

Essex Rural Partnership (ERP) News

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ERP Chairman, Cllr John Jowers

ERP celebrates 10 year anniversary

Over 80 people attended the [special celebration](#) event held to mark 10 years of the ERP on 31st July. The event, held at Channels Golf Club in Chelmsford, saw a variety of people from the private, public and voluntary sectors come together to celebrate the Partnership's achievements and look to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. Presentations are available to download from the [website](#).

Economic

Braintree Portas Pilot bid successful

[Braintree](#) has been chosen as one of only 15 towns in the UK to receive funds in the second round of the [Portas Pilot](#) scheme. The town will use its share of the £1.5m pot to provide mentoring support to independent shops in the town. The Braintree bid was the only successful bid in Essex, meaning Halstead and Witham's submissions were among those rejected.

Rural communities' role in delivering broadband is crucial

More must be done to inspire rural communities to deliver superfast broadband services themselves warns a new report by the [Plunkett Foundation](#) and Carnegie UK Trust. The issue is about more than just technology; communities themselves will need to help bridge the gap between government and market plans and lack of provision, but the debate has so far failed to empower communities.

New report highlights barriers for young people in rural areas

The [Commission for Rural Communities](#) has published a report looking at the barriers to education, employment and training young people in rural areas face. Key findings include a more accelerated rate at which young people become NEETs (not in education, employment or training) and public transport issues for those in more remote areas of the country.

Farmers of the future

A drive to encourage more young people to pursue a career in agriculture has been launched by Farming Minister Jim Paice. The [Future of Farming Group](#) will aim to break down the barriers that prevent talented and entrepreneurial young people from making careers in farming.

Redundant rural buildings could aid sustainable growth

Plans to bring empty [redundant buildings](#) back into use have been unveiled by the Government. The proposals would make it easier to re-use existing empty buildings, such as warehouses, offices and agricultural buildings, without the need to submit a planning application.

Communities

Essex gets sporting boost

As the London 2012 Olympic Games get fully underway, [11 projects in the county](#) will benefit from £500k in Sport England's second round of Inspired Facilities funding. Thirteen projects had previously accessed around £600k of funding in the first round, bringing the total benefit to Essex communities to over £1m.

Rural Housing Week

The importance of affordable housing in keeping rural communities vibrant will be highlighted during Rural Housing Week, which will run from 24th-30th September 2012. Housing associations in our region will be organising events for MPs, councilors and parish councilors showcasing examples of best practice and the benefits for communities. The [National Housing Federation](#) is coordinating events and has produced a resource pack for those wishing to get involved.

Plans to cut rural road speed limits to 40mph

Many rural roads could have their speed limits cut from 60mph to 40mph under new [guidance](#) issued to local authorities by the Government. Updated speed limit guidance was published for consultation on 13th July.

Defra launches new rural proofing resources

A new series of [rural proofing resources](#) to help those developing and delivering services at a local level has been unveiled by Defra. The resources, funded and published by Defra, have been produced by Rural Innovation with the guidance of a Steering Group.

Environment

Essex nature reserve awarded Green Flag

Roding Valley Meadows Nature Reserve, near Loughton, has received a Green Flag award, which recognises green spaces freely accessible to the public that are well-managed and of the highest quality. The nature reserve, managed by [Essex Wildlife Trust](#) and owned by Epping Forest District Council and Grange Farm Centre Trust, is the largest area of traditional river-valley landscape left in Essex.

Schmallenberg virus still circulating, scientists warn

Researchers at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) and Institute for Animal Health (IAH) have confirmed that the [Schmallenberg virus](#) is still circulating in the UK as the current midge season reaches its peak. Staff at the RVC found the virus present among livestock on its farm in June, proving that the midge-borne virus survived the winter.

Perfect pints to save the planet

Pubs will be able to save almost £3, 000 a year, serve better pints and conserve significant amounts of energy due to new Government-backed [drinks cooling technology](#) being developed. The technology will chill drinks as they're needed, rather than beer being cooled in the cellar, warming on its way through the pipes only to be cooled again just before serving.

Other News

Essex population rises by over 82, 000 in ten years

The number of people living in Essex has increased by 6.3% over the last ten years according to estimated figures in the [2011 Census](#). The data shows that the population totaled 1,393,600 in 2011 compared to 1,310,836 in 2001, an increase of 82,764.

Dates for your diary

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| 29th August | ERP Steering Group meeting , RCCE Offices, Feering , 10:00am (<i>Steering Group members only</i>)
Community Action Group meeting , RCCE Offices, Feering , 2:30pm |
| 14th September | EERF meeting , NFU Offices, Newmarket , 9:30am – 12:00pm |
| 10th October | Full ERP meeting , venue TBC, 10:00am
Steering Group meeting after lunch at 2:00pm (<i>Steering Group members only</i>) |
| 9th November | Community Action Group visit to Highwood Catch-up Café , Highwood Village Hall , 11:00am |
| 19th December | ERP Steering Group meeting , RCCE Offices, Feering , 10:00am (<i>Steering Group members only</i>) |
| 30th January 2013 | EERF meeting , venue TBC, 10:00am |

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 email info@essexruralpartnership.org.uk with 'unsubscribe' as the email subject.

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