

Making the links

an essex parish partnership

Monthly Bulletin

Essex Rural Strategy

There is still time to share your views on the Essex Rural Strategy. The questionnaire should take approx. 10 minutes and can be completed on line:

<http://surveys.essexinsight.org.uk/EssexRuralStrategy>

Consultation closes on the 4 December 2015.

The Essex Rural Strategy sets out a vision for our rural areas to thrive. The strategy seeks to provide a framework and aspirational goals to ensure that social, economic and environmental aspects of our rural villages and hinterland are offering the best possible place to live and work. It will be used to influence local policy and to guide the priorities and actions of those who deliver services in rural parts of the county.

The questionnaire is the public consultation element of research leading up to a new Rural Strategy and offers an opportunity for you to tell us about your experience of living in a rural area, and what you consider to be the important issues that the strategy should seek to address.

The Essex Rural Strategy is owned by the Essex Rural Partnership which is made up of a variety of public, private and voluntary sector organisations. For more information visit www.essexruralpartnership.org.uk

If you have any queries about the Essex Rural Strategy please call Suzanne Harris or Elizabeth Rose at 01376 574330 or email info@essexruralpartnership.org.uk

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Change of Parish Clerk?

To ensure information is sent to the correct person/council, please let me know as soon as possible if there has been a change of parish clerk. I am responsible for updating the Essex County Council (ECC) central database of parish and town councils; I also send alerts to the various ECC departments of any changes.

You can contact me either by email: angela.balcombe@essex.gov.uk

or telephone:
033301 38008



A new Grant is available to help minimise flood risk in Essex

Money to help protect homes against surface water flooding is now on offer through a partnership grant for local authorities and organisations bringing forward schemes to protect homes.

The Partnership Programme Grant is available for the delivery of flood prevention schemes, such as pumps, bunds, attenuation ponds, permeable pavements, rain gardens and flood storage areas , which will result in protecting more homes across Essex from ordinary watercourse, ground water and surface water flooding caused by heavy rainfall.

The grants are a part of the Essex County Council five year Flood Prevention Capital Programme, and is just one of the ways in which the programme is working towards the end goal of making Essex more resilient against the effects of flooding and protecting homes and businesses.

The Partnership Grant has been designed to work alongside the other funding programs of other authorities and organisations involved in flood risk reduction in Essex. Those eligible to apply for this new source of funding include but are not limited to:

- Town and Parish Councils
- District, Borough and City Councils
- Community groups
- The Environment Agency
- Water supply and sewerage companies (Anglian Water, Affinity Water, Thames Water and Essex and Suffolk Water)
- Essex Highways
- Essex Fire and Rescue Service
- Voluntary Organisations, Charities and Conservation Bodies
- Other interested organisations in Essex.

Cllr Roger Hirst, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Environment, said: “This new grant offers an opportunity for our flood partners to access financial support towards the delivery of their own capital and other eligible flood minimisation projects.

“We would encourage local partners to come forward where they have experience of risks to people’s homes and livelihoods.”

Details of how to apply can be found on the Essex County Council website:

<http://www.essex.gov.uk/Environment%20Planning/Environment/local-environment/flooding/Grants/Pages/Partnership-programme-grant.aspx>

For further information and to return completed application forms, please contact the Flood and Water Management Team on floods@essex.gov.uk or Postal address: Flood and Water Management, E3 Zone 1, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1QH.

Essex County Council

Trading Standards Update

October 2015



Welcome to the October edition of the Trading Standards Update

This month, the team has been dealing with the importation of illegal and dangerous electrical goods through Stansted Airport. Consignments of dangerous chargers and laser pointers have been intercepted and prevented from entering the UK marketplace. This approach to enforcement is a very efficient and effective way for the team to keep not just Essex residents but all UK consumers safe. The team is also working on an electrical safety project focussing on second hand goods shops, raising awareness of some simple checks that can be undertaken to make sure goods are safe before they are sold.

This update features stories that showcase just how diverse Essex food businesses are and how the Trading Standards team are able to support those businesses giving them confidence that their products are compliant and enabling them to maximise their economic potential.

