailto:martin.george@archant.co.uk)

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