

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY – VIDEO CONFERENCING MINUTES
Little Easton Parish Council



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Minutes of the **Little Easton Parish Council** general meeting held via Video-Conferencing Call on Wednesday **31 MARCH 2021 AT 7PM**

Present: Cllr Dodsley Cllr Fowell Cllr Hindley Cllr Keefe Cllr Rodwell Cllr Sidgwick
Dist Cllr Foley
Cnty Cllr Walsh

03 members of the public

AGENDA

20/161	NOTE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Dist Cllr Foley and Dist Cllr Tayler sent their apologies
20/162	DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR THIS MEETING None declared
20/163	APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2021 RESOLUTION – Approve the minutes as an accurate record subject to the following amendment- <i>“I have received correspondence from a resident which has been circulated to members, expressing the view that they did not feel that the closure of the memorial hall gates in the evening was causing lorries to reverse down Manor Road”</i> Proposed Cllr Dodsley, Seconded Cllr Hindley – Unanimous agreement
20/164	RECEIVE PRESENTATION FROM CO-OPTION CANDIDATES The vote was unanimous and Sarah Sidgwick was duly co-opted onto the council, invited to sign acceptance of office and took up her position on the council for the remainder of the agenda
20/165	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION Members of the public may raise questions about and comment on items on the Agenda OR of import. Session is limited to 15 minutes (3 minutes per person with no repetition of a previous question) A residents observations and comments in full are at APPENDIX A Have the PC received the gate operation risk assessment from the MHMC, CLERK to request it. The PC will review that risk assessment. Erosion of Manor road, request to understand the number of vehicle movements along the road due to use of the Memorial Hall, noted once reopened it will create more traffic movements, increased damage to Manor Road surface and thus should not the MHMC contribute to the cost of the road repairs?

	<p>Noted in the previous year the MHMC had covered the cost of certain repair works.</p> <p>Request for clarification of the legal status of Manor Road – noted the first section is metallised and a Highways responsibility with the remainder classed as a Public Right of Way (PROW) which Highways will maintain to Bridleway standard, which is not to road use standards; in theory not for wheeled vehicles use, however, prescriptive rights allow those who live along the road to drive along it to gain access to their homes and users of the hall to gain access to the car park.</p> <p>Request for PC to work with the MHMC to progress solutions for the future of Manor Road that will hopefully satisfy all users.</p>
20/166 <i>Dist Cllr Foley joined the meeting</i>	<p>RECEIVE THE DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS</p> <p>Dist Cllr Foley - Report at APPENDIX B, UDC making a difference award, nominations closing 14 April, celebrating those making a difference during the pandemic.</p>
<i>Cnty Cllr Walsh left the meeting</i>	<p>Cnty Cllr Walsh – Libraries are now open to distribute self test covid kits. Full County Cllrs reports at APPENDIX C and D</p>
20/167	<p>RECEIVE CLERKS REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE</p> <p>I can share a bin servicing update from UDC for the proposed additional litter bin along Park road adjacent to the dog waste bin at the top of the Bridleway at Laundry Lane – UDC have confirmed they will add this bin to their route once we confirm it is installed.</p> <p>I have been copied into correspondence with the District Council from a resident raising concerns over the football club site in Laundry Lane. I have also advised the football club that sadly they will not be offered use of the playingfield for their Saturday morning youth training.</p> <p>Cllr Rodwell has raised concerns over the appearance of road planings on Easton Park next to the muck pile and the fact that the HGV servicing the pile are routing via Park Road, whereas the understanding was thought to be any such vehicle routing would be via the quarry and airfield? I have raised this matter with County Cllr Walsh and Essex direct, seeking clarification as it seems this is a contract between the land owner and Highways, although Cllr Rodwell may be able to explain further.</p> <p>The annual audit will soon be upon us as I close the accounts at month end and council reviews the budget performance, I am making arrangements to collect the signed copies of the year’s minutes from the Chairman to enable my delivering them to the internal auditor to ensure we comply with one aspect of the Governance section of that audit.</p> <p>Currently council meetings are due to return to face to face events with social distancing in a covid secure venue, although that may change but meanwhile we assume there will be a return to such meetings commencing with our May PC meeting which will be our Annual Council Meeting, or AGM to most. The plan is to hold the Annual Parish Assembly before our April PC meeting currently proposed at 6:30pm prior to the council meeting commencing at 7:30pm.</p> <p>The agenda is quite comprehensive and covers a lot of ground and it will comment in more detail on the remainder of any matters that I might touch upon in this report, so back to you Mr Chairman.</p>
20/168	<p>FINANCE – RECEIVE STATEMENT & AGREE PAYMENTS – APPOINT AUTHORISER RESOLUTION – Approve the Finance statement: - Proposed Cllr Dodsley, Seconded Cllr Hindley– Unanimous agreement. Cllr Dodsley to Authorise – Finance statement at APPENDIX E</p>
20/169	<p>PLANNING – REVIEW AND COMMENT ON ANY CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS</p>

