

Chief Officer Report 11th NOVEMBER 2023

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION FOR ACROSS ESSEX

EALC Legal bulletin

EALC's bulletin has been released and is attached for your perusal.

Legal Update- Changes to absent vote applications

As of the 31st October, the Elections Act 2022 has introduced new postal and proxy vote regulations, along with an online service for applying for an absent vote. Under these regulations, individuals who wish to vote by post will need to reapply for their postal vote every three years. Additionally, there will be restrictions on the number of people a person can act as a proxy for, with a maximum of four, and no more than two being 'domestic' electors. To enhance the application process, similar to the Register to Vote process, an applicant's National Insurance Number (or other relevant data) will now be verified for all absent vote applications. To accommodate this change, there is a transitional period allowing electors with existing postal or proxy arrangements to adjust and reapply under the new rules. Moreover, a new digital service has been launched today on GOV.UK, enabling electors to apply for a postal or proxy vote online. Although paper applications will still be available, this launch provides electors with an alternative application route.

For inquiries regarding the secondary legislation or the new digital service, please reach out to EIPBusinessChange@levellingup.gov.uk.

NALC reveals analysis of local council tax levels for 2023/24

The report includes insightful information such as the number of local councils categorised by precept range, details on precept totals and changes, updates on new and disbanded local councils, precept totals organised by county association, and more. A copy has been emailed to all councillors.

Sixth Windrush Day Grant Scheme is now open

Councils, community groups and charities can bid for a share of up to £500,000 for educational, arts and sporting projects in the run up to Windrush Day on 22 June 2024.

Grants will fund commemorative and celebratory events and activities in recognition of the contributions the Windrush generation and their descendants have made to UK society. Some previous examples of events funded by the grant include celebratory parades, art exhibitions, and choir groups.

Near Neighbours, a charity that brings people together in communities that are religiously and ethnically diverse, are administering the grant scheme on DLUHC's behalf.

I am joined on to a workshop on the 16th November 2023.

Essex LNRS - Town and Parish Councils Webinar

Date: Tuesday 21st November

Time: 11am-12pm

Location: Online

This educational session for Parish and Town Councils will delve into the topic of LNRS and explore how it can benefit the community. The webinar will cover how LNRS works, what it might look like in Essex, and how it links with Neighbourhood Plans and Nature Recovery Plans. Attendees can see examples of successful case studies and learn how to access opportunity mapping. Moreover, there will be a chance to present questions and provide feedback.

I am booked onto the workshop on the 21st November and will feed back to councillors

Rural engagement team newsletter

[Essex-Police-newsletter-October-2023-1.pdf \(ealc.gov.uk\)](#)

NITROUS OXIDE CLASS C DRUG

As of Wednesday 8 November, it is illegal to possess nitrous oxide for the purpose of getting high and it is now classified as a Class C drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

This means that it is now a criminal offence to possess nitrous oxide without a legitimate reason, as opposed to just supply and intent to supply.

Under the legislation, repeat, serious users could face up to two years in prison while those convicted of supply it could face up to 14 years.

Flood Warning Advice from the Environment Agency

Recent weeks have seen a series of extreme weather events as the impacts of Storms Babet and Ciaran continue. While the most significant impacts have been in Yorkshire and the East and West Midlands and along the South Coast, Essex has also experienced severe localised flooding.

Residents are advised by the Environment Agency to enrol in their information services, comprising of maps and targeted alerts, to stay informed about potential weather hazards in your area.

[Check if you can get flood warnings for your address - Sign up for flood warnings - GOV.UK \(environment-agency.gov.uk\)](#)

ECFRS- Charging Safety Advice for Electrical Fire Month

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is issuing safety advice ahead of Electrical Fire Safety Month, after being called to 267 fires caused by electrical devices or chargers in the past 12 months. Andrea MacAlister, Temporary Head of Live Safe, provides tips to avoid charging-related incidents, such as not leaving items charging unattended overnight, using the charger that came with the device, and charging devices on a flat, solid, and stable surface. She also advises people to check their

charger temperatures and replace them with genuine and branded products from trusted suppliers. Lastly, ensuring every level of their property has a working smoke alarm was deemed important, in case of a fire.

Restorative Justice & Mediation Awareness Briefing

Safer Essex invite you to join them for a briefing for Elected Members on Restorative Justice and Mediation Awareness. This topic has been chosen as an area of concern for local Community Safety Partnerships, as well as being an issue that Elected Members can play an important role in helping to spot the signs of victimisation and/or make referrals. All sessions will be held online via MS Teams.

These sessions will be held on: Wednesday 22nd November 2023, 18:00-19:30
Tuesday 28th November 2023, 18:00-19:30 Friday 1st December 2023, 13:00-14:30
Safer Essex Elected Member Briefing - Registration (office.com)

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner is committed to engaging with the public of Essex around policing, crime, fire and rescue services. These meetings provide members of the public with the chance to ask questions about what is happening in their area.

Questions can be sent in advance to PFCC@essex.police.uk or posted at the event on the night.

Braintree Public Meeting

Date- 22nd November 2023

Time- 7pm to 8pm

Location-

Braintree Town Hall,

Fairfield Road,

Braintree,

Essex,

CM7 3YG