

## MALDON DIVISION MONTHLY UPDATE– COUNCILLOR JANE FLEMING

### SUPPORT WITH THE COST OF LIVING

If you are facing hardship, you can get help with your essential household costs. [View our range of services to support with the cost of living](#) for those struggling with rising costs. You can find support for:

- energy costs
- childcare costs
- household costs

You can also find [simple tips on how to save energy](#) and reduce your bills with the 'It All Adds Up' campaign.

### WARM WELCOME IN ESSEX LIBRARIES

Essex Libraries Warm Welcomes are back for another year. At this time of year people can feel alone, with dark nights drawing in and increasing costs to heat homes, and we want to help.

That's why we're hosting 'Warm Welcomes', in all our libraries across the county. To help bring the community together and provide support when most needed.

Our Warm Welcomes are where you can come along, enjoy a hot drink and utilise all the library has to offer. Just fancy a sit down in the warm with cuppa and a good book? That's fine! Want to come in, grab a coffee and have a chat? Great!

Warm Welcomes are all about being of benefit to each and every individual. No booking is required, so you can just turn up. Passing by and feel like you could do with a chat? Come on in!

In addition, there are special Warm Welcome events in some of our libraries. Come and join us for a Warm Welcome and find out all your library has to offer! [Click here to find a Warm Welcome near you.](#)

## INCREASED GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR ROAD MAINTENANCE

The government has announced that [Essex will receive £121 million for road repairs and resurfacing](#) between now and 2034.

The funding, which has been reallocated to Local Authorities across England from the HS2 scheme, will ensure the road network across Essex will receive repairs and help towards maintaining the condition of the roads across the county.

This follows the additional investment of £17.4 million Essex County Council allocated to highways in this year's budget. This is currently being used to carry out additional works across the county.

More information is available on the [Essex Highways website](#).

## ESSEX AIR WEBSITE

A new website has been launched to raise awareness of air pollution in Essex and highlight the simple actions people can take to reduce emissions and help protect themselves and their families.

The [EssexAir](#) website includes a dedicated school zone and two interactive online games to help young people learn about air pollution. It also features a pollution map and tips to reduce your exposure to air pollution.

[Visit the new EssexAir website](#) to access the interactive [air pollution map](#) and tips to help reduce your emissions and exposure to air pollution.

## 70 NEW ON STREET CHARGING POINTS TO BE INSTALLED ACROSS ESSEX

A series of new electric vehicle charging points will be installed after charge point operator Qwello UK were appointed to roll out the county's first on-street charge point scheme.

The charge points will be installed from early 2024, with Qwello responsible for ongoing operation and maintenance.

The initiative will provide about 70 new chargers in 30 locations across the county, including Chelmsford, Colchester, Maldon, Braintree, Harlow and Epping.

The charging points will be installed in various urban and rural locations to help understand what works best and where.

## ESSEX EXPLORER PASS

Explore some of the incredible green spaces in Essex as many times as you like throughout the year with an Essex Explorer Pass. Enjoy free parking at seven country parks and 10% discounts at many cafes and visitor centres within the parks.

Discover the beautiful places on your doorstep and beyond! [Order your Essex Explorer Pass](#) and quote code 'Jan24' to get 13 months for the price of 12.

## ESSEX YEAR OF NUMBERS – DJ CLASSES

As part of the [Essex Year of Numbers](#), the Essex Music Education Hub are hosting free 'Count Me In' music production and DJ skills sessions.

Students can get hands on experience of using DJ decks, producing their own music and can develop their understanding of the music industry. Classes are available in Basildon, Brentwood and Harlow from Monday 15 January. Find more information and [register your interest in the DJ classes](#) online.

## ESSEX LOCAL OFFER

Essex County Council are committed to improving the Essex Local Offer for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND).

Thanks to residents' suggestions, we continue to add quality SEND support services, groups and activities to the website all the time. [Visit the Essex Local Offer online directory](#) to see some of the new services added recently.

## WINTER ON THE ROADS

Now the winter weather is here, Essex Highways crews are busy gritting the roads. The weather over the next few months will impact on the condition of the roads. Residents are likely to only see

Essex Highways teams out repairing emergency issues on the roads. [Report issues on the roads](#) through the report it tool.

## FREE COURSES TO SUPPORT FINANCIAL WELLBEING

Financial wellbeing is important. That's why ACL is here to support you with budgeting and helping you build your confidence to make the most of your money. Courses include:

- reducing portion sizes to cut down waste
- managing your electricity metre readings
- helpful money saving tips

All courses are free, [book an ACL course](#).

## FREE EMPLOYABILITY COURSES WITH ACL

Finding a job can be hard and there could be a number of reasons why you feel like you aren't progressing. ACL provide a range of courses to help with every step of your job search, from deciding the career you want, to improving your employability skills. [Enrol on a free ACL course](#) today.

## NEXT STEPS FOR WASTE STRATEGY

Over 4,500 people had their say on the [draft Waste Strategy for Essex](#). The survey feedback, alongside other factors, will help develop a final version of the Waste Strategy for Essex. A full report will be published shortly.

