

Minutes 20th April 2017
Elmstead Parish Council
Community Centre, School Road, Elmstead Market, CO7 7ET

Present: Councillors P Beard (Chairman), N Bell, R Fairweather, B Kavanagh, M Kirby, J Routledge, J Snowden, J Triscott and M Ward
Also Present: Mrs Baxter (Clerk) and 11 members of the public

Cllr Beard opened the meeting with a welcome to the public attendees.

17/067 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Anne Smith sent her apologies as she was unwell. District Councillor Fred Nicholls was on holiday.

17/068 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests and Non Pecuniary Interests

Cllr Beard declared a non pecuniary interest in item 17/076 regarding planning appeal reference APP/P1560/W/16/3160793.

17/069 Approval and signing of the minutes from 16th March 2017.

It was resolved to accept the minutes from 16th March 2017 as true and accurate.
Proposed Cllr Routledge, Seconded: Cllr Fairweather, all in favour.

17/070 To receive an update about the progress of resolutions from the last meeting of the Council on 16th March 2017.

The clerk made a verbal update.

17/071 Public Speaking

It was reported by a resident that all the potholes in Bromley Road have been filled. A resident is concerned that the First Essex Bus number 76 is very unreliable in the morning, the 8.30 is not arriving until 8.45.
A resident asked if the PC have considered spending some of the £10,000 Bluegates donation on a defibrillator for the village.
The PC responded that it had been discussed – the issue has been where to put it. Budgens is a potential location. This is to be added to the May agenda.

17/072 County Councillor report

Not present – see annual report attached.

17/073 District Councillor reports.

Not present. Cllr Beard commented to the attendees that the District Councillors do a lot for the PC and do support us.

17/074 Planning – Church Road, Elmstead (20 houses)

Mr Kevin Coleman, director of Phase 2 Planning & Development Ltd and William Anthony of Knights Developments, will attend to provide an update on the Church Road development.

Mr Anthony will be retiring soon and is looking to sell the site to another developer. Whoever buys the site will have to provide a community centre. He will introduce us to the buyer as soon as he knows who they are, he does have some interest. The process needs to be completed by the end of June.

Although Mr Anthony is retiring he is not jumping ship and will ensure each site he sells is dealt with properly.

It was asked if the buyer would seek to increase the number of houses. Mr Anthony responded that the people he is speaking to currently say they would keep the scheme as it is. However this may change, there is no guarantee. Mr Coleman was asked if he would work with the new developers, he replied that he would if they kept to the current scheme. They were asked what the likely timescale would be to see the new community centre built. They didn't know but said possibly two years.

Mr Coleman and Mr Knight were thanked for attending and providing an update.

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17/075 Market Field Summer Event

The PC have received a request to use Market Field in conjunction with a community centre booking to host a Summer Fair. The organisers will be attending the meeting to answer questions and discuss the event. They are willing to work with the PC to decide what size of event it will be and what attractions will be included.

Gail and Dorota of Eranox Events explained that they have put on events over the last few years, a couple of which were outdoors. They could make the proposed event as big or small as we wish and the PC can specify what kinds of rides and stalls they would like to be included. They could arrange a charity stall to raise money for a village organisation. They have got public liability insurance and all stall and ride owners have their own insurance. They will market the event by leaflets, posters and adverts in the local papers. They guarantee a full clean up and will recycle as much as possible. They would like to do the event as a strawberry fair on 29th July, but they could change this to suit the PC. There would be no entrance fee.

It was discussed that the PC would like to support events for the village. There is the primary school fete on the 1st July so it may make sense to have this event later in August. Parking options were discussed.

It was resolved that the PC were in support of holding this event on the field subject to the formation of a working party consisting of Cllrs Ward, Fairweather and Snowden working with Eranox and reporting back to the PC on the details of the event.

Proposed: Cllr Bell, Seconded: Cllr Routledge, all in favour.

17/076 Planning Applications – for information only

17/00367/OUT: Turnip Lodge Farm Turnip Lodge Lane Elmstead Colchester Essex CO7 7BD. Outline planning application for one detached bungalow. No PC comments made.

17/00542/TPO: 51A Church Road Elmstead Colchester Essex CO7 7AW. 1 No. Cedar - Dewooded. Remove badly pruned lower limbs. Slightly reduce some lateral limbs.

