

ECC Report September 2019

Stars in hard hats feature in government Road Heroes campaign

Men and women working to keep Essex roads safe for everyone are featured in short films produced by the Department for Transport, which was launched on Friday 6th September.

The films are part of a Government campaign called 'Road Heroes', highlighting the often-unsung work our staff do to keep our highways safe and fit for purpose.

Councillor Kevin Bentley, Essex County Council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, said:

"Whether they are fixing potholes, resurfacing whole roads or repairing street lights, staff have to work in all weathers throughout the year, often at night. One thing that has changed over the years is the total priority now given to safety for the workers and the public – too many roadworkers across the country used to be killed and injured. Nowadays the job is still inherently high risk, with live traffic often just a few feet away, but modern equipment methods and training are helping to bring the workforce home each day, safely."

He added: "All of us tend to take our roads for granted, forgetting that as traffic gets heavier, roads wear out faster. We also tend to complain at the inconvenience of roadworks for a few hours, forgetting that the road will then be improved for years afterwards. The people who do the work, and the behind-the-scenes teams, deserve not just our respect but our active appreciation, for a job done in difficult conditions."

The Essex films highlight a plea to report potholes so we can repair the worst ones quickly. Reporting using our online service www.essex.gov.uk/highways ensures it goes straight to the Highways Inspector's tablet computer. One innovation on trial in Essex is an asphalt recycling machine which re-uses material dug out from the potholed surface, heated and re-laid, saving material and travel time and so money.

Spencer, one of the employees featured, talks about his career progress, including qualification as an HGV driver, which gives him a key role in the team as well as more earning opportunities. Several of the current and recent directors and senior managers at Essex Highways started their career laying black stuff, gaining valuable experience on the front line of keeping the county moving.

Follow the #RoadHeroes day on Friday at <https://twitter.com/transportgovuk> and for local insights on <https://twitter.com/essexhighways> @EssexHighways

**Essex Trading Standards urge residents ‘be sure, at the door’ to
combat rogue traders and doorstep scammers**

Beware of rogue traders and doorstep scammers – that’s the message this autumn from Essex Trading Standards.

In Essex, over the past 18 months there have been more than a hundred reports of doorstep incidents which have led to financial loss incurred by residents. Sometimes victims are repeatedly targeted resulting in significant individual financial losses.

Figures from 2017/18 show the average age of victims of this type of crime is 71 and the average financial loss to each victim is £8,960.

Essex Trading Standards have issued advice to residents concerned about dealing with traders when they need household work completed. This advice is:

- Choose a ‘Buy With Confidence’ accredited trader – to find a reputable trader approved and vetted by Trading Standards visit www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk
- Obtain several quotes
- Get written quotes detailing exactly what work will be carried out, how much it will cost and what the terms of payment are.
- Take your time to make sure you’re happy with what you’re undertaking
- Ask a trusted friend/relative for advice
- Ask to see identity.

Residents are also advised to be aware that a genuine trader who comes to your house, will not:

- Call without an appointment
- Ask you or offer to take you to the bank to withdraw cash or make a money transfer
- Ask you to pay in full before the work is complete
- Insist that you decide about the work they’re offering to do on the spot
- Bully or scare you into doing the work.

For general help and advice or to report a problem with a trader that is not immediate telephone the Citizens Advice Consumer helpline on 03454 04 05 06

If you are concerned about a trader who is already at your house call 999 immediately.

To underline all this advice a new short film has been co-produced by Essex Trading Standards, to raise awareness of rogue traders and doorstep scammers.

The film, Rogue Trader, a co-production with Chelmsford-based film company Deadline Communications, stars actor and singer Lee Mead, known for his starring

roles in Casualty and Holby City, and winner of the 2007 BBC talent contest Any Dream Will Do.

In the film, a young man, played by Lee Mead, has a dawning realisation that an elderly relative is being viciously scammed.

Cllr Susan Barker, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Customer, Corporate, Culture and Communities, said: "We believe in building stronger and safer communities.

"As such, it is great that Essex Trading Standards are taking a lead in raising awareness of rogue traders and doorstep scammers. Educational material, such as this brilliant video, helps to shine a light on this important issue and protect residents."

The full film Rogue Trader will be available to view from Tuesday 10th September on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/l7pZ7qDB2Fk>

It will also be distributed on the Essex Trading Standards Twitter feed @EssexTS and the Essex County Council Twitter account @Essex_CC as well as the Essex Police Twitter account @EssexPoliceUK.

Internationally known artist comes to Cressing Temple Barns

Award-winning artist, Henry Driver, will be bringing his unique artistic talent to Cressing Temple Barns this month as part of a new, three-month Artist in Residence programme led by Essex County Council.