	<p>UTT/21/0823/HHF PROPOSAL: Proposed two storey side extension to form covered parking and studio above LOCATION: White Gables Duck Street Comment date 09 April 2021 NO OBJECTION</p>
20/170	<p>DISCUSS AND AGREE WHETHER TO NOMINATE THE STAG PUBLIC HOUSE AS AN ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE AND SUBMIT A NOMINATION FORM TO UDC</p> <p>Council agreed to the nomination – unanimous support – Cllr Dodsley to provide nomination form for the CLERK to submit</p>
20/171	<p>CONSIDER DRAFT DRONE POLICY PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED TO MEMBERS</p> <p>Cllr Fowell suggested an amendment to the circulated policy; draft policy to be attached to these minutes</p> <p>Policy to be formally adopted at next meeting</p>
20/172	<p>CONSIDER INVITATION FROM A RESIDENT TO JOIN THEM IN A REVIEW OF PLAYINGFIELD BOUNDARY DETERIORATION ALONG A SECTION OF MANOR ROAD</p> <p>Agreed a parish maintenance issue - Cllr Hindley and Cllr Keefe to meet the resident on site</p>
20/173	<p>CONSIDER NEED FOR SAFETY MATTING AT CHICANE ENTRANCE TO PLAYINGFIELD – Option 1 £125.25 Option 2 £157 Option 3 £196.85</p> <p>Fitting at parish maintenance contractor’s R2 rate Defer to next meeting.</p>
20/174	<p>RECEIVE UPDATE ON PLACEMENT OF ONE LITTER BIN ADJACENT TO DOG BIN ON LAUNDRY LANE BRIDLEWAY</p> <p>Cllr Hindley to research options and report to council</p>
20/175	<p>REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS</p> <p>WAR MEMORIAL – Cllr Keefe Circulated report earlier with photographs, gate needs oiling, pointing of paved area, cleaning of memorial required; council agreed to complete works – unanimous, prices to be sought</p> <p>MEMORIAL HALL – Cllr Hindley Last meeting on 17 February, report in February minutes</p> <p>PLAY AREA – Cllr Fowell & Cllr Keefe including update on equipment repairs Updated maintenance list circulated, contractor has revised list of works, painting completed</p> <p>PARISH MAINTENANCE – Cllr Hindley Village sign advised as safe, watching brief</p> <p>PLANNING LOCAL AND NP – Cllr Dodsley Community stakeholder forums complete, still time to submit views; Call for Sites closing soon; Asset of community value – Nissen Huts and Stables are to be considered for inclusion in the local heritage list at the next week’s review meeting</p> <p>GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE – Cllr Fowell First Open day 18 April, fees apply, parking on site; return to Thursday opening to follow</p> <p>COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES – Cllr Keefe None currently to discuss but considering end of lockdown options</p> <p>STANSTED AIRPORT – Cllr Rodwell No meetings scheduled at present</p>

	<p>HIGHWOODS QUARRY – Cllr Hindley No meetings scheduled at present</p> <p>FOOTPATHS & HIGHWAYS – Cllr Fowell Highways scheduling works to reported FPs defects</p>
20/176	<p>DISCUSS PLAY AREA FENCE REPLACEMENT PROJECT FOR 2021-2022 Play area fencing in need of renewal, quotes require updating – Metal fence option recommended as alternative to a wooden solution – Cllr Fowell and Cllr Keefe to lead</p>
20/177	<p>DISCUSS BENCH RENOVATION PROJECT FOR 2021-2022 Some in poor condition, contractor to jet wash all benches and tables, to apply wood treatment, paint any metal edges and generally renovate the furniture on the playing-field, does not included the war memorial benches.</p>
20/178	<p>ITEMS OF REPORT OR FOR INCLUSION ON NEXT AGENDA OR IN 5P MAGAZINE</p> <p>Address following concerns regarding 1) PC working relationship with MHMC to include the gate operation issues and 2) maintenance and repair of Manor road</p> <p>5P entry - Ideas for community gathering post lockdown, family orientated; Prior notification of a vacancy arising during early summer</p>
20/179	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING(S) – 28 APRIL 2021 – 7pm – CLOSE – 9:06pm</p>

Signed..... Date.....

APPENDIX A

Little Easton is now facing development battles as speculators eye up the parish with glee, at the profits they can make, which the parish will never benefit from.

Yet we are distracted with on-going BUT NONETHELESS IMPORTANT issues of Manor Road - a single track bridleway adopted for only 1/3rd of its 180 metre length. It is the road that provides access to the village’s key playing field amenities of the Memorial Hall, cricket field, children’s playground and the MH car park. Manor Road also has 22 houses leading to the playing field.

2/3rds of the road is pothole-ridden with crumbling verges and house driveways infringed as vehicles negotiate the holes and traffic coming towards them. It’s dusty in summer and muddy in winter. Visiting vehicles are essentially forced to travel to the car park, the responsibility of the LEMHC, in order to turn around. At nighttime they may face a closed gate to the car park with no immediate idea as to how best to turn around. So more vehicles attempt dangerous reversing in the road.

it’s no wonder that Manor Road generates so many complaints. And bad feelings amongst neighbours.

The gate has caused the most recent issues. I strongly believe the gate is necessary. There has been a proliferation of young people in hatchbacks driving too fast along the road (especially but not exclusively at night) who park at the back of the car park and involve themselves in drugtaking. Also, there is always the risk of travellers...

However, if the gate is shut at the wrong times then vehicles cannot turn around safely in the road. It’s also wrong that elderly people go out in all weathers late at night to manually close the gate.

My first suggestion is that gate operation should be automated. I believe my detailed proposal using standard components but tweaked software would resolve the argument over gate closing times and vehicle access yet still provide adequate security and not be overly expensive. I have promised Jenny Green a paper explaining how this would work installation requirements. Due to the limited time I have in this meeting I’ll also send to Ian. As a consequence, the hall needs to be internet-enabled; something Jenny is already sure of.

Turning to hall management, the current trustees have done a solid job and the hall is on a good footing. But it's ripe to consider plans now for a new generation to take over ensuring it remains a 'going concern' over the next **testing** decade. **And this is the second point I want to make.** The last recruitment attempt was three years ago. No-one applied. **LEPC ultimately owns the land. It needs to work with the LEMHC REPEATEDLY asking for volunteers - younger volunteers** bringing a fount of fresh ideas and to ultimately take on the running of the hall. In tandem an enlarged LEMHC also needs to promote the fact that **the Hall is first and foremost for Little Easton residents** because, bluntly residents either "use it or lose it".

The 1996 agreement between the LEPC and LEMHC is **my third point.** Times have changed dramatically since it was drawn up and it needs clarifying in several areas. A joint review by both bodies is long overdue. I have sight of this agreement. I'll submit my comments to Ian separately.

My fourth point is that all documents concerning the transfer of the amenity land from the Countess of Warwick in 1930 through to the 1996 agreement should be made easily available to all residents. There is nothing secret about them. But I have been unable to see the full picture. And that must be the case for most residents. How can you feel affinity if you don't know the history and objectives? They could easily be published on the LEMHC website under the History tab.