Planning Determinations

APP/P1560/W/16/3160793: Land to the East of Tye Road, Elmstead Market, Essex. Outline planning application for residential development of up to 32 dwellings, land for a community facility and associated parking and infrastructure.

It has been suggested that the PC write to the Planning Inspectorate regarding this decision.

It was discussed that the some of the Planning Inspectorate's decision comments were incorrect. For example he stated that the Tendring Local Plan was in its early stages, when it is in its later stages. In fact, some applications are being turned down because they are not in line with the anticipated Local Plan. He also left the matter of the Tye Road footpath and necessary width of Tye Road to be dealt with at the reserved matters stage. It was discussed whether the PC should write to the Planning Inspectorate but resolved that the PC would take no further action for now, as it won't make a difference and the time to make our arguments regarding the footpath will be at the reserved matters application.

Proposed: Cllr Routledge, Seconded: Cllr Kavanagh, all in favour (Cllr Beard did not vote due to his non pecuniary interest)

For information only:

APP/P1560/W/16/3164433: Land to The North of Bromley Road Bromley Road Elmstead. Residential development of 0.4ha of land to create 5 detached dwellings with associated garaging and parking. Appeal dismissed.

APP/P1560/D/16/3165583: The Cottage Broad Lanes Elmstead. Demolition of cottage and erection of four new dwellings. Appeal dismissed.

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17/00027/OUT: Avonleigh House Clacton Road Elmstead Colchester Essex CO7 7DA. Proposed 5 dwellings. Approval – Outline.

It was noted that building work has started on the 32 houses on Clacton Road, opposite Beth Chatto and the 6 houses adjacent to Clacton Road car park. It was also noted that the application for 62 houses on School Road has gone to appeal.

17/077 **Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community**

Feedback from Cllrs Bell and Routledge following the meeting with consultants on 9th April

Cllr Routledge: Demonstrated a map that showed the latest plan that had been discussed in the workshop she attended with Cllr Bell. It was not the final plan, but part of the consultation process. Cllr Routledge showed that the green buffer between the development and Elmstead is just under 1km. Cllr Routledge expressed several concerns; 1) That the map showed some development south of the A133. The attendees at the workshop told the consultants there should be nothing south of the A133 in order to have a cohesive garden community, so the consultants are to come back with a revised plan. 2) That the mixed use centre is on the main road (A133). 3) People from the East of Colchester want the Salary Brook valley protected, so they want the new housing moved over the hill, which will put pressure on the green buffers. 4) The number of houses – the proposal is now for 9,000 houses over 20-30 years. It was previously 7,000 houses and Cllr Routledge believes it should go back to being 7,000. This would be a good size for the intended community, provide good facilities and there would be less pressure on the surroundings. The workshop attendees were against and shocked by the number of houses.

The consultants will produce their final proposal and then the planning departments will decide.

It was discussed as to whether we should write to the consultants about our concerns. It was resolved to circulate the map to the PC to review before the May meeting, to invite our District Councillor Carlo Guglielmi to attend our May meeting to talk about this development and to decide then whether to write a letter of our concerns.

Proposed: Cllr Beard, Seconded: Cllr Kavanagh, all in favour.

17/077-1 **Public Right of Way from Clacton Road car park to Park Farm**

Any update?

The clerk had received a call from TDC planning enforcement. The developers have made an application to move the PROW slightly and it has been agreed by TDC. The application will then go to ECC who will do a consultation on the PROW change.

J17/078 **Finance**

To look through the finance report and approve the payments for April. See appendix 1.

It was resolved to accept the finance report and approve the payments for April.

Proposed: Cllr Routledge, Seconded: Cllr Kirby, all in favour

17/079 **Market Field – Joint User Agreement Obligations**

i) Agree “no dog fouling” signs,

Cllr Bell has received 2 quotes for a 10x8 (A4) sign of £15 each. Both companies are in Elmstead Market. The wording was discussed and it was agreed to change the line saying “continued dog mess could result in the closure of the field”, to “could result in the permanent exclusion of dogs from the field”.

It was resolved to agree the signs at the cost of £15 each.

Proposed: Cllr Bell, Seconded: Cllr Triscott, all in favour.

