



## ESSEX RURAL PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The coronavirus crisis has changed everyone's lives in an instant. It is presenting particular challenges to many Essex Rural Partnership (ERP) members at the moment, as they strive to provide support and reassurance to communities, businesses and people in need in rural Essex. The need for social distancing has already led to the cancellation of several events, organised by ERP members, that are an important part of the rural calendar, including the very popular Essex Schools Food & Farming Day in June and the Essex Village of the Year Competition.

This bulletin contains plenty of news related to coronavirus, including information on the new Essex Coronavirus Response and Recovery Programme, just set up by Essex Community Foundation.

Before the onset of coronavirus, ERP was focussing its attention on the refresh of the Essex Rural Strategy. This will have to be delayed, with the full Partnership meeting scheduled for later this month cancelled, but the online public consultation survey is still live – as featured in this issue. This may not seem a priority right now, but when we are able to pick up on the refresh of the Strategy, it will be essential for us to understand the issues that matter to people who live, work, run businesses or visit rural Essex.

Best wishes and stay safe,

Nick Shuttleworth,  
Executive Director, Rural Community Council of Essex

## ESSEX RURAL STRATEGY 2020-2024 CONSULTATION NOW OPEN UNTIL 30/04/20

### Online Public Consultation – LIVE

The public consultation survey is live and will be open for responses until **Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020**.

To access it please [click here](#)

The survey contains questions on a broad range of issues relevant to life in rural Essex today, as well as a specific section for businesses. We will be promoting it through the various Essex Rural Partnership and RCCE publicity outlets but **in order to maximise the response it would be really helpful if you could publicise it as fully as possible to your colleagues, members, networks, partners etc. throughout the period when it is live.**

**Have Your Say on the Future of Rural Essex**  
Help shape the refreshed Essex Rural Strategy

What matters to you the people who live and work in our rural communities?  
**Public Consultation is NOW open until 30/04/20**  
<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/rci/essex-rural-strategy-2020-consultation/>

The refreshed Essex Rural Strategy will:

- Set out a shared vision for the future of rural Essex
- Highlight priorities for action over the next four years
- Represent the needs of rural Essex to all levels of Government
- Encourage greater collaboration between organisations working in rural Essex
- Provide an evidence base for new initiatives for funding bids

The Strategy is being prepared by the Essex Rural Partnership which brings together a wide range of organisations to co-ordinate action on the major challenges facing the county's rural areas.

RCCE

## EMERGENCY GRANTS



The purpose of the **Essex Coronavirus Response and Recovery Programme** is to get help quickly to voluntary and community organisations that are in crisis as a result of the pandemic and need emergency funding to keep their vital services running.

Initially grants of up to £15,000 will be available. Priority will be given to those delivering vital services to older and vulnerable people, organisations helping to relieve pressure on public services and those co-ordinating a local community response.

### How to apply?

To help ECF understand your funding needs, please [click here](#) to access more information and a short form. Please ensure you have read all the information provided before completing the form.

ECF are asking people to complete the form and **NOT** call the office.

## RCCE NEWS & UPDATE



### CANCELLATION OF THE 2020 ESSEX VILLAGE OF THE YEAR AND BEST KEPT CHURCHYARD COMPETITIONS

RCCE's competitions have been a feature of the summer in Essex for 65 years. Sadly this will not be able to continue this year. The rapid escalation of the coronavirus crisis and the latest Government requirements for avoiding all non-essential social contact and travel mean that it will be impossible to run our competitions in the normal way over the coming months. After careful consideration, we feel the responsible course of action is to cancel them entirely for this year and plan for a full restart in 2021.

In announcing this, we would like to acknowledge our sponsors, Essex & Suffolk Water, Inkpen Downie Architecture & Design and Lodge & Sons (Builders) Ltd, who had kindly agreed to support this year's competitions.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE – OIL BUYING SCHEME INFINITY OIL



As COVID 19 continues to disrupt the UK the demand for heating oil, liquid fuel and our services has increased. This increase is causing longer than normal delivery times, so your patience is appreciated. We are open but with reduced staffing in our main office. We therefore have a reduced capacity to receive and answer all phone calls.

**Due to demand we are unable to offer any updates to existing order delivery dates.**

### To order:

The fastest method to order fuel is to use our website [www.af-affinity.co.uk](http://www.af-affinity.co.uk), clicking on the appropriate section.

Or

**Email** us with your order adding your name, post code, phone number and details.

For queries:

If you are a syndicate member or fuel customer, email [enquiries@af-affinity.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@af-affinity.co.uk), adding your name, post code, phone number and details.

If you are a business, email [business@af-affinity.co.uk](mailto:business@af-affinity.co.uk), adding your name, post code, phone number and details. For customers unable to email please call the office between 10.00am & 4.00pm. (Monday-Friday).

Please only send one message and we will respond as soon as we can.

Thank you, The AF Affinity Team

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING SUPPORT PROGRAMME 2020/2021

[Applications](#) for grants and technical support will be open from 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020. If your neighbourhood plan group needs support in making an application, please contact Michelle Gardiner Community Engagement

Email: [michelle.gardiner@essexrcc.org.uk](mailto:michelle.gardiner@essexrcc.org.uk)

## LOAN SHARKS



The [England Illegal Money Lending Team \(IMLT\)](#) recognises that this period may be one of increased financial pressure for many people. The Team is fully committed to ensuring that illegal money lenders (loan sharks) do not take advantage and profit from other people's hardship.

