



## NATIONAL FARMERS UNION (NFU) – Essex update from Jake Richards



As we head well and truly into Autumn it seems that the post-EU Exit train is full steam ahead. Our county's farmers will be cultivating fields ahead of the busy drilling period where seeds are sown for next year's wheat, barley and oilseed rape while also making time for harvesting of potatoes, onions, and sugar beet. Meanwhile, as with the general population, the farming and rural businesses of Essex are feeling the pressure due to a shortage of labour throughout the food chain, from haulage (as we're seeing with the current pressure on fuel supplies), through to meat processing and on-farm labour too. Not least the current hike in energy prices which have further squeezed the margins for our staple crops due to a knock-on increase in fertiliser prices. We are currently lobbying the government to increase the access to seasonal, overseas labour to fill the 500,000 vacancies in the food sector.

Locally, the last few months have been busy on the NFU front too – we have held a number of meetings with local MPs and authorities to raise the profile of issues faced by farmers. One particular meeting with Stephen Metcalfe MP, has yielded in results including letters being sent to Secretaries of State for Trade and Defra. Furthermore, thanks to our relationships with local MPs we have organised meetings with planning authorities to help improve the understanding that farm businesses need to be able to develop their infrastructure in a sustainable way to future-proof their businesses.

As we head into the autumn, we are anticipating announcements on the Agricultural lump-sum exit scheme consultation and the delinking consultation which will have significant implications for farm income following our leaving the EU. Meanwhile we have just received response from the government on the use of Gene Editing of plants in the UK. Modern gene editing breeding techniques are now far safer than in the 1990s and will go some way to helping us achieve more efficient food production with less impact on the environment. For those who are concerned with this change be assured that all food produced in the UK has to undergo significant assurance to ensure that it is safe to consume in the UK.

Finally, as I sign off, I am pleased to say that our branch and county meetings for this season will return in a face-to-face manner. We will be holding our Annual County meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> November at 7:30pm. Our six local branches also have plans for a programme of events this autumn and winter. We will of course be following government advice regarding COVID-19.

For more information, please get in contact [jake.richards@nfu.org.uk](mailto:jake.richards@nfu.org.uk) NFU members can keep up to date with the latest activity via the weekly newsletter which members receive on a Friday.

Regards, Jake Richards



## Community tree and bulb planting project to help tackle climate change Braintree District Council (BDC)



BDC are offering free tree whips and bulbs to local community/voluntary groups, charities, schools and colleges - enabling the planting of 18,600 native trees and 73,000 bulbs across the district. Following the success of numerous Green Heart of Essex bulbs and tree planting schemes, this project is another great opportunity to involve the community in helping to protect our natural environment.

Two of BDC's priorities in their Climate Change Strategy are to improve biodiversity and green spaces and increase the planting of trees and bulbs, which they know is a popular priority for residents following feedback in their public engagement which took place in the summer. This will in turn deliver benefits to tackle climate change as well as having a positive impact on the wellbeing of local residents.

The community tree planting will also contribute towards Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee through the Queen's Green Canopy project, 'Plant a tree for the Jubilee', to honour the legacy of our Queen and benefit future generations. From November, you can add your Jubilee tree to The Queen's Green Canopy map on the official website: [www.queensgreencanopy.org](http://www.queensgreencanopy.org)

If you would like to be involved in this wonderful project, please apply online for planting packages no later than Friday 29th October 2021. [Click here to find out more & apply online](#)

## THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS RAISE £25M IN A YEAR TO KICKSTART NATURE'S RECOVERY



The Wildlife Trusts

Just over a year ago the Wildlife Trusts launched a vision to put nature into recovery across at least 30% of land and sea by 2030 and started an appeal to raise £30 million to begin the work. The Trusts are delighted to announce that in just twelve months they have raised over £25 million. 35 important nature recovery projects are underway to restore land for wildlife. The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, with once-common creatures such as hedgehogs, red squirrels and sparrows now critically endangered, and huge reductions in the abundance of wildlife across the board. The Wildlife Trusts are determined to reverse the trend.

A new online map has also been unveiled which gives examples of a range of projects underway to achieve nature's recovery. Nature needs more, bigger, wilder landscapes that are joined together to allow wildlife to thrive, rebuild natural abundance and help species and habitats adapt to climate change. The projects include nature-friendly farmland, urban green spaces, gardens, woodlands, rivers, nature reserves and more. View the map [here](#).