The hall is a business. That business needs to change with the times updating established practices to not only self-fund but hopefully to generate profit for the benefit of all village residents. I have other suggestions to make but these four need the most immediate attention.

APPENDIX B

Uttlesford Making a Difference Awards

The closing date for nominations into the Chairman's 'Uttlesford Making a Difference Awards' is 14 April. The awards are about recognising and celebrating people who have made a difference to others during the coronavirus pandemic. Members are welcome to nominate anyone in their community who they feel is deserving of an award.

Full details are available on the website, or for further information contact Sue Hayden @ UDC

Essex County Council Elections

The elections have formally started with the publication of the Notice of Election for the various polls that are taking place on 6 May. Poll cards have all been sent.

The registration deadline for anyone who is not registered is midnight, Monday 19 April – people can register online at www.gov.uk/register tovot e. The postal vote deadline is 5pm, Tuesday 20 April.

There is a new emergency proxy category for this year, for anyone who falls ill with Covid or is told to self-isolate after the proxy vote deadline of 5pm, Tuesday 27 April – this emergency proxy deadline is 5pm on polling day.

Details are available on the elections on our website, or for further information contact the elections team.

Waste Services update

Uttlesford recycled at least 58% of waste collected immediately after the Christmas period. With more people staying at home and changing buying habits, we saw a big increase in the amount of waste produced immediately ahead of Christmas.

Collection crews worked hard during our catch-up period and collected over 275 tonnes of food waste and just over 700 tonnes of co-mingled recyclable materials.

Since the first national lockdown, the nature and volume of waste produced across the district has changed, with notable increases in the amount of glass and cardboard being presented for collection.

Like all districts, we have seen growth in the overall volume of waste being produced alongside changes in the specific materials. We will need to monitor these changes to see whether this is just a short-term change.

APPENDIX C

County Councillor's Report March 2021

County Council Budget: "We have done it before and we will do it again."

A message of hope was shared by Essex County Council's (ECC) Leader today as he outlined plans for the county's recovery from the pandemic and unveiled the Council's Organisation Plan and 2021/22 budget.

Significant investment in the county's young people, highways, local communities and businesses make up ECC's plans for the coming year, with Cllr David Finch announcing key initiatives across three priority areas - environment, family and economy. These include:

- An additional £2million investment in economic development to ensure a successful reopening of the Essex economy.
- £1.5million to support a new Educational Recovery Task Force which will lead and oversee the educational recovery of all Essex children.
- A further £1million investment in mental health support for children and our health and care workforce.
- A further £1million community action fund for environmental initiatives to help communities create less waste, travel sustainably, use renewable energy and produce less carbon.
- A further £500,000 to break the cycle of violence and protect young people from gangs.
- A further £7.2million of capital funding for Local Highways Panels (LHP) - £200K more for each panel, each year, for the next three years.
- An additional £180,000 added to LHP revenue budgets for smaller highways projects.
- A further £10,000 for every county councillor to invest in local community initiatives - enabling local members to tackle the local issues that matter most to their communities.

In total, ECC will be investing an additional £33m across its portfolios over the next year, with the majority of this being invested in adult social care services to support some of the county's most vulnerable individuals and those that care for them.

ECC's ambitious capital programme, which was announced in the papers for its January Cabinet meeting, also includes a £1.34 billion spend over the next four years on major infrastructure projects, such as new schools and major road improvements. The spend in 2021 is set to be £290m - 50% more than the last two years' capital budget.

Cllr David Finch, Leader of Essex County Council, said: "While this year's budget has been produced under the most testing circumstances the council and our communities have ever faced, I want people to take away a message of hope today.

"We are committed to building on the work we have done to date – not just through the pandemic, but over the past decade since the last recession – to help Essex to emerge healthier and with a brighter future.

"I am extremely proud that we have been able to set out robust plans today for how we will do this, while at the same time achieving a 0% county council tax increase for residents and just a 1.5% increase from the Government's Adult Social Care precept.

“As an organisation, we have taken great strides over the last ten years, investing in Essex to benefit the communities and businesses that call the county home. We have a strong record of sound financial management and I am confident we will recover – we have done it before, and we will do it again.”

Essex County Council announces new measures to rebuild economy

Essex County Council has pledged its commitment to restart the county’s economy and help people recover from the pandemic, with dedicated measures to boost businesses, upskill people and create new employment opportunities in growth sectors including health and social care, construction and the green economy.

500 apprenticeships and 500 new Kickstart Essex placements will be created to provide employment opportunities to young people across Essex.

The Council’s 2021/22 Budget and 12-month [Organisation Plan](#), produced under the most testing circumstances the Council has ever faced, was approved by Full Council on 23 February and sets out the measures for securing inclusive economic growth from which everyone can benefit.

Each year Essex County Council spends around £900 million of its budget on Essex businesses and in October 2020 announced a £100m economic growth investment strategy and £5m economic recovery fund which will be rolled out in 2021/22.

Unemployment is at a 30-year high in Essex, with young people under 25 feeling the greatest impact. The number of well-qualified adults (with skills at Levels 3 and above) is increasing but remains below the national average.

New measures will tackle increased unemployment and help people develop the skills they need to thrive post Covid-19. The Kickstart Essex scheme, launched in the county in 2020, will continue to support the creation of new jobs for 16-24 year-olds. It enables small and medium sized enterprises to access Government funding to pay a young person’s salary for six months, and so far 124 local businesses have registered, enabling 200 young unemployed people to get into work. Another 500 Kickstart Essex placements will be created in 2021/22.

The Essex Accelerator programme, which has been piloted since November 2020 with Colbea, will continue to support those at risk of unemployment, or recently unemployed, to set up their own businesses. The pilot eight-week intensive online course gave 25 people advice on starting out and enabled six new business start-ups, creating 12 new jobs. Four more courses will run in 2021.