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ii) Appoint a volunteer team to regularly inspect the field and

It was resolved to appoint Cllrs Bell, Beard and Ward for a 3 month trial period to inspect the field and see how much dog mess is being left.

Proposed: Cllr Bell, Seconded: Cllr Beard, all in favour.

Cllr Beard said that he only found one mess after the two week Easter School holiday, which is not bad.

iii) Agree the keyholder contact number to be posted on the gates

It was resolved to put the PC office phone number on the gates.

Proposed: Cllr Beard, Seconded: Cllr Kavanagh, all in favour.

17/080 Streetlights

Cllr Fairweather is to provide a report with details of costs of upgrading the PC owned light to LED and the potential cost savings.

Cllr Fairweather's report proposed that the PC upgrade all of its streetlights to LED at a cost of £2,835, with an anticipated cost saving of £650/year at current electricity prices with additional potential savings on maintenance costs. The PC budget will have £1,500 allocated in reserves for LED lights in 17/18.

Cllr Routledge has ascertained that the bats prefer a warmer light in the LED spectrum.

The upgraded unit that A&J lighting (our contractor) can supply is in the range 4000K – 4500K which is classified as Natural Light.

It was resolved to agree to the above proposal with the remainder of the expense to be taken from general reserves.

Proposed: Cllr Fairweather, Seconded: Cllr Routledge. All in favour

Cllr Fairweather was given an estimate last October of £375/light from a company in Cambridge, which is more expensive than the quote from our maintenance contractor used for the proposal in the report. Cllr Fairweather is to seek an additional quote for comparison purposes.

17/081 Spring Rubbish Pick Up

Does the PC wish to organise/coordinate a Spring clean for the village? Which areas to concentrate on, when to do it and how to get people involved?

It was discussed that the PC has a handyman who litterpicks most of the village, there are some outlying areas that collect rubbish though. Tye Road, Bromley Road and the layby on Colchester Road were identified as problem areas. The clerk is to ask Mr Dingwall how far up Bromley Road he collects rubbish. The clerk is also to try and report the areas of concern and see if TDC will clear them. At a later date the PC may look again at an organised litterpick.

17/082 Speedwatch

An update

Cllr Routledge: no-one has volunteered for Speedwatch despite an article in Upmarket calling for people to help. There is one previous new volunteer who needs training.

Cllrs Kavanagh and Snowden asked to be added to the list of volunteers to be trained. Cllr Routledge will contact the coordinator to ask if they can be trained.

It was suggested that the Speedwatch coordinators advertise a date when they can demonstrate what they do to anyone interested. The details be included in the next Upmarket article.

17/083 Village Plan

Cllr Beard to discuss the status of the village plan and to discuss next steps for the plan.

Cllr Beard asked if any of the councillors felt strongly about any of the items on the village plan would they be prepared to take responsibility for them. Cllr Snowden

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offered to take on the Carnival and May Fair for 2018 and Cllr Triscott offered to help. This will be added to the May agenda.

17/084 Electoral Review of Tendring – Draft Recommendations

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has published draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Tendring District Council. There is an eight-week public consultation on the Commission's draft recommendations on new ward boundaries across Tendring District Council. Elmstead is proposed to be in the "Ardleigh, Alresford and Elmstead Ward" (which encompasses Great Bromley, Frating and Thorrington too) with 3 District Councillors.

The consultation closes on 8 May 2017. Does the PC wish to comment?

This was discussed and it was resolved to make no further comment as the PC has already provided its input to the LGBCE.

Proposed: Cllr Beard, Seconded: Cllr Bell, all in favour.

17/085 Risk Assessment

To agree the basic risk assessment. This is a working document to be improved and updated on an ongoing basis.

Cllr Routledge had updated the current risk assessment with some proposed changes. The changes were agreed and it was also agreed to add in to the document that we are to look into a fireproof cabinet for the more important documents stored in the office.

Proposed: Cllr Beard, Seconded: Cllr Ward, all in favour.

17/086 Village Image

To discuss what improvements could be made.

Cllr Kavanagh proposed that he approach the owner of the business units at Old Forge Court and ask if it's possible that the swing signs are taken in overnight. This would improve the look of Elmstead and allow the grass to grow back.

