

## WOULD YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO IF YOU SAW HARE COURSERS?



Gangs of men with lurcher dogs and 4x4 vehicles appear on the fields around our village after harvest, when the land is easy to move across. In the daytime you may see these coursers walking the fields, ready for a hare to bolt. Their cars will be close for a quick getaway or parked up near our homes and footpaths. When a hare makes a move to escape they release a lurcher to pursue it. Someone from the group will film the chase, and live-stream footage to gamblers who have bet money on the result. Which dog will kill the most hares? Prized dogs are bought and sold on the dark web for up to £20,000.

Illegal but common in our area, hare coursing is punishable by imprisonment and fines of up to £5,000. The crime is hard to prevent because of the type of people who do it; often arriving in convoy with 'minders' to the front and rear, in cars with false number plates, uninsured and untaxed. Individuals have tried to confront coursers and been abused; farmers received death threats and have seen their barns and cars burnt down.

These violent groups have known links to illegal gambling, firearms and drugs. Their crimes in our area involve poaching and trespassing, road traffic offences, damage to crops, and property. They prey where local farmers feel isolated and inflict huge suffering on hare and deer populations. It's best to avoid engaging with coursers.

### WHAT SHOULD YOU DO if you witness this kind of activity?

PC Matt Harkness, from the Rural Engagement Team, advises ***"If you see coursing in progress, dogs chasing hares, or people breaking into land to course, then please call 999 immediately"***. Give the exact location, with descriptions and numbers of vehicles, people and dogs. It is also useful to mention you are aware of police **Operation Galileo**.

**The most helpful location code comes from smart phone app What3Words. Download the app in advance and use it to generate the unique code for your precise location.** Pinpointing a remote field is a struggle without that vital detail! If the report is **second hand, or suspected, or a few hours old then, please still report online at [www.essex.police.uk](http://www.essex.police.uk) or by calling 101 or anonymously to CrimeStoppers on 0800 555 111.**

Small pieces of information build an intelligence picture of what's happening, who is involved and where the police are needed most. Left unreported then Essex Police can't get a clear idea of crime levels around our village or police it effectively.

PC Harkness said *"We're working closely with the local rural and farming communities as well as partner agencies to combat this issue. The information we receive really has helped the team. I ask you to **please continue to assist us and combat this illegal activity.**"*

## HOW SMART DEVICES ARE EXPLOITED FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE



BBC News reports the number of domestic abuse cases has increased dramatically since the UK's Covid lockdown - and tech has played a role. Smart speakers, tracking apps and key-logging software are among products that have made it easier for perpetrators to maintain control of victims and continue abuse. Domestic-violence charity Refuge says more than 70% of those it provides support to have reported tech-related abuse within a relationship.

The following two shared short stories are depicted by two victims who remain anonymous for their own safety.

"When he left the house, that's when I started to see that he was using the Ring doorbell camera to track me," says Kate, who is using a pseudonym. She is referring to Amazon's internet-connected security device. It triggers alerts when it detects motion in front of a home and allows live footage or recordings to be watched from afar.

"I could take the battery out of it if I wanted to, but I didn't feel like I could because he would say to me, 'You're compromising our children's safety'.

"I was worried that he would go to the police and try and suggest that I'm a bad mother."

Another explained how her partner used Amazon's virtual assistant to monitor her via a function that lets users remotely connect to enabled smart speakers and listen/speak via an intercom-like facility.

"He would set up all the accounts," says Sue, who is also using an alias.

"He would set up family-sharing on things. There were various Alexa devices all over the property.

"He could drop in from outside or he could go to someone's house and ring the Alexa when we were at home."

Abuse experienced by men also increased during the pandemic. The Respect Men's Advice Line reports receiving 5,000 more calls during the start of the UK lockdown than in the same period the year before. But women are still more likely to experience violence and harassment. Three-quarters of domestic abuse victims recorded by the police last year were female, according to the Office for National Statistics' latest figures.

To continue reading this report please [click here](#).

For more information and help regarding Domestic Abuse please [click here](#).

Source: BBC News - By Shiroma Silva & Talia Franco

## VISIT ESSEX FILM LAUNCHED

visit essex



THIS IS ESSEX  
EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE  
visit essex.com



Visit Essex has launched a new short film, 'This is Essex' in which the good people of our county stepped forward to showcase the *real* Essex and take on (and dispel) some long-standing stereotypes.

In the film, comedian Ellie Taylor takes a wry look at the Essex accent from the well-known 'TOWIE' nightclub, Sugar Hut and, with tongue firmly planted in cheek, eighth generation Mersea oysterman, Tom Haward, proves (whilst dressed head to toe in waterproofs) that going 'out out' doesn't mean getting out the false eyelashes and fake tan! Female rally champion, Nabila Tejpar shows us all that, surprise surprise, the county is not full of 'boy racers' after all.