Essex County Council’s Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Councillor Tony Ball, said: “We are dedicated to building back the Essex economy as our highest priority in the coming year and in a way that everyone benefits. We’ll get people back into work, give businesses the support they need to survive and grow, and enable people to grow their skills so they can thrive as Essex recovers. We will do all we can to get Essex back in business.”

On 23 February 2021 the Council allocated a further £7.2 million for Covid-19 business recovery grants, in addition to the £2.2 million for business adaptation grants announced in October 2020. A new Additional Business Support Grant was announced which is being made available to Essex self-employed people and small and medium-sized businesses who do not have rateable premises and have been excluded from accessing other Covid-19 financial support schemes. Grants of up to £5,000 are available.

An additional £1m of Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans has been made available, working with Let’s Do Business Finance, and an additional £2 million of investment to ensure a successful reopening of the Essex economy.

The extension of the Essex Business Adaptation Grant scheme until July 2021, meanwhile, will give many more businesses the opportunity to access grants of up to £1,500 to help them be safer for customers and employees. The grants can also be used to help diversify the way businesses operate, fund new technology and support home working.

- Essex County Council's 2021 Organisation Plan was approved by Cabinet on 23 February 2021. It responds to the challenges faced by the Covid-19 pandemic and sets out a path to recovery that will allow it to fulfil its strategic aims. See <https://www.essex.gov.uk/plans-and-strategies>
- Kickstart offers funding to create new jobs for 16 to 24-year-olds on Universal Credit at risk of being long-term unemployed. It provides financial support for six months covering 100% of the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage (depending on age) plus other necessary employment contributions. Using the service is free to small and medium sized businesses and public sector organisations. email kickstartessex@essex.gov.uk
- Essex County Council has partnered with Colbea to deliver the Essex Accelerator Programme. Find out more via social media at Twitter: [colbeabizadvice](#) Facebook: [colchesterbusinesscentre](#) or Linked in: [colbea](#)
- The [BEST Growth Hub](#) helps businesses understand the support available, telephone 0300 303 4864.
- Grant advice and support for Essex business is available on the County Council website at the following weblink: [Support for businesses: Financial support for your business - Essex County Council](#)

£100,000 fund announced for new emotional wellbeing initiatives to support people affected by the pandemic

This April will see the opening of a new fund to support initiatives focused on helping people whose emotional wellbeing has been affected by Covid-19.

The £100,000 "Emotional Wellbeing: New Opportunities Fund" will open on 1 April for applications from individuals or groups who need help in kickstarting their ideas.

Small grants of £100 to £5,000 will be available.

Suitable projects could target support for vulnerable children, young people or adults. They must meet one or more of these outcomes:

- Managing and coping with change
- Separation and loss
- Managing and coping with anxiety
- Maintaining healthy relationships
- Staying active
- Education and learning.

Successful applicants could use the grant in a range of ways:

- To develop their thinking about how to respond to pandemic impacts
- To build new knowledge
- To develop or try new ways of working post-pandemic

- To enable accessibility and help people reconnect with self, family and communities as we emerge from lockdown.

Examples could be, but not exclusively:

- To develop a new idea or try a new delivery concept
- To access or develop specific/unique training to meet a niche and unmet need
- To buy new resources to enable a different way of supporting delivery of work
- To develop new resources to support delivery of work.

Cllr Louise McKinlay, Cabinet Member for Children and Families at Essex County Council, said: "The pandemic has affected us all in so many ways. For some, they are experiencing emotional issues for the first time whilst for others, the situation has deepened the struggle.

"Although it is good that we can see light at the end of the tunnel, the months ahead are going to be bumpy and uncertain. We know many are struggling with their mental wellbeing and will need extra or different support to get back on track with the social, physical and emotional impacts of the pandemic.

"Our local communities have been fantastic in reaching out to people and a number of ideas have come forward seeking funding support. I hope that by making this money available, we will see the rollout of many initiatives that will help even further.

"If you've been involved in providing support, in receiving it or you've just seen how the pandemic has impacted people around you, you might have some great ideas for new or better ways to help people to recover from the impacts of the pandemic. If so, start developing your ideas now for when the fund opens in April."

People can register their interest from 15 March by email to CandFCommissioning@essex.gov.uk

Essex residents reminded to stay vigilant as latest Covid-19 data is published

The [latest Covid-19 data available for Essex](#) (excluding Southend and Thurrock) has been published.

In the seven days up to 18 February, there were 1,366 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Essex. This is the latest date for which complete data is available.

Up to 18 February, the weekly case rate for Essex is 91.7 per 100,000. This is the latest date for which complete data is available.

Up to 18 February, the highest weekly case rates were in Brentwood and Tendring, with rates of 118.2 and 145.3, respectively.

Up to 18 February, the area with the lowest case rate was Maldon with a rate of 57.

CLLr John Spence, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Adults and Health, said: “Case rates continue to decline at a reasonable rate, albeit less rapidly than in previous weeks, but we have seen significant reductions in a number of areas which had seen higher rates recently, including Tendring, Harlow and Braintree.

“However, there is some variation within Essex, with Brentwood, which had shown a low rate recently, now seeing an increase in recent days. We do expect this to fall again, but is a stark reminder to us all that we simply cannot drop our guard now.

“We were given a very clear timeline out of the pandemic this week and I know this has been the welcome news we have all been waiting for, but we need to remember it will take a collective effort to get us there.

“I would urge every single resident in Essex to please keep following the guidance – socially distance, wash your hands regularly and wear a face covering if you are able to. It is vital that anyone that has to go out to work also [gets tested frequently](#) and if you test positive, you must self-isolate.”

You can view the full data for Essex in our coronavirus hub:

- [cases in Essex, per 100,000 per week](#)
- [cases in Essex by age band](#)
- [cases in Essex by district, per 100,000 per week](#)
- [hospital beds occupied by Covid patients in Essex](#)

97% of children offered one of their preferred secondary schools

Today, Monday 1 March, families of almost 16,400 pupils will discover the outcome of their secondary school applications.

