

## Essex Rural Partnership (ERP) News

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### The Next Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) : Ensuring Success

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May 4.00pm – 7.00pm Cambridge Golf and Conference Centre, Huntingdon (A14)**

This event is aimed at those in private, public and voluntary sectors with an interest in rural and farming issues, and is one of several that will take place across the country between March and June 2013. As well as hearing from Defra about what we might expect from the next RDPE, there will be opportunity to highlight priorities and concerns, and to discuss the potential benefits offered by this programme. Refreshments will be provided and attendance is free, but places are limited and this is a regional event – attendance must be confirmed by booking; please contact [suzanne.harris@essexrcc.org.uk](mailto:suzanne.harris@essexrcc.org.uk) with your details to request a place.

### RDPE and LEADER

On Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April, a group of Essex Rural Partnership members came together to discuss the new round of RDPE and LEADER funding. A new [page](#) has been created on the [ERP website](#), where you will find information added as it becomes available.

### South East LEP (SELEP)

The Rural Workstream of the SELEP met on 16<sup>th</sup> April, under a new Chair, Nick Sandford. Essex Rural Partnership was pleased to be invited to join this meeting as a way of strengthening links between ERP and the SELEP. The SELEP is currently working on production of a Local (South East) Growth Strategy and an EU Investment Prospectus.

## Economic

### Help for Start-Up Businesses Hiring Staff

An online [toolkit](#) was re-launched on 15 April by Employment Relations Minister Jo Swinson. The toolkit provides employers with help when taking on their first employee. The first version of the toolkit received approx 4,000 hits per month, but since moving to a gov.uk site the toolkit is now receiving approx 12,000 hits per month.

### South East LEP Mobile Telephony Questionnaire

The South East LEP is responding to concerns raised by businesses about areas of poor or no mobile phone coverage, known as cold spots (where people have been unable to make or receive calls). The SELEP is carrying out a [survey](#) of businesses across its area to develop a clear picture of the scale and economic impact of poor or no mobile phone coverage. The SELEP hopes to use this evidence to urge mobile phone operators to take action. The survey is open until **10<sup>th</sup> May 2013**.

## Communities

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### Growth and Infrastructure Bill

The [Bill](#) was given Royal Assent on 25 April 2013. It aims to reduce bureaucratic barriers which can prevent businesses creating growth and jobs, by introducing practical measures and reducing red tape.

### Volunteers Week : 1-7 June

[Volunteers Week](#) is an annual event to celebrate the work of volunteers across the UK. The idea is to say 'thank you' to those who give of their time and to recognize the contribution to various organisations.

## Environment

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### A common approach to reducing the harm caused by criminal use of firearms in the EU

The European Commission has launched a consultation with stakeholders and citizens of the EU, about action which may be necessary at EU level to reduce the threat of firearms to people living in the EU. Responses to [this questionnaire](#) has 25 questions and will inform a communication which the Commission is preparing for adoption later this year, as well as possible future legislative and other initiatives.

### Hunt is on for Chalara-resistant ash trees

Environment Secretary, Owen Paterson, has announced that Defra is throwing its resources into managing and slowing the spread of Chalara. The latest [Chalara Management Plan](#) includes the planting of a million young ash trees over 25 sites (mainly in East Anglia) and identifying trees which have a natural resistance to the disease to aid future planting. The Plan identifies Essex as being at 'medium' risk of infection by 2017.

## Other News

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### Defra takes up new home on the web

Defra has been the latest Government Department to transfer its on-line information to [www.GOV.UK](http://www.GOV.UK). All departments are expected to undergo this move by the end of June. The intention is to make it easier to find information, enabling web visitors to search by subject and find cross-departmental information all in one place.

## Dates for your diary

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| 16 <sup>th</sup> May 2013    | <b>RDPE: Ensuring Success</b> , Cambridge Golf and Conference Centre, Huntingdon<br>(Regional event, in partnership with Defra) <b>Attendance <u>must</u> be confirmed by booking</b> |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2013   | <b>Community Action Group Meeting</b> , RCCE Offices, 10:00am (coffee from 9.45am)  |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> August 2013 | <b>Community Action Group Meeting</b> , RCCE Offices, 10:00am (coffee from 9.45am)  |

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