Finally, I'd like to draw your attention to the item about the 94 year old lady who has been systematically scammed out of tens of thousands of pounds over many years. Thankfully the team, working with colleagues from Essex Police and our own Social Care team has been able to intervene and provide the support and reassurance needed to break this cycle.

Cllr David Finch
Leader of the Council

EGGSACTLY AS DESCRIBED!



We have recently taken samples of hens eggs sold as “free range” as part of a national sampling program to ensure that the eggs did not pose a threat to human health due to the presence of various contaminants. These contaminants are Dioxins, furans & PCB's which had been identified by the European commission as potentially present in free range or organic hens eggs being sold across the EU.

Dioxins and dioxin-like compounds (DLCs) are by-products of industrial processes, and are commonly regarded as highly toxic the most toxic dioxin being classified as a carcinogen. Furan is a colourless, flammable, highly volatile liquid with a boiling point close to room temperature and listed as a possible human carcinogen. PCBs' exhibit environmental toxicity and are classified as a persistent organic pollutant which can build up in the food chain and are probably human carcinogens. No unacceptable contaminants were found in any of the four eggs samples tested.

A traceability exercise was also conducted to ensure that the eggs were as described, i.e. from free range egg producers. To do this the assistance of the Egg Inspectorate was sought. Using the codes stamped on the eggs they were able to check the supply chain, some eggs passing through a secondary collection centre or packer before supply to the retailer, and verify that the original producer was registered with them as free range producer. The Egg Inspectorate officers undertaking these checks had personal knowledge of the producers having conducted inspection at their premises (except of course a supplier from the Netherlands). Checks with the Netherland authorities confirmed the free range status of the egg producer in their jurisdiction. Therefore Essex consumers can have confidence that the free range eggs they purchase are from free range hens.

HIDE AND SEEK IN COLCHESTER

We have been working in partnership with HMRC Hidden Economy Team to carry out evening visits to check the authenticity of alcohol and tobacco stock, inspection of invoices and receipts from suppliers. Samples of wine were taken due to the very low retail price and lack of supplier invoices and lot codes on the bottles indicating a lack of traceability for the products. Our HMRC colleagues were looking at declaration of VAT and the declared lists of employees and their salaries. We are currently liaising with the Wine Standards Branch of the Food Standards Agency in relation to verifying the authenticity of the wine.

FEED LEGISLATION COMPLIANCE – PET FOODS

Trading Standards is responsible for enforcing animal feed legislation including the labelling of feed and hygiene at manufacturers. The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) approve manufacturers that incorporate animal by-products (meat no longer intended for human consumption) into their feed.



When an Essex based business who wished to make raw dog food, (very trendy at the moment), contacted us we advised them on their legal obligations including their application for approval by the APHA.

The trader was subsequently approved by APHA but as for all such pet food manufacturers had to abide by a sampling and testing regime to ensure the pet food was safe and posed no threat to pet or human health.

We were contacted by the APHA a few months later to attend the business with them. This was due to the receipt of an adverse salmonella result for a sample of the trader's raw pet food. A joint visit was undertaken and advice on hygiene given by the APHA veterinary officer. The Trading Standards officer, with expertise in feed legislation, gave further advice on procedures to prevent/limit contamination plus guidance to ensure the recall from clients of all remaining affected product. The trader was to notify the officer when this had been completed and provide evidence of the disposal of affected product to prevent the spread of diseases such as foot and mouth.

The business has since implemented the recommended changes and conducted a full recall. As a result of the prompt intervention and the traders corrective action no pets became ill and the business has been allowed to continue manufacturing but with heightened sampling and microbiological testing in place.

BRINGING THE TASTE OF AFRICA TO ESSEX



Officers recently visited a business that is producing a fruit drink made from the Baobab fruit, a South African fruit picked from the weird and wonderful Baobab Tree. The drink contains all natural ingredients including Baobab fruit pulp which is high in Vitamin C. Watch out for this super food in the local farm shops!

TOTAL RECALL

We are currently conducting a project aimed at providing safety advice and guidance to all second hand traders and charity shops within the County, as part of a wider regional strategy. Trading Standards Officers are visiting these retailers and providing information leaflets on the legal requirements primarily relating to the supply of second-hand electrical and gas appliances, and steps that such businesses can take to ensure they supply only safe products to consumers.



