

Essex Rural Partnership (ERP) News

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David Heath MP visits Essex to meet ERP

On Tuesday 8th January David Heath MP, Minister of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, met with representatives of the Essex Rural Partnership. The Minister is actively attempting to meet with the different groups which are members of Defra's Rural and Farming Network, which includes ERP. The ERP Steering Group was able to set the agenda and decide which areas of interest should be discussed – these topics included affordable housing, the National Planning Policy Framework, coastal issues and relationships with other local bodies. An open and interesting discussion took place and we are grateful to the Minister for taking the time to come to Essex to hear about what is important to us.

Economic

Harwich harbour secures loan for wind farm industry

A [harbour for high speed vessels](#) could be built on the Essex coast to support the offshore wind farm industry. A public loan of £2.2m from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) will go to AJ Woods Engineering to build the harbour in Harwich.

Prime Minister announces support for Start-up Loans

At an event in Preston on 3rd January, David Cameron MP voiced his support for [start-up loans](#) for new businesses, saying that 'new jobs predominantly will come from small- and medium-size and start-up businesses'.

Communities

Essex villagers take ownership of pub

Villagers in [Toppesfield](#) have taken ownership of their local pub The Green Man, ten years after taking over their village shop. The Green Man public house, which was owned by Admiral Taverns, has been purchased by Toppesfield Community Pub Ltd (TCP Ltd) after being on the market for a number of years.

Insufficient progress on Big Society

The Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations, Sir Stephen Bubb, has [written to Government](#) saying that insufficient action has occurred to take forward ideas about modernisation of services – which should in turn lead to charities being able to play a greater role in service delivery. Sir Stephen wrote an open letter, which applauds the aims of Big Society, but asks for more to be done to make it happen.

Environment

Government seeks views on Marine Conservation Zones

A [consultation](#) outlining proposals for the first set of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) to protect the UK's rich marine environment has been launched. The proposed sites will contribute to a network of marine protected areas and will complement the 8.4% of UK waters and 24% of English inshore waters already within protected areas. The consultation will run until 31 March 2013.

UK invests in Bioenergy innovation

The UK has pledged up to £10million to work with 7 other EU countries in a scheme which will develop innovative [bioenergy](#) projects. Bioenergy is one of the most versatile forms of low carbon and renewable energy and development of the industry also offers potential for job creation.

Other News

Wondering what to do with your old Christmas Tree?

Linton Zoo, just over the county border into Cambridgeshire, has appealed for people to drop off their old [Christmas Trees for recycling](#) – in the Lion enclosure! African Lions at the zoo have been given old trees without roots as toys and they love [playing](#) with them. No trees go to waste as those with roots are replanted and dried out trees can be used as biofuel.

Essex Rural Partnership wishes you a Happy New Year and we look forward to seeing you in 2013

Dates for your diary

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| 30th January 2013 | EERF meeting , NFU Office, Newmarket, 9:30am – 12:00pm (<i>EERF Members only</i>) |
| 6th February 2013 | Full ERP Meeting , Venue TBC, 10:00am (registration from 9:30am)
Steering Group meeting after lunch at 2:00pm (<i>Steering Group members only</i>) |
| 11th March 2013 | Community Action Group Meeting , RCCE Offices, 10:00am (coffee from 9.45am) |
| 10th June 2013 | Community Action Group Meeting , RCCE Offices, 10:00am (coffee from 9.45am) |
| 20th August 2013 | Community Action Group Meeting , RCCE Offices, 10:00am (coffee from 9.45am) |
| 4th November 2013 | Community Action Group Meeting , RCCE Offices, 10:00am (coffee from 9.45am) |

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