

Updated 11 January 2023

## **Details of e-mails received from County Councillor Peter Schwier, since the November 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. ECC Disability Strategy - All residents, including those with disabilities, their families and those who care for them, are asked to give their views on ECC's future Disability Strategy. A consultation has been launched and your views can be given online here: <https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/rci/disability-strategy-consultation/> . An easy read version of the consultation can be found here: <https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/rci/disability-strategy-2022-easy-read/> . The consultation will close on Thursday 23 February. Received 1 December.
2. Free full fibre broadband connection from Gigaclear for community buildings. Received 1 December [CLERK'S NOTE: The Community House is already connected free by County Broadband]
3. Essex Local Offer Website - The website, which is managed by ECC, provides information about what Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) support is on offer for children and young people in Essex. The site is available here: <https://send.essex.gov.uk/>. ECC will continue to listen to families views about the new website to continuously improve it. Received 1 December.
4. Essex Safeguarding Children Board – Campaign to remind parents and carers that if their child does receive a new device or games consoles for Christmas, it's important to set them up correctly to keep them safe when online. Received 2 Dec.
5. Fully funded Retrofit Training courses - Retrofitting is the process of adding new technology or features to make homes more energy efficient, which will play an essential role in reducing the county's CO2 emissions. Residents are invited to sign up to retrofit courses to enable them to qualify to complete Retrofit work. Received 7 December.
6. School Meal vouchers available for Christmas holiday - Free school meal vouchers will be available for 50,000 eligible pupils across Essex this Christmas Holiday (21 December- 4 January) thanks to renewed funding from the Department for Work and Pensions. Received 8 December.
7. Strep A and Scarlet Fever – The UK Health Security Agency are have issued guidance for education settings which ECC has shared with Schools and Early Years Settings. The Education team will continue to direct education settings to these resources. [The UKHSA blog outlines what you need to know about Group A Strep and is a helpful overview.](#) Received 9 December.

8. Essex Community Foundation Review – The Review can be found here [Annual Review](#) and [Grant Supplement](#) for our financial year ending 1 July 2022. If you would like to receive a hard copy, please email [hello@essexcf.org.uk](mailto:hello@essexcf.org.uk) with the address that we should deliver the document(s) to. Please encourage local charities and voluntary organisations working in your area to contact our grants team on 01245 355947 or e-mail [grants@essexcf.org.uk](mailto:grants@essexcf.org.uk) to discuss their funding needs. Received 9 December.

9. White Hart Bridge, Great Yeldham – Work is progressing well and the latest website update can be found on the [White Hart Bridge, Great Yeldham webpage](#). Received 12 December.

10. Broadband deals for low income households - As we move into the colder months and face record-high living costs, several broadband providers are offering social tariffs to help low-income households stay digitally connected. Residents who receive Universal Credit or other benefits could save up to £144 a year on their broadband bills. Find out more at [www.essex.gov.uk/broadband](http://www.essex.gov.uk/broadband). Received 14 December.

11. Essex Bus Passengers to pay reduced fares this winter - The Bus Fare Cap will limit the price passengers will pay for an adult single fare to £2 on routes operated by bus firms which have opted into the scheme. Running from January 1 to March 31, 2023, the scheme is backed by up to £60 million of central Government funding. A number of bus providers in Essex are taking part in the scheme. Received 20 December.

12. Health Issues in Essex – Information and advice relating to Vaccinations, the availability of antibiotics to treat Strep A / Scarlet Fever and Hospital pressures. ECC are working with partners in a fully joined up way to address the issues. Received 24 December.

13. Essex Library Service – Numbers of new members joining in the last 12 months. Received 9 January.

14. Budget for 2023-24 - Proposed Council Tax increase of 3.5 per cent. This is made up of a 1.5 per cent council tax increase, plus a further 2 per cent ring-fenced to Adult Social Care. Received 9 January. (Circulated to Cllrs 11 January).