97% (more than 19 out of every 20 children) are being offered one of their named preferences of secondary school, with 91.15% of parents being offered their 1st or 2nd preference.

This year, 99% of families applied online and will receive their offer by email or by logging onto the Essex County Council website.

CLLr Ray Gooding, Essex County Council’s Cabinet Member for Education, said: “I am delighted that, once again, we have been able to offer so many pupils their preferred secondary school place.

“It has been a challenging year for young people across the county and I hope those embarking on this exciting next step enjoy their last few months at Primary and Junior School before they set out on their next academic adventure.”

You can find out more about what to do after your offer [here](#).

Essex prepares for return to schools and colleges

With a phased return to the classroom for secondary school and college pupils set to start from Monday 8 March, settings are currently putting arrangements in place for pupils to take part in asymptomatic Covid-19 testing as per the latest Government guidance.

The Government has stated that secondary schools and colleges should offer three rapid Lateral Flow Tests (LFT) to pupils as they return to on-site education and that the return of secondary-age pupils can be flexible to allow for this to take place.

This is aimed at identifying positive cases more quickly and breaking the chain of transmission within the school community.

It is down to each individual secondary schools or colleges to decide how they fulfil this guidance and there are two options for schools and colleges to use.

Schools and colleges have the option of offering all three tests on site and flexibility in terms of how they organise pupil's phased return from 8 March.

Alternatively, Essex County Council (ECC) has put in place increased community testing capacity so that pupils could take the first of these three LFTs in advance of their return to school or college. If schools decide to use this option, the second and third tests would then need to be taken on the school site three to five days apart.

Community testing would be carried out at one of the existing rapid testing centres across Essex. Additional capacity to support pupil testing only is also being put in place for the next couple of weeks in the form of three temporary rapid testing sites in Clacton, Dunmow and Braintree.

Parents and carers will be sent specific instructions from their child's school or college about what they need to do and are encouraged to speak to their setting if they have any questions or concerns.

Testing is voluntary and will not be done unless consent has been given. It is also not a determining factor for whether pupils are able to return.

However, it is something that is being strongly encourage so that potential transmission of the virus within the school community is reduced.

If they are taking part in testing, pupils can return to face-to-face education following their first negative test result. Once these three initial tests have been carried out, pupils will be provided with rapid tests to be carried out twice a week at home.

If they test positive, they will need to self-isolate immediately in line with current Covid-19 guidance and not return to school until this is complete.

The results of these home tests must be reported to NHS Test and Trace as per the instructions in the test kit as soon as the test is completed (results will be given in around 30 minutes). The results should also be shared with your child's school or college, whether positive or negative, to support them with contact tracing.

The DfE is now also recommending that face coverings are worn by secondary-age pupils in classrooms, only where social distancing cannot be maintained and unless a young person is medically exempt from wearing one. Secondary and college pupils are already required to wear a face covering when moving around school buildings in corridors and communal areas, as well as when travelling to and from school on public transport.

Primary school pupils

For primary school-age children, on-site attendance at school on and from 8 March will be mandatory.

The advice from Public Health England is that there is no requirement for primary age pupils to be tested for Covid-19 before returning. This is because there are limited public health benefits attached to testing primary pupils in terms of stopping the spread of Covid-19 and younger children are less likely to catch the virus.

Primary school pupils are also not required to wear a face covering at school, however adults may be asked to wear a face covering when entering the school site.

Cllr Ray Gooding, Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Education, said: "We know how eager schools and colleges are to see children and young people back in the classroom. By increasing our community rapid testing capacity, schools will have greater flexibility in terms of how they are able to fulfil the Government guidance.

"If schools take up the offer to encourage their pupils to have a rapid test in advance of 8 March, this will help prevent pupils with symptoms spread the virus within schools when they return and make arrangements for subsequent testing in schools less onerous."

Dr Mike Gogarty, Essex County Council's Director of Public Health, said: "We strongly advise parents of secondary-age children to get their children tested. By using our network of rapid testing centres, they can do so before children return to the classroom safe in the knowledge that they are free of the virus."

Households with school-age children offered free Covid-19 tests

The government has this week confirmed that twice-weekly testing using rapid Lateral Flow Tests (LFT) will be available to adults in all households with primary, secondary school and college aged children and young people, including childcare and support bubbles.

Essex families with school-age children are being encouraged to access the free home tests and take part in regular testing to help identify more asymptomatic Covid-19 cases and quickly break chains of transmission before they enter schools and colleges.

Twice-weekly testing will also be offered to adults working in the wider school community, including bus drivers and after school club leaders.

Individuals will only be able to take part if they, their household or bubble do not have coronavirus symptoms or have not been told to self-isolate.

If anyone is showing Covid-19 symptoms, they will need to [access a PCR test via the national system](#).

Where an individual has tested positive for Covid-19 in the past 90 days and they have not had any new symptoms since completing their self-isolation period, they do not need to be tested as part of this approach, but must continue to follow Covid-19 guidance.

This latest announcement comes in addition to the [testing requirements announced by the government for secondary school pupils](#) who will start to return to the classroom from Monday 8 March. Primary school children do not need to take part in regular asymptomatic testing.

Cabinet Member for Education, Cllr Ray Gooding said: "We welcome the latest announcement from the Government around increased and regular testing of families with school-aged children. This will go a long way in allowing pupils to stay in school and reduce the need for whole bubbles to self-isolate.

"We have always been very clear that testing is a vital part of our Covid-19 response in Essex and our priority has always been the education and wellbeing of all children and young people. I would strongly encourage all adults in families with school-aged children to do their bit and help to ensure that once pupils return to the classroom, they can stay there."

[LFTs are available to families in different ways](#), including through employers if they offer testing to employees, at a local test site, by collecting a home test kit from a test site, or by ordering a home test kit online.

A secondary PCR test will be required for positive LFTs which are taken at home, either through at home PCR testing or at a local PCR testing site. As with student testing, this testing of households is encouraged but not mandatory.

Dr Mike Gogarty, Director for Public Health at Essex County Council, said: “As many as 1 in 3 people testing positive for Covid-19 don’t show symptoms and so this latest announcement is extremely welcome news.

