

NEW DEFRA MINISTER: MICHAEL GOVE MP



Following the General Election, Mr Gove has been appointed by the Prime Minister as Secretary of State for the Environment. Whilst the appointment was somewhat unexpected by many, the reaction has been generally positive.

Mr Gove has a history of supporting many policies which rural organisations, residents and business-owners welcome. He has shown interest in issues affecting Essex at the moment, such as fly-tipping and rural crime, as well as calling for more affordable rural homes and supporting the work of the (now defunct) Commission for Rural Communities. Mr Gove has also supported protection of migrant labour in the agricultural sector, promotion of British food produce, matching of EU farm payments post-Brexit and abolition of red tape.

Environmentalists may be less pleased about the appointment, as Mr Gove has also voted against measures to prevent climate change and shown a willingness to prioritise new rural homes over environmental conservation. We watch with interest to see how Mr Gove performs in his new role.

Click [here](#) to read more

RURAL CRIME UPDATE – PC Andy Long



The Rural Policing Team in Essex has now interviewed and selected its 3 extra officers and hopefully they will be in post shortly. In addition, Brenda Cross, our Watch Liaison Officer at HQ, is back after an extended absence and part of her task is to rejuvenate the Farmwatch scheme. This is a vital scheme which allows the public and police to work together in rural areas to combat crime.

- During this hot weather I want to remind everyone to lock their windows when away from their home and ground floor ones at night. The opportunist thief will notice an open window, knock on the door with the pretence of looking for someone to check if anyone is in. If no one answers, the open window allows easy access.
- When you get in your car in this heat you can feel how hot it can become. Please remember that leaving your dog in the car can be fatal in only a few minutes. Even if you leave your car in the shade, this can change quickly, as the sun or clouds move, your car soon moves out of the shade and rapidly heats up.
- Make sure you also look after yourself in this heat, drink lots of water and remember the advice Slip-Slop-Slap.... Slip on a shirt, Slop on the 30+ sunscreen, Slap on a hat!



If you wish to discuss this or any other Rural crime concerns please feel free to contact me on 101 ext 435003 or by email Andrew.long@essex.pnn.police.uk or on Twitter @PcAndyLong. If you want to report crime dial 101 or in an emergency 999 .

FRUIT AND VEG FARMERS FACING MIGRANT LABOUR SHORTAGES



UK summer fruit and salad growers are having difficulty recruiting pickers, with more than half saying they don't know if they will have enough migrant workers to harvest their crops. Many growers blame the weak pound which has reduced their workers' earning power, as well as uncertainty over Brexit, according to a BBC survey. About 80,000 seasonal workers a year pick and process British fruit and veg. Most of them are from the European Union, mainly Romania and Bulgaria. One in five growers says they already have fewer pickers than they

need. British Summer Fruits, the body which represents soft fruit growers, says labour shortages are now the worst seen since 2004.

Recruitment was getting harder even before the vote to leave the EU. But the industry believes Brexit is exacerbating the problem and if access to non-UK workers dries up, it could cripple home-grown berry production.

At Wilkin and Sons in Essex, the picking season for strawberries is in full swing. But this year, they have 20% fewer workers than they would like.

"We're managing, but we're not comfortable," said joint managing director Chris Newenham.

"Our seasonal workers are a critical resource for us to be able to save our crop each year. And the logical extension of not being able to harvest that crop is that we will have to bring our production in from overseas and that's a position none of us want to see. "

To read the full BBC article please [click here](#)

MOBILE NOT-SPOTS 'HOBBLE' RURAL AREAS



Rural areas across the UK are being 'hobbled' by poor mobile phone reception, says a survey. Full or partial mobile signal 'not-spots' affect 70% of firms, according to the study by the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC).

But the proportion of companies based in rural areas which report such issues (91%) is considerably higher than those in inner cities (56%). 'Not-spots' are areas of no mobile coverage by any operator, while 'partial not-spots' have some coverage but not from all networks.

The survey of 1,465 businesses also shows that 29% of firms have unreliable mobile internet connections, with the figure rising to 54% in rural areas. It found that a considerable proportion of UK businesses are not accessing the highest connection speed, with only 42% of businesses reporting a 4G connection. Inner city firms (54%) are more likely to have 4G than those based in rural areas (25%) Some 6% of companies said they still typically obtain a 2G connection and 25% a 3G connection. Big businesses are more likely to report 4G connections (57% of businesses with more than 500 employees) than their smaller counterparts (41% with 1-4 employees) BCC director general Adam Marshall said: "All across the country businesspeople complain about patchy mobile coverage and unreliable internet connections in their local areas.

"Time and again, I hear from frustrated businesspeople who can't use their mobiles or access the internet when they need to."

Dr Marshall said these were basic requirements for companies to work on the move, trade online, and connect with customers and suppliers "Rural businesses are particularly affected by poor mobile coverage and connectivity, but our research shows that 'not-spots' are prevalent across the UK.

For full article please [click here](#)

COUNCIL MARKS CARERS' WEEK BY PILOTING PERSONALISED NEW SUPPORT SERVICE FOR YOUNG CARERS



Thousands of young carers in Essex could soon benefit from a new tailored support service that aims to ensure they enjoy the same opportunities as their peers. There are thought to be about 146,000 carers in Essex, with an estimated 10,000 of those under 18 and some as young as just six. Those numbers are expected to continue to grow in the years to come and Essex County Council is determined to ensure the young people have access to the help and support needed to prevent them from being disadvantaged by their caring responsibilities.