## ESSEX TRADING STANDARDS – SAFE SHOPPING ONLINE

Shopping online is convenient and if you follow a few simple rules can be safe. However, you should always be aware of the steps you should take to protect yourself and your money. Be aware of credit card fraud, fake online stores, misleading item descriptions and intrusive tracking of web activities to deliver advertising within your browser. Here are some simple steps to follow:

- do your research, only purchase from reputable shopping sites, check consumer reviews and look for an address and phone number for the company
- be suspicious of unsolicited emails offering fake bargains with links that direct through to malicious sites
- don't click on links within emails, ads, tweets or Facebook posts unless you are 100% sure they're legitimate - roll over links with your mouse or finger to see the destination web address and always look for a padlock symbol in the address bar of your browser and the "https://" prefix denoting a secure connection
- beware of free public Wi-Fi and think carefully about using any unsecured network to perform important transactions
- separate your passwords - always use a password that's new and unique when setting up a new account
- double-check all details before confirming payment including; postage/handling costs, when payment is required, when the item will be shipped, can it be tracked and the returns policy should there be any problems. When transacting with an international site, check the currency you'll be paying in, the exchange rate and if any sales duties or taxes will be applied
- print out a hard copy (or take a screen shot) of the order confirmation page as this may be handy later on as proof of purchase, check your bank statement carefully to ensure the correct amount was debited
- use a credit card or PayPal as these provide greater protection than other payment methods, be wary of sites that insist on Western Union transfers or direct bank deposit and never supply credit card details to a company via email.
- secure your PC and mobile devices and ensure you have the latest updates installed and that you're using up-to-date antivirus software

If you've been the victim of a scam report it to [Action Fraud](#) on 0300 123 2040 or if you're having issues with an on-line purchase help is available via the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133 or online through the [Citizens Advice website](#).

## ESSEX TRADING STANDARDS – RENTAL ADVANCE FEE WARNING

Essex Trading Standards are aware of cases in Essex where prospective tenants either fell victim to a letting scam, or narrowly avoided losing money to fraudsters posing as private landlords.

Criminals are taking advantage of the busy private rental market and would-be renters that are looking to save money by dealing directly with landlords and not paying commission. However, fake landlords can be waiting online to advertise properties that they don't own and will provide a false address for themselves.

We understand that good privately rented property can be hard to find. Fraudsters also know this, which is why they seek to take up-front fees for properties they don't control, for example to guarantee a viewing. Don't be tempted. See the [Action Fraud advice](#), and let Trading Standards know if you are suspicious about landlord or agent practices, via the Citizens' Advice Consumer Helpline **0808 223 1133**

## M11 JUNCTION 8 IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

Work on the M11 Junction 8 improvement scheme is continuing to progress, with Dunmow Road now re-opened to traffic. The overall scheme is progressing well, with the bulk of the works due to be completed by Christmas and some elements in the new year. Following the completion of landscaping the works will be complete by Spring.

Once complete, the scheme will help improve journeys in the local area, through increased capacity, making it easier to travel between the M11/A120 and London Stansted Airport, Bishop's Stortford, Birchanger Services and Takeley.

For more information please visit the [scheme webpage](#).

## ARMY & NAVY JUNCTION UPDATE

Plans to transform the Army and Navy junction in Chelmsford and improve sustainable travel options in the city have taken a huge step forward after [Essex County Council was conditionally awarded £69million of Government funding](#).

The proposed [Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package](#) includes a hamburger roundabout (a new roundabout with a road through the centre of it) at the Army and Navy junction in Chelmsford, bus priority measures and walking and cycling improvements at the junction itself and on the approaches to and from the roundabout. The package also includes a 350-space expansion of Sandon Park and Ride, and a 500-space expansion of Chelmer Valley Park and Ride.

Planning applications are due to be submitted in the coming weeks.

## NEW BEAULIEU PARKWAY BRIDGE IS OPEN

[A new bridge](#) connecting Chelmsford's new relief road with the re-aligned Boreham Interchange has now opened.

The opening of the bridge, funded and delivered by Countryside and L&Q (the developers of Beaulieu in Chelmsford), marks the final stage of the developers' £35 million infrastructure programme to provide a new relief road between the A12 and the A130.

The new bridge is 161 metres long and provides a more convenient link between the A12 (Junction 19) and the A130 (Essex Regiment Way). It will also provide connections to the new [Beaulieu Park Station](#) and Section 1A of the [Chelmsford North East Bypass](#).

Work on the new Beaulieu Park Station is also progressing well and last month Network Rail released a [timelapse video](#) showing the progress made so far.

## SINGLE USE VAPE DISPOSAL

There are two good reasons why we should recycle disposable vapes:

- they contain precious materials
- they hold a battery which can cause a fire

You can now take disposable vapes to any [Essex County Council recycling centre](#). Put them in the dedicated vapes bins and the materials will have a new life!

Remember to [book your slot](#) to visit the recycling centre