“Regular asymptomatic testing will be vital to the easing of restrictions over the coming months. We need everyone to do their bit and remember, if you test positive, you must self-isolate immediately.”

Regular rapid testing does not replace current Covid-19 guidance and everyone must continue to follow the rules around hands, face, space.

Highways

At last some dry weather after a fairly challenging winter. Damage to roads and pavements due to rain and freezing conditions is beginning to become apparent, in particular, potholes and tarmac lifting around manholes and drains. Please keep reporting them using the on-line reporting tool and also any blocked drains or other defects you know about. It will take a while to catch up, but the highways teams are working flat out to get to them as soon as they can. Hopefully we are through the worst of the winter weather, and things will improve as spring progresses.

Simon Walsh

County Councillor, Thaxted Division

APPENDIX D

County Councillor’s Report, April2021

Play by the rules and keep us on track - residents urged to stay vigilant, get tested regularly and continue social distancing



Essex residents are being urged play their part in keeping the roadmap for the relaxation of lockdown restrictions on track in the coming weeks and months.

Keeping to the social distancing rules and getting tested regularly is more important than ever particularly as lockdown restrictions continue to ease next week, and will also reduce the chance of a third wave of Covid-19.

From Monday 29 March, outdoor gatherings (including in private gardens) of either six people or two households will be allowed, making it easier for friends and families to meet outside. It is one of several key milestones planned for the coming

weeks and months, as part of the roadmap to recovery from the pandemic. The Government has emphasised that each step in the easing of restrictions will only be possible if case numbers remain low.

By keeping a minimum distance of two metres between yourself and another person, wearing a face covering where possible and regularly washing your hands, the risk of spreading the virus is greatly reduced.

Taking these precautionary measures is vital even for those who have received the Covid-19 vaccination.

Getting into the habit of regular testing will help stop the spread across the County. [Home testing kits are available](#) for households or bubbles with school-age children to order online or collect. All residents are also able to visit one of [12 Lateral Flow Testing centres](#) located in each district of the County.

Dr Mike Gogarty, Essex County Council's Director of Public Health, said: "As restrictions begin to be relaxed and people start to socialise again with others, it might feel like the threat of Covid-19 is lessening and that we don't need to follow Government advice as strictly. However, this is sadly not the case.

"There are still many unknowns about new variants of Covid-19 and they may be less vulnerable to the vaccine. The best way to prevent new variants developing is to keep cases low. Therefore, it is crucial that as restrictions are eased, everyone continues to follow appropriate social distancing guidelines, wearing face coverings and washing hands often.

"We are already beginning to see [infection rates levelling off](#), following a strong decline in numbers. The actions we take as individuals over the weeks to come will make a difference in preventing another significant rise in cases. As restrictions ease, cases will inevitably rise and therefore we are urging people to be as careful as possible and not risk losing the freedoms we are all looking forward to enjoying again.

"With multiple testing routes available, getting tested regularly is a simple habit to form and it will help to stop the spread enormously. And if you are positive and need to self-isolate, there is [financial support available](#). From 29 March, if you are planning to meet with people outside your bubble or household, we urge you to take a lateral flow test before you do so.

"Keeping a two metre distance of those outside of your household will also prevent the risk of being identified as a close contact by Test and Trace and reduce the need for self-isolation."

The second step out of lockdown, planned for 12 April, will see all non-essential shops open. Pubs and restaurants will be able to serve food and drink outside from this date. However, the Government has said that each step will be assessed before restrictions are lifted. The decision on each stage will be based on data which will inform how and when other services and organisations can resume operation.

New Covid-19 test collection scheme to launch in Essex

For latest updates visit:

www.essex.gov.uk/coronavirus

#essexcoronavirus



From this Monday (29 March) Covid-19 self-test kits will be available for collection at 21 libraries across Essex, making testing even more accessible and convenient.

Residents, who do NOT have Covid-19 symptoms, will be able to collect and take away two boxes of seven tests, to undertake regular twice weekly testing at home to help prevent the spread of the virus.

The self-test kits are simple to use and offer quick results.

Dr Mike Gogarty, Director of Public Health, said: “I cannot emphasise enough how important it is that as lockdown eases people remain vigilant, observe hands, face and space and get tested to make sure we reduce asymptomatic infections as much as possible.

“It is also important that people use the testing channel most appropriate for them to ensure that people we need to get tested can have access to the tests they need.

“We are particularly keen to test people who cannot work from home, and are encouraging residents to take a test before seeing relatives or loved ones outside of their lockdown bubble.

“It is also vital that people upload their results as directed in the test instructions, and that people self-isolate as per the government guidance if their result is positive”.

Essex County Council has received an initial stock of 199,000 tests to start the scheme and further tests, and potentially more libraries will be available as more tests become available from the government.

Anyone in a bubble or household with children aged 0 – 18 should continue to choose the online direct option to get their tests delivered to their home. More details can be found [here](#).

Anyone who is already receiving a regular supply of self-test kits from another source should continue with their existing route to help increase the availability of testing for people not currently covered by other national testing schemes.

For private sector businesses registered with Companies House, a new national workforce testing scheme is available. Those eligible should register [here](#) before 31 March.

Library collection

Please see below the list of libraries available to collect a testing kit from and opening times.

Saffron Walden Library

Saffron Walden Library, 2 King Street, Saffron Walden,

CB10 1ES

Monday - Thursday 9am -5pm, Friday 9am-5.30pm & Saturday 9am-5pm

Chelmsford Library

Chelmsford Library, PO Box 882, County Hall, Market Road, Chelmsford

CM1 1LH

Monday - Saturday 9am-5pm Sunday 10.30am-1.30pm

Broomfield Library

Broomfield Library, 180 Main Road, Chelmsford,

CM1 7AH

Monday 1pm-5pm, Wednesday 9am-5pm, Saturday 9am-1pm

Dunmow Library

Dunmow Library, 47 White Hart Way, Great Dunmow,

CM6 1FS

Monday -Saturday 9am-5pm

Braintree Library

Braintree Library, Fairfield Road, Braintree,

CM7 3YL

Monday 9am - 5.30pm, Tuesday -Friday 9am -5pm & Saturday 9am-3pm

Additional collection points for take home testing kits

Self-test kits can also now be picked up 7 days a week between 2:30pm - 8pm only at the below locations.

