

## Essex Rural Partnership (ERP) News

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### ERP focuses on rural health and wellbeing

At the last full Partnership meeting, the changes in healthcare provision and the future for health and wellbeing in rural areas was the focus. We heard from the NHS and from Essex County Council representatives Gary Raynor and Andy Payne talking about strengthening communities and Healthwatch respectively. Martin Cleverly introduced us to ThinkingFit; a project designed to reduce the risk of dementia by incorporating various activities into their everyday lives. Presentations are available on the [website](#).

## Economic

### 17, 500 jobs could be unlocked by South East LEP investment

The potential for more than 17,500 jobs could be unlocked under a package of schemes announced by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). Six schemes, two of which are in Essex, have been provisionally backed by the SELEP Board to receive a total of £8.7 million support under the Government's Growing Places Fund. Business cases for a further eight projects are being drawn up.

### Essex homes and businesses get faster broadband

Faster [broadband](#) is now available to a further seven communities in Essex (Great Bentley, Ramsey, Earls Colne, Southminster, Writtle, Great Horkesley and Tollesbury). The BT investment will make available download speeds of up to 20 megabits per second (Mbps) – more than double the fastest speed previously available from BT.

### Bill to boost growth

New legislation to reduce bureaucratic barriers that delay and discourage business investment, new infrastructure and job creation has been introduced to Parliament. The new [Growth and Infrastructure Bill](#) sets out a number of practical measures to reduce red tape whilst ensuring democratic checks and balances and environmental safeguards remain in place.

### Mapping local food webs

A new [toolkit](#) that will help communities to map the connections between producers, retailers and consumers has been launched by Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). Mapping your local food web will highlight its importance for the local economy, landscape and community, says CPRE. The toolkit contains guidance, meeting plans and questionnaires and will help to develop local food strategies that could feed into a Neighbourhood Plan.

## Communities

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### **Bishop of Chelmsford opens new affordable homes in West Hanningfield**

The Rt. Rev Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Chelmsford, officially opened the latest scheme of affordable housing for local people in Pandan Close, [West Hanningfield](#) on Monday 15 October. The 12 homes have been fitted with ground source heat pumps making them energy efficient and cheaper to run.

### **Community Pubs Minister toasts resident-run Essex pub**

Community Pubs Minister Brandon Lewis shared a celebratory pint with the locals who successfully saved their pub from closure by establishing it as a [community run pub](#). The Norton, in Cold Norton, was re-opened in 2009 after having been closed for two years, and the volunteers are now looking to buy the freehold so the community can claim a real stake in the pub by buying shares in the business.

### **Making it easier to set up Parish Councils**

Proposals to make it easier to set up new town and parish councils have been announced by Local Government Secretary Eric Pickles. The [consultation](#) proposes amending existing guidance to speed up the process, clarifying how local authorities should consider local opinion, and making it easier for neighbourhood forums to start the process for creating a new parish council.

### **What next for Localism?**

Parish Councils have launched an [inquiry](#) asking the question: what next for localism? The inquiry, coordinated by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), is asking key stakeholders in local government and beyond for their analysis, insight and advice on where localism needs to go next.

### **Rural crime manifesto unveiled**

The Country Land and Business Association (CLA) have published a [manifesto](#) spelling out rural needs when it comes to cutting crime. The manifesto, published ahead of the Police and Crime Commissioners' elections on 15<sup>th</sup> November identifies metal and fuel theft, poaching and fly-tipping as crimes that have a huge impact on rural businesses and communities.

### **New guide helping communities to run their own farm**

Making Local Food Work has published a new [guide](#) for communities looking to set up and run a community-owned farm. The guide was written by Charlotte Hollins, founder of Fordhall Community Land Initiative, and draws on her experiences of saving the family farm through co-operation.

## Environment

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### **Government action on ash die-back disease**

Hundreds of staff members from government agencies are undertaking an [urgent survey](#) of sites across the UK looking for signs of the tree disease Chalara ash dieback. It's one of several actions to emerge from a meeting of the Government's emergency committee COBR, chaired by Environment Secretary Owen Paterson last week. In the last six weeks [100,000 ash trees have been destroyed](#) in the UK.

## Ending abuse of village green legislation

New plans outlined in the Growth Bill will ensure communities that wish to see land developed in their areas will no longer be overruled by an abuse of **Town and Village Green (TVG) legislation**. The new approach will prevent TVG applications when an application for planning permission has been made or granted, and when land has been allocated for development by the local authority.

## Badger cull to proceed next year

The National Farmers Union (NFU) has written to Environment Secretary Owen Paterson to request that the pilot **badger culls** in West Somerset and West Gloucestershire go ahead in 2013. The request follows new survey results which revealed higher than anticipated badger numbers in the two pilot areas.

## Go wild with British game

This month the **Countryside Alliance** is encouraging everyone to 'Go Wild with British Game' as part of its Game-to Eat promotion campaign. The dedicated month will see over 50 official events take place across the country and the organisation is encouraging the public to get involved by hosting a dinner party or introducing someone to game for the first time.

## Other News

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### Public service delivery becoming 'digital by default'

**GOV.UK**, the new online home of government services and information has been launched. This is the first phase in the creation of a single domain for government, addressing the needs of those previously served by Directgov and Business Link websites. The 'Digital by Default' agenda aims to transform public services online, but those in remote rural areas without access to broadband could be left behind.

## Dates for your diary

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| <b>9<sup>th</sup> November</b>      | <b>Community Action Group visit to Highwood Catch-up Café, Highwood Village Hall, 11:00am</b>   |
| <b>19<sup>th</sup> December</b>     | <b>ERP Steering Group meeting, RCCE Offices, Feering, 10:00am</b> ( <i>Steering Group members only</i> )  |
| <b>30<sup>th</sup> January 2013</b> | <b>EERF meeting</b> , NFU Office, Newmarket, 9:30am – 12:00pm ( <i>EERF Members only</i> )  |
| <b>6<sup>th</sup> February 2013</b> | <b>Full ERP Meeting</b> , Venue TBC, 10:00am (registration from 9:30am)<br><b>Steering Group meeting</b> after lunch at 2:00pm ( <i>Steering Group members only</i> ) |

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Compiled and edited by Daisy Martlew, Rural Community Council of Essex

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