

### RURAL HOUSING ENABLER PROGRAMME BID SUCCESSFUL



[ACRE](#), (Action with Communities in Rural England) is managing a new £2.5m programme created by [Defra](#) that aims to help rural communities secure more small-scale, sensitively designed affordable housing schemes based on an assessment of local need. The programme, which runs until March 2025, will expand the network of Rural Housing Enablers (RHEs) across England. RHEs are professionals working for Rural Community Councils, who encourage communities to consider solutions

for meeting local affordable housing needs, and broker relationships with planners, landowners, and developers to identify suitable sites for development.

RCCE is delighted to confirm it has been successful with its bid to the new RHE programme. This will enable us to expand our rural housing service and we are currently recruiting an additional RHE to join our successful team.

### RCCE ESSEX VILLAGE OF THE YEAR – COMING SOON!



RCCE's Essex Village of the Year competition is returning after an absence of four years, accompanied for the first time by a series of Rural Community Awards for village halls, community enterprises and community and voluntary groups. Full details will be circulated very soon to member parish councils and village halls and will be available on the RCCE website – [www.essexrcc.org.uk](http://www.essexrcc.org.uk)

Essex has a wonderful variety of villages where local people are doing great things to sustain and strengthen community life, much of it through the efforts of volunteers. RCCE wants to celebrate and reward these efforts, especially given the challenges presented in recent years by the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

This year's Essex Village of the Year and Rural Community Award winners will be announced at the RCCE Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 3rd July.

### RCCE MEMBERSHIP EVENING – WHAT WE CAN DO FOR YOU

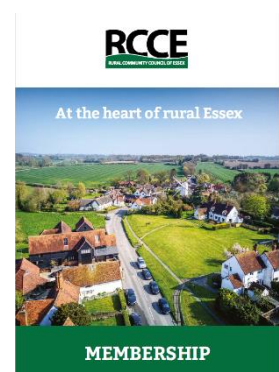


RCCE held a highly successful membership evening at its Feering offices on 14<sup>th</sup> March. The event gave members an opportunity to find out more about the range of services RCCE provides, the categories of membership on offer and the wider benefits membership brings to those who join.

After a series of presentations which provided a snapshot of RCCE services and activities, those present had the opportunity to stay and talk with the staff over refreshments.

The event coincided with the release of a [new booklet](#) which provides more information on RCCE membership, which this year includes an additional category for parish councils that own or manage village/community halls. The membership evening is being augmented by several online meetings for members.

Renewal information for 2024/25 is currently being circulated to RCCE members.



## RCCE GROWING COMMUNITIES – BEE GOOD SCHOOLS COMPETITION RETURNS!



Whether your school is just starting out or looking to develop an established garden, the Bee Good Plot Competition can help **demonstrate the value of gardening, enriching the curriculum**, teaching life skills and contributing to children's mental and physical health. This year it is all about the British Bee and how we can help by supporting these mini beasts that are so crucial to our ecosystem. Growing Communities (GC) is asking our busy bee helpers to create a bee haven for our buzzy little friends to feed, live and prosper. The competition is open to all primary schools in Essex and requires teamwork. All we ask is for the children to think outside of the box with their plot design and encourage schools to promote wellness within their community so that children can explore and enjoy the natural world. GC has some exciting prizes to be won this year including literature for the classroom, Bee Good Hotel and the number one request via our Bee Good Survey that supersedes all other needs, gardening equipment!



To find out more and to enter the competition please [click here](#).  
or alternatively contact Lizzie Rose email: [elizabeth.rose@essexrcc.org.uk](mailto:elizabeth.rose@essexrcc.org.uk)

## RURAL COMMUNITY GREEN SPACES TO BE REJUVENATED THROUGH NEW GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

Defra are creating a new fund that will boost access to nature and support rural communities across England to become more green-fingered. The new Community Green Spaces Fund will provide up to £7 million of funding to support communities across the country - from Northumberland to Cornwall - to create, restore and enhance their green spaces. Grants of up to £75,000 will be

provided to help communities to plant fruits, vegetables and trees, creating orchards and kitchen gardens for all to access and enjoy. Landscaping projects could also create raised beds and improve areas to plant different flowers around village hall facilities and other community green spaces, making space for pollinators and nature to thrive. To find out more please [click here](#).

## CPRE FLOOD MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE



CPRE Norfolk has organised a one-day conference on Wednesday May 22nd at Dereham Memorial Hall to give advice and guidance on steps parish councils can take to reduce the risk of flooding in their local area. Attending will be expert speakers from the Environment Agency and the National Farmers Union who will take delegates through the planning framework, environmental improvement schemes and the role of landowners. Examples of successful flood management measures and

identifying other sources of advice and support will be showcased.

Parish Council Members of CPRE are eligible for two free tickets for this event. Non-members are welcome the ticket cost is £45 (plus booking fee). All delegates will receive a free Flood Management Toolkit with practical information, advice and guidance for your parish council.

For further details and to reserve your place [click here](#).

## RCCE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024 – SAVE THE DATE!



**Date: Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July**

**Time: 6:30pm**

**Venue: Oaks Pavilion, Rivenhall Oaks Golf Centre, CM8 2FX**