University of Essex Colchester, Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford, Sandon Park and Ride, Chelmsford, Basildon Adult Community Learning Site and Stansted Airport.

Existing LFT sites

The [twelve existing LFT assisted testing sites](#) DO NOT have stocks of take home self-testing kits. Residents are advised that they should not attend these sites to collect a take home testing kit.

However, if you require an assisted test (going to a test centre for it to be completed there and then, rather than doing it yourself at home) you can book online here- [Getting tested: If you don't have symptoms - Essex County Council](#)

Rapid Covid-19 test centre closures over Easter weekend

Essex residents who access regular, symptom-free, rapid Covid-19 tests are being encouraged to plan ahead due to closures during the Easter Bank Holiday weekend.

All of Essex County Council's twelve Covid-19 rapid test centres will be closed on Good Friday (2 April) and Bank Holiday Monday (5 April).

The centres will, however, be operating normal hours on Saturday and Sunday (3 and 4 April).

Normal service will resume on Tuesday 6 April.

Why should I get tested?

You may be unaware you have Covid-19 if you are showing no symptoms and you could, unknowingly, be passing it on to family, friends and loved ones. The more people that get tested, the quicker we can stop the spread.

What is a rapid lateral flow test (LFT)?

A lateral flow test (LFT) allows people who have no symptoms to find out if they are infected, but not know it yet. It's a rapid test, and you can get a result within 20-30 minutes.

Who can get tested?

If you don't have symptoms and you live or work in Essex you can get a test. We have test centres set up in all districts. See locations listed below.

How do I get a test?

If you live or work in Essex, you can get a test by:

- booking online
- telephone
- email

Note: These tests are only for people who DO NOT have symptoms.

If you have Covid-19 symptoms, you need to book a test with [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Also, you shouldn't get a test if you have recently received a positive test.

Call 0333 772 6144. Lines are open from 8am to 8pm, every day including Saturday and Sunday.

Rapid test centres are [located across Essex](#) and there is one in every district.

What happens if I test positive?

If you test positive, you will need to self-isolate immediately. Find out what you must do and how to get support if you are self-isolating.

What happens if I test negative?

You must remember to continue to follow guidance on social distancing, keep 2m from other people, and remember, Hands Face Space.

Essex businesses benefit from Covid-19 business loans: two days left to apply

Several Essex businesses are eagerly awaiting to re-open next month after receiving support and funding through the Essex Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) which has helped them to prepare for the easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

Earlier this year, Essex County Council (ECC) partnered with Let's Do Business Finance to create a new £1.25 million loan fund to help Essex businesses during the current national lockdown.

The CBILS scheme offers loans repayable over up to six years with any interest and fees during the first 12-months paid for by the government and additional business mentoring support from ECC via their Back to Business initiative.

Since the scheme launched in 2021, Let's Do Business Finance has approved four Essex businesses with CBILS loans totalling £600,000. This boost to the Essex economy has safeguarded 327 jobs and created 30 new jobs.

The CBILS has provided a lifeline to these businesses as all four had previously struggled to access the financial support they needed from their banks.

Pasini Leisure runs several independent and local hospitality venues across Essex. They received funding to expand their micro-Brewery, Other Monkeys Brewing, by re-housing the brewery into an iconic building opposite their current Colchester venue, Three Wise Monkeys.

Paul Tonkinson, Director of Pasini, said, "We are incredibly excited to restore the charm of such a rich piece of Colchester's history and reimagine the space into a modern craft brewery. Though we have faced one of the most challenging years in our history as a local and independent operator of craft bars and pubs, we remain passionate and excited about the reopening roadmap ahead and the expansion of Other Monkey Brewing. Let's Do Business Finance plays a significant part in supporting and enabling us to do that with confidence as we come out of the pandemic."

[There's still £625,000 available for Essex businesses to access](#), but time is running out. The scheme ends on 31 March 2021.

Share your views on Essex Minerals Local Plan

The Essex Minerals Local Plan was launched in July 2014 and sets out policies for minerals development in Essex. It includes the strategy for the most effective use of mineral resources and allocating sites for future extraction.

Essex County Council is consulting on proposed amendments to the Essex Minerals Local Plan and members of the public are invited to have their say.

Proposed changes include:

- That the two 'Reserve Sites' in the Plan (located at Bradwell Quarry in Braintree) are re-allocated to 'Preferred Sites'
- That the policy seeking the safeguarding of mineral resources and infrastructure is amended to reflect current best practice
- Some restrictions are lifted to allow for a greater range of uses for former extraction sites

There are no new sites included in the proposals.

The [Minerals consultation](#) runs from 18 March until 29 April 2021 and can be accessed online

For any queries regarding the consultation please email the County Planning Team at mandwpolicy@essex.gov.uk

Ambitious environment plans announced by Essex County Council



Ambitious plans for an additional 50,000 trees, more electric vehicle charging stations and county-wide energy saving LED street lighting have been made by Essex County Council as part of its 2021/22 annual plan.

The Council's 2021/22 Budget and 12-month Organisation Plan, approved at Full Council on 23 February, includes £26.8 million investment in LED streetlighting and £7.3 million for greener, safer Active Travel to ensure the Council builds on its commitment for Essex to be a great place to grow up, live and work.

In 2019 Innovate UK awarded Essex County Council, GRIDSERVE, Brunel University and Upside Energy, £5.3M to develop and deliver UK's first Electric Forecourt. The Forecourt, which includes co-location of 24 EV charging bays, multi MW on-site battery storage and solar PV canopy, opened in December 2020. The project gives the Authority an opportunity to support community engagement, awareness and education activities, promote a low-carbon agenda regionally and the uptake of electric vehicles.

