



Essex Rural Partnership (ERP) News

Next Meeting to Focus on Water

The next meeting of the Essex Rural Partnership, on Wednesday 24th July, will have a 'water' theme. The meeting will hear about three different, but related, subjects: a new initiative of Essex Biodiversity Project, 'Healthy Headwaters'; ELfS, a partnership involved in environmental education; and the role of Essex County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority. *It would be appreciated if you could assist our catering arrangements by advising us in advance if you wish to attend.*

Economic

Mobile phone cold spots in South East hold back growth

Contracts, jobs and efficiencies are potentially being lost to the South East economy as a result of businesses suffering poor or no mobile phone coverage, research by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) has revealed recently. Over 400 businesses across all sectors and sizes in the South East responded to SELEP's call for evidence, with 84 per cent saying their business had suffered and continues to suffer from disruption due to mobile phone cold spots. Click here for the [full story](#).

UK votes on Common Agricultural Policy reform

The UK Environment Secretary Owen Patterson has pressed for a [reformed Common Agricultural Policy](#) to benefit British farmers, the environment and taxpayers. The system that spends €4 billion of tax payers' money each year to support the UK farming industry has been under review in Luxembourg. With a final deal yet to be struck, the UK has supported a mandate for the Irish Presidency to take the revised CAP proposals to Brussels to be passed by the full European Parliament

Future of farming review: 2013 report

The [report](#) which was released on the 12th July was undertaken by Defra to examine the barriers and opportunities for new entrants entering and building successful careers in farming.

Communities

Essex Village of the Year

The 2013 winner of Essex Village of the Year was announced as being Great Bentley, at RCCE's AGM on 10th July. Great Bentley nestles in the Tendring district and won the award not just for the appearance of the village (which has the largest village green in the country) but also for the activities which make it a vibrant,

enterprising and caring community. More information about the competition and class winners of the Best Kept Village Competition and winners of the Best Kept Churchyard Competition can be found [here](#).

Defra and Association of British Insurers reach an agreement on flood insurance

Hundreds of thousands of households in flood-prone areas will be guaranteed affordable flood insurance after the government and insurance industry agreed a deal recently. After negotiations with the Association of British Insurers (ABI), this new agreement replaces the current 'Statement of Principles' that runs out at the end of July and will bring peace of mind to people who will soon need to renew their insurance. The [new agreement](#) will cap flood insurance premiums, linking them to council tax bands so that people will know the maximum they will have to pay.

The 'Help to Buy' equity loan is an instant hit

Since its launch in this year's Budget, thousands of prospective homebuyers have been seizing the opportunity to buy a new-build home with just a fraction of the normal deposit. The [help to buy equity scheme](#) has already had 7,000 reservations in its first three months. It enables both existing homeowners and first time buyers to receive a 20% equity loan interest free over 5 years to buy an eligible new build property up to £600,000 in value. The [Help to Buy mortgage guarantee](#), which will be administered by the Treasury and begin in January 2014, will enable lenders to use government-backed guarantees to offer £130 billion worth of mortgages with smaller deposits, as little as 5%, on new and existing properties.

Environment

National climate change adaptation programme report published

Defra is calling on businesses, local councils and communities to get ready for climate change and extreme weather in a [report published](#) on 1st July, as part of the government's [National Adaptation Programme](#). The National Adaptation Programme report sets out what leading businesses, councils and communities, as well as government, are doing to tackle climate threats.

National Survey into acute Oak decline commissioned

The lead scientist on behalf of the Forestry Commission revealed on the 15th July that thousands of trees could be infected with [acute Oak decline](#). The disease which scientists believe may be the responsibility of a beetle causes weeping patches on the stems of mature trees and is on the rise in England, particularly in the Midlands and the South East. A national survey has been commissioned by Defra as part of a new £1.1m research drive. The public is being urged to report any suspected cases using a Tree Alert app available from the [Forestry Commission](#).

Bovine TB strategy launched to make England disease free within 25 years

A plan to rid England of bovine TB within 25 years has been set out on 4th July by Environment Secretary Owen Paterson. The [strategy](#) sets out action in areas such as disease surveillance, pre- and post-movement cattle testing, and removal of cattle exposed to bTB, tracing the potential source of infection and wildlife controls including culling and vaccination trials. It also focuses on the development of new techniques such as badger and cattle vaccines and new diagnostic tests that could one day offer new ways of tackling the disease.

Other News

Ready, steady, go fish!

To celebrate the start of river fishing season the Environment Agency is launching a competition asking anglers to share their best family fishing photographs for the chance to be featured on its Facebook and Twitter banners for a month. The Environment Agency is also launching a survey on 16 June 2013 to discover Britain's top family fishing spots. Environment Agency figures released at the start of the 2013 fishing season show that over 1.2 million rod fishing licences were sold last year making it one of Britain's most popular outdoor sports. [Enter your vote for Britain's top family fishing spot](#) to read more about this story and to enter your family fishing photograph click [here](#).

Dates for your diary

24th July 2013	Full ERP Meeting and Steering Group Meeting,	Chelmsford City FC 10:00 am (Coffee from 9.45 am)
29th July 2013	Economic Action Group Meeting	RCCE Offices 10.00 am (Coffee from 9.45 am)
20th August 2013	Community Action Group Meeting,	RCCE Offices 10:00 am (Coffee from 9.45 am)
3rd October 2013	Environmental Action Group Meeting,	RCCE Offices 10.00 am (Coffee from 9.45 am)
4th November 2013	Community Action Group Meeting,	RCCE Offices 10.00 am (Coffee from 9.45 am)

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