



Economic

July 2013 farming and food brief

This [monthly paper](#) produced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) brings together the latest key information relating to agriculture and the wider economy. In particular it highlights the results of recently published economic and statistical evidence and research.

Help to Buy mortgage guarantee scheme details set out by Chancellor

Details have been issued to lenders of the government's Help to Buy mortgage guarantee scheme which will support an increase in high loan-to-value mortgages for people who can't afford large deposits, and will boost house building from January 2014. For the full story please click [here](#).

Post office competition to suggest projects that benefit their communities

A competition launched in July asks the public to suggest projects their local post office could start up to benefit the community, including mentoring for business start-ups, digital access and training and display space for local producers. Successful schemes must be innovative and support the local community or small businesses in the area. Judging takes place in the autumn. Information on the [competition](#) and a flyer for people to submit ideas to their local post office are now available on the Post Office website. The deadline for applications is Friday 18th October 2013.

Communities

Rural Communities report highlights challenges

[A new Commons Committee report](#) released on July 16th says people living in the countryside must be given the support they need to help themselves. The House of Commons Environment Food and Rural Affairs Committee said more needed to be done if Defra was to achieve its target of 'fair, practical and affordable outcomes for rural residents, businesses and communities'. The report highlighted the challenges faced by rural dwellers from unequal funding in healthcare and lack of broadband and mobile coverage, to cuts in public transport and a shortage of affordable housing.

New National Rural Proofing Guidelines available

On 16th July, the Rural Communities Policy Unit (RCPU) published new National Rural Proofing Guidelines. These sit alongside existing resources already available including local level resource materials and the Rural Proofing for Health Toolkit. These guidelines are designed to assist national policy makers with their decision taking and to address the needs and interests of rural communities and businesses in England. The guidance presents clear principles of rural proofing in a straightforward manner, and emphasises practical examples of good practice. You can download the full rural proofing guidelines [here](#). In May this year the RCPU also produced a [pamphlet to act as a short handy guide to rural proofing](#). For more information email the RCPU at rural.communities@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Commons Select Committee call for evidence: Passenger transport in isolated communities

The Committee will be looking at how best to meet the needs of passengers in isolated communities, including rural areas, island communities, and suburban or urban areas with poor transport connections. They are particularly interested in the provision of bus and rail services, as well as the role of Community Transport services. The Committee intends to hear oral evidence in the autumn. Ahead of this, it would like to receive written evidence. This inquiry was outlined in the Committee's recent report setting out its future work Programme for 2013/14. The deadline is Monday 2nd September 2013. To make a response follow the [link](#)

Environment

Funding opportunities for generating energy in your community – Essex County Council

Co-reducing the fuel bills and CO₂ emissions for our communities is a priority for Essex County Council (ECC). Community energy projects vary in scale and cost from providing electricity for a single building - a village hall or school perhaps - through to providing power and heating for a village or small town. There are a variety of ways projects can be funded and set up. The attached leaflet provides a range of funding opportunities and case studies to illustrate how renewable energy projects can be brought into being. Now is a good time to start your community thinking about alternatives to the traditional, inefficient and expensive ways of heating and powering our homes, businesses and community buildings. Please give ECC the chance to help with your project by filling in this [short survey](#). If you have any queries or want further information in developing a community energy project, [contact Luciana Almeida](#), Low Carbon Policy Officer, to take things further, or to view an information sheet from ECC renewable energy department on this matter [click here](#).

'Challenges and Choices' - an Environment Agency consultation

'Challenges and Choices' is a consultation about the biggest issues that affect the water environment in our region. Water is essential to people's enjoyment of life and wellbeing; it allows the natural environment to flourish, and businesses, agriculture and the economy to grow and prosper. The Anglian River Basin District is home to approximately 7.1 million people, including many important animals and plants. Some key challenges the water environment faces is a growing population, climate change and Man's interventions both now and in the past. The Environment Agency wants to work with you to overcome these challenges and make the

right choices to protect water for the future. This consultation is an important step in managing the water environment in England and will help them plan how to improve water quality between now and 2021. They want you to help develop plans to improve water quality in Anglian Region by telling them what you think. The consultation runs from June to 22nd December 2013. To take part [click here](#).

Other News

New Facebook App to help in the fight against *Chalara fraxinea*

In a new attempt to gain public assistance in helping with research into the disease, a game application has been launched on the social networking site, Facebook. The game, known as '[Fraxinus](#)', is designed to help scientists to better understand the genetic make-up of both ash trees and the *Chalara fraxinea* fungus. Forestry Commission researchers believe that some trees are more resistant to the disease and that by identifying the differences in genetics it may be possible to grow resistant forests.

Dates for your diary

9th September 2013	Economic Action Group site visit	10:00 am	(details on request)
3rd October 2013	Environmental Action Group Meeting	RCCE Offices 10.00 am	(Coffee from 9.45 am)
18th October 2013	Full ERP meeting	tba	(morning)
	ERP Steering Group meeting	tba	(afternoon)
4th November 2013	Community Action Group Meeting	RCCE Offices 10.00 am	(Coffee from 9.45 am)

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 email info@essexruralpartnership.org.uk with 'unsubscribe' as the email subject.

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