

Updated 23 November 2022

Details of e-mails received from County Councillor Peter Schwier, since the October PC meeting

Regular e-mails have been received from County Councillor Peter Schwier since the last meeting, detailing updates from Essex County Council. Please find below a list of the e-mails with brief details.

1. Free school meal vouchers continued - Free school meal vouchers will be available for around 50,000 eligible pupils across Essex this October half-term (24-28 Oct) thanks to renewed funding from the Department for Work and Pensions. Received 19 October.
2. ECC campaign to raise awareness of discounted broadband deals - Residents who receive Universal Credit or other benefits could save up to £144 a year on their broadband bills. Received 19 October.
3. Winter Warmth and Welcome Spaces Fund launched as part of ECC commitment to supporting residents with the cost of living – Community Groups and Parish Councils can apply for grants of up to £1000 to help them provide warm and welcoming spaces for residents this winter. Received 21 and 24 October.
4. Essex+ Reward Card Scheme launched – Residents can apply for a Reward Card to use at local Essex shops and receive reward points “to get a little extra back”. Pilot scheme currently cover 36 shops across the county. Received 24 October.
5. Retrofit training opportunities in Essex – Two pilot schemes are running in Essex to provide training to residents and businesses in ‘Retrofit’ (the process of adding new technology or features to homes in order to make them more energy efficient). Received 26 October.
6. Building Digital UK Public Review (BDUK) – Review to identify which areas in Essex are eligible for future, public-funded rollout of gigabit-capable broadband. Received 27 October.
7. ECC 2023-24 Budget Consultation launched - Businesses and residents are invited to give their feedback on how public money should be spent in the coming financial year. Deadline 28 November. Received 4 November.
8. ECC Highways Highlights – October 2022 edition. Received 4 November.
9. Essex Libraries Warm Welcomes - Warm Welcomes will offer further opportunities for residents to visit libraries in order to keep warm, get advice and information and stay connected with others this winter. Received 4 November.
10. Reporting Highway Issues – A reminder that any highway issues you come across, as we move into winter, can be reported direct to ECC Highways. Go to the ‘Tell Us’ reporting tool on ECC Highways website where you can report blocked drains, gully’s, flooding, pot holes, signage and other problems. Link: [Tell us - Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](https://www.essexhighways.org) . If you think there’s a risk to public safety, please contact Essex Highways immediately on 0345 603 7631. Received 6 November.

11. Children starting school – Parents of children starting primary school in the academic year starting in September 2023 are now able to apply online for their child's reception school place at www.essex.gov.uk/admissions until the closing date of 15 January 2023. Received 7 November.
12. Support to families and households through the winter - Funding totalling £8.687m has been allocated from the DWP Household Support Fund and will be used to support households who may otherwise struggle with the cost of energy, to buy food, pay for household bills or to meet other essential living costs. More information can be found at <https://www.essex.gov.uk/cost-of-living>. Received 7 November.
13. White Hart Bridge at Gt Yeldham – Work updates can be found at this website [White Hart Bridge, Great Yeldham webpage](#) . Received 9 November.
14. Community Challenge Fund Applications are Open at [Essex Partnership \(essexfuture.org.uk\)](#). Sometimes it only takes a small amount of money to bring a good idea to life in your community. You can bid for between £300 and £5,000 to fund a new, not for profit scheme, group, initiative or idea. Received 11 November.
15. Foster Carers in Essex – Find out more about fostering visit : <https://www.essexadoptionandfostering.co.uk> . Received 14 November.
16. Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities (SEND) system in Essex – Improvements are being made to the system. Find more details at essex.localoffer@essex.gov.uk . Received 21 November.