

RURAL CRIME STRATEGY LAUNCH



Tackling crimes within rural communities and supporting vulnerable people will be top priorities in the new Rural Crime Strategy 2023-2026. Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Roger Hirst, together with representatives of Essex Police and the Essex Rural Partnership outlined the new strategy at a public event held at Layer Marney Tower on 10th March.

The previous strategy, which completed its four-year term in 2021 saw a significant reduction in rural crimes. Unauthorised encampments were reduced by more than 70 per cent, hare coursing saw a reduction of 10 per cent and the theft of large machinery by 36 per cent.



Following feedback from rural communities, the new strategy will go even further, with a stronger focus on tackling all crimes within rural communities, supporting community empowerment, protecting vulnerable and isolated rural communities, and supporting victims of crime.

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Roger Hirst said: “In Essex, we have made protecting rural and isolated areas a key priority in the Police and Crime Plan 2021 – 2024, with the objective to work with rural communities to help them build greater resilience and make them more safe and secure for all.

RCCE Executive Director, Nick Shuttleworth, speaking for the Essex Rural Partnership said:

“Essex Rural Partnership brings together a wide range of organisations concerned with the future of the county’s rural areas. Rural crime is an important issue for the Partnership, and we are committed to supporting Essex Police and the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner in taking forward this refreshed strategy.”



To read the new Rural Crime Strategy please [click here](#).

To find out more please [click here](#).

SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND PLACE PLANNING



The Essex School Organisation Service (ESOS) have recently published a new ‘Ten Year Plan’. An annual publication with the current edition covering the period up to and including the 2032/33 academic year. The document contains the core evidence that is used when asking developers for section 106 contributions towards school places and demonstrates a record in both delivering new school places and the commitment to meeting the future needs of a community.

There are four main sections:

- An overview of the Service and how school places are planned
- Pupil forecasts for each area using groups of schools agreed with the Department for Education
- Details of potential new school and expansion projects
- A list of projects, for each district, that have been completed in recent years

The ESOS state that over the past few years, forecasts in the Ten Year Plan have proved robust, and have supported the collection of around £18m per year from developers for school places in Essex.

As the document demonstrates, the Essex School Organisation Service have used this money, in conjunction with other funding, to deliver around one hundred projects during the last seven years. The money that has not yet been spent is held in accordance with the terms of each agreement against the appropriate local project. To view the document please [click here](#). This page also includes links to ESOS Planners Guide, which covers how they can help you with Local Plan making, and a guide to their approach to Garden Communities.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



The Prince's Countryside Fund (PCF) is inviting applications for grants of up to £25,000 from community projects across the UK, with up to £250,000 available. The PCF is interested in projects that will make a difference in rural communities across the UK and clearly demonstrate the need within the community. Applications are encouraged from all parts of the UK.

Keith Halstead, Executive Director of The Prince's Countryside Fund said: "The PCF's grant programme enables rural communities to become more self-sufficient by funding community-led solutions. With thanks to Waitrose and players of People's Postcode Lottery, the PCF aims to invest at least £500,000 each year through our rural grant programmes to make projects happen, particularly in hamlets, villages, and small towns."

If you are interested in applying you will need to have read the guidance, FAQ and Grant application tips, which can be found on the [PCF website](#).

If you are unsure whether you meet the eligibility criteria or would like to discuss your project, please complete the online Expression of Interest form on the website and a member of the team will be in touch. Applications for grants close on **11th April 2023** at midday.

APPLY FOR ENERGY BILL SUPPORT FOR NON-DOMESTIC PROPERTIES



Who can apply?

This scheme provides support for all UK non-domestic consumers using alternative fuels such as kerosene for energy, that are not on the gas grid. This includes commercial businesses, voluntary sector organisations including charities and community interest companies and public sector organisations such as schools, hospitals and care homes. The fixed payment of £150 to UK non-domestic consumers who are off the gas grid and use alternative fuels are eligible for this payment and some will have already received it automatically as a credit on their electricity bills. Properties not connected to the electricity grid will not have received £150 automatically and will need to apply through the online portal. Higher users of kerosene, defined as over 10,000 litres per year, will be eligible to apply for an additional payment based on the amount of Kerosene they use.

If you are not connected to the electricity grid, you will need to apply for the £150 fixed payment.

If you use more than 10,000 litres Kerosene per year you may be eligible for the additional payment and you will need to apply and provide evidence to support your claim.

Applications to the scheme will close on 28th April 2023. To find out more and to apply please [click here](#).

THE BIG HELP OUT



On Monday 8th May 2023, there will be a National Day of Volunteering to mark the King's Coronation called 'The Big Help Out'. People are being encouraged to use this time to get involved in community activities. [The Big Help Out](#) campaign has been designed to showcase how volunteering benefits both communities and individuals. It is hoped that the legacy of this national day will be that more people from a wider range of backgrounds decide to volunteer.

It's also hoped that it will ultimately help reverse [the decline in volunteering](#). How can you and your organisation tap into this and make the most of the Big Help Out? [Click here](#) to find out.

HORAAAY! THE ESSEX SCHOOLS FOOD AND FARMING DAY RETURNS



Following a 3 year break from live shows (due to Covid) we are delighted to hear the Essex Agricultural Society is gearing up to host 3,000 school children at the Essex Schools Food and Farming Day on 28th June. We are confident it will be a fun filled event which the children attending will not forget! The day will give 3,000 Essex school children aged 8 to 11 the opportunity to visit Writtle University College and find out how their food is produced, the role played by farmers in Essex and the many related jobs within the industry. To find out more about the work of the Essex Agricultural Society please [click here](#).

EVENTS

Rural Community Council of Essex 2023 Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 4th October
6.30pm start
Layer Marney Tower, Layer Marney, Nr Colchester CO5 9US



HELPING COMMUNITIES DELIVER NET-ZERO: HOUSING AND ENERGY



This **FREE in-person event** will be held at Anglia Ruskin University's Chelmsford campus on **Thursday 4th May, 9.30am-4.30pm**. The event will showcase the latest developments in community energy and community-led housing, presented by the groups and practitioners who are developing these projects. Two other rooms will focus on latest advancements in net-zero carbon housing and low carbon retrofit technology and practice. For full information and to book your place please [click here](#). For an information leaflet please [click here](#). (Please note this is not an RCCE event).

COMPETITION

RCCE Growing Communities Bee Good Competition 2023



The Bee Good Competition is open to all primary schools in Essex, it is designed to encourage team work hence no age categories. What do the children have to do? I hear you ask... well your busy bee teams are tasked with designing and creating a Bee Good Plot specifically for our pollinators. They will also be asked to keep a diary detailing their journey from the beginning of the project until the end showcasing their beautiful blooms and buzzy visitors. The plot can be any size as every little helps, and we encourage thinking outside of the box. All the necessary paperwork including the diary template will be provided to entrants. There are some exciting prizes to be won this year including literature for the classroom, Bee Good Hotel and gardening equipment, the number one request from schools, identified via our Bee Good Survey, that supersedes all other needs! (actual prize may vary from the image shown) Entry will require completion of the Bee Good Survey which will open on Wednesday 1st March and close on Monday 10th July 2023. GC looks forward to receiving diaries brimming with colourful bee friendly blooms and bee facts! **WARNING: This competition involves, fun, laughter and fresh air.**



To find out more information and to enter your school please visit the Growing Communities page [here](#). Please share the competition details far and wide after all this is to help our British Bees and also help enrich our future generations' understanding of the environment.