The film also stars Essex treasures such as Michelin starred chefs, the Galvin Brothers, Super Scientist Dr Miles Adcock, Paralympian Anne Wafula-Strike and much-loved pantomime dame, Antony Stuart-Hicks.

Check out the film on the Visit Essex [website](#) and social media channels. Follow us over the next few weeks to find out more about some of the Extraordinary Essex folk who took part in the film or [click here](#).

## VOLUNTEER AS A MAGISTRATE



HM Lord-Lieutenant of Essex

Play a vital role in the justice system and give back to your community.

A message from HM Lord-Lieutenant of Essex Mrs Jennifer Tolhurst:

"Have you ever thought of becoming a magistrate? If you are between 18 and 65 you could apply to train for this vital role in the justice system and give back to your community. Magistrates are unpaid volunteers who use their everyday skills to deal with real social issues and make life-changing decisions. Many employers recognise the benefit of allowing employees the time off to do this valuable work partly because of the skills learned which impact favourably in the workplace".

For further information please [click here](#).

## NATURAL ENGLAND UNVEILS PLANS TO COMPLETE COAST PATH IN ESSEX



Proposals to open up a 50 mile stretch of coast between Salcott and Jaywick have been unveiled by Natural England. Once established this final stretch of the path will complete a 295 mile (474 kilometres) coastal route along the Essex coast. Which would start at the landing jetty for Tilbury Ferry and finish on the Essex/Suffolk border near Manningtree.

An 8 Week public consultation was launched on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020 for everyone to have their say on the England Coast Path Route.

The route would become part of the England Coast Path which is a 2,700 mile long distance walking route. It is also England's newest National Trail which is currently being developed around the entire English coast by Natural England.

The coastline between Salcott and Jaywick follows the estuaries of the River Colne and part of the Blackwater. This path would be the first continuous route around these estuaries.

To have your say on the England Coast Path please [click here](#).

## EXTENT OF RURAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFITS FROM VILLAGE AND COMMUNITY HALLS REVEALED



Village and community halls in England offer extensive economic and social benefits to rural communities, a report from ACRE has revealed. Just before lockdown 2,109 halls took part in the National Village Halls Survey 2020 which provides a detailed snapshot of the operations and management of community buildings across the country.

The survey found that village halls make a significant contribution to the economy. At least 10,000 individuals earn a living connected to the use of these community buildings, from Pilates and Yoga teachers to people running dog training classes. A further 4,500 people are employed as cleaners, caretakers and managers.

Nearly half of all halls serve as a venue for private parties, and a quarter host weddings; events which provide commercial opportunities for local businesses. One in ten are also home to community businesses; enterprises which are owned and run by residents for local community benefit, such as shops, cafes, and post offices.

Additionally, 70% of respondents had undertaken improvement work, extensions, or new halls in the last five years, contributing well over £46 million to the UK economy. Local builders were often used. Village halls also offer extensive social and cultural benefits, ACRE's research found.

Those living in rural areas are at heightened risk of social isolation, which can lead to poor health, loss of independence and lower quality of life, according to the Local Government Association. This makes the work of village halls particularly important.

To read the full article, please [click here](#) and to read the report [click here](#).

## SAFER, GREENER, HEALTHIER ESSEX



Providing enabling transport and infrastructure which encourage more people to walk and cycle is critical to recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. If more people were to walk and cycle for short trips in our towns, it would relieve congestion, reduce air pollution and increase health and wellbeing. The schemes aim to provide bigger, safer spaces in key locations for city centre shoppers, residents, workers and visitors to social distance.

Full details are found on the [Essex County Council website](#) which includes a number of initiatives for each Borough and District. It also provides an insight into current thinking regarding highways policy and schemes that aim to encourage use of sustainable transport methods and increase the ability to socially distance. In addition, there is guidance for shops within one of the [policy documents](#).

For enquiries and assistance please use the following email: [SGH.Routes@essex.gov.uk](mailto:SGH.Routes@essex.gov.uk)

## ESSEX LIBRARY SERVICES DURING LOCKDOWN



Following the [latest Government guidance](#) most Essex libraries are now temporarily closed to the public. Sixteen sites\* remain open to offer public computer access by appointment only.

You can still [reserve items](#) and collect these from your chosen library with our click and collect service.

Please note that all libraries now close by 5pm. Please check individual [library opening hours](#) for details.

For full details please [click here](#).

## FUTURE MEETING DATES:

**Essex Rural Partnership Meeting Dates for 2021: TBC**

**IS HARE COURSING HAPPENING IN YOUR AREA?**

**HARE COURSING IS ILLEGAL**

Please call 999 if you are witnessing criminal activity right now

If you have any information about hare coursing in your area, please let us know by:

- Reporting online ([www.essex.police.uk/doitonline](http://www.essex.police.uk/doitonline))
- Calling 101
- To remain anonymous call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111

 **ESSEX POLICE**  
[www.essex.police.uk](http://www.essex.police.uk)

**#OperationGalileo** 

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