

AFFORDABLE RURAL HOUSING: A ROYAL CALL TO ACTION FOR OUR COUNTRYSIDE



An important event took place in April at the historic Coram campus in London, where policymakers, housing professionals, community advocates, and rural champions gathered for a landmark conference on one of the country's most overlooked crises — the chronic shortage of affordable homes in the countryside. Titled “Affordable Rural Housing: Opportunity in Changing Times”, the event was jointly hosted by English Rural and ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) and

featured a keynote address by HRH The Princess Royal, Patron of English Rural.

RCCE's very own Laura Atkinson, Senior Rural Housing Enabler was also among the principal speakers. To find out more please [click here](#). Photograph credit: Matt Pereira Photography / English Rural

RCCE'S ESSEX VILLAGE OF THE YEAR COMPETITION AND RURAL COMMUNITY AWARDS 2025 – ENTRY DEADLINE THIS WEEK



There is still just time to enter this year's Essex Village of the Year Competition which includes a series of Rural Community Awards for village halls, community enterprises and community and voluntary groups. 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 and RCCE wants to celebrate and reward these efforts.

The entry deadline is **Monday 2nd June, but we will accept entries received in the first week of June.**

It is very easy to enter and needn't take a lot of time, just tell RCCE what makes your parish, village hall/community building, group or community enterprise special in no more than 500 words.

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

RCCE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – COMING SOON!



Date: Wednesday 9th July

Time: 6:30pm

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

Guest Speaker: The Rt. Revd. Guli Francis-Dehqani, Bishop of Chelmsford and the Church of England's lead bishop for housing.

Featuring: Presentation of the Essex Village of the Year and Rural Community Awards 2025

WEBINAR – NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING



Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) are holding a webinar on Wednesday 25th June at 7.30-8.30pm via Zoom/Teams to provide guidance to those groups that have a Made Neighbourhood Plan and are considering reviewing it.

This will be a repeat of the very successful webinar that we held in December last year. If you have only recently decided to review your neighbourhood plan or you missed it then or want to participate again and have some questions, then this event is for you. The event is free to members. If you or any of your Councillors would like to participate, please email: enquiries@essexrcc.org.uk We will be issuing a zoom/teams meeting link on Monday 23rd June.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO LEAD LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION



Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) in partnership with Community Climate Action and The Great Collaboration are hosting a Community Climate Action Workshop on **Wednesday 2nd July, Start: 11am until 3pm at the Chelmsford Central Baptist Church on Victoria Road South**. This will be an interactive session designed especially for Parish and Town Councils, Councillors and Clerks across Essex who are looking to strengthen their leadership on local climate action as well as interest groups. To find out more and to book your place please [click here](#).

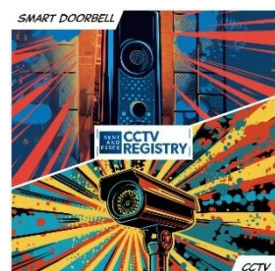
PLANNING GUIDE UPDATE



At the end of April, alongside the CPRE (The Countryside Charity), National Local Association of Councils (NALC) launched an update to one of the most trusted resources for responding to planning applications. 'As planning reforms and rapid development continue to reshape towns and countryside, communities need tools to ensure local voices are heard. The revamped guide is the go-to starting point for anyone who wants to understand – and have a say in – what gets built in their local area'.

To view the update please [click here](#).

HELP KEEP ESSEX SAFE



Do you have a doorbell camera or CCTV?
Your CCTV could help to solve real crimes.

Register your CCTV or doorbell camera and help keep your community safe. You would be contacted if your camera may have recorded a crime in your area. It takes just 60 seconds to register your home or business cameras.

To find out more about how you can help keep your community safe please [click here](#).

GRANT FUNDING OF £3.2 MILLION TO ADVISE CHURCHES ON USING LAND FOR HOUSING



Churches hoping to build affordable homes for their communities on pockets of land that they own — or as part of schemes such as rebuilding parish halls — have been invited to apply for grants to pay for expert advice from a £3.2 million fund from the Archbishops' Council.

The fund will run for five years. Grants of up to £25,000 are available towards the cost of an architect, consultant, and other professional fees needed to assess the feasibility of housing proposals on church land. Grants can also be made to help meet the cost of navigating the planning process.

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

NEW VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR SUPPORT AVAILABLE



New support for the local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) - Your Essex Community - is now available. The VCS in Essex plays a vital role in supporting the health and wellbeing of our communities. The aim of Your Essex Community therefore, is to create a strong sector for the county.

Support is available to VCS organisations of any size and based anywhere in Essex.

Find out more about [Your Essex Community](#) and how to access it. [Youtube video available](#).

COMMUNITY SUPERMARKETS



Essex County Council (ECC) have launched their final two community supermarkets in Uttlesford and Braintree. This means there is now one community supermarket in every district in Essex.

Uttlesford Community Supermarket is mobile and will travel around the district to meet resident needs. It will support local communities in hard-to-reach areas to access affordable, healthy food.

The mobile supermarket will stop in eight locations across Uttlesford.

You can find the full list of days and times [HERE](#).

The Braintree Community Supermarket is the fourteenth to launch. It will be operating from community venues across rural Braintree.

The network of community supermarkets is now supporting over 19,500 residents across Essex. They provide access to good quality, affordable food, toiletries and household items.

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

GOVERNMENT'S SIMPLER RECYCLING POLICY BRIEFING - VILLAGE HALLS & COMMUNITY BUILDINGS - ACRE BRIEFING



The Government has aimed to simplify the approach to recycling by introducing a universal standard to ensure that everything that can be collected for household recycling is collected in every region.

This will not change the duty of care for hall committees, or the classification of village halls set out in earlier legislation. ACRE is aware that village hall committees managing halls across England can be treated differently according to which Local Authority they come under and that Local Authority's interpretation. To read the full ACRE briefing please visit the RCCE website: [click here](#).

GROWING PLACES CONFERENCE



SEEE and Anglia Ruskin University are collaborating to run an exciting one-day conference, 'Growing Places: VCSE and the Inclusive Economy'

Date: Thursday 12th June at ARU's Cambridge campus.

Complete the [expression of interest form](#) and be the first to receive programme details!

INTERESTED IN JOINING US AND USING YOUR SKILLS TO SUPPORT RURAL COMMUNITIES IN ESSEX?



RCCE is always keen to hear from anyone interested in joining its Board of Trustees (governing body), especially if you share our passion for rural communities, have time to give and can bring skills, knowledge and experience that will help us to develop our work.

A trustee is a voluntary, unpaid position although reasonable expenses are covered.

To find out more about the requirements of the role and what we are looking for [click here](#) for our Board of Trustees – guidance for applicants.



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