

## Economic

### **New Enterprise Zone announced for Essex**

The Government has approved the [West Essex Enterprise Zone at Harlow](#), as one of a number of zones nationwide to help boost economic growth. As part of the scheme, two parts of the town will be joined to create a 26 acre site for high tech and medical technology companies. The [Enterprise Zones](#) will benefit from simplified planning processes, superfast broadband and relief from business rates.

### **BDUK announces funding for superfast broadband**

Essex is to receive £6, 460, 000 for [superfast broadband](#) as part of the Government's £530 million investment in the UK's broadband network. The Government aims to establish the best superfast broadband network in Europe with 90% of homes and businesses having access to superfast broadband and everyone accessing at least 2Mbps by 2015.

### **FSB calls on Government to extend work trials**

An extra 46, 000 jobs could be created by extending [Work Trials](#) says the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB). The FSB's 'Voice of Small Business Survey' shows that nearly a quarter of small firms think that Work Trials would act as an incentive to take on staff.

### **'Agri-crime' in the East cost farmers £8m**

Criminals targeting rural areas in the East of England cost farmers £8m in 2010, a new survey has found. The '[NFU Mutual Rural Crime Survey](#)' reported an 18% rise in 'agri-crime' for the year, with heating oil, diesel, tools and quad bikes being the main targets for thieves.

## Communities

### **New guide to help community orchards blossom**

A new 'how to' guide for communities wanting to start up or save their orchards has been published by Communities and Local Government Secretary Eric Pickles. The '[Community Orchards Guide](#)', part of a series of booklets being produced by the Government to assist local groups, outlines the support, information and powers available for setting up a community orchard.

### **Critical shortfall in affordable rural housing**

The [Countryside Alliance](#) has highlighted a huge shortfall in affordable rural housing with only 29% of the identified need in England planned to be built by rural and semi-rural councils in 2010/11. The research, based

upon a Freedom of Information Request to all local authorities, also found that rural housing remains less affordable than in urban areas with average house prices 5.4 times the UK average annual earnings in the countryside.

### **Special protection for bowling greens under new planning policy**

[New powers](#) that will enable bowling enthusiasts to safeguard cherished greens from closure and the threat of development have been announced by Communities and Local Government Secretary Eric Pickles. Under new planning rules communities will be able to designate bowling greens as local green spaces for special protection. The designation could also cover other green spaces such as recreational areas, wildlife havens or beauty spots.

### **Boost for community pubs**

Community Pubs Minister Bob Neill has launched a [review](#) of restrictive covenants, a legal clause that can prevent community pubs reopening as public houses following a sale. Covenants can not only take away a vital community hub but also prevent local people from taking it over as a community run asset. Changing the use of certain restrictive covenants will give communities more opportunities to harness the new 'Community Right to Buy' power in the Localism Bill.

### **ECC announced as HealthWatch Pathfinder**

[Essex County Council](#) has been announced as one of 75 [pathfinders](#) in the creation of local HealthWatch organisations. Local HealthWatch is part of the new Health and Social Care Bill and will give patients, carers and the community a greater say on how services are delivered. A new national body, HealthWatch England, will be created next year.

## **Environment**

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### **New strategy to protect wildlife in England**

A [new plan](#) to create bigger and better habitats to preserve and protect some of England's most iconic species has been published by Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman. 'Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services' follows the global agreement reached at the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010.

### **Climate science explained in new guide**

A new guide explaining the science behind climate change has been produced by the [Green Alliance](#). 'Climate Science Explained' is based on information compiled by the Royal Society, the Committee on Climate Change and the Met Office and has been written as an aid to communicating the issue. All scientific evidence contained within the guide is fully referenced and sources of further information are given.

## **Other News**

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### **ERP now on Twitter!**

The Essex Rural Partnership has joined the flock. To get all the latest news and updates, follow us [@EssexRP](#).

## BBC survey shows poor 3G mobile coverage in UK

A [BBC crowd-sourcing survey](#) has shown that despite operator claims of 90% or more 3G mobile coverage in the UK there are still many 'notspots', including major towns and cities. Last month the BBC invited people to take part in the survey by downloading an app that collated the 3G coverage their android phone was receiving. The data was then used to map UK coverage, which shows that large areas of Essex including main towns and along main roads have poor 3G service at best.

## Big Lottery Fund answers Village SOS

A new campaign to help revive rural communities by starting up new business ventures has been launched by the Big Lottery Fund. The '[Village SOS Active](#)' campaign includes a £5 million fund to help inspire and empower communities to address any problems they may face. The 'Village SOS' TV series, the first episode of which was aired on 10<sup>th</sup> August, follows the journey of six villages that have used the funding to establish new enterprises.

## Grants rounds announced at ECF

Essex Community Foundation (ECF) has announced two grants rounds of September 9<sup>th</sup> and January 9<sup>th</sup>. ECF currently manages 72 Named Funds, all with differing criteria, but there is no need for an organisation to match their application to any specific fund; usually one application will access all funds under ECF's management. All guidelines and application forms can be accessed via the [website](#).

## Dates for your diary

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<b>20<sup>th</sup> September</b>	Community Action Group meeting, RCCE Offices, Feering
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> September</b>	Economic Action Group meeting, County Hall, Chelmsford
<b>27<sup>th</sup> September</b>	<a href="#">Essex Association of Local Councils AGM</a> , Foakes Hall, Great Dunmow
<b>20<sup>th</sup> October</b>	Full Essex Rural Partnership meeting, Bentley Golf Club, Brentwood
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> October</b>	<a href="#">RCCE Village Halls Conference</a> , Great Totham Village Hall
<b>18<sup>th</sup> January</b>	Full Essex Rural Partnership & East of England Rural Forum – joint meeting, Hylands House, Chelmsford

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