

ECC Report May 2023

Councillor Jill Reeves appointed new Chairman of Essex County Council

A new Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Essex County Council have been appointed at this year's Annual Council Meeting.

At the Full Council meeting of 16th May 2023 Councillor Jill Reeves was welcomed as the new Chairman supported by Councillor Ray Gooding as the new Vice-Chairman.

Councillor Reeves has been a County Councillor since 1985, representing Hadleigh Division since 2005, and before that Benfleet Division.

During this time she has served on a variety of committees including chairing Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee for many years. She chairs the Member Development Steering Group and previously chaired the Scrutiny Board. Cllr Reeves has also been a member of the Development and Regulation Committee.

Cllr Reeves has been married to Richard for 43 years. She has lived in Benfleet her whole life, where the couple share their home with three Golden Retrievers.

Cllr Jill Reeves said: "It is an honour to accept the position of Chairman and I am proud to continue serving the residents and communities of Essex as the new Chairman of Essex County Council.

"We have heard today of the continuing ambitious programme set out by this County Council and I very much look forward to working alongside the Leader and Cabinet to raise the profile of the Council and the role it plays in supporting communities across the county."

Cllr Gooding has been a councillor since 2005, representing Stansted Division since 2009. He is the Chairman of the Scrutiny Board and the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee.

Essex Library Service secures Working to Become Dementia Friendly recognition

Essex Library Service has achieved Alzheimer's Society's Working to Become Dementia Friendly recognition.

The status applies across all 74 libraries in Essex. It recognises our commitment to improve the experience of people living with dementia, as well as their families and carers, when using Essex libraries.

Alzheimer's Society looked at what we've done to improve our service to people affected by dementia. This includes:

- **training employees and volunteers**
- **a commitment to helping employees and volunteers become Dementia Friends**
- **setting up dementia groups in libraries**
- **making links in communities with relevant partners**

Councillor Louise McKinlay, Essex County Council Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance, said: "Essex Library Service is immensely proud to achieve this recognition from the Alzheimer's Society. We have been working closely with them to make our libraries Dementia Friendly and have developed a plan to keep improving as we move forward.

"By making our libraries more accessible, we can help people living with dementia, as well as others who may have additional needs, to remain part of the community, be more active in the local area and live better, more fulfilled lives."

To find out more about Working Towards Becoming Dementia Friendly Recognition, email dementia.team@essex.gov.uk

To learn more about the [dementia support available in Essex](#) and the [support provided by Alzheimer's Society](#) please click the two links.

LEGO® in libraries project launches in Essex

An exciting project was launched on 16th May 2023 in Essex, giving children the chance to develop their problem-solving, literacy and coding skills.

The project, funded by Essex County Council, is bringing LEGO® Education kits into libraries in priority Levelling Up areas across the county.

LEGO® Education SPIKE™ Essential kits use a combination of relatable LEGO® minifigures and blocks, alongside Lenovo Chromebooks, to challenge young learners aged 6-11.

As well as encouraging children to develop their problem-solving skills using science, technology, engineering, arts and maths (STEAM) concepts, they will also get the chance to learn how to code.

Free, bookable LEGO® in libraries sessions will launch in libraries in Basildon, Canvey Island, Colchester, rural Braintree, Harlow and Tendring from 30 May. These [must be booked at here](#).

LEGO® in libraries is jointly funded by two of the council's programmes, Digital Essex and Multiply in Essex. Digital Essex is working to overcome the causes of digital exclusion, which include access, affordability, and adoption of the skills needed to use digital technologies.

Multiply offers courses to help Essex residents improve their maths skills at work and at home. Free Multiply courses are available across every area of Essex to help parents and carers feel better able to support their child with their schoolwork. There are also courses available to help people manage their personal finances and increase their confidence using numbers in the workplace.

Cllr Louise McKinlay, Deputy Leader of Essex County Council, said: "LEGO® in libraries is a great new opportunity for children in Essex, not only to develop their English and maths skills, but also their digital ICT skills. In addition, it helps them to become familiar at a young age with using different forms of technology, all while having fun!"

Find out more about [LEGO® in libraries visit the website here](#).

100,000 streetlights replaced with LEDs in Essex

Essex Highways has installed 100,000 new LED streetlights across the county.

LED technology is replacing older lamps, with most upgrades taking place on residential roads. This is part of the final phase of the street lighting upgrade

project. This will see older bulbs replaced with LEDs across Essex, helping save energy and taxpayers money.

Compared to older bulbs, upgraded LED lights save around 75% energy, making the upgrades more efficient. Plus, the new lights will last up to 20 years without needing a replacement, saving taxpayers' money.

Councillor Lee Scott, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, said: "The streetlight upgrade programme is a significant project and the progress made so far in bringing more efficient and environmentally friendly lighting across Essex has been impressive.

"Despite a number of global issues affect the supply of LEDs, the team have worked hard to secure stock and continue the rollout and I am confident every residential streetlight across Essex will benefit from new, more efficient lighting by next year."

Major events including the pandemic and the war in Ukraine caused a global shortage of components, delaying phase four of the upgrade programme. However, the work is on track to be completed by March 2024.

Find out more about the [LED replacement programme](#) in Essex.

Essex Highways launches 2023/24 resurfacing programme

Resurfacing works on many roads in Essex are now in full swing as the warmer and drier spring weather sets in.

Essex Highways has launched its 2023/24 programme to upgrade the condition of many roads across the county. This will repair some of the damage caused by the cold and wet winter conditions.

Essex Highways' budget for maintaining and repairing the carriageway across Essex over the next year is over £35 million. This does not include the £9 million additional investment announced in February, which has now been allocated to the following works:

- **£3.46 million for road resurfacing**
- **£4 million for two member led footways schemes, where members will prioritise funding across their districts**
- **£1.54 million for carriageway patching**

An extra £1.2 million has also been allocated to Local Highway Panels for resurfacing. Additional crews have also been put in place to support Essex Highways teams deliver maintenance and repairs across Essex.

Cllr Lee Scott, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, said: "The additional investment allocated to fixing Essex's roads is a clear commitment from Essex County Council to ensuring damage caused by the winter is repaired and roads are maintained.

"It's exciting the resurfacing programme is now underway and is being supported by additional crews secured to help with the volume of work required to repair roads the width and breadth of the county and increase the visibility of the service as these repairs are carried out."

Essex Highways' engineers inspect and record the condition of all roads on the network. This ensures the highest risk jobs are prioritised for the safety of the public.

There are five main resurfacing methods that are used across Essex:

- Surface dressing is used where the surface is in reasonably good condition but needs sealing to stop water damage. A large area can be covered very quickly and once completed it can last up to ten years.
- **Micro surfacing** is a more durable process which places a thin layer of a completely new surface on the road. It takes longer to cover a given area than surface dressing but is used where roads are busier and the surface needs levelling off.
- **Machine resurfacing** involves removing the existing surface, and a completely new surface is laid. It is a slower process but is very effective in places where the road is badly worn and is required to take heavy traffic.
- **Recycling** is used in limited areas where the condition of the road is only slightly less than desired, and a very durable new surface can be laid. It is easier to re-use existing materials rather than bring in new stone for this method.
- **Joint and crack sealing** is necessary to stop water damage to the underlying surface. The road surface type will determine which method will be used.

[Find out more about resurfacing works and where they will be taking place.](#)