

## CELEBRATION TIME FOR ESSEX VILLAGES

A village in the heart of Essex is celebrating after capturing the top prize in the annual Essex Village of the Year Competition. The competition is organised by Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE), sponsored by Essex & Suffolk Water and Worldbridge Ltd. and supported by Essex Life.

Felsted, in Uttlesford District, beat off strong competition from runner-up Great Waltham, and joint-third prize winners Little Hallingbury and Wickham Bishops, to clinch the prestigious Essex Village of the Year award for 2015. The top two villages receive prizes of £500 and £150 respectively. Felsted also received a new winners' shield. The joint third prize winners share £100 between them. All prizes are provided by sponsors Essex & Suffolk Water.



The awards were presented at the Annual General Meeting of RCCE held at Writtle College on Wednesday 8th July.

Felsted is a thriving community with over a quarter of the people employed in local businesses living in the village. It has a Village Events Committee which has run special fundraising events for 17 years and recent community projects include the redevelopment of the playing field and provision of a multi-games area, the reconfiguration of the village war memorial and the provision of allotments. A Neighbourhood Plan is currently being produced which will set out a 15 to 20 year vision for the future of Felsted.

The competition, organised annually by Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) also includes the popular Best Kept Village in Essex awards, sponsored by Worldbridge Ltd., consultant electrical and mechanical engineers. This year's 5 individual class winners, who each receive £150, were Brightlingsea, Feering, Wickham Bishops, Rivenhall and Little Braxted.

**Congratulations to all the worthy winners and also to all the villages that took part!**



## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The Localism Act (2011) introduced a new type of Community Led Plan.

Communities now have the right to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, setting out policies on the development and use of land in a parish or neighbourhood area. The Neighbourhood Plan will show how the level of growth identified in the Core Strategy / Local Plan is to be met or exceeded.

### Why produce a Neighbourhood Plan?

Developing a Neighbourhood Plan can help communities to play a greater role in determining the future of their area. It is not a tool to stop development where it is already included in the Core Strategy / Local Plan; it gives communities the opportunity to shape what that planned growth will look like and where additional growth might go.

- It will bring the community together to share ideas and build consensus about needs and priorities for the area.
- It can also help to create lasting partnerships to take forward actions that may arise from the process.

### Who needs to be involved?

The parish council or neighbourhood forum must initiate and lead the process. They will need to involve the wider community in the development of the plan: residents, businesses, local groups, landowners and developers.

It is essential that the local planning authority is involved throughout the process; they have direct responsibility for some of the steps and have a wealth of information that will be useful in producing the Neighbourhood Plan. It may also be necessary to engage other organisations or commercial consultants to assist with the process.

For more information on how to access free advice & support please click:

[http://www.essexrcc.org.uk/Our\\_work\\_with\\_Communities/Community\\_Led\\_Planning/Information\\_packs/Neighbourhood\\_Planning\\_Guide.aspx](http://www.essexrcc.org.uk/Our_work_with_Communities/Community_Led_Planning/Information_packs/Neighbourhood_Planning_Guide.aspx)

For more information on the funding please click the following link: <http://www.mycommunity.org.uk>

## THE GREEN ESSEX AWARDS



The Green Essex Awards 2015, is an awards programme designed to recognise and reward companies, organisations, community projects, education establishments and charities within the county of Essex for their efforts to reduce their carbon footprints and improve environment performance.



The winners will be announced on October 23rd at a special awards breakfast at the Weston Homes Community Stadium, so if you would like to proudly display one of the winner's logos while adding a trophy to your cabinet...

Please enter! 😊

For further information and how to enter please click: <http://www.greenessexawards.com/>

## Countryside Stewardship is open for business

Countryside Stewardship (CS), the new agri-environment scheme.

- A scheme that will invest more than £900 million over the next 6 years
- Supporting farmers and land managers to deliver more biodiversity, cleaner water, beautiful landscapes and other environmental benefits, is open for business.

Building on the existing Environmental Stewardship and Woodland Grant schemes, it will offer:

- A new competitive approach
- Ensure that funding goes to those agreements that provide the best environmental benefits for the local environment

*Note: To apply for woodland elements of the scheme via the Higher Tier should submit the “woodland-only Higher Tier” application form by 31 July so that they can then refine their application with a Woodland Officer before the final deadline.*

The application window opened on 1<sup>st</sup> July and will close at the end of September.

Contact Natural England on 0300 060 3900 to request an application pack for a Mid Tier agreement or find out more by visiting: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-get-paid-for-environmental-land-management>

# Celebrating a fantastic first year for Abberton Rural Training

Abberton Rural Training has celebrated its first birthday with some amazing achievements. The project, which is being managed by Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) in conjunction with Essex & Suffolk Water and a range of other partners, delivers rural, employability and craft skills courses for the whole community from its base close to the recently extended Abberton Reservoir.

At a celebration event held on Thursday 23rd July, students conducted tours of the site and proudly showed off their skills and expertise. The students met John Devall, Water Director of Essex and Suffolk Water and Nick Shuttleworth, Executive Director of Rural Community Council of Essex, and gave their thoughts on the courses which included,

“I have better money management. I am saving now and am planning a holiday abroad”

“It’s a brilliant course, good support; everyone’s helpful and looks out for each other.”

The success of the first year has exceeded all expectations:

- 177 participants having attended courses
- 16 of these are now in employment
- 5 are starting their own businesses
- 42 are continuing further education
- 17 have registered for voluntary work
- 3 have gone on to apprenticeships

All full time students achieved City and Guilds Level 1 qualification and many gained additional qualifications in functional skills and English and maths.

Jacqui Stone, Project Manager for ART, said, “It has been non-stop and at times extremely hard work, but also very rewarding. I am passionate about this project and look forward to doing more in the next academic year.”

Nick Shuttleworth, Executive Director of RCCE, said, “We are delighted with the progress made by Abberton Rural Training. It will make an important contribution to the rural economy, as well as providing young people with new skills, qualifications and confidence.”

John Devall, Water Director of Essex and Suffolk Water, commented, “The Abberton Scheme secures water supplies for our customers in Essex and parts of East London – making sure we are prepared for many years into the future.

“We wanted to ensure this project left a lasting and meaningful legacy. As a business we are passionate about supporting people with education and skills training. This is why we are proud to have helped to set up the Abberton Rural Training scheme, which is providing this support to a wide range of people from different backgrounds and ages,” he said.

“It is very exciting to see how the project has moved from conception to actually helping individuals into employment and moving towards self-employment, this will change people’s lives for many years to come,” added John.

# HOT OFF THE PRESS!

## ONE NATION GOVERNMENT BACKS BRITISH FARMERS

**Prime Minister David Cameron states:**

**"As a one nation government we will keep on backing British farmers."**



- **Cutting red tape to support Britain's farmers – 20,000 fewer farms inspected and new single Farm Inspection Taskforce**
- **New Innovation Network – over 400 food and drink businesses in Wales alone will have access to latest research**
- **Plans to protect a record 200 great British foods**

The Prime Minister has announced plans to boost productivity and grow food and farming exports by more than £7 billion.

The Prime Minister also went on to say

“Farming and food production are a fundamental part of our rural economy. As a one nation government, we will keep on backing British farmers to grow and sell more home-grown food by liberating them from red tape and opening up new multi-million pound export markets.”

For further information please click here: <http://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-one-nation-government-backs-british-farmers>

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](mailto:info@essexruralpartnership.org.uk) with 'unsubscribe' as the email subject.

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