

UNITED IN KIND



RCCE's United in Kind coaches are involved in a number of community projects which bring people together to make connections and friendships. In Castle Point, the Hug in a Shrug project was formed in 2021 during the Covid lockdown. What started out as a kindness initiative very quickly grew in popularity and the Hug in a Shrug project has now spread across Essex with hundreds of volunteers supporting the project and hundreds more residents being on the receiving end of an act of kindness. In this [video](#) our Castle Point coach Anna shares her story of this fantastic project.



Getting together with others for a walk is a great way to keep active and meet new people. It is for this reason that United in Kind's Rochford Coach Corrina decided to start up the 'United in Strides' walking group in her area last year. Since the group formed, it has grown in popularity and has been an invaluable support network for residents who attend every week.

Watch this [video](#) to hear first-hand the positive impact this group has had on those who have joined.

PLATINUM JUBILEE VILLAGE HALLS FUND UPDATE



In May 2022, Defra announced a £3 million Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund, to mark Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee. The aim of the fund, managed by ACRE, is to support the modernisation and improvement of village halls, so that they are fit for purpose and can provide activities which seek to achieve one or more of the following outcomes for their communities:

- improved health and/or wellbeing and/or reduction in rural loneliness,
- positive impact on the local environment, contributes towards net zero,
- support for the local rural economy,
- promotion of community cohesion.

RCCE has been assisting local halls with applications and is pleased to announce the first successful applicants from Essex to be awarded a grant from the Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund are:

East Hanningfield Village Hall (Hanna's Field Charity) – for solar panel installation

Takeley Silver Jubilee Hall – for increased access to the hall through the inclusion of disabled toilets

Wormingford Village Hall (Wormingford Recreation Trust) – replacement of roof and removal asbestos.

To find out more about the fund please [click here](#) – please note the fund is now closed for new applications.

COST OF LIVING CRISIS



Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) cites the combined impact of rising fuel prices, cost of housing and access to services as factors making life especially difficult for people living in the countryside. In a [briefing](#) considering how the rural characteristics of the cost-of-living crisis recently published, the charity claims deprivation in the countryside is often overlooked by policy makers who fail to recognise the profoundly limiting circumstances in which many low-income households find themselves. It is estimated that 27% of rural households are currently in fuel poverty, many of whom are off the gas grid and have not received the same level of government subsidy as those on dual tariffs. Housing affordability has also got worse in rural areas since the pandemic. Between 2020 and 2021, it was estimated rental prices in suburban and rural areas jumped by 11% compared to just 2% in urban areas. And in 2022, the cheapest properties to buy were 8.8 times the earnings of those on lower incomes, compared with 7.6 times earnings in the city. To access the full article please [click here](#).

COMMEMORATING THE KING'S CORONATION



HM Lord-Lieutenant of Essex, Jennifer Tolhurst would like to raise awareness of an initiative that has taken place elsewhere in the country to commemorate King Charles's Coronation. In her letter, Mrs Tolhurst explains how the design and distribution of a plaque is the result of a collaboration between HM Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire, Anna Turner and the British Ironwork Centre, Oswestry. Its distribution covers at least

20 towns and organisations in Shropshire to commemorate the Coronation and to serve as a lasting legacy of this significant occasion.

For further information about the plaque such as pricing and size please [click here](#) to read the letter.

COMPETITION – Win a compost bin



This May brings both [International Compost Awareness Week](#) and [National Gardening Week](#). Love Essex states adding compost to your garden leads to healthier, more resilient soil - making the garden a better place for plants, vegetables and wildlife. In Essex, food and garden waste makes up 25% of the general waste we throw away. The more garden and food waste that can be composted at home, the better for your garden and the planet. This spring, Love Essex are offering residents the chance to win a [HotBin Mini 100 litre Compost Bin](#) which can break down food and garden waste quickly into nutrient-rich compost. To be in with a chance to win please [click here](#). There also two runner up prizes of one-year gift membership to the [RHS](#).

EVENTS

Save the Date!

RCCE Village Halls Conference to be held on Saturday 1st July 2023 at East Hanningfield Village Hall. Further details will follow shortly.



Rural Community Council of Essex 2023 Annual General Meeting



Wednesday 4th October

6.30pm start

Layer Marney Tower, Layer Marney, Nr Colchester CO5 9US

Rural Affordable Housing Briefing - Exploring your options

ESSEX ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

New Briefing for 2023

Rural Affordable Housing Briefing—Exploring your Options

Delivered by the Rural Community Council of Essex

£50.00 + VAT Time: 7.30pm—9.30pm

Briefings available on following dates

7th June—Delivered on Zoom &

8th June Delivered at the EALC Offices

Course Tutor - Laura Atkinson, RCCE, Rural Housing Enabler & Community Led Housing Advisor.

This course is open to Clerks, Officers and Councillors.

For further information please contact Pearl Willcox at Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC): pearl.willcox@ealc.gov.uk