Cllr Snowden declared a pecuniary interest in this item as she is owns The Old Forge Café, one of the businesses in this location.

The above proposal was agreed. Proposed: Cllr Kavanagh, Seconded: Cllr Kirby, all in favour (Cllr Snowden did not vote).

Cllr Kavanagh also felt that there was too much on the North Green, spoiling the view over the green and to the memorial. For example the yellow salt bin could be relocated behind the bus stop out of sight.

Cllr Kavanagh was asked to put together a proposal for how to improve the appearance of North Green and this will be put on the agenda for May.

17/087 Residents' complaints regarding neighbour's overgrown tree

To agree the wording for a letter in response to communication received from the neighbour. Does the PC wish to take any other action?

There was a discussion as to whether the PC should be involved with this issue beyond sending a response to the letter we received from the neighbour. Cllr Bell felt that we should wait for the results of a possible survey on the tree and that might generate another meeting. Other councillors felt that this letter should be our last involvement. A change was suggested for the wording of the letter and it was then agreed to send this letter to the neighbour. Proposed: Cllr Routledge, Seconded: Cllr Kirby, all in favour.

17/088 PC Meetings

To discuss refreshments, heating and if the length of the meetings requires other arrangements.

It was agreed to hold over this item until the May meeting.

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- 17/089** **TDC Local Plan Meeting at the Community Centre 4th July.**
To discuss.
The hall has been hired from 2pm – 8pm. Cllr Routledge is to contact the organizer and find out if they are doing any marketing for this meeting.
- 17/090** **Communications** *Items of interest for inclusion in our June Upmarket report in addition to Cllr Routledge's report.*
To include the above item, TDC Local Plan meeting details. Cllr Beard suggested that Cllr Snowden send Cllr Routledge some wording regarding the 2018 events of item 17/083.
- 17/091** **Items for next agenda or for information only**
None

**There being no further public business councillors were thanked for their attendance.
The meeting closed at 10.15pm.**

Date of next Parish Meeting: Thursday 18th May 2017

To be held in the Community Centre, School Road, Elmstead

Minuted by Mrs. A Baxter

20th April 2017

Contact: elmsteadparish@gmail.com

01206 827139

Signature

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Appendix 1

Elmstead Parish Council Finance Report

Closing Balances to 31st March 2017 are:

Current Account to Bank Statement Ref 830	£21,183.34
Total uncashed cheques	£465.67
Total of expenses below (April payments - request for approval)	£494.35
Balance in current account after April expenses	£20,223.32
Deposit Account to Bank Statement Ref 153	£27,714.65
Active Saver Account (Bluegates Donation)	£10,057.39
Estimated Overall Closing Balance - Current and Deposit	£57,995.36

Income Details for March 2017:

Total income for March 2017	£0.00

Approval is requested for the following payments:

Elmstead Community Centre – hall hire March x 2	£32.00
EALC & NALC Affiliation Fees 17/18	£376.41
Cllr Bell – dog bags	£4.94
Cllr Bell – mileage for attendance at TDALC meetings May, July, Sept, Nov 2016, 19 mile round trip. 4x19@£0.45/mile	£34.20
Cllr Bell – attendance at Speedwatch Meeting, Essex Fire Headquarters, Rivenhall, 42 mile round trip 42@£0.45/mile	£18.90
Cllr Beard – attendance at Mileage to attend Chairman’s training in Great Dunmow – 4/2/17 – 62 miles @£0.45/mile	£27.90
Total Cheques	£494.35

Report prepared by A Baxter – Clerk & RFO
 19th April 2017

Notes

- 1) First instalment of Parish Precept received 3/4/17 £16,001.01
- 2) EALC/NALC Affiliation Fees have increased by £10.90 = 3%

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ECC Annual Report 2016/2017

Governance and Finance

The new Municipal year begun with a Cabinet re-shuffle following Cllr Roger Hirst's successful election as the new Police and Crime Commissioner for the County.

The main changes being:

Cllr Simon Walsh, taking on the Environment and Waste portfolio.

Deputy Leader Cllr Kevin Bentley took on responsibility for public sector reform and strategic partnerships.

Cllr John Spence, Finance, was given additional responsibility for Planning and Housing, a new IT and digital transformation Cabinet position was also set up which saw young Cllr Stephen Cunning entering the Leadership team.

