

ERP News

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ERP chosen as member of Rural and Farming Network

The [Essex Rural Partnership](#) has been chosen by Defra as one of only 14 Rural and Farming Network members. The Network will bring together people from rural communities, rural businesses and the food and farming industries from different parts of the country, creating new opportunities for better and more targeted policy.

Joint ERP & EERF meeting focuses on Localism

The Essex Rural Partnership and the East of England Rural Forum teamed up for a meeting centered around Localism on 18th January at Hylands House, Chelmsford. The presentations are available to download [here](#). The DVD 'Your Community, You Decide', shown as part of the presentation by Essex Association of Local Councils and Norfolk Association of Local Councils, is available to [buy](#).

Economic

British food exports will drive economy

A Government-backed campaign to boost exports of British food and drink to high-growth markets such as China will help drive economic growth. The [Farming, Food and Drinks Exports Action Plan](#) sets out how Government and industry will work together to open up and take advantage of key markets.

Rural tourism has more potential

The Government has announced a £25 million initiative to promote [rural tourism](#) and support rural businesses. The money includes establishing a new £10 million fund for the rural development programme in England.

Social enterprises play key role in rural England

[Defra](#) have published a review of the importance of social enterprise to the rural economy, communities and the environment. The report will be used to inform policy and initiate practical support solutions in rural areas.

Revised mobile broadband plans target rural not-spots

Ofcom has increased the proportion of UK population it wants covered for next generation superfast 4G [broadband](#) from 95% to 98%. This means that the successful bidder will have to cover 98% of the country, which will bring faster mobile broadband to areas of the country currently poorly served, including many rural not-spots.

Communities

Towns challenged to be 'bold, loud and proud'

Action for Market Towns has launched the [2012 National Awards](#), encouraging market towns to be 'bold, loud and proud' about what they have achieved. The awards offer recognition for innovative and creative ideas that small towns are using to survive and thrive, which can be held up as examples of best practice to others.

Environment

UK among the best prepared for climate change

A ground-breaking study into the threats the UK faces from climate change has confirmed that the country is a world-leader in understanding climate risk and making robust plans to deal with these threats. The [Climate Change Risk Assessment \(CCRA\)](#) highlights the top 100 challenges to the UK and lays out the evidence for the need to increase our resilience.

Ministerial statement on Feed-in Tariffs

The Energy Secretary Chris Huhne has released a written ministerial statement on Feed-in Tariffs (FITs). The full statement can be read [here](#).

Free tree safety guide

A free guide giving advice on tree safety has been produced for farmers and landowners. [Common Sense Risk Management of Trees](#), published by the National Tree Safety Group, provides guidance for inspecting and maintaining trees as well as an overview of health and safety obligations.

Other News

Essex community magazines celebrated

The award winners for the 2011 Essex Life [Community Magazine Awards](#) have been announced. Theydon Bois Village News won the top prize, with second prize going to Writtle News and third prize to Felsted, Flich Green and Little Dunmow Interface.

Dates for your diary

25th April East of England Rural Forum meeting, venue TBC

20th July Full ERP meeting, venue TBC

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