

MALDON DIVISION MONTHLY UPDATE – COUNCILLOR JANE FLEMING

FREE BLOOD PRESSURE CHECK AT LOCAL PHARMACIES FOR THE OVER 40S

High blood pressure often has no symptoms, so regular blood pressure checks are a simple yet important step in preventing serious health complications. If you're aged 40 or over, free blood pressure checks are available at local pharmacies with no appointment needed. [Find your nearest pharmacy with the NHS Pharmacy Finder.](#)

FOSTERING IN ESSEX

Did you know that there were approximately 107,000 looked after children in the UK in 2022/23? Right here in our community, there are hundreds of children who need a loving home.

In Essex, we need foster carers for children of all ages, including babies and toddlers. Foster carers are ordinary people doing extraordinary things, and you could be one of them.

With exceptional support, award-winning training, competitive fees, and a whole community behind you, there's never been a better time to foster with us. We're excited to offer a welcome bonus for all new carers starting in 2025.

There's no upper age limit to foster, and you can have pets, rent your home, and be of any gender or relationship status. Life skills are more important than academic qualifications.

Join us for a friendly and informal chat. You can explore flexible fostering options that might suits you.

Event Details:

 **Date:** Saturday, 17th May 2025

 **Time:** 10am – 4pm

 **Location:** The County Hotel, 29 Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, CM1 2PZ

This is a drop-in event, so feel free to come by anytime between 10am and 4pm. Enjoy tea, coffee, and biscuits while you learn more about the rewarding journey of fostering.

You can meet our wonderful foster carers and hear firsthand stories from those whose lives have been touched by fostering.

GARDEN WASTE

As our gardens spring back to life this time of year, you might find yourself with lots of garden waste. Here are some options for dealing with it:

- [compost at home](#) - turn garden waste into nutrient-rich compost for your plants
- [use your council's garden waste collection service](#) - conveniently dispose of garden waste by using your local council's service
- [take it to a recycling centre](#) - but remember, soil shouldn't be included in your garden waste as it is recycled separately

Check out [this video](#) to see how garden waste from recycling centres and collection services is processed.

LOVE YOUR BUS GRANT

A number of parish and town councils in Essex have secured funding to help increase the number of residents using buses.

The Love Your Bus Grant is part of the BSIP+ (Bus Service Improvement Plan) funding allocated to Essex County Council by the Department for Transport. Parish and town councils had to submit projects which would increase passenger numbers, improve service frequency and coverage, and attract new users.

Many of the successful schemes included collaborative suggestions, which saw neighbouring councils working together to maximise the impact of bus services across communities.

The successful councils will each receive a share of the £500,000 fund to start implementing their projects.

The successful councils are:

- Sheering Parish Council
- Ingatestone and Fryerning Parish Council
- North Weald Bassett Parish Council
- Woodham Walter Parish Council
- Burnham-On-Crouch Town Council
- Mayland Parish Council
- High Easter Parish Council
- Shalford Parish Council
- Rayne Parish Council

Some examples of the projects that were submitted include:

- Attracting new passengers through marketing, leaflets, timetables, maps, and/or community-led engagement events.
- Service enhancements such as increasing bus service frequency during peak hours, introducing late-night or early-morning services, and/or creating new route extensions to connect underserved areas to key destinations.
- Community engagement and promotions through targeted marketing campaigns, community-led engagement events, and/or school and community group partnerships.
- Passenger experience improvements, including providing information on bus routes and schedules using maps, leaflets, posters, and/or other accessible formats.

NEW BUS SURVEY SHORTLY TO BE LAUNCHED

Essex County Council will launch a new bus survey in June 2025. The survey will seek feedback from residents, passengers, and local communities to help shape the future of bus services across the county.

More details about how to take part will be shared shortly.

WRAP AROUND CHILD CARE

Wraparound childcare is offered before and after school for primary school aged children during term time. Wraparound hours run from 8am until 6pm. Childcare may be available on a school site or other local settings such as nurseries or childminders. [Find out where you can access wraparound childcare in Essex.](#)

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS NETWORKING EVENT

Young business talent from North Essex will shine at the free *Celebrating Young Entrepreneurs* networking event, part of NEEB's Young Entrepreneurs Programme.

Open to young people aged 16 to 30 from Braintree, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Maldon, Tendring, and Uttlesford, the event offers tailored start-up support, market trader guidance, and access to grants.