Cabinet Members

Name	Portfolio
Cllr David Finch	Leader
Cllr Kevin Bentley	Deputy Leader, Infrastructure and Economic Growth
Cllr John Spence	Finance, Housing and Planning
Cllr Eddie Johnson	Highways and Transport
Cllr Anne Brown	Corporate, Communities and Customers
Cllr Dick Madden	Adults and Children
Cllr Ray Gooding	Education and Lifelong Learning
Cllr Graham Butland	Health
Cllr Simon Walsh	Environment and Waste
Cllr Stephen Cunning	IT and Digital Transformation

ECC will see an overall reduction of 84% in Government support over the next four years. Set out as part of the 'Four Year Settlement' provided by Government, the Council will see its support grant reduce from £118 million in 2016/17 to £18 million in 2019/20.

This 84% reduction comes on top of a 49% reduction already made over the last three years. Over the period of the settlement, it is expected that inflationary pressure on services will increase by 12%, while changes to demographics and increases in population will mean an additional £352 million of pressures by 2020.

Essex is a growing and ageing county, and the Council needs to come up with different ways of doing things; there is already an excellent record in making savings, with more than £520million already been taken out of its budget, therefore it will not be easy to meet this challenge head on.

Realistically in the years to come, the Council is going to look and feel very different - services will need to be provided in different ways, there will be more collaboration with partners, commercial and trading opportunities will be maximised and some areas will be delivering services for themselves rather than relying on the council.

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In Essex more than £1million a day is currently spent on Adult Social Care. This figure is increasing, and at the same time we are seeing a rapid increase in the older population. Over 85s currently make up over 51% of users in Adult Social Care. Over the next 10 years this will grow by 50% - and in 20 years' time, the money we are spending on adult social care today would only cover care for the over 85s.

In the 2017/18 budget to Full Council on Tuesday 14th February, the Leader highlighted how, despite a reduction in government funding, the council will be spending:

- £524m on adult social care
- £127m on children and families
- £668m on education and lifelong learning
- £233m on highways, infrastructure and public transport
- £92m on health

His speech set out the ambition to more than double the local economy to £60 billion by 2025, which will be achieved by raising skills and qualifications by investing in schools and further education; improving transport infrastructure to help people travel across the county more easily; supporting local businesses to grow through investment in innovation centres; and investing in new and affordable housing.

The council has also taken the decision to implement the Government's Social Care Levy, increasing council tax by 3%. This will raise an extra £17m to support vulnerable residents, in recognition that this is the biggest area of pressure for the local authority, with the older population set to grow by 21%.

In the quest of delivering services in a different and more economical way ECC organised "The Smart Essex Digital Summit" at the BT Tower in London on 27th February 2017.

The event brought together senior leaders from visionary organisations including BT, Google, Dell, Eurovia, Huawei, Microsoft and Anglia Ruskin University as well as representatives from public sector organisations.#

During the summit, different themes were explored including how technology can impact on people's lives and streamline public services. Companies at the forefront of digital transformation also showcased some of the great work already under way in the UK and abroad where digital is changing lives, work and the environment around us.

The aim was to redefine how a digital strategy can support public services in today's challenging financial times and drive economic growth to meet the needs and aspirations of a changing and growing population, which will be launched later this summer.

Highways

The 2016 summer verge cutting took place in May when a gang of up to eight tractors worked on the Essex road network; around 6,100 miles of verge were cut during the summer programme and engineers also treated weeds by spraying them in some more urban areas to limit the damage they can cause by growing through the surfaces.

Highways staff will trim the county's roadside verges twice. The first cut is to a minimum width of three feet; the second will be up to 18 feet wide in particular spots, to ensure that the areas close to road signs, street lights and other obstructions are cut with trimmers.

The cutting programme includes verges next to roads and pavements, as well as vegetation on central reservations and anywhere growth affects sightlines at junctions.

A new hospital stop for Colchester Park and Ride was launched in November 2016 for staff, patients and visitors to Colchester General Hospital, by buying a daily, weekly or monthly

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ticket them to and from the hospital from 7am to approximately 7pm, starting at £3 daily and discounted fares for under 16s. Concessionary pass holders qualify for free travel after 9am. The stop will be situated on the Northern Approach Road, off J28 of the A12 just a short walk from the main entrance.

