

Report from Cncl Simon Walsh

County Councillor's Report Oct 2018

2019 Secondary School Admissions Open

As schools across Essex start their autumn term parents of Y6 pupils are being reminded that it will soon be time to apply for their child's September 2019 secondary school place.

From 12 September 2018 parents and carers can apply online for their child's Year 7 secondary school place. Applications must be made by the national closing date of 31 October 2018.

Applications can be made [here](#) with the website also holding information on different schools and their admissions criteria.

Cllr Ray Gooding, Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Education, said: "The start of secondary school is another exciting milestone in a child's academic life and therefore it is crucially important that parents get their application submitted on time.

"I would encourage parents to visit their preferred schools, carefully consider each school's admissions criteria and use all six preferences on the admissions application."

The 31 October deadline for applications is a national deadline and applications made after this are considered once all on-time applications have been determined. Applying late could reduce the chance of a child being offered a place at their preferred school.

Calling all young people – Registrations now open for Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Working together with schools and colleges throughout Essex, the Essex Youth Service is inviting young people in Essex to register for the Duke of Edinburgh's award this autumn.

As the world's leading youth achievement award, the DofE aims to engage, inspire and empower young people from every possible background, giving them the chance to develop skills for life, education and work.

The Essex Youth Service's mission is to provide all young people in Essex aged between 13-24* years old with the opportunity to start their Duke of Edinburgh's Award. *13 year old's have to be in current year 9.

A bursary is also available to support young people to complete the award. Funded by Essex County Council and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award it supports the guiding principle of the DofE Award being achievable by all, by supporting disadvantaged young people and those with additional needs.

Registering for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Are you inspired to push yourself mentally and physically, make friends for life, and experience adventure?

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- DofE is available to all 13*-24 year olds across the whole of Essex. *13 yr olds have to be in year 9.
- Speak with the DofE leader at your school/college to get a place on the DofE programme, [QR](#)
- Register with the Essex Youth Service who offers the bronze, silver and gold award from their youth centres, located in: Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Colchester, Hadleigh, Harlow and Loughton. Registrations open all year round with no cap on numbers.
- Start your DofE adventure in autumn 2018 with an early bird offer running until end of September 2018 - Save £10 on your registration fee.
- To register for the award, to book a place at one of the October information evenings and to read more about the bursday, please take look [here](#).

Solar Together registrants offered big saving on panels

Almost 2000 residents and businesses have now registered for Solar Together Essex, the council's solar panel group buying scheme. These lucky registrants have now been offered an **average discount saving of 20%** in relation to market prices for solar panels.

Launched in July by Essex County Council, in partnership with iChoosr (the group buying specialist), Solar Together Essex offered residents and businesses the opportunity to take part in an online auction for high quality solar panels, saving money on both installation and future energy bills.

Following a successful auction process, the prices offered to registrants are between 18% and 22% below market prices indicated. Those that registered will now receive their offer letters and if they choose to go ahead, will be contacted by the chosen, trusted supplier, EEC Ltd.

Over the last 27 years EEC Ltd has specialized in renewable energy, security, electrical, plumbing and home improvements. Over the last nine years it has installed more than 15,000 renewable energy systems.

Cabinet member for Environment and Waste, Cllr Simon Walsh said: "It's great news that so many people registered for the scheme and even better news that they will be offered such a considerable saving."

"Increasing the number of properties in the county with solar panels is one way that we can encourage a greener and brighter future so it's encouraging that we will see more getting installed across the county."

"Also, for those that missed the auction, don't worry- it has now been extended until 19 October, so you too could benefit from these fantastic savings."

The scheme has also been running across Suffolk and Norfolk with more than 5,000 households across the three counties registering. The expected outcome of this scheme is a phenomenal 2.5 MW of installed solar power which will save some 880 tons of CO2 emissions.

For those that missed the auction, **registration has been extended until 19 October**. After registration, residents will receive a personal offer to get an understanding of the cost, and the potential discount that they could secure by buying through the group scheme. It is free to register and there is no obligation to buy.

To register and for more information please visit the Solar Together Essex [website](#).

Community Initiatives Fund

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The Community Initiatives Fund (CIF) is a small grants scheme designed to fund community projects that:

- create, procure or develop new community assets
- enhance existing community assets
- enhance or develop initiatives that strengthen a community.

There are three parts to the fund:

- CIF (subject to a maximum application of £20,000 for any one project)
- CIF Response (subject to a maximum application of £15,000 for any one project).
- The Superfast Essex Community Wi-Fi Scheme (applications of up to £400 to enable local communities to provide a public Wi-Fi service via their community hubs).

Community Initiatives Fund

This is for capital funding only and eligible areas of expenditure could include, but are not limited to:

- community, social and recreational facilities
- village halls (including church halls)
- community shops (including general stores and pubs in some circumstances)
- community transport initiatives (not for a single-use group)
- land purchases
- playground equipment
- environmental works
- any related feasibility, design and planning work.

Communities Initiatives Fund Response

This fund is subject to a maximum application of £15,000 for any one project. Eligible projects for this funding are as described for the CIF. The difference is that applications for CIF Response funding will only be considered where the need is evidenced clearly by the applicant that funding is required for:

- projects that are time-critical (proof would be needed)
- projects where match-funding is time-limited

This fund will not be used to support the on-going running costs of established organisations.

How to apply

Full details of the fund, including the qualifying criteria and eligibility, can be found in the [guidance notes](#) which should be read before submitting an application.

To apply, the [application form](#) should be completed and emailed to CIF@essex.gov.uk.

CIF timetable 2018/19

- receipt of completed application forms: Friday 26 October 2018
- judging panels' decisions: throughout November/December 2018

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CIF Response timetable 2018/19

- Final receipt of completed application forms: Friday 22 February 2019

To apply, the [application form](#) should be completed and emailed to CIF@essex.gov.uk.

Superfast Essex Community Wi-Fi Scheme

The Community Wi-Fi Scheme, run by Superfast Essex and supported by CIF, is now open for applications.

Local communities can apply for up to £400 to enable the local provision of a superfast public Wi-Fi service via their chosen community hub.

Please read the [leaflet](#) and the [guidance notes](#) before completing the [application form](#). Information is also available on the [Superfast Essex website](#). Email your completed application form to cif@essex.gov.uk no later than Friday 22 February 2019.

All funding is subject to availability.

Essex surface dressing programme complete for this year

Over 250 miles of Essex roads have been improved this summer with surface dressing techniques which prevent potholes forming.

Surface dressing techniques future proof the road surface to prevent potholes forming but can only be done in warm, dry weather. This summer the 250 miles of road have been covered in 3,652 tonnes of binder and then 38,000 tonnes of stone chippings, which are rolled in to form a new top layer. The technique can be viewed at www.essex.gov.uk/surfacing

Councillor Kevin Bentley, Deputy Leader, Essex County Council and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, said: "With this work, other surfacing techniques and regular pothole-fixing crews, the number of potholes on our main roads has come down from 988 in June to 407. That's a major improvement for the safety and comfort of drivers and riders on our faster roads where most of the traffic is. We will now work to keep that figure low, while shifting our crews' efforts to fixing more potholes on local roads, whether in villages or town estates."

Councillor Bentley added: "However, I am not content with our progress so far, I want to accelerate the work, so I am pleased to report we've undertaken successful trials with different pothole-repair machines. When we have completed all the trials I will decide how we combine the various repair techniques to get the most potholes fixed providing best value for money for Essex residents."

Simon Walsh, October 2018