**Craig Bennett, Chief Executive, The Wildlife Trusts said:**

"We are thrilled to have raised £25 million in the past year to fund our vision for 30 by 30 and we're extremely grateful to every single person who has helped make this happen. It's fantastic that people want to support our work to reverse wildlife declines and address the climate emergency.

“But this is only the first step to mend our broken natural world by 2030. While The Wildlife Trusts are taking urgent action, some aspects of the Government’s agenda threaten to undermine good work on the ground, by weakening habitat regulations which protect wildlife, weakening the planning rules that guard the environment, and shrinking the powers and resources needed by the Environment Agency to stop river pollution. To read the full article please [click here](#)

## LOCAL NEEDS RURAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING – COULD YOUR PARISH BENEFIT FROM A HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY?



RCCE’s Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) can act as an independent advisor providing impartial assistance in developing rural affordable and community led housing for people with a strong local connection.

Establishing if you have a local housing need via a Housing Needs Survey, is the first step towards ensuring that, as a community, you are able to take control and plan ahead. If a need is identified, this information will allow the parish to review its options towards providing locally prioritised homes to suit.

Should you wish to undertake, or learn more about, a parish wide Housing Needs Survey, please do email [laura.atkinson@essexrcc.org.uk](mailto:laura.atkinson@essexrcc.org.uk) for more information.

Click [here](#) to find out more about the role of the Rural Housing Enabler or visit our website for more information on this service - <https://www.essexrcc.org.uk/our-work/rural-affordable-housing>

## HOUSE PRICES IN TOURIST HOTSPOTS INCREASINGLY OUT OF REACH FOR YOUNG AND LOW PAID



Rising house prices and private rents mean that some workers are at risk of being priced out of living in rural and coastal areas, contributing to skill shortages in the tourism and hospitality industries that their local economies rely on. Young and low paid

workers in tourist hotspots are increasingly facing the prospect of being unable to afford to live there.

Despite falling from a record high in June, the [average UK house price \(£256,000\) increased by 8.0% in July 2021](#) compared with the previous year.

House prices are increasing partly because of temporary changes to taxes paid on property purchases (including Stamp Duty in England and Northern Ireland), but they also reflect a shift in consumer preferences with growth being driven by rural and coastal areas. To read the full article please [click here](#)

## COVID SAFE COMMUNITY BUILDINGS FUND



This fund is being managed by the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) on behalf of Essex County Council (ECC) with grants of up to £15K available for capital and revenue projects. The £1.5 million fund will support projects to help community buildings such as village halls, community centres and faith buildings put in place measures that reduce the transmission of the virus and help activities to resume safely.

Grants can be used to fund numerous projects such as improving ventilation, implementing measures that manage visitors and/or create space for social distancing or adaptations to

encourage users to resume activities in the community hall safely.

For further information please visit the RCCE website.

Please use the following email address: [CovidCBFund@essexrc.org.uk](mailto:CovidCBFund@essexrc.org.uk) for any queries and to return your completed application. The application process is simple and straightforward to enable a quick turnaround as the funding **must be spent by 31st March 2022**

## ESSEX LIBRARY OF THINGS



Have you tried out the Essex Library of Things yet?

Provided you're 18 or over and have an Essex library card, items such as DIY tools, camping equipment, musical instruments and party decorations can be yours, free of charge, for a week. Pressure washers, carpet cleaners and telescopes are the most popular items so far.

It's simple – just go on to the [Love Essex website](#), select the item of your choice, and reserve it.

Watch their [video](#) on the Essex Library of Things.

## EVENTS

### Essex Rural Full Partnership Meeting

Date: Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021

Time: Start time: 10:30am until 12:30pm

Meeting to be held via Zoom

## SCAM WARNING



# Watch out for this tax refund scam

Action Fraud has received 326 reports this week about fake emails purporting to be from HMRC. The emails state that the recipient is owed a tax refund of £240. The links provided in the emails lead to phishing websites that are designed to steal personal and financial information.

Your bank, or any other official organisation, won't ask you to share personal information over email or text. If you need to check that it's a genuine message, call them directly.

Forward suspicious emails claiming to be from HMRC to: [phishing@hmrc.gov.uk](mailto:phishing@hmrc.gov.uk)

