



Essex Rural Partnership (ERP) News

Next ERP meeting

This will take place on **Thursday 16th January 2014** at the Waterfront Place (now run by Oasis) in Chelmsford. We will be joined by Police and Crime Commissioner, Nick Alston, for part of the meeting; further details will be posted on the website nearer the time.

SE LEP Structural Investment Fund Strategy: Draft Published

The SE LEP launched its **draft EU Structural Investment Fund Strategy** at an event in London on 16th October. The draft strategy can be viewed [here](#) on the SE LEP website. There is also a link to a feedback form, which can be submitted; the SE LEP is aiming to finalise the strategy by January 2014.

Economic

Britain's Forgotten Foods

Slow Food UK is developing its list of '[forgotten foods](#)' which are at risk of extinction, owing to people eating them less frequently; the list includes Colchester Native Oysters. In an attempt to encourage more use of these rare foods, Chef Ambassadors, including Richard Corrigan, Angela Hartnett and Michel Roux Jr, have published an online selection of [recipes](#) which make use of ingredients such as beef cheek, medlar and red grouse. Slow Food UK also provide a [seasonal calendar](#) for forgotten food products.

Government National Infrastructure Plan

The new [National Infrastructure Plan](#) has been launched, setting out details of projects which will be supported in the next few years. Money has been allocated to provide 'a £10 million competitive fund in 2014 to market test innovative solutions, delivering superfast broadband services to the most difficult to reach areas of the UK'. The Plan also announces 'nearly £800 million of borrowing at the Public Works Loan Board project rate to Local Enterprise Partnerships in partnership with local authorities in 2014-15 and 2015-16 as part of growth deals'. The Plan also refers to the Mobile Infrastructure Project and Flooding and Coastal Erosion.

Funding for Rural Post Offices

The new funding is part of the Post Offices modernisation programme and is intended to support the 3,400 community and outreach Post Office branches. £20m will be invested to help businesses develop and meet the needs of their customers. More information about Post Office plans can be found [here](#).

Communities

Chancellor Admits Rural Areas Financially Disadvantaged

[George Osborne](#) has conceded that methods used to allocate public funding probably lead to urban areas receiving greater financial support. He argued that their deprivation problems also tend to be greater. Mr Osborne is quoted as saying that there is 'room for improvement' and suggested that, initially in the case of schools, this inequality will be looked at. It is generally believed that those in rural areas pay higher taxes, whilst the amount of Government grant per head is substantially lower than for urban counterparts.

Essex Police Introduce New Technology

Essex Police has begun to issue [Mobile Data Terminals](#) to officers. These terminals will enable remote access to information usually available at Police Stations, such as the Police National Computer, Automatic Number Plate Recognition and live CCTV feeds. The use of Mobile Data Terminals will reduce the amount of time required to travel to Police Stations to access data and thereby increase the time available to be spent on the beat; this has huge potential benefits for rural areas where Stations are fewer and further to access.

Environment

Essex Fights Solar Farms

A group of villages in north Essex are concerned that up to 300 acres of grade II arable land has been earmarked for solar farms by at least 3 developers. Pentlow, Foxearth, Liston, Belchamp St Paul and Belchamp Otten are the first villages to potentially be affected by this and a decision is imminent. Other applications are expected to follow.

New Chairman for CPRE

Congratulations to Chris Butler, who has been nominated as the new Chair of CPRE. Chris has served on his parish council for many years, is a member of the Court of the Essex University helping foster links with local businesses and had been involved with Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, the Essex Environment Trust and the Campaign for the Farmed Environment.

Marine Conservation Zone Designation

As of 21st November 27 new areas have been designated as [Marine Conservation Zones](#), including one in Essex. The Backwater Crouch Roach and Colne Estuaries MCZ is 284km², making it the largest inshore MCZ. The site is considered one of the largest estuaries in the East of England and has extensive areas of mudflats and saltmarsh which support Brent Geese and Curlew in the area.

Other News

Britain's Sexiest Farmer

Farmers Weekly, in association with The Original Muck Boot Company, have launched a competition for [Britain's sexiest male and female farmers](#). The competition is open to anyone of any age – as long as they have a country connection. The prize includes a pair of limited edition boots. Gok Wan will help with judging, but the final winner will be determined by public vote. It's easy to enter, and you can either nominate yourself or a friend, but entries (including photo) must be submitted by 31st December.

Dates for your diary

13 th January 2014	Environmental Action Group Meeting	RCCE Offices 10.00am	(Coffee from 9.45am)
16 th January 2014	Full ERP meeting & ERP Steering Group meeting	Waterfront Place 10.00am & 2.00pm	(Coffee from 9.30am) (immediately after lunch)
25 th February 2014	Community Action Group Meeting	RCCE Offices 10.00am	(Coffee from 9.45am)
10 th June 2014	Community Action Group Meeting	RCCE Offices 10.00am	(Coffee from 9.45am)
Provisional: 18.11.14	Community Action Group Meeting	RCCE Offices 10.00am	(Coffee from 9.45am)
Date tba	<i>Economic Action Group meeting</i>	<i>RCCE Offices</i>	



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Compiled and edited by Suzanne Harris, Rural Community Council of Essex.

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