To coincide with the start of Carers' Week, the council today officially launches a new key worker pilot project that will see young carers benefit from a more comprehensive and joined-up package of support.

The new model comes following feedback from young carers themselves and is being trialed in Braintree, where there were concerns about what support would be available in the area following the closure of a support group provided by Crossroads Care.

Key workers will work closely with the young people and their families and, where requested, will help with things such as access to mental health services, liaising with schools to improve attendance and attainment, finding social and leisure opportunities, signposting to other support services and intervening at times of crisis.

To read full article please [click here](#)

VOTE FOR RURAL GRANTS OF UP TO £5,000



Rural energy provider Calor is asking people to help decide which community groups receive funding for projects to improve local life. Depending on the size of the project, three levels of funding available are available under Calor's Rural Community Fund. Two grants of £5,000 are available and two are available of £2,500. A further five £1,000 grants are also up for grabs. Applications are now closed – but people are now being asked to vote for approved projects. Projects with the most votes will become finalists to be reviewed by a panel of judges who will decide which entries are awarded the funding. People have 10 votes, which can be used at any time during the voting phase of the competition. Votes can be spread between projects or all used to support one project.

Anyone who lives in the UK and registers on the Calor Rural Community Fund website can vote for projects during the voting phase of the awards. People can choose a project local to your area, or one further afield that they feel is most worthy.

Voters must register on the Calor Rural Community Fund website and cast their vote **before 26 June 2017**.

Local Community Groups include:

- *Peldon & Wigborough Community Hall Heating – Essex*
- *Bicknacre Memorial Village Hall replacement of ceiling, lighting and redecoration - Essex*
- *Bromley Cross Pub Community Garden - Essex*
- *Bowls Green toilet and path refurbishment - Essex*
- *Canvey Bay Watch Beach Access Path - Essex*
- *Herts and Essex Community Farm - Essex*
- *Replacement of Demountable Staging for Cold Norton Village Hall – Essex*

For further information and to register to vote, please [click here](#)

GET INVOLVED: BEACH CLEANING EVENTS TO JOIN



Help keep our coast tidy by doing a beach clean.

Beach litter is currently at the highest level since records began. There are almost 2,500 pieces of litter for every kilometre on a beach, and it has increased 140% since 1994. The Great British Beach Clean 2016 report showed that although the number of plastic bags found on beaches had declined, the number of balloon related litter was up over 50%. The report also found that there was a seven-fold increase of wet wipes over the last decade, and another rise in the amount of plastic bottles found on beaches. Other commonly found litter included cigarette stubs, packets, lids, string and cotton bud sticks. It is commonly known that litter on beaches can be extremely hazardous to wildlife.

To learn more about the Great British Beach Clean please [click here](#)

To find a beach cleaning event near you please [click here](#)

NFU REACTION TO GENERAL ELECTION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR BRITISH FARMING?



The NFU are busy working to make sure the importance of British food and farming to you and to the nation is recognised and understood by the new government.

NFU President Meurig Raymond has written to the new Defra Secretary of State Michael Gove to welcome him to the post and propose a meeting at the earliest opportunity.

He said: "British farms grow the raw ingredients for the UK food and drink manufacturing sector, the UK's largest manufacturing sector, worth £109 billion and providing 3.8 million jobs. Farming is of enormous value to the economy - for every £1 invested, farming delivers around £7 back to this country. British farmers are proud to provide over 60% of the nation's food and manage 70% of UK landscape. We do this all while focusing on producing safe, nutritious and high-quality food for people at home and abroad. "And we can and want to deliver more. We are looking to Defra; to work with us and our members, to champion farming within the Government and to work closely with the devolved powers across the UK. Our shared aim is to ensure a productive, progressive and profitable future for British farmers and assurance to British consumers."

To read the full article please [click here](#)

EAT BRITISH FOOD. LOVE YOUR COUNTRYSIDE. TELL YOUR FRIENDS.

30,000 KM OF HEDGEROWS HAVE BEEN PLANTED AND CARED FOR BY FARMERS PROVIDING FOOD AND SHELTER FOR WILDLIFE	UK FOOD AND FARMING IS WORTH £109 BN AND EMPLOYS 3.8 MILLION PEOPLE	FARMERS HAVE PLANTED 10,000 FOOTBALL PITCHES WORTH OF FLOWER HABITAT CREATING HOMES FOR BEES
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Check out our guides to buying British food at www.countrysideonline.co.uk

Countryside | Follow us on social media | Look for the Red Tractor logo for a sign of quality food you can trust.



FULL ERP FUTURE MEETING DATES 2017

Date: Monday 25th September 2017

Time: 2pm – 5pm

Location: TBC

This newsletter is produced and sent by Rural Community Council of Essex on behalf of the Essex Rural Partnership. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter in future please e-mail info@essexruralpartnership.org.uk with 'unsubscribe' as the email subject.

Compiled and edited by Lizzie Rose, Rural Community Council of Essex. Rural Community Council of Essex Registered Charity No. 1097009. Company registered in England and Wales No. 4609624