Henry, originally from Suffolk, has exhibited his artwork across the world and will be creating new pieces based around the themes of environment and sustainability, and inspired by the unique and historical setting.

Working out of a dedicated studio space at the barns between August and October, all the artwork created will eventually form part of proposals for a new Cressing Temple art trail.

As part of the programme, visitors were also able to meet and speak with Henry at three open studio events which took place on 23rd, 29th August and 1st September, with more to be announced later in the residency. Creative projection and photography workshops are also due to run on 3rd and 5th October.

Henry said: "I was immediately drawn to the magnificent granaries and beautiful, cathedral-like architecture of the barns. I'm looking forward to exploring the huge importance these monumental buildings must have held, and how intrinsic food production and storage was to previous societies, in contrast with our current society's wasteful consumption."

Specialising in combining art and technology, to create immersive and thought-provoking artworks, Henry works across the Eastern region and has previously exhibited work at Tate Liverpool, Tate Britain, The Barbican & Whitechapel Gallery.

Most recently, he was nominated as one of the top 15 artists under the ages of 35 working in the UK for the Kleinwort Hambros Emerging Artists prize.

Councillor Simon Walsh, Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste, said: "Cressing Temple Barns is a beautiful site, rich in history and culture and I'm delighted we are hosting an artist of Henry's calibre.

"Our Artist in Residence programme will help visitors to connect with some of the most well-known places in the county, in new ways and all the artwork created will form a new and exciting art trail.

"I hope visitors will enjoy getting involved via the Open Studio events and workshops and look forward to seeing Henry's finished work."

- Henry is available for interview – please contact the Essex County Council press office to arrange.
- For more information about the Artist in Residence programme and opens studio events, visit www.exploreculture.org.uk
- For more details about other art trails across the county and Essex Summer of Art, visit www.visitessex.com
- Internationally, Henry has previously exhibited work in Berlin, Melbourne, Copenhagen, Toronto, Sydney, Montreal, Taipei & Seoul.
- He was selected by Turner Prize winner Mark Leckey to exhibit at Tate Liverpool in 2014, and was also shortlisted for the international Aesthetics Art Award
- In May 2017, he was selected for alt.barbican - a major new accelerator for innovative artists working at the intersection of art and technology in partnership with The Trampery, MUTEK, the British Council, and the National Theatre's Immersive Storytelling Studio.

Nominations are now open for the 2020 Essex Teaching Awards

The aim of the annual awards is to shine a spotlight and celebrate the exceptional teaching, school and early years colleagues, who go above and beyond to support children and young people across the county.

Everyone spends time in the formal education system and it's the actions of individuals working in schools and early years settings that can influence some of the biggest decisions we'll ever make.

Anyone working or volunteering in an education or early years setting in Essex can be nominated, including teachers, teaching assistants, school support staff, governors, childminders and other early years professionals.

Visit the [Essex Teaching Awards web-page](#) for more details and to make a nomination before the deadline on 3 November 2019. You can also follow [@EssexTeachAward](#) on Twitter for the latest news.

New-look Essex Lottery promises more cash prizes

Since the Essex Lottery launched in 2017 over £135,000 has been donated to good causes, thanks to the thousands of people who buy a weekly £1 ticket – 60p of which is donated.

Currently 180 charities and good causes are signed up to benefit, supporting diverse causes across Essex, from animal welfare, education and arts groups, to organisations supporting children, disadvantaged groups and the elderly.

There are also opportunities for players to win big and this summer we have introduced a new prize structure, with guaranteed weekly wins for people who match the winning number combination, no matter how many tickets are sold. The prizes on offer are £25, £250, £2,000 or £25,000, as well as free Essex Lottery tickets.

If you want to be in with a chance of winning and to support a local cause that's close to your heart, visit the [Essex Lottery website](#) now.

Free school meals

Infants

Children in reception, year 1 and year 2 automatically get free school meals. This is called [Universal infant free school meals \(UIFSM\)](#). You don't need to apply for UIFSM, just let your child's school know.

Children in year 3 or older

Your child may be eligible for free school meals if you are receiving any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (not Working Tax Credit), with an annual income below £16,190
- Pension Guarantee Credit
- Employment and Support Allowance, income related
- Support under part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act, 1999
- Working Tax Credit run-on, paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

- Universal Credit, with a household income of £7,400 or less (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Apply

Your application will be refused if you're not receiving any of the listed benefits. Please consider this before applying.

You can [apply online](#).

Your application will be processed within 15 working days, but it can take longer if you apply in August or September.

We will contact you and the school if your child is entitled.

Change of circumstances

If your child changes school or address, you will need to reapply for free school meals.

Related content

Pupil Premium is extra funding schools can claim for children from low income families. [GOV.UK](#) has more information about the funding, including how schools should spend it.