

County Council

Highways Issues

It's that time of year when our service teams have to grit roads if necessary. There are 5,100 miles of roads in Essex, and 40% of them are gritted. You can find out more about the service www.essexhighways.org/winter-travel and even track the gritting trucks.

It's also that time of year when restrictions on cutting hedges/trees are lifted. Most of these are on privately owned land, and housing associations, farmers and home owners are responsible for the maintenance and have a duty of care to cut back if overhanging the highway.

I do keep an eye on local roadworks and act if there is likely to be an issue, e.g., I got recent road closures on Hospital Approach amended because of the chaos it created. Note the closure of Wheelers Hill & Cranham Road due to commence 20th October for 102 days. If you are wondering about the reason, it is because the consultation for the Longfield Solar Farm received many comments about the roads' suitability for bringing in materials, so a condition was added to widen them.

Pylons

Despite the negative feedback from 4 consultation exercises, NGET push on to blight our rural Chelmsford with ugly pylons. And the Labour Govt are making sure that the planning pathway is smooth and limits the ability to object. NGET submitted an application for a DCO 29th August 2025. The Planning Inspectorate has now accepted this for examination. The application documents are available to view on the [Planning Inspectorate's website](https://www.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/). This includes a Consultation Report providing responses to the feedback submitted during the 2024 statutory consultation and the targeted consultations earlier this year. There will be an opportunity to register as an interested party with the Planning Inspectorate. Registering means you will be able to have your say on the application and take part during the examination. Registration closes 27th Nov.

Having looked at the website, I can see that there appears to be no change to the last proposal which has a shorter pylon right next to Chelmsford Road. The NGET justification for this was to address the comments about visibility of the taller pylons from a distance. But the shorter pylons have less span and an extra one was added and one being located next to the road. We should strongly oppose this.

I continue to use all democratic avenues to oppose the pylons that will go through 9 of my 11 parishes! I am also working with the Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk Pylons group to formulate and lobby for response from ECC, City Council, parish councils, our combined parish council group and MPs along the route.

Local Govt Reorganisation – LGR - Update

ECC/12 DCs/Southend Unitary/Thurrock Unitary have made a single application but with 4 options – two 4 Unitaries, a 5 Unitary option and a 3 Unitary option.

The favoured option from ECC is the 3 Unitary model of north, mid and south Essex.

The Govt will then decide on whether to consult on these 4 options (or fewer) which will run from Nov 25 to Jan 26

Music Licences

Because of the traffic chaos around the Gt Leighs Racecourse, on the weekend of 4th July, Essex Police requested a reduction in attendance licence from 30,000 to 5,000. I attended and spoke at the licence review, having met with the racetrack event organisers before the review meeting and arranged a call with the police requesting the review, and speaking to City Council Licencing Officer and Public Nuisance Officer. The decision was to reduce the licence for "music led events" to 10,000 but events of over 5,000 will trigger the requirement for an event management plan and additional conditions. If the racetrack can demonstrate events over the next 2 years, do not result in the same problems, they may apply for an uplift.

LW, GW, Leighs and CGR residents will be aware that Wheelers Hill have applied for an increase of licence from 3,000 to 5,000. I know that when this first started operating, there traffic plus public nuisance issues, but improvements were made. The application represents a significant increase and I have made comments to the Licencing dept and so will be able to speak at the meeting.

Community Initiative Fund

This year's Essex Community Initiatives Fund (CIF) is now open for applications, and is offering grants of up to £10,000. [Applications to the fund](#) should be made before the closing date of Friday 28th November 2025.

The pot is available to voluntary organisations, community groups, residents' associations, as well as Town and Parish Councils. Last year over £200,000 was distributed, with a similar amount available this year.

This year, two kinds of grants are available:

- Grants of up to £10,000 are available for projects designed to strengthen local communities.

