



RCCE AND MALDON DISTRICT COUNCIL TO PROMOTE THE RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND



Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) and Maldon District Council will be working in partnership in the new year to promote the Rural England Prosperity Fund to businesses and community groups in Maldon district. This opportunity has been made possible with funding from Magnox Ltd.

RCCE has appointed Philip Wilson as Programme Officer for the fund. He has considerable experience of working in rural communities with Essex County Council and the Farming Community Network, and as well as raising awareness of this new funding opportunity at events and meetings in the district, he will be available to provide one-to-one advice on the preparation of applications.

Before this, Philip's first task will be to put in place an application process with priorities and guidelines for funding. Further details of this will be released early in 2024.

Philip is contactable at philip.wilson@essexrcc.org.uk

WE ARE RECRUITING! – RCCE Community Engagement Officer



Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) has a vacancy within its Community Engagement Team. This is a part time position – 14-18 hrs per week negotiable. Circa £26,000 (pro rata)

At RCCE, we believe that communities have the power to influence change and our Community Engagement Team are at the heart of this by working with local communities to plan for their future, in particular, by supporting parish councils and community groups with the production of Community Led Plans. The team also works to help communities identify local housing needs and aspirations, and provides a Village Halls Service, supporting communities to manage their local assets. For further information please visit the RCCE website [here](#)

ENERGY EFFICIENCY – SUPPORT FOR VILLAGE HALLS



Volunteers managing village halls can look forward to new opportunities for making improvements to their buildings and managing energy bills in the New Year

At the beginning of 2023, Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) was shortlisted for a Third Sector [award](#) celebrating a project it had undertaken with corporate sponsors Utility Aid which revealed that over half of England's 10,000+ village halls were experiencing [financial difficulties](#) due to increased energy bills.

But out of a crisis, opportunities have emerged. Whilst energy prices have remained high, many management committees secured funding for energy improvements to their building through the [Platinum Jubilee Grant Fund](#).

And in the past month, there have been two more pieces of welcome news. First the government announced it would extend a VAT reduction scheme on the installation of Energy Saving Materials (ESMs) to buildings used for a charitable purpose in response to [feedback](#) from organisations including ACRE. And significantly, a new [VCSE Energy Efficiency Scheme](#) has been announced that will support organisations such as village halls conduct Independent Energy Assessments and apply for capital grants of up to £150k which can be used to retrofit energy improvement measures.

To access the full report please [click here](#)

DOMESTIC ABUSE HELP AND ADVICE



Domestic abuse (DA) in rural areas sadly remains an uncharted territory compared to its counterpart in urban areas. It has been documented that DA lasts on average 25% longer in rural areas. Not an envious position to be in when resources are limited and isolation prevails, empowering controlling, violent and coercive behaviour. Why doesn't the victim get out? This is a common question and the answer to this is varied but the most poignant being the more rural the setting the higher the risk of harm. Rurality and isolation serve the perpetrator and this coupled with a close knit community can deter a victim from speaking out for fear of not being believed and also retaliation. Lack of services also plays a part, but this has been recognised and work here in Essex is ongoing to improve this. These are just a few examples but enough to highlight the difficulties faced by victims of DA in rural areas. It is also important to recognise that some do not realise that they are victims of DA, most common in mental/financial/emotional and coercive abuse cases, whilst others find it hard to come to terms with their situation. This is a complex position to be in as a victim or as a friend who has concerns about someone who maybe suffering,

COMPASS

Compass is an organisation that can help and who are determined to make the change. They want people to know they are here to help no matter where you live and particularly understand the difficulties faced by victims living in rural areas. COMPASS is a local Domestic Abuse Helpline for victims/survivors to access advice and support. COMPASS is open 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The helpline is free and confidential, aimed at anyone aged 16 or over across Essex, Southend and Thurrock. The team can also provide guidance to the public and professionals who have concerns about family, friends and people they work with who may be victims of domestic abuse. To find out more please [click here](#) (with quick exit page)

CLIMATE ACTION REPORT 2022-2023



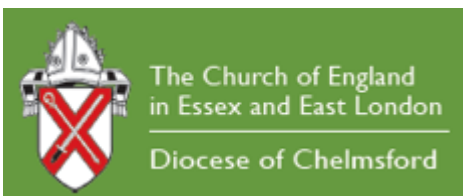
Cllr Peter Schwier, Essex County Council's Climate Czar and Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste Reduction and Recycling, has shared the second Annual Essex Climate Action Report, six months after the announcement of the revised £250 million [Essex Climate Action Plan](#).

The Climate Action Plan was originally published in November 2021 in response to the [Essex Climate Action Commission's](#) report [Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral](#).

This report provides an update on all the hard work that has been going on across the length and breadth of the county of Essex as we continue on our journey to becoming a net zero county.

Included in the report are updates on new Council projects, like the [Carbon Cutting Essex App](#), and the continuation of projects, like the [Essex Forest Initiative](#). Please [click here](#) for a copy of the report.

PLOUGH SUNDAY - INVITATION



Everyone is warmly invited to celebrate Plough Sunday at Thaxted Parish Church, CM6 2PE, on Sunday 14th January 2024 at 11.00am. The Plough Sunday service is offered to support all those who work with the land. The aim to lift the spirits in deep, dark January with God's blessing and the opportunity to enjoy good company and mulled wine. The Thaxted Morris Men will be performing and there

will be a grand Tractor Drive-Past courtesy of Essex Young Farmers! For more information, please contact Agricultural Chaplain, Revd Canon Janet Nicholls: jnicholls@chelmsford.anglican.org