

Cllr David Finch – Parish Update

June 2013

1. I was delighted to receive a letter of support from Number 10 in recognition of Essex County Council's pioneering work on the Whole Essex Community Budget (WECB) programme. There are tough challenges ahead, and this is just the beginning of the journey. On behalf of the County Council, I'm committed to collaborating further with our partners to tackle those challenges through just the kind of innovative, 'whole systems' approaches that the Prime Minister has acknowledged.
2. ECC has written an open letter to Essex businesses asking them to support the Essex Apprentice scheme and take on a young person and to follow in the footsteps of other Essex companies that have helped support over 2000 young people since the scheme launched in 2009. Essex County Council statistics show that apprenticeship starts increased by 87% in 2011, compared with a national average of 21%, which shows that Essex County Council is committed to providing apprenticeship opportunities and young people in Essex are aware of the opportunities available.

Essex County Council is offering businesses in the following sectors a £2500 grant as a wage subsidy to take on an apprentice:

Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths (STEM)
Health & Social Care
Creative & Digital
Energy
Engineering

3. At the beginning of this year, Essex County Council announced that it will be offering computers to charities and voluntary groups across the county to support their work in Essex communities. Essex County Council is currently undergoing an Information Services Modernisation Programme and as this project evolves there are a number of computer devices that no longer meet the business needs of the council. The devices that are no longer required are cleaned of all data and then charity licensed software is loaded ready to be re-used. This incurs no cost to Essex County Council. The scheme offers the opportunity to support voluntary bodies through the use of equipment which is very much in demand.

Essex County Council is also working closely with The Princes Trust to deliver this Scheme and they are delighted at the progress made already to help and support local charities and voluntary groups. This scheme may benefit organisations that manage pre and/or after school clubs, older people schemes for ICT literacy or to provide digital access for those who may be currently excluded.

4. The new Cabinet was agreed at the Full Council meeting on 14th May:

Leader – David Finch

Transformation and Support Services – Derrick Louis

Waste and Recycling – Roger Walters

Families and Children – Dick Madden

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Infrastructure – Kevin Bentley

Libraries, Communities and Planning – John Jowers

Highways and Transportation – Rodney Bass

Education and Lifelong Learning – Ray Gooding

Public Health and Wellbeing – Ann Naylor

Adult Social Care and Health Integration

5. Essex recycling rates are on the rise yet again, with 52.6% of all household waste now being recycled, composted or reused. The level of diversion from landfill is the highest ever achieved across Essex and continues the recent record of year on year improvement. This demonstrates the commitment of Essex residents to new recycling services introduced by local councils.

Not only is more being recycled and composted, but the total amount of household waste being produced by Essex households is actually going down. Over the past year the amount of waste generated has fallen by over 7500 tonnes (approximately 1.2%), saving over £500,000 in landfill disposal costs.

The continued improvement in recycling rates across the county is a tremendous achievement, however the hard work does not end here, as our aim is to reach 60% recycling.

Last year we spent £19.56m on landfill tax alone in Essex, so we all need to keep reducing our waste and recycle, compost and reuse as much as we can. Essex councils will continue to provide the very best recycling services, as we work together to strive for continuous improvement.”

There are a number of ways that Essex residents can waste less and recycle more – from making the most of food leftovers, home composting and reuse, to recycling more unusual items through kerbside collections and recycling centres. For inspiration visit www.recycleforessex.co.uk or like Recycle for Essex on Facebook – www.fb.com/recycleforessex

6. After the successful launch of the county’s ‘Live Local, Love Local’ campaign, by Visit Essex, the county’s tourism organisation, thirteen new local tourism attractions and organisations have joined as members.

The ‘Live Local, Love Local’ campaign aims to increase awareness amongst local people as to what Essex has to offer as a visitor destination, the experiences they can enjoy on their doorstep as well as an increase in the sense of civic pride in the

county. After their popularity last year, the Visit Essex team once again linked up with attractions, hotels and restaurants from all across the county to produce an exclusive chequebook of discounts, worth over £450, designed to help local residents get out and discover the gems that are on their doorsteps for a little less.

There are so many wonderful attractions across the county and this is a fantastic way of enabling people to go out and see them for themselves.” county has to offer. The ‘Live Local, Love Local’ discount cheques are available to pick up at libraries, TICs, train stations and all major attractions and accommodation establishments or alternatively, you can visit www.visitessex.com/livelocal to download the vouchers.

7. The new Essex Youth bus has been officially opened at the end of May. The new Essex Youth Bus will be used as a tool to engage with young people throughout the county, specifically to those areas where communities have little or no youth provision. Mobile units such as this have been used by the Essex Youth Service in various forms for many years. The bus is equipped with the tools to provide a number of informal and social education programmes to young people. It also has a confidential space which can be used for sexual health advice or to discuss confidential issues. The bus is a safe place that young people can go to for help, advice and guidance.

The Essex Youth Bus will predominately cover the South areas of Essex but it can and will be used across the county when needed.

8. On 6th June I was honoured to speak at a conference on social investment being held by the G8 - the group of the world’s eight wealthiest nations. As part of the UK’s G8 Presidency, Prime Minister David Cameron asked for an event on social impact investment in order to push the agenda forward, grow the social investment market and increase investment.

As the first local authority to explore social investment, I hosted a workshop on the benefits of social investment bonds (SIB) and explained why Essex has chosen to introduce this approach. The Essex SIB is a means of financing interventions targeted at vulnerable people on the edge of care with the simple aim of keeping them out of care. The bond will fund intensive work with families experiencing difficult times and with complex needs, working with around 380 young people with the aim of keeping families together, not apart.

Social investment is exciting to Essex. It is exciting because it provides a new means of raising funding to deal with social problems at a time when our finances are under pressure and our sources of income falling. Essex’s social investment bond aims to divert young people away from the care system, to improve their social outcomes and life chances.

9. May 2013 was “Scams Awareness Month” – a national campaign organised by the Citizens Advice Bureaux and Trading Standards. Scams are schemes to con people out of their money. They can be carried out in a number of ways: post, phone, email, online or sometimes via a knock on the door. Scams take different

forms such as fake lotteries, prize draws, bogus health cures, dodgy investment schemes, pyramid selling and phishing. New scams are emerging all the time but the best piece of advice we can give is 'if it sounds too good to be true it probably is'."

For information about Scams Awareness Month visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk and also Check the Action Fraud alerts for common scams www.actionfraud.police.uk/news.