

ECC Report June 2016

New Chairman announced

Cllr John Aldridge was elected as the new Chairman of Essex County Council for the coming year.

County Council Member for the Broomfield and Writtle Division since 2005, Cllr Aldridge takes over the post from the outgoing Chairman, Cllr Norman Hume.

Cllr Aldridge was very honoured to be elected as Chairman of the Essex County Council, and said that following on from his two years serving as Vice Chairman, he wished to acknowledge the outstanding contribution to the County of Essex by his predecessor, Cllr Norman Hume.

The role of Chairman of the County Council dates back to 1889, when the County Council was formed, and there has been a long tradition of service to the community and it is his aspiration to follow in that tradition and the example of his predecessors.

Amongst his priorities he will promote entrepreneurial skills at all levels whilst also seeking greater recognition for all those voluntary groups and carers that make such a major contribution to the wellbeing of the residents of Essex.

During his time as a County Councillor, Cllr Aldridge has served as Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and as Chairman of a number of Council Committees.

He has also served on a number of outside bodies including the Anglian Eastern Regional Flood & Coastal Committee, Chelmsford Youth Strategy Group, the County Council's Network, Chelmsford Local Highways Panel and as Chairman of the Epping Forest District Locality Board.

Changes to Council Cabinet

At the same Full Council meeting changes to the Cabinet were also announced, following Cllr Roger Hirst's election as the new Police and Crime Commissioner for the county.

The changes will see Cllr Simon Walsh, member for Thaxted, join the Cabinet and take on the new Environment and Waste portfolio. Deputy Leader Cllr Kevin Bentley will take on responsibility for public sector reform and strategic partnerships. Cllr John Spence will take on additional responsibility for Planning, while IT and digital transformation will move under the Leader's portfolio.

Cabinet Members

Name	Portfolio
Cllr David Finch	Leader
Cllr Kevin Bentley	Deputy Leader and Economic Growth and Partnerships
Cllr John Spence	Finance, Housing and Planning
Cllr Rodney Bass	Infrastructure
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

Deputy Members

Cllr Anthony Jackson (Property and Project Assurance)

Cllr Stephen Canning (Digital Innovation)

Cllr Penny Channer (Broadband and Enterprise)

Cllr Ricki Gadsby (Creative Economy and Skills)

Cllr Mick Page (Planning and Rural Affairs)

Cllr Ray Howard (Local Transport and Parking)

Cllr Malcolm Maddox (Age Care)

Cllr Sue Lissimore (Early Years and Customer Service Improvement)

Cllr Susan Barker (Health Living and Wellbeing)

Cllr Kay Twitchen (Sustainability)

Cllr Malcolm Buckley (Waste Reduction)

Colchester Community Hub opens after revamp

A newly redesigned community hub has been officially opened in Colchester on Thursday, 2 June offering residents a number of vital community services under one roof.

Colchester Library and Community Hub have undergone a month-long transformation to incorporate a wide variety of services within a vibrant ground-floor space.

Colchester Institute design student Fiona Morris won a competition to redesign the ground floor of the building and was on hand to see her plans come to life which are colourful and creating a very good sense of space.

The redesigned venue offers residents 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, are a great way to bring together services to make them more accessible to the public whilst saving money for the taxpayer.

This building offers a brilliant resource from library books and housing support to tips on how to stay healthy.

The work was completed by local company Carmelcrest, as lead contractor, and Axis Europe who undertook the redecoration for free as part of their commitment to community work.

For more information on the transformation work please visit www.colchester.gov.uk/transformation

Registration services now live across the county

Residents can now register a birth, death or notice of marriage at 18 conveniently placed community hubs across Essex after the final venues went live.

Essex County Council is creating pioneering new community hubs across the county offering a range of services under one roof.

The community hubs allow registration services to share space within pre-existing libraries and other community venues, such as town halls; they are a common sense solution to towns where different council services are dotted about in a number of separate buildings.

Each community hub is unique and will offer different local services depending on the need in that area.

There are initiatives in the pipeline of exploring sharing space with police, district council services and voluntary services at a number of locations to make the best use of public buildings as well as saving money for the taxpayer.

The new registration points are:

- Basildon Library
- Braintree Library
- Brentwood Town Hall
- Burghstead Lodge, Billericay
- Chelmsford Library
- Clacton Library
- Colchester Library and Community Hub
- Dunmow Library
- Epping Library
- Halstead Hospital
- Harlow Library
- Harwich Library
- Maldon Library
- Rayleigh Library
- Rochford Library
- South Benfleet Library
- Uttlesford District Council Office
- Witham Library

Appointments can be booked quickly and easily online or by calling 0345 603 7632.