Attendees will be able to:

- network with peers and experienced local professionals
- hear from successful entrepreneurs and business leaders
- access expert advice and guidance on building or growing a business

- enjoy a free buffet lunch and refreshments

Confirmed speakers include Harrison Cantel, founder of H Creative, and Mathew Parkins, CEO of The AI Guys, who will share insights on branding, innovation, and leveraging AI for business growth.

Event details:

- **Date:** Wednesday 21 May
- **Time:** 10am to 1pm
- **Location:** Braintree Plaza

Under 18s must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

5,000 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGERS TO ROLL OUT ACROSS ESSEX

Millions of pounds in government funding will significantly expand local charging infrastructure.

More than 5,000 electric vehicle charging sockets will be installed across Essex with millions of pounds awarded in government funding.

Essex County Council will receive £8.3 million from the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund to complete installations in different locations over the coming months.

The fund supports local authorities in England to work with the charge point industry to improve the roll-out and commercialisation of local charging infrastructure.

It follows earlier funding in March which has already seen more than 60 electric vehicle charging sockets installed in locations chosen by Essex residents.

Chargers are live in Chelmsford and Colchester and currently being installed in Epping, Saffron Walden, Harwich and Canvey Island.

The latest LEVI funding will be used to install charging points across a mix of on street and off-street locations, in both urban and rural areas, to minimise gaps in the network.

The council will now work closely with city, district and borough partners to assess viable locations and bring commercial suppliers onboard.

Essex residents are also asked to suggest locations for the electric chargers to be installed by visiting www.essexhighways.org/getting-around/driving/electric-car

MEMBER HIGHWAYS INITIATIVE CONTINUES FOR 2025/26

More than 15,000 extra road and pavement repairs have been done across Essex in the past year through the Members' Highways Initiative (MHI).

The MHI gives every Essex County Councillor a dedicated Essex Highways crew. Councillors can prioritise local highways issues that matter most to residents.

In the 2024 to 2025 financial year 15,104 repairs were completed through the programme. This is on top of regular maintenance repairs.

The works have included:

- 8,000 carriageway defect repairs, such as potholes and surface damage
- 6,000 footway repairs, including kerbs and paving issues
- Replacing or repairing bollards, signs, pedestrian guard rails and surface covers.

The initiative runs alongside other works, including Essex Highways core maintenance schedule, and last year's extra £25 million Priority One resurfacing programme.

The MHI is now fully funded and continuing into the 2025/26 financial year. Local councillors and Essex Highways teams are already working together on new rounds of repairs. These will improve the safety of roads and pavements and keep Essex moving.

NORTH ESSEX ECONOMIC BOARD

The North Essex Economic Board (NEEB) has announced a major investment into the local economy through its 2025–2026 Action Plan. This is aimed at supporting business innovation and empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs and workers.

The collaborative board - made up of seven local councils and Essex County Council - is putting forward a bold series of initiatives designed to stimulate sustainable economic growth and ensure communities across North Essex are inclusive and future-ready.

Highlights of the 2025–2026 Action Plan include:

- 20 free exhibition stands at the North Essex Expo (Sept 2025) for local businesses to connect with partners, investors, and customers
- sector-based job fairs to align local talent with evolving industries
- a business support programme offering mentorship, skills-building sessions, and community networking

Youth and early-stage entrepreneurs will benefit from:

- the Earniversity programme for 13–16 year olds
- an eight-week business accelerator with The Weave and the University of Essex
- Co-Working Wednesdays with ARU and Arise, featuring workshops and peer support

Find out more at the NEEB website.

PRIORITY ONE INVESTMENT IN ESSEX ROADS

Extra highways crews deployed to resurface roads most in need of repair.

Priority One, the £25 million investment made by Essex County Council into targeted highway maintenance has finished this month. 128 additional roads were resurfaced – a total of 400,000 square metres.

The 8-month programme was the largest ever additional highways investment made by the council. The funds were used to deliver additional schemes across all 12 Essex districts in the areas. It was also used to tackle vegetation clearance, drainage repair, signage improvements and new lining.

Additional investment in road maintenance will continue in 2025/26, on top of the usual highways repair programme carried out over the course of the year.

For more information on the Priority One programme visit www.essexhighways.org/priority-one

Cllr Jane Fleming

Member for the Maldon Division

(Maldon Town and Parishes of Woodham Walter, Woodham Mortimer with Hazeleigh, Purleigh including Cock Clarks, Cold Norton, Stow Maries, North Fambridge)

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