One of the main aims of the project is to encourage retailers of second hand gas and electrical items to undertake checks to determine whether any of the appliances they are selling are, or have been the subject of a product recall by the manufacturer. The success of a product safety recall depends on the safety message being seen, and acted upon by as many consumers as possible. However, the average success rate of a product recall is between 10% and 20%, and for products which have been donated or passed on to the second hand retail sector, this figure is much lower as owners and consumers of products are less likely to be traced by the manufacturer.

As part of the project, we have been promoting the use of an online tool set up by UK charity Electrical Safety First (ESF). The ESF Product Recall Checker contains details of all electrical products recalled since 2007, and Trading Standards have been encouraging retailers to use this website - <http://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/product-recalls/> to search and see whether any electrical products on sale have been recalled in the past and to take appropriate steps to remove such products from sale. Officers have demonstrated the use of the recall checker tool to retailers during the visits and advised that such additional checks form part of their own safety testing programme of second-hand products.

In addition, our second-hand retailers have been asked to hand out consumer advice cards to customers who purchase electrical or gas appliances. These cards contain gas and electrical safety advice for consumers such as using only Gas Safe engineers for installation of gas appliances, not overloading plug sockets and regularly checking that smoke alarms work in the home. These cards also advise consumers to register their appliances directly with the manufacturer via the AMDEA website at www.registermyappliance.org.uk, so that they will be advised directly by the manufacturer should there be any safety issues affecting those appliances.

So far, feedback regarding the project from traders has been very positive; all those visited so far have agreed to use the ESF "Recall Checker"

NORTH WEALD MARKET INSPECTION 17/10/15



Acting on Intelligence received, we visited North Weald Market with the intention of collecting further intelligence and advising traders of their legal responsibilities especially in the run up to Christmas.

Four traders were advised and given warnings about selling counterfeit goods. If found selling counterfeit goods in the future they will now be subject to prosecution and a ban from trading at the market. One trader was advised and warned about selling black toy guns. Legislation designed to prevent toy guns being used illegally and help Police identify genuine weapons require toy guns to have a predominant colour which is not black. As recent as 2014 a boy in America was shot by Police for brandishing what they thought was a real gun but turned out to be a toy.

During the market visit we were approached by two traders who thanked us for attending and requested further visits. As traders of legitimate goods they both said that they are able to make more money selling genuine goods when we stop criminals selling poor quality counterfeit goods. Further visits in the run up to Christmas will be carried out to ensure compliance and to promote fair trade.

DEVIOS DIESEL?

A certain motor manufacturer has featured prominently in the news lately, on account of the 'defeat devices' supposedly incorporated into the software and hardware systems that control exhaust emissions of some of their diesel engine vehicles. What role is there for Essex Trading Standards in this? Well, the County hosts a couple of major motor manufacturers and from time to time they seek our services for the calibration and certification of their test and measuring equipment used in Exhaust Emissions Laboratories and Vehicle Proving Grounds.

Recently, we were called in to certify the accuracy of some fuel pumps used for checking consumption and emission rates, which had to be done to the satisfaction of certain major players such as UK government departments, the German TUV and other continental accreditation bodies. All was found to be well on this occasion and, at least, we can be assured that the infrastructure for determining emission rates is soundly based.

CRUCIAL CREW

Two Trading Standards officers attended the Older Person's Crucial Crew in Tendring on the 1st October. The main message they wanted to convey was the prevalence of rogue trading and how the elderly can protect themselves. Most attendees were aware of the cold caller at the door but not so informed as to the other threats via telephone, mail or on-line scams. Talks and discussions took place within small groups to provide an opportunity for questions and over 120 people were present. All attendees were presented with no cold calling stickers and further information on scams, nuisance calls and loan sharks. They were also reminded of the assistance offered by the Consumer Direct helpline and the Citizens Advice Bureau. In addition, the officers' recent knowledge was tested by the groups in relation to the new Consumer Rights Act. This had been highlighted on the local radio that morning as it had come into effect on that very day!

FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD!

Working as food officers we often come across some weird and wonderful new food products being produced and marketed within Essex. So we thought we would share with you just a few of the latest crazes to hit the streets!

1) FLAVOURED POPCORN

Forget the usual salted and caramel versions! We now have Popcorn coated in old fashioned sweets such as Lemon Sherbet, Cherry Pips, Rhubarb and Custard and many more... A local businessman first came to us for advice and guidance on food labelling back in 2014. At the time the whole family were involved in making the popcorn in the family's domestic kitchen. The company have now moved to an industrial unit where they are hoping to expand even further to supply large supermarket chains, and other high-end retailers!! The owner also recently interviewed for the popular TV show for up and coming entrepreneurs, 'Dragons Den' so watch this space!



2) QUINOA COOKIES



Quinoa has been around for a while, but we recently visited a business that is producing cookies made from a special type of quinoa which is only grown on the plains of Bolivia, South America. The importer, who is Bolivian, but now lives in the UK, takes regular trips back to their homeland where the cookies are made and hopes to expand the range in the future. The business is currently working with us to ensure the labelling is compliant for UK markets.

NO BANG FOR YOUR BUCK!

In the run-up to Bonfire Night officers have been out and about across the County providing businesses with advice on preventing the sale of fireworks to those who are underage. People have to be 18 years old to buy fireworks and shopkeepers are encouraged to follow the Challenge 25 initiative, whereby they ask anyone who does not look like they are 25-years-old for ID

Test purchasers were sent in to try and buy fireworks at 25 shops across Basildon and Harlow Districts, but they drew a blank when every single one challenged them for ID. Protecting young people from purchasing age restricted products, such as fireworks, is a priority and it is very pleasing that businesses have taken on board the advice provided by officers – helping to ensure that everybody has a safe and enjoyable Bonfire Night this year and that antisocial behaviour is kept to a minimum.

The improving situation shows that in 2009/10, 42% of test purchases in Basildon resulted in a sale of fireworks. In 2011/12 the failure rate in both Basildon and Harlow was 16%. In 2013/14 the failure rate in Basildon was 6% and in Harlow 10%. We really have got a great outcome here!

BORDER SHERIFFS FIGHT THE COWBOYS AT STANSTED

A small team of Trading Standards Officers based at County Hall have recently become fully operational at Stansted Airport where they can regularly be called-out to examine suspected unsafe imports of all manner of sub-standard and dangerous goods entering the country. These products are typically destined for online sellers.

The self-styled Essex Border Sheriffs are part of a wider network of import control Trading Standards Officers across UK ports and airports who regularly examine consignments that have been specially selected because of the high risk nature of the goods, the past history of the importer, or because the consignment is suspected of having been diverted to Stansted to avoid the traditionally tough scrutiny that such consignments get at established border control points such as Felixstowe or Southampton.

Since 1st April 2015 over £7000 worth of unsafe consumer products have been denied access to the UK market, a figure which includes 700 unsafe generic smartphone chargers that posed a risk of electrocution and fire, and 350 laser pointers that had the potential to cause permanent eye damage with even momentary exposure to the beam. Dangerous products checked at Stansted that fall into this Serious Risk category are detained before they can be placed on the market, and must now be disposed of at the importer's expense and to the satisfaction of Trading Standards.

Essex County Council's Border Sheriffs currently have their work at Stansted Airport funded by National Trading Standards Board, on behalf of the nation. This funding stream ultimately comes from the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills who recognise the value for money that controlling unsafe products at the border represents in terms of consumer protection.

DETAINED LASER POINTER LABELLED AS HAVING A MAX POWER OF < 5MW

When tested it actually had a measured power of 118mW – a record for Essex Trading Standards. This compares with a UK government recommended limit for consumer-use lasers of 1mW!



DETAINED SMARTPHONE CHARGER WITH MULTI-USB OUTLETS



This smart looking “New Now” model 2.0.0 charger was destined to sell via internet auction sites for as little as £5-6, but buyers would not have known about the poor internal construction that meant



that there was a risk of electric shock. In addition the plug pins were not even made to British Standard sizes or spacing and as a result the poor engagement of the pins with a standard wall socket could lead to arcing and fire, according to the expert report commissioned by Trading Standards.

