

In brief

Centre among top two in Europe for cancer research

The Cancer Research UK Cambridge Centre has become the first UK institute to be designated a Comprehensive Cancer Center of Excellence by the European Academy of Cancer Sciences (EACS).

It means Cambridge is one of the top two cancer centres in Europe for outstanding academic research, alongside the Netherlands Cancer Institute.

The Cancer Research UK Cambridge Centre is now the largest CRUK Cancer Centre by funding, totalling approximately £100million a year. More than 600 laboratory and healthcare professionals are based there.

Dr Anton Berns, who chairs the EACS committee overseeing the Designation of Excellence process, said: "This is the type of setting that will make a difference for cancer patients and that is precisely why they are so deserving of this prestigious title.

"Clearly, an example for other institutions to follow."

Police hunt for four burglars

Police officers confronted five burglars at the scene of a crime on Hauxton Road, Cambridge.

Two officers were assaulted and four of the men managed to flee. A man in his 20s was arrested and is being held at Parkside police station.

Anyone with information should call police on 101. They are appealing for anyone with dashcam footage taken around 6pm on Friday, February 9.

Hospice hosts its first volunteer day

East Anglia's Children's Hospices welcomed five volunteers to its Milton hospice education centre for one of the first Help at Home training sessions in Cambridgeshire.

Each Help at Home matches



The volunteer day was held at the Milton hospice

caring individuals with families whose children have life-threatening conditions.

They provide support by helping with everyday tasks such as cooking, cleaning, ironing and gardening.

Plastic-free challenge sparks hunt for a 'naked' cucumber

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When Hilary Tunncliffe decided to go plastic-free for February, she had no idea of the difficulties she would have to overcome to achieve her goal.

Hilary, who lives in Cambridge and teaches at Parkside Federation, was inspired to try the challenge by two of her former school students in a bid to help with world's waste problems.

But she has discovered that trying to beat the plastic power is far from easy, and says it would be impossible to have even tried had she been a busy working mum with a large family.

One of the biggest bug bears has been the search to buy a 'naked' cucumber – a hunt that left her in possession of just two four-inch examples.

She told the *Cambridge Independent*: "I have been trying to find a naked cucumber for a while. I could only find two tiny cucumbers from an independent shop down Mill Road. I have even been to farm shops looking for naked cucumbers.

"I went to the Gogs and they wrapped my meat up in wax paper. I also found a lovely independent butcher who let me use my own containers.

"I am depriving myself of yoghurt because I cannot find it anywhere without it coming in plastic.

"It is very, very difficult. It is ridiculously difficult in that if I was working full-time, and I had a family to feed, I couldn't do it.

"When you start investigating it is difficult. I found some orange juice in a glass bottle but it was twice the price of any other orange juice. But I have not had orange juice since January 31. So, it has been a very interesting challenge."

Despite the problems in tracking down food and drink without plastic wrapping, she is determined that her February experiment will become a lifelong passion.

"It is going to have a lasting effect," she said. "The advantage has been buying all my vegetables loose – apart from my naked cucumber. I only buy what I need and that is saving me money. Instead of putting a bag of



Hilary Tunncliffe with her plastic-free groceries
Picture: Keith Heppel

carrots in the shopping trolley. I am spending 23p on enough carrots for my chicken casserole.

"But you can't get meat loose, very little fruit is loose, and try to get rice if you can. Pasta is impossible, dairy products in general are impossible. I have just bought some expensive cheese from the Gogs because they could wrap it in wax paper.

"It is remarkably tricky but it is changing my shopping habits. I dare not buy anything from Amazon because I don't know whether it will come in plastic.

"I have failed dismally on two counts, that's all. I have a gin club

delivery and that comes in plastic and I hadn't thought to cancel that.

"I also have two dogs and for the sake of hygiene, I am still sticking to biodegradable poop scooping bags."

She added: "You can buy toothpaste in glass jars, and I am making my own hummus. But that means I make my own pitta bread because the stuff from the shops comes wrapped in plastic.

"I will never buy a vegetable in plastic again and on the plus side, I bought four rashers of bacon in my own container whereas before I'd have to buy six and freeze the two I didn't want to eat or throw them away, so I have saved waste already."

Hilary's five tips

- Take shopping bags with you
- Think about reducing rather than recycling
- Buy loose vegetables
- Ask and lobby supermarkets for change, such as wax paper to wrap certain items
- Lobby supermarkets for a plastic-free aisle in shops

Free Friday

Friends of the Earth (FoE) is also on the plastic-free campaign trail. The group wants people to go 'plastic-free' each Friday from February 16, and share their #PlasticFreeFriday experiences on social media.

With up to 12million tonnes of plastic waste ending up in the sea each year, FoE says that reducing the amount of throwaway plastic is critical. Throughout the campaign, FoE will be sharing tips to help people on their way towards a plastic-free lifestyle.

Julian Kirby, waste campaigner at FoE, said: "Doing our bit to ditch plastic can seem daunting, especially given the amount of unnecessary packaging that is used for products such as fresh fruit and vegetables.

"Nonetheless there are a number of simple changes people can make to their daily lives to help reduce the plastic choking our oceans.

"From taking a moment to sit in a café and enjoy your coffee from a proper cup, to saying no to plastic straws, taking part in #PlasticFreeFriday is a great way for everyone to take their first step on the journey towards a plastic-free life."

■ friendsoftheearth.uk.

Food fight: University aiming to eliminate landfill waste

Cambridge Sustainable Food is teaming up with Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) with the aim of reducing food waste.

From Monday (February 19) the 'Food Waste: Sort it out' campaign will encourage students to reduce their food waste to keep compostable and biodegradable waste out of landfill. The university's catering team will also be involved, working in the kitchens to make sure no food waste goes to landfill.

A spokesman for Cambridge

Sustainable Food said: "Thirty-four per cent of our food waste comes off the plate. What happens after leftover food leaves our plate is just as important as reducing it in the first place.

"Working with the catering department and students at ARU, we want to raise the issue of management of food waste that cannot be eaten with the aim to throw zero waste to landfill.

"Organic waste (mostly from food) in landfill accounts for

about 20 per cent of all methane emissions and methane is a much warmer greenhouse gas than CO₂ when it comes to global warming. In Britain, keeping waste food out of landfill equates to taking one in four cars off the road.

"What's more, food that can be recycled is rapidly filling up valuable landfill space in our countryside.

"Landfill is a dead-end. Recycling waste food means it can be turned into compost, a valuable resource in growing

new food."

He added: "We are delighted that both the catering and environment teams as well as the Student Union at ARU are all supporting Cambridge Sustainable Food with this campaign."

The group also works as a partner in the Sainsbury's Waste Less Save More campaign and with the city council to reduce waste from food businesses.

■ cambridgesustainablefood.org.