Detailed ticket and timetable information is available online at www.essex.gov.uk/parkandride

A consultation on dualling the A120 between Colchester and Braintree was launched in mid-January 2017, giving a choice of nine possible options for a new stretch of road; these had been distilled from numerous alternatives.

Upgrades to this road are long overdue and results of the consultation will be announced later this year.

The number of potholes on local roads dropped by a fifth following major investment; Pothole numbers on these local roads throughout Essex dropped from 4,954 to 3,961. Crews fixed more than 3,200 potholes, with fewer potholes developing thanks to a record-breaking road surfacing programme over the summer.

The improvements came as the Government awarded ECC an extra £1,869,000 for Essex as part of the national Pothole Action Fund for the financial year 2017/18.

.To report a highways issue, please visit www.essex.gov.uk/highways

The Council is progressing well in its programme of replacing all streetlight to LED, with 10,000 energy-saving LED streetlights now been installed across the county.

These are the first phase of a £9.2 million programme to replace 19,000 conventional lights with LEDs on main roads and junctions in Essex.

Converting these all-night streetlights to LEDs will save Essex taxpayers an estimated £600,000 each year as LEDs use less electricity and last longer.

.Another benefits will be fewer failures and longer lasting lamps, thus drastically cutting maintenance costs

Braintree, Colchester and Tendring will be next as part of the programme.

A new facility has been set up on the Council's website to find out if your road is set to be resurfaced this year.

The full roads resurfacing programme from April 2017 to March 2018 is now available to check on the highways information map at www.essex.gov.uk/surfacing . More precise dates will also available on www.roadworks.org

The map allows residents to see every road scheduled for an upgrade superimposed on a map. A colour code then shows what type of road surfacing will be used.

This is all part of a move to make highways information more easily available online, partly because of the many calls from the public asking when their road is due to be resurfaced, and partly to be more informative.

Despite a cold snap creating more potholes over the Christmas and New Year period, the number of potholes on local routes is down from June last year (2016).

The number of potholes on local routes dropped from 4,954 in June last year to 4,733 at the end of March 2017.

You can now tell us about a highways issue quicker and easier thanks to our newly improved website at www.essex.gov.uk/highways

Communities

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Essex County Council has retained its ‘excellent’ rating for embedding equality and inclusion into its work, which was announced at a meeting of the authority’s Full Council on Tuesday 10th May 2016.

Inspectors from the Local Government Association (LGA) which looked at every aspect of the Council, assessed how the organisation works with local communities and partners embedding equality and inclusion.

Essex is one of only two county councils in England to be reaccredited as Excellent – Leicestershire County Council is the second.

Essex is a diverse county with many different communities and faiths; the culture of equality and inclusion has always been the ethos within the Council and the inspectors not only spent time with officers but also went into out into the communities and were clearly impressed with some of the work that is happening across the county; they made particular reference to the partnership work done to tackle domestic abuse, the work undertaken to support the community in adopting, and the introduction of work experience opportunities for young people with autism

The Council once again run the very popular Community Initiatives Fund (CIF) with the usual deadline for expressions of interest at the end of August 2016.

Applications are welcome from community groups, sports clubs, parish councils and charitable organisations within Essex (excluding Southend and Thurrock).

Successful projects from previous years include new play equipment, village hall refurbishment, community gardens and allotments, nature reserves and village signs. The fund helped over 160 community groups last year, and awarded around £100k per districts and boroughs.

The Community Initiatives Fund is a great example of how Essex County Council is encouraging and supporting communities, and for more information and details on how to apply for funding www.essex.gov.uk/cif

On Thursday 2nd June 2016 Colchester Library and was launched as the most up to date model of Community Hubs in Essex, offering residents a very wide range of vital community services under one roof, such as most registration services, Council Tax and benefits advice, library services, housing support, clinics promoting health and wellbeing, Colchester Community Voluntary Services and a brand new sensory corner all under one roof.

Community hubs, such as this one, will be the future way in which ECC will bring together services to make them more accessible, whilst saving money for the taxpayer.

Essex County Council’s £27.7 million Independent Living programme received Ministerial recognition in December.