- Micro grants of up to £1,000 are also available to help reduce social isolation, improve wellbeing or encourage communities to connect. The micro grants can also be used to support organisations to build and develop their capabilities and skill. [Applications to the micro grants fund](#) will remain open until all the funds for these are allocated.

The CIF aims to help strengthen local communities and make Essex an even better place to live, work and visit. In recent years, the fund has supported projects such as:

- upgrades to sports facilities
- improvements to community buildings such as new heating systems or accessible toilets
- transport
- staff costs for projects or maintenance
- IT systems or support

Applications can be made by:

- constituted clubs or membership organisations
- community groups and voluntary organisations, residents associations, constituted neighbourhood committees and management committees
- charities and trusts
- social enterprises
- community interest companies [CIC's]
- community benefit societies
- Town and Parish Councils

The fund is administered by Essex Association of Local Councils on behalf of Essex County Council.

Opening date announced for new Beaulieu Healthcare Centre

The new Beaulieu Healthcare Centre will be opening its doors on Monday 10 November 2025, ready to provide local patients with a wide range of healthcare services.

The new-build healthcare centre will operate as a branch surgery of nearby North Chelmsford Healthcare Centre. It will open to the practice's existing patients as well as new patients wishing to register.

New patients can register through North Chelmsford Healthcare Centre by visiting [How to register – North Chelmsford NHS Healthcare Centre](#) or by contacting the practice on [0300 123 3366](tel:03001233366).

S.143 Notice served by ELS on Eagle cottage.

Enforcement of that S.143 Notice is on hold by Essex Highways pending the outcome of the application to the court for permission to seek judicial review. Such an application is unlikely to be treated as urgent and thus with no fixed time for a response, it is likely to take several months.

Grant to VH

I have made a grant to GWVH from my Locality Fund, for a projector and remote controlled screen.

City Council

Local Plan consultation

The Labour Govt demanded that Chelmsford review their Local Plan to show a build rate of 1400 dwellings per year (around 60% higher than the current plan) to support their unrealistic ambitions of 1.5M new homes in the UK in their parliamentary term. And the Lib-Dems readily comply with a draft new plan to meet these kind of figures. But, it's not going well. Already, approved planning applications seem to be delayed in starting - with building companies hit by inflation, extra NI costs, material increases. Furthermore, plans for redevelopment of the Meadows (which included new dwellings) have been shelved because the development company went into liquidation). And the Beaulieu Park development is hit with delays because the very same Labour Govt have cancelled the A12 widening project (including the Boreham Interchange improvements) which is a planning condition for the Beaulieu Park development. The net result is that CCC are revising the Local Plan with potential increases in sites above and beyond what was suggested (and consulted on) in the new paused plan. The decision to re-run the consultation has already been made at Cabinet meeting, but the proposed changes to Local Plan have not yet been revealed. The new sites and any expansions, will be considered at 6th Nov Policy Board, and so will be revealed when the agenda is issued 29th Oct. I will get a briefing on this on 28th Oct.

Tree Giveaway

CCC Tree giveaway 2025 is now live, and ready for residents to claim their free tree.

The Tree Giveaway is part of 'Our Plan' - Greening Chelmsford Strategy. This year, there are 1,200 trees available, and residents can choose between: Wayfaring Tree, Crab Apple, Silver Birch, and Whitebeam. From (6 October), until 6 November, Chelmsford residents can claim their tree to collect in late November as part of National Tree Week 2025.

To claim a tree, and find out more information, residents can go to: [Tree Giveaway - Love Your Chelmsford](#)

The scheme is/will also be promoted through:

- Love Your Chelmsford e-newsletter
- The City Life website
- Social media pages (Facebook/Instagram) for the main Council, and Love Your Chelmsford sites.
- On site poster cases (a copy of this poster attached for reference, members are welcome to share this should they wish).
- A separate email is being sent to all Parish councils

If residents encounter any issues, they can contact us via: Services.Parks@chelmsford.gov.uk