

Essex County Councillor's Report: March 2020

Coronavirus



The Department of Health and Social Care will be publishing updated data on the number of coronavirus cases on their [website](#) each day at 2pm until further notice.

As of 3 March, there is one case in Essex. Public Health England (PHE) is working closely with NHS colleagues and Essex County Council to manage the situation and help reduce the risk of further cases.

Dr David Edwards, Consultant in Health Protection, Public Health England East, said: “Public Health England is contacting people who had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 who is an Essex resident. We’re working closely with local NHS colleagues as well as Essex County Council to manage the situation and help reduce the risk of further cases.

“Close contacts will be given health advice about symptoms and emergency contact details to use if they become unwell in the 14 days after contact with the confirmed case. This tried and tested method will ensure we are able to minimise any risk to them and the wider public.”

Cllr John Spence, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care said: “I’m satisfied the work Essex County Council has been doing already with our public health colleagues means we have very well-developed plans in place to deal with whatever comes next.

“Let us be calm and proportionate in our response to what is a relatively mild form of virus. We have had one case, in a county of one and a half million people.

“I would ask all Essex residents to keep washing their hands and make sure they don’t create facilities to spread the illness. Keep aware of personal hygiene and keep aware of the things you can do to minimise the spread, such as catching coughs and sneezes in tissues and then disposing of those tissues. And keep washing those hands.”

Essex County Council’s Director of Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities, Mike Gogarty said: “This new cases of coronavirus is nothing unexpected. We fully anticipate an increase in numbers which is why our services have planned for, and are ready, for this situation.

“I’d like to reassure people that the risk to the general public remains low and Essex County Council is working with health colleagues to do everything we can to stop the virus spreading and ensure the people of Essex are protected.

“Current evidence indicates that most cases appear to be mild, with patients experiencing flu-like symptoms. Older residents or those with weakened immune systems or long-term conditions may experience more severe symptoms, which is why it is important to help protect ourselves and each other.

“Following Government guidance to take basic hygiene precautions remains the best way of significantly reducing the chances of spreading any virus: sneeze or cough into a tissue, bin it, wash your hands frequently and don’t touch your face unless you’ve just washed your hands. We should do this all day every day as we should for flu.

“Good regular cleaning with normal detergent of surfaces people touch regularly or may cough onto, like door handles and lift buttons, is also sensible. People should log onto <https://gov.uk/coronavirus> for the latest advice and information.”

Based on current evidence, Coronavirus COVID-19 presents with flu-like symptoms including a fever, a cough, or difficulty breathing. The current evidence is that most cases appear to be mild. Anyone who is concerned about health symptoms is advised to follow the advice on the [NHS website](https://www.nhs.uk).

Amnesty on Essex Library books



During March all Essex Libraries are holding a book amnesty to collect up those forgotten books.

If you haven't had time to return your books, or know they are really overdue, then return them in March with no fear of a fine. We'll even replace lost library cards for free too!

Don't let the worry of an overdue book stop you from using your library. Return forgotten library books or any library item to your local Essex library, mobile library or Thurrock library without paying late charges.

Visit any Essex library or mobile library during March to take advantage of this opportunity and rediscover all your library has to offer!

Essex successful in transport funding bids



The county council has been successful in two funding bids from the Department for Transport. The only authority in the country to have two successful bids, ECC will receive £380,000 to support with costs associated with the removal of the Army and Navy flyover in Chelmsford and £1million to invest in maintenance of Braintree town centre.

CLlr Kevin Bentley, ECC's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, said: "I am thrilled by today's announcement from the Department of Transport and pleased the Government has recognised the importance of investing in Essex by funding two significant projects across the county. We are the only Local Authority in the country to be successful with two separate bids.

"The additional funding to cover the cost of current Army and Navy removal works will free up much needed funds which we can invest in establishing a long-term solution for this busy junction which sits at the heart of our county.

"Investment in Braintree town centre is also testament to the role of local high streets – the life blood of our communities - and how important it is that we continue to maintain them now and in the future so that they can thrive."

Read more about the announcement at [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

Who Will Care? Awards 2020



The Who Will Care? Awards make a much-anticipated return in May and nominations are now open.

The annual awards celebrate volunteering across the county and bring together communities and individuals who are working to make Essex a great place to live, work and visit.

There are nine categories for this year's awards:

- **Business Award:** awarded to a commercial organisation who has had an impact on their community.
- **Individual Overcoming Adversity Award:** awarded to an individual who has demonstrated outstanding commitment within their community, while overcoming personal adversity.
- **Individual Volunteer – Young Person's Award:** awarded to a volunteer under 18 who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment within their community.
- **Individual Volunteer – Adult 18+ Award:** awarded to a volunteer aged 18+ who has demonstrated outstanding commitment within their community.
- **Individual Volunteer – With a Disability Award:** awarded to a volunteer with a disability who has demonstrated outstanding commitment within their community.
- **Innovation Award:** awarded to social enterprises, commercial organisations and individuals of any age who have demonstrated innovation in developing a service or project to support the community.

- Voluntary Community Service Award: awarded to charities and community groups who are able to demonstrate outstanding service delivery to support their community.
- Volunteer Team Award: awarded to a group of two or more volunteers of any age who have made an outstanding contribution to their community.
- Social Media Volunteer Award: awarded to a volunteer who has demonstrated outstanding commitment within their community through the use of social media.

If you know an individual, organisation or business that deserves recognition for their volunteering efforts in Essex, [nominate them now](#). The deadline for nominations is midnight on Sunday 15 March 2020.

Highways

Although we have got off lightly with few frosts, the roads have suffered as a consequence of the wettest February in recorded history. Roads are continuing to flood each time it rains heavily, not least because the farmland is waterlogged. A number of drains have silted up with runoff from the fields, and the jetting teams are working hard to get around to clear the blockages. Unfortunately they have a vast network of roads to deal with and may take a little time to get to your blocked drain. Please report any defects via the report it tool on the ECC website.

Highways Report it Tool

A new version of the Report it Tool will be rolled out over the next few weeks, starting with a test version. This will allow better interaction and residents will be able to add their contact details to be included in any updates. The intention is to have a more simplified version which is more user friendly and will provide timely updates on progress of the fault or defect.

Simon Walsh

County Councillor for the Thaxted Division