SAFER LIVING EVENT

Between 29th September and 13th October 2015 officers attended five 'Safer Living Events' across Essex. The events were well attended and well received by local residents. The aim of the event, organised by Uttlesford District Council, was to give residents that were more vulnerable to scams and accidents the courage to ask for help when they need it.

The packed morning schedule included talks from Trading Standards on being vigilant at the door against Rogue Traders; a re-assuring visit from Police Officers; the Fire Service attended to explain the importance of smoke alarms; the residents were also treated to a thirty minute seated exercise session, which went down surprisingly well! The residents also completed a little quiz before a cooked lunch that covered all the points in the talks. This was the events third year, and after another success, all looks set to be repeated next year too.'

POSTAL SCAMS



Officers from Trading Standards and Essex Police have been working together to support a 94 year old Maldon resident who has been identified as a victim of postal scams. The victim has been responding to scam mail since losing her husband and son in the same week 14 years ago. The photograph illustrates the extent of the mail that the victim has been receiving in recent years and we believe that she has lost tens of thousands of pounds to scammers during this time.

With the victims consent, we have met with her daughter and granddaughter who were unaware of the extent of the problem and we are making arrangements to have all of the lady's mail re-directed to her daughter for the foreseeable future. We have also contacted colleagues from social care who will be visiting the victim next week, to see what support they can offer. Arrangements are also being made to meet with her bank to put measures in place to stop further money being taken by the scammers as she says they have now taken everything and she has nothing left.

This is the worst case we have seen since signing up to the National Scams Hub Project 18 months ago. This victim is just one of almost 3,000 vulnerable Essex residents that Trading Standards and Essex Police are hoping to visit as part of Operation Action. It is estimated that as much as £14 billion is lost each year by UK residents to telephone and postal scams. For more information on the impact of scams please visit <http://www.thinkjessica.com/>

For full application details visit www.essex.gov.uk/viewplanning, click on 'Search for a Planning Application' then search for an application using the application reference, the application date, location or proposal

Pending Minerals and Waste Applications as of 15 October 2015

<u>Area description</u>	<u>Application number</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Application type</u>	<u>Validation date</u>	<u>Full development description</u>
Basildon Borough	ESS/49/14/BAS	Pitsea Landfill, Pitsea Hall Lane, Pitsea, Basildon, SS16 4UH	Full App with EIA ESS	27/11/14	Continuation of installation of waste pre-treatment facilities and recontouring of the landfill to facilitate restoration permitted by ESS/35/06/BAS without compliance with condition 4 (completion timescales), to allow waste to be deposited on site until 31 December 2025 and the site restored to nature conservation by 31 December 2027 and without compliance with condition 3 (waste geographical sources) to allow importation of waste from outside Essex and Southend and also without the development of the previously permitted waste pre-treatment facility.
Basildon Borough	ESS/13/15/BAS	Land to the south of Terminus Drive, Pitsea Hall Lane, Pitsea, SS16 4UH	Full Planning Applications ESS	03/08/15	Change of use and erection of buildings, hardstandings, roadways, parking and storage areas to enable the use of the site as a waste recycling and materials recovery facility (part retrospective).
Basildon Borough	ESS/39/15/BAS	Hovefield Avenue, Courtauld Road, Basildon, SS13 1EB	Full Planning Applications ESS	02/09/15	Proposed change of use of part of the existing main building to a non-hazardous commercial and industrial waste transfer station (12,000 tonnes per annum), proposed construction of