The Council’s innovative approach towards housing and care for older people was hailed as an example for other local authorities to follow.

Around 2,000 Essex residents will benefit from ECC’s £27.7 million investment in the programme to meet demand for housing options that can support and enable older people to live independently.

The new Independent Living homes will be created around the county between now and 2021.

The investment will enable eligible older people in the county - who would otherwise be housed in residential care, or receive domiciliary care in a home of their own that may no longer meets their needs - to live independently.

ECC is working with all district councils to identify suitable land for development to meet local demand for Independent Living housing.

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The first new Independent Living scheme, Rosebank Park in Harwich, features 70 one and two bedroom flats and will open in January 2017.

The second initial scheme, Beaumont House in Walton-on-the-Naze, features 60 one and two bedroom flats and will open in spring 2017.

A third scheme, in Saffron Walden, will feature 73 one and bedroom flats and will open in early 2018.

To be eligible for Independent Living housing, an individual must be aged 55 or over, require six or more hours of care each week and have a connection to the area where the scheme is located.

The Police Crime Commissioner Consultation launched a consultation for Joint Governance with Essex Fire Service

The new Policing and Crime Act 2017, which received Royal assent in January offers the opportunity to transform local fire and rescue governance, enabling police and crime commissioners to become the fire and rescue authority where a strong local case is made. The Government has also created a statutory duty to collaborate.

This new duty requires emergency services to keep collaboration opportunities under review and to take on collaboration opportunities where it would be in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness to do so.

Essex is the first County in the UK where a Police Crime Commissioner has produced a business case to shared governance between the Police and the Fire Service. The consultation, which started on Thursday 16th February, will run until Wednesday 10th May. The financial benefits on a ten year span will be just over £30million, which are calculated through

1. Sharing of estates better joined up service delivery.
 2. Shared business services such as HR, IT, and Finance management.
 3. Joint procurement.
 4. More effective service response and improved Public Safety.
-

The Essex Energy Switch has continued its success; this year nearly 6,000 Essex residents registered for the scheme and will be benefitting by a substantial; reduction on their energy bills.

After successful switches over previous years, residents and businesses in Essex have already saved over £2million on their gas and electricity bills, which averages out to well over £200 on a normal household bill.

To find out more and to receive your offer, visit: essex.gov.uk/energyswitch

Trading Standards

Rogue or doorstep traders, scammers and faulty used car sales are three of the biggest issues combatted by Trading Standards in Essex, who once again are fighting conmen, tricksters, and anyone with defrauding intentions.

They have released a series of animated videos to help to avoid the most common tricks con-artists use, Essex Trading Standards has.

Animations

Rogue traders: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sZom540ipY>

Scams: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLipNSm0tP4>

Used cars: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZJokCCFU9Q>

These animations are a very useful way to raise awareness of the dangers of rogue or doorstep trading, scams and buying a used car. Some traders operate purely to con residents

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out of their money; they receive more complaints about used cars than anything else, so hopefully the animation will stop people being taken for a ride when purchasing a vehicle. If you need any work carried out on your home it is recommended you use a trader on the Buy with Confidence Scheme. A Buy with Confidence trader has been audited and approved by Trading Standards and you can find the nearest three to your postcode by calling 03454 040506 or visiting buywithconfidence.gov.uk

Every year thousands of Essex residents are targeted by scam through **emails, phone calls and letters with fake prize draws, lotteries, offers and competitions, rogue tree surgeons** who cold-call on doors.

For further information visit essex.gov.uk/Pages/Be-sure-at-the-door.aspx

If anyone is concerned that someone is being targeted please call Trading Standards on 03454 040506

As ever everyone is urged to use a “Buy with Confidence” trader, as everyone on this scheme has been audited and approved by Trading Standards.

For more information about Buy with Confidence call 03454 040506 or visit buywithconfidence.gov.uk

Education

Application period open for primary school places for children starting reception from September 2017 once again opened online at www.essex.gov.uk/admissions between 14th November 2016 and 15th January 2017, with late applications, submitted after the deadline on 15 January, to be considered once all on-time applications have been determined.

Parents, as usual were encouraged to use all four of their preferences and use the website to search for the school information and check admissions criteria.