The Stop Loan Sharks helpline service (0300 555 2222) remains open and fully operational during the COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage not only victims but friends, family members and the wider community to come

forward if they suspect someone is suffering at the hands of loan sharks.

## ESSEX LIBRARIES – ONLINE SUPPORT



Following careful consideration and Government guidance on Coronavirus, all Essex libraries and mobile libraries are closed until further notice. Essex Libraries apologise for any inconvenience this may cause and will let you know as soon as normal service resumes. All loans will be extended, overdue charges will be automatically waived and reservations suspended. BUT!!!!!!

Essex Libraries would like to remind customers of their [comprehensive eLibrary](#) with thousands of eBooks, eAudiobooks, eComics, eMagazines and eNewspapers available online 24/7 through Borrowbox, RBdigital and PressReader. They will be purchasing more titles in this time to increase this service provision. They are also working with their suppliers to enable new customers joining online to be able to access these services quickly and without needing to collect a library card from a library.

So, if you are unexpectedly stuck at home download the apps on your own device and sign in with your library card number and start reading today!



## RHS GROW COOK EAT COURSE UPDATE



I thought I would take this opportunity to display the fruits of my labour! Well the progress so far since attending the fantastic RHS GROW COOK EAT course. I am pleased to announce my coriander seedlings have appeared along with a mystery line of seedlings which I thought at the time would be fun to guess what they are as they grow! Not sure that was such a good move now....The mint and chives are clippings and guided by Alison Findlay RHS Community Outreach Advisor, (as seen below) they were both re-potted, I am happy to report both are doing fine. For windowsill indoor herbs I intend to recycle clean plastic milk bottles and deep food trays for when I need to separate the seedlings not forgetting my paper potter which I will use for plug plants in a large planter when the weather improves i.e. no more frosts! As you can see from the photographs I created a very simple greenhouse using a plastic food bag and kept the seeds on a windowsill that receives warmth and light. The seeds only needed watering sporadically otherwise the greenhouse effect provides enough moisture overall.



If you have some seeds and peat free compost then why not have a go I would love to see your results and even better include them in another bulletin! For more information please visit the experts at the RHS [click here](#)

## Rural Response Emergency Grants Programme



The Prince's Countryside Fund is inviting applications for emergency funding from farming and rural community support groups, who are providing assistance which counters the effects of isolation during the Coronavirus pandemic. The Fund will assist projects that support farm businesses or other rural business and rural communities to cope with the effects of Coronavirus. This may include, but is not limited to, volunteer and fuel costs

for grocery and prescription delivery from rural community shops, pubs, and hubs; costs associated with emergency support by farm and agricultural support groups; or rural foodbanks and food delivery services. [Click here](#) for more information.

## ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL URGENT APPEAL FOR PERSONAL EQUIPMENT



A request from all relevant small and large businesses, if you are able to provide items such as MASKS, DISPOSABLE GLOVES, APRONS, EYE GOGGLES, OVERSHOES & SANITISING GEL then please email: [PPESupplies@essex.gov.uk](mailto:PPESupplies@essex.gov.uk) State the supplies details, quantity, Postcode and contact number.

This equipment will be diverted to provide protection to our front line care staff who are looking after and delivering care to our most vulnerable residents within #Essex in the coming days and week.

A member of the team will be in touch with you once you email.

## HELP FROM DAVE THE DOG TO EXPLAIN CORONA VIRUS TO CHILDREN



Dave the Dog is worried about coronavirus' is a story which provides truthful information in a reassuring and child-friendly manner. It can be downloaded for free [Please click here](#)

## WASTE COLLECTIONS



## EXERCISE ISN'T JUST ABOUT LEVELS OF FITNESS. EXERCISE ALSO AFFECTS YOUR BRAIN.

We all need to look after our mental health, particularly in our current situation of social distancing or self isolation. Healthy life Essex looks at the huge benefits exercise has on our mental health and immune system! [Click here](#) to find out more



## THANK YOU TO ALL OUR NHS COMMUNITY



## A NOTE FROM REVEREND JANET NICHOLLS - REFLECTION PRAYERS



I am writing a weekly reflection with prayers. If you or anyone you know, would like to receive this, please email me.

[jnicholls@chelmsford.anglican.org](mailto:jnicholls@chelmsford.anglican.org)

I will only retain personal email addresses for the duration of the crisis. The reflection should arrive in your inbox every Sunday morning to offer an alternative to church worship!

Keep safe and well. God bless

Janet

## MEETING DATES

### Essex Rural Partnership Future Meeting Dates:

# CANCELLED

**Date:** Tuesday 28th April 2020

**Venue:** Essex Young Farmers Conference Centre, Whitbreads Farm Lane, Chatham Green, Chelmsford CM3 3LQ

### Launch of the Refreshed Essex Rural Strategy 2020-24 - **TBC**

**Date:** Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**Time:** TBC (PM)

**Venue:** Chelmsford City Racecourse, Great Leighs, Essex

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](mailto:info@essexruralpartnership.org.uk) with 'unsubscribe' as the email subject.

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