In yet another move to simplify and improve services, residents can also now request a copy of a birth, death or marriage certificate online which can then be posted directly to their home.

The service is now live 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through the Essex Record Office and is available at

<http://www.essexrecordoffice.co.uk/services/registration-certificates>

Tendring gets ready to Beat the Street

Tendring is set to play host to an exciting new initiative called 'Beat the Street' – a six-week challenge that encourages participants to get active.

Beat the Street will turn the Tendring District into a real-life game and local people will be challenged to form a team and see how far they can walk, cycle or run within the timeframe.

Participants will be able to log their journey by tapping cards against 100 sensors called 'Beat Boxes', which will be found on lampposts across the area, approximately half a mile apart.

The challenge will run from Wednesday, 8th June to Wednesday, 20th July and is funded by Essex County Council with support from Tendring District Council and Active Essex with the main aim being to get healthier and have fun, as well as helping families become more active and encourage people to become more engaged in their local community.

The benefits of Beat the Street are clear; walking for just half an hour a day, five days a week, can dramatically improve health and reduce the risk of developing illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes.

The project also further reinforces the Council's commitment to promoting physical activity that local people can enjoy, regardless of their level of ability

There will be great prizes of Decathlon vouchers for the teams that travel the furthest and the teams that clock up the highest average points per person. There is also the chance to win weekly 'lucky tap' prizes just for taking part. People of all ages can take participate and players can win prizes for themselves and their community team.

Beat the Street Tendring was launched on 25 May at Whitehall Academy and it is designed to inspire people to be physically active, with the intention that they will continue these lifestyle choices beyond the competition.

For more information about Beat the Street, visit beatthestreet.me/tendring or get involved by searching for Beat the Street Tendring on Facebook or @btstendring on Twitter.

- Regular physical activity is known to improve 23 long-term conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, cancers, dementia, depression and anxiety. Taking exercise also helps improve the health of those who already have these conditions.
- Following the Beat the Street competition in Reading 2015, a survey showed that eight out of ten people thought that Beat the Street helped them be more active (84%), walk more than usual (78%) and feel healthier (78%).
- In 2016, more than 50,000 people have already played Beat the Street in Hounslow, Wolverhampton and Birmingham plus Beat the Street Sandwell which is funded by the National Charity Partnership, a collaboration between Tesco, the British Heart Foundation and Diabetes UK.
- Active Essex is hosted by Essex County Council. Their vision is “To create a more physically active and sporting environment for all people in Greater Essex to enable everyone to participate in the activity of their choice at their chosen level”
- For further details of activity in your area visit the activity finder on www.getactiveessex.com

Trading Standards gets animated about fraudsters

Rogue or doorstep traders, scammers and faulty used car sales are three of the biggest issues combatted by Trading Standards in Essex. To help you avoid the most common tricks con-artists use, Essex Trading Standards has released a series of animated videos.

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 out of their money, and although Trading Standards are experienced in dealing with these issues we still need everyones's help to ensure that family member, friend or neighbour does not become a victim.

Trading Standards 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 anyone is concerned that someone is being targeted please call Trading Standards to report the issue.

Rogue traders

Be Sure at the Door is a partnership between Essex Trading Standards, Essex Police and Age UK encouraging elderly residents to say no to cold calling rogue traders.

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

Scams

Essex Trading Standards will launch their Too Good to Be True scams campaign this summer. Every year thousands of Essex residents are targeted by scam through emails, phone calls and letters with fake prize draws, lotteries, offers and competitions.

These scams will often ensnare people by promising a very tantalising prize for a very low fee, but it doesn't take long for those small payments to add up. Trading Standards #2Good2bTrue campaign advises: if it looks too good to be true, it probably is.

Used cars

Some used car dealers may mislead potential customers or cover up issues with a car to make a sale. Trading Standards receives more complaints about this than anything else.

The used car animation gives examples of actions a consumer can do to make sure the car they are buying is fit for purpose.

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

Rogue tree surgeons

Trading Standards are also warning residents to be vigilant about cold calling, with regards to rogue tree surgeons currently operating in Essex.

Rogue tree surgeons have been reportedly knocking on doors and leafleting residents in order to obtain business. Trading Standards have been passed leaflets from these traders containing false business names and addresses.

Cutting down trees is a specialist occupation, with companies required to be trained, health and safety qualified and possess permits for the disposal of waste. Some trees may also have preservation orders, with strict restrictions placed on their maintenance that qualified tree surgeons would be able to navigate.

Rogue tree surgeons will often offer services at a bargain price, which will then escalate as the work continues, adding on extra costs, such as waste disposal.

The advice to residents is never to agree to repairs or maintenance with traders who knock at your door. These are the sales tactics of a chancer, not a reputable trader.

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