Attendance at schools in Essex is at its highest since records began; statistics for the autumn and spring terms in 2015/16 were once again improved by showing the percentage of sessions missed in state-funded primary schools in Essex was **3.7%** – above both the national and East of England averages, which were **3.9%**

The figure means Essex enjoys its best ever ranking of **29th** out of **151** local authorities.

At secondary level, the percentage of sessions missed in Essex was **4.8%** compared with **5%** nationally and **4.9%** for the East of England, meaning the county remains ranked **54th**.

The Council launched a new programme to encourage former teachers back into the classroom; according to the latest Department for Education statistics, about 14,000 former teachers return to the profession in England every year.

The intensive course is suitable for both primary and secondary-trained teachers and is free to participants, which aims to get them ready for a post starting in September and will include three full days of professional development, covering curriculum changes and classroom management, as well as support with job applications and interview preparation.

A record number of children who are due to start secondary school for the first time in September have been offered their parents’ top preference of school.

More than 15,000 parents in Essex discovered on 1st March the outcome of their secondary school applications. Although the county continues to grow, the council’s investment in creating new school places means an all-time high of **87.58** per cent of pupils have been offered their parents’ first preference of school – a **1.6** per cent increase on last year.

A further 6.78 per cent have been offered their second preference, meaning 94.36 per cent have been offered either their first or second preference.

More than 200 new special school places will be created in Essex after the Government approved plans for two free schools and encouraged a formal bid for a third.

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Under the proposals, Market Field Learning Community, based in Elmstead Market, will open and run Chatten Free School – a new 75-place special free school for children aged 3 to 19 who have autism with severe or the most complex learning needs.

A location for the school has yet to be finalised but it is likely to be in mid Essex, and the academy trust hopes it will be open by September 2018.

The council, which hopes the school would create about 70 places for children with social, emotional and mental health needs, will now invite bids from academy trusts interested in running it.

Any final decision on the proposal would be subject to agreement between the Secretary of State and the trust.

The announcements are a huge boost for the county and come as Essex County Council continues with its own record investment in special schools.

About £85million, including £42million from the Essex Schools Forum and up to £43million of capital funding from the council, has been allocated towards creating more special school places in the county over the next three to five years.

A record 89.37 per cent of children due to start Reception in September have been offered their parents' first preference – up from 87.40 per cent last year discovered the outcome of their primary school places applications on Tuesday 18th April 2017. A further 6.23 per cent have been offered their second preference, meaning an all-time high of 95.60 per cent have been offered one of their top two preferences – compared with 94.08 per cent in 2016.

Having already spent millions of pounds creating more than 5,500 new school places during the last two academic years, a further 2,200 more are due to be available from September.

The council has also allocated £230million for creating about 13,000 more mainstream school places in Essex by September 2019.

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This year's figures in full:

- 89.37% of parents have been offered their 1st preference
- 6.23% of parents have been offered their 2nd preference
- 1.80% of parents have been offered their 3rd preference
- 0.79% of parents have been offered their 4th preference

Waste

The Council decided this year to tackle the growing problem of waste from Essex businesses which gets illegally left at recycling centres, leaving taxpayers with a disposal bill running to hundreds of thousands of pounds.

'Man with a van' operators offering cheap rubbish clearance, property developers and independent building and home improvement trades have swamped many sites. Local facilities have seen the amount of DIY and construction waste alone leap by over 50% in the last two years.

The current plan to improve recycling centres meant that from the 31st October 2016 about half of the county's sites no longer allowed vans or multi-axle trailers in and will no longer offer any disposal facilities for DIY and construction waste.

The remaining sites still offer access to residents who only have access to a commercial vehicle, but will place strict limits on how much DIY waste can be disposed of. Vans and pick-ups will be under greater scrutiny though, and those identified as bringing in waste from any kind of business activity have been refused entry and owners may be liable to prosecution.

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The taxpayer could not continue to pick up the bill for businesses which don't dispose of their waste properly. These operational changes have stopped people unlawfully disposing of business and trade waste, whilst still provide the facility for residents to dispose of their legitimate DIY waste when carrying out ad-hoc work at home themselves.

For more information, please contact Carla Johnson – Carla.johnson@essex.gov.uk tel: 03330 131891.

A review of this new Policy will be carried out in June 2017.

Signature

Date