The Council has committed to support funding to plant 375,000 trees by 2025 as part of the Essex Forest Initiative to offset carbon emissions. Two years ago, it planned to spend £1 million with partners over five years for the Essex Forest project. In 2019/20 ECC has worked with partners to plant 36,000 trees with a further 50,000 set to be planted this year. Essex County Council and the local city, district and borough councils aim to plant one million trees collectively over five years.

Mass tree planting of this scale helps to reduce the effects of climate change whilst improving local air quality, encouraging biodiversity and reducing the risk of flooding.

In highways, following the upgrade of 42,000 main road streetlights in Essex already, a large portion of the remaining 85,000 lights will be converted to LED bulbs in 2021/22, bringing energy and cost savings. 60% less energy is used by LED lights, saving thousands of tons of carbon using less electricity, supporting the council's Safer, Greener, Healthier pledges.

There are more projects to encourage cycling and walking in the county. £7.3 million has been allocated for the Active Travel Fund to develop, design and build cycling and walking routes in Basildon (Wickford), Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford and Colchester. A further £1m will be invested to improve existing cycleways in the county's towns, with funding helping to upgrade, repair and improve existing routes.

The work of environmental interest groups in the county, such as the Rural Council of Essex, the Wilderness Foundation UK and The Essex Climate Commission will continue to be closely supported by Essex County Council this year.

Essex's green credentials include being one of only eight local authorities in the UK to achieve 'Excellent' in the Building with Nature Accreditation, a framework for creating places that really deliver for people and wildlife. The 'Excellent' Award is given for exemplary high-quality green infrastructure covering all stages of policy, planning, design and delivery of developments.

For more about Essex Forest Initiative visit www.essex.gov.uk/the-essex-forest-initiative

Survey launches to help shape future broadband plans

A vital survey to establish the future broadband needs of residents and businesses has been launched by Essex County Council.

Running until Monday 19th April, the [Essex County Council Broadband Survey](#) aims to better understand connectivity needs across the county and identify addresses that should be included in future state-funded broadband rollouts.

Launched by Superfast Essex, the council's broadband improvement programme, the survey invites residents and businesses to share information about their current broadband connectivity, including their provider and download speed, as well as what they use their connection for.

To date, the Superfast Essex programme has worked with network operators Openreach and Gigaclear to extend broadband coverage to nearly 140,000 properties across Essex.

Superfast Essex is now exploring how to support the deployment of gigabit-capable networks, in line with the government's ambition for 85% of homes and businesses to have access to ultrafast (gigabit-capable) broadband by 2025. As part of this, the government has committed to investing £5bn in the hardest to reach parts of the country, where commercial investment is not viable.

The Essex County Council Broadband Survey is designed to help Superfast Essex validate which homes and businesses can currently access a fast broadband service, and those which cannot and therefore should be eligible for future public-funded broadband investment. In parallel to this survey, the Council is also consulting broadband network operators to identify which addresses are in commercial rollout plans for a gigabit-capable service.

To find out more, visit www.superfastessex.org/broadbandsurvey

Library Service to transfer to new Library Management System



Essex and Thurrock Library Services are about to start the transfer to their new Library Management System (LMS).

The new LMS will deliver a modern, interactive experience that will continue to evolve and develop and give residents a system that is fit for the future. Over time the new system will have the following benefits:

- Access to over 6 million new items of stock
- Socially interactive platform
- Users will be able to follow their favourite authors, friends, read press releases on forthcoming titles
- It will enable authors to engage with their readers
- It will display the most popular titles, the current content and latest releases
- It will host virtual book clubs
- It will follow the customer, build a profile and make recommendations
- Customer recommendations – star rating system and post reviews
- Events bookings system

In order to transfer the data and set up the new LMS, the library catalogue and app will be unavailable 6-21 April. During that period customers will be unable to search for items, place reservations or check their account. Customers will still be able to collect any reservations they have previously been notified are available.

More details about how these changes will affect customer can be can found via the Frequently Asked Questions on the website: libraries.essex.gov.uk

APPENDIX E

LEPC March 2021 Finance Statement											
Precept	25,612								Budget	Net Expense	Diff +/-
									25,612	19,396	-6,216
Date	Supplier	Description	Invoice	FPO/DD	Min Ref	Rec	Credit	Debit	VAT	Net	Centre
Opening Balance							32,859.48	0.00		0.00	
01-Mar	Employee	WFH expense Feb	N/A	SO		Y		26.00		26.00	Admin
11-Mar	UDC	Grant	200548	BGC		Y	1,500.00				Income
11-Mar	Activ	Web services	4871	DD		Y		42.00	7.00	35.00	Web
15-Mar	A&J Lighting	Street Lighting	34963	DD		Y		24.30	4.05	20.25	Lighting
15-Mar	Haven Power	Electricity	7891/7892	DD		Y		43.31	2.06	41.25	Utility
18-Mar	LECC	Grass cost cont.	N/A	Chq		Y	351.00				Income
29-Mar	Employee	WFH - March	N/A	SO		Y		26.00		26.00	Admin
31-Mar	EALC	Training	13714/13735	BP				216.00	36.00	180.00	Training
31-Mar	Wicksteed	4See-Saw & flooring	813140	BP				4,176.00	696.00	3480	Play Area
31-Mar	ZOOM - AD	Subscription	20613	BP				14.39	2.40	11.99	Subs
31-Mar	MD Landscapes	Grass cutting	619	BP				78.00	13.00	65.00	Grass
31-Mar	Employee	Salary	PAYE	BP				381.80		381.80	Salary
31-Mar	Employee	Expenses	N/A	BP				2.70		2.70	Expenses
31-Mar	Steve's Garden Serv	Painting swings	190321	BP				350.00		350.00	Play Area
31-Mar	Steve's Garden Serv	Leaf Collection	250321	BP				280.00		280.00	Maintenance
February							34,710.48	5,660.50	760.51	4,899.99	
Opening Balance	APRIL						29,049.98	0.00		0.00	