					bulking bays and proposed relocation of existing End of Life Vehicle operation from the main building to the vacant workshop building on site.
Braintree District	ESS/39/14/BTE	Land at Colemans Farm, Little Braxted Lane, Rivenhall, Witham, CM8 3EX	Full App with EIA ESS	25/07/14	Extraction of an estimated 2.5 million tonnes of sand and gravel together with the provision of an new access from Little Braxted Lane; and the installation/construction and operation of primary processing and ancillary facilities comprising washing and bagging plant, silt lagoons, weighbridge, site management office, mess room and maintenance workshop; with restoration to agriculture and water based nature conservation habitats.
Chelmsford City	ESS/36/13/CHL	Hanson Aggregates, Bulls Lodge Quarry, Generals Lane, Boreham, Chelmsford, CM3 3HR	Bulls Removal / Variation of Condition ESS	09/07/13	Continuation of winning and working of sand and gravel, the erection of a processing plant and ready mixed concrete and mortar plants, workshop and weighbridge office (permitted by planning permission ref. CHL/1890/87) without compliance with condition 17 (hours of operation) to allow additional hours of operation for the processing plant from 0600 to 0700 and 1800 to 2200 hours Mondays to Fridays for a period of 5 years.
Chelmsford City	ESS/15/15/CHL	Bulls Lodge Quarry, Generals Lane, Boreham, Chelmsford, CM3 3HR	Removal/Variation of Condition CC	27/03/15	Continuation of the existing inert recycling facility which includes screening and crushing and a washing plant and a lorry parking area for the distribution of aggregates products as permitted by planning permission ESS/56/13/CHL, without compliance with

Chelmsford City	ESS/16/15/CHL	Blackley Quarry, Land to the north east and north west, A131, Great Leighs, CM3 1QP	Full App with EIA ESS	14/04/15	condition 2 (application details) to allow amended site layout, condition 16 (maximum stocking tonnage) to allow stockpiling of not more than 60,000 tonnes of unprocessed or processed waste/aggregate, and condition 22 (stockpile heights) to allow stockpile heights to the height of the adjacent screening bund.
Chelmsford City	ESS/37/15/CHL	Bulls Lodge Quarry (Boreham Airfield), Generals Lane, Boreham, Chelmsford, CM3 3HR	Removal/Variation of Condition ESS	11/08/15	Extraction of an estimated reserve of 2.8 million tonnes of sand and gravel (from sites A38 and A39 as identified in the Minerals Local Plan 2014) and retention of existing access onto the A131, retention of existing sand and gravel processing plant (to be relocated within site A38), progressive restoration to agriculture using inert fill, installation of inert recycling facility, including screening and crushing to recover secondary aggregate. In addition revised restoration scheme for the existing quarry area.
Chelmsford City	ESS/05/15/CHL	Roxwell Quarry Complex, Boyton Cross, Roxwell, Chelmsford, CM1 4LT	Full Planning Applications ESS	23/02/15	Continuation of winning and working of sand and gravel as permitted by CHL/1019/87 without compliance with condition 1 (application details), Condition 4 (working and reclamation schemes) and condition 6 (restoration Master Plan) to allow amended restoration levels and amended restoration Masterplan.
Chelmsford City	ESS/05/15/CHL	Roxwell Quarry Complex, Boyton Cross, Roxwell, Chelmsford, CM1 4LT	Full Planning Applications ESS	23/02/15	Modification to the restoration profile and the restoration scheme for the non-hazardous landfill arising from overtipping of approx.

85,250 cubic metres (part retrospective).
Enhanced restoration of a former landfilling area by the importation of inert materials and biosolids to enable agricultural after-use and restoration scheme for the former mineral processing plant site to woodland, nature conservation and agricultural after-uses (including retention of hardstanding and workshop). All to be completed by 31 December 2015.

Rochford District	ESS/09/15/ROC	Land to the North of Mucking Hall Lane, Barling Magna, SS3 0NH	Full Planning Applications ESS	08/04/15	Importation of 40,000m3 of inert material (soil) to re-profile the site and bring it into beneficial and productive agricultural use.
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Pending County Council Applications as of 15 October 2015

<u>Area description</u>	<u>Application number</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Application type</u>	<u>Validation date</u>	<u>Full development description</u>
Braintree District	CC/BTE/17/14	Braintree Road, Shalford, CM7 5HQ	Full App (Major) CC	10/03/14	Restoration of the former Shalford Recycling Centre for Household Waste to amenity parkland. Proposed development includes the demolition of the existing hardstanding area; the formation of a pond; the re-contouring of land levels; modifications to the existing access; and the creation of a car parking area.