

## ERP News

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### ERP is 10 years old!

The ERP is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and we'd like to invite members to a special meeting to mark the occasion on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> July. The meeting will be held at [Channels Golf Club, Chelmsford](#) from 9:30am until 3:00pm. If you would like to attend, please email [daisy.martlew@essexrcc.org.uk](mailto:daisy.martlew@essexrcc.org.uk).

## Economic

### South East LEP announces new £40m package to boost employment

A £40m package of schemes with the potential to create over 26, 000 jobs and build more than 17, 000 new homes has been announced by the [South East Local Enterprise Partnership \(LEP\)](#). An initial 12 schemes across Essex, East Sussex, Kent and Medway will benefit from the funding provided by the Government's Growing Places Fund.

### Big Society Capital launched

The Government has launched a new £600m institution to make it easier for charities, social enterprises and community groups to access affordable finance. [Big Society Capital](#) will grow the social investment market through the development of socially orientated investment organisations that support charities and social enterprises that have the ability to repay an investment through the income they generate.

### Rural businesses to benefit from £20m investment

A new £20m scheme to help provide work-based training for rural businesses has been announced by Farming Minister Jim Paice. [Defra's](#) Skills and Knowledge Framework, provided through the Rural Development Programme for England, will offer a subsidised vocational training programme.

### The cost of fuel in rural areas

[Defra](#) has published a report that summarises the outcomes of work to better understand current pressures and ensure that the needs of rural residents are taken into account in relevant policies and programmes. In addition to summarising the progress made, the paper outlines further initiatives to benefit rural areas.

## Communities

### Localism Act hands back power to communities

Parliamentary measures known as commencement orders have now brought key measures of the [Localism Act](#), which received Royal Assent in November 2011, into effect. The key measures include new

neighbourhood planning powers, new local discounts to encourage business investment and general power of competence to all English local authorities and eligible parish councils.

### **New Planning Framework comes into force**

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#), which replaces over 1,300 pages of policy in 44 separate documents with a 50 page simplified and consolidated document, has been published. The final framework retains all of the key elements of the draft framework published in July 2011, strengthened by responses to the consultation.

### **Plans to reform local bus subsidy**

Plans that aim to attract more people on to buses while giving local transport authorities more influence over local bus networks have been published by the [Department for Transport](#). The document also acknowledges that traditional bus services are not always the most viable option for some rural communities, citing Coggeshall's community bus service as an example of good practice.

## **Environment**

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### **Villagers asked to share views on flood management scheme**

The [Environment Agency](#) and Chelmsford Borough Council are inviting residents in Margaretting to share their views on designs for a scheme to help protect Chelmsford from flooding. The consultation event, being held at Margaretting Village Hall on Friday 20 April, from 2:00pm-7:00pm, will give people the chance to see the latest proposal and talk to members of the project team.

### **Businesses must do their part to conserve water**

The [Environment Agency](#) is urging all businesses to join households in the South East to conserve water as the hosepipe ban comes into force across much of the region. Businesses are being encouraged to carry out a water audit of the workplace to establish where savings can be made.

### **Trees invaluable for farmers fighting drought**

A new report commissioned by the [Woodland Trust](#) and written by Harper Adams University highlights the value of tree shelter belts in combating the effects of drought. The report pulls together UK and other temperate agriculture systems to show how trees can help to reduce wind speeds and slow evapotranspiration as a result.

### **Canal and River Trust becomes a charity**

The Charity Commission has confirmed the registration of the [Canal and River Trust](#) as a charity. This means that the Trust, formerly the quango British Waterways, can now legally begin to raise charitable income to support its objectives.

## Other News

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### Chelmsford becomes first city in Essex

[Chelmsford](#) has been awarded city status as part of Her Majesty the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Situated at the heart of the county and with many traditional attributes of a city, Chelmsford is well-placed to become the first city in Essex. The award also presents a great opportunity for Chelmsford to raise its profile and attract more inward investment into the area.

### Free foraging taster sessions

The Edible Essex Project in partnership with Essex Wildlife Trust is holding two free foraging taster sessions to learn more about food that grows wild in our countryside. The sessions will be held on [28<sup>th</sup> April](#) and [26<sup>th</sup> May](#); for more details and to book email [sophie.blythe@essexrcc.org.uk](mailto:sophie.blythe@essexrcc.org.uk) or call 01376 574330.

### Paper published to mark 25 years of rural research

The [Countryside and Community Research Institute](#) has published a series of reflective essays examining the changes to the rural condition over the last 25 years to mark the organisation's silver anniversary.

## Dates for your diary

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<b>23<sup>rd</sup> April</b>	<b>Economic Action Group meeting</b> , <a href="#">RCCE Offices, Feering</a> , 2:30pm
<b>25<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>East of England Rural Forum (EERF) Meeting</b> , <a href="#">NFU Offices, Newmarket</a> , 9:30am – 12:00pm
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> May</b>	<b>Full ERP meeting</b> , <a href="#">The Reid Rooms, Margaret Roding</a> , 9:30am – 1:00pm, <b>Steering Group meeting</b> after lunch at 2:00pm ( <i>Steering Group members only</i> )
<b>30<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>Community Action Group meeting</b> , <a href="#">RCCE Offices, Feering</a> , 10:00am
<b>15<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>ERP Steering Group meeting</b> , <a href="#">RCCE Offices, Feering</a> , 10:00am ( <i>Steering Group members only</i> )
<b>31<sup>st</sup> July</b>	<b>10 Year Anniversary Full ERP meeting</b> , <a href="#">Channels Golf Club, Chelmsford</a> , 9:30am – 3:00pm
<b>29<sup>th</sup> August</b>	<b>ERP Steering Group</b> , <a href="#">RCCE Offices, Feering</a> , 10:00am ( <i>Steering Group members only</i> )
<b>10<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<b>Full ERP meeting</b> , venue TBC, 9:30am – 1:00pm, <b>Steering Group meeting</b> after lunch at 2:00pm ( <i>Steering Group members only</i> )
<b>19<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>ERP Steering Group meeting</b> , <a href="#">RCCE Offices, Feering</a> , 10:00am ( <i>Steering Group members only</i> )

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