

ECC Report August 2018

Colchester Park and Ride extended hours to start

From Monday 30 July Colchester Park and Ride is opening earlier and shutting later with the introduction of its extended operating hours.

Responding to customer feedback and public demand, Colchester Park and Ride will now run from 5.30am to 21.30pm Monday to Friday and 7am to 19.00pm on Saturday.

During August customers will get free travel on production of a valid rail ticket – ideal for those wanting to try the park and ride for commuting. The normal price is £3 and the journey time to the station is around eight minutes.

Essex County Council is also launching its 'Kids go free in August' offer with under 16s able to travel for free, after 9am, when accompanied by a paying adult. And the group fare of £5 for up to two adults and three children is also now available.

Essex County Councillor Kevin Bentley, Cabinet Member for Highways said that the Council listened to its customers comment to improve the opening times at the Park and Ride.

The site has plenty of space to park and frequent services to popular stops like the town centre, North Station, Middleborough and Colchester General Hospital, Colchester Park and Ride which makes travelling into Colchester quick and stress free.

Nick Hulme, CEO STP Lead for Suffolk and North East Essex Colchester General said: "The main advantage will be that all staff working shifts at Colchester hospital site will now be able to access the Park and Ride service, as it will operate from 5.30am to 9.30pm, rather than 7am to 7pm.

Detailed ticket and timetable information is available online at www.essexhighways.org/bus/park-and-ride/colchester-park-and-ride.aspx

40,000 lights already converted

ESSEX County Council has said all of its street lamp will be converted to LED lights by the end of the year.

Essex Highways manages 127,000 lights and with the support of interest free

Government loans, it has funded the conversion of approximately 40,000 street lights, (37% of the total) to LED.

This programme will be completed this year and will eventually deliver a saving of £24million over 20 years.

Army and Navy flyover reopens with new speed limit

The Army and Navy flyover reopened today Monday 13th August, briefly with a new lower speed limit of 20mph in place. Unfortunately it remained closed for because of power supply issues.

The lower speed limit (reduced from 30mph) is designed as an additional safety precaution to reduce the likelihood and impact of vehicle collisions on the flyover, and is not related to its structural soundness.

While the flyover is scheduled to reopen today, engineers will still be working on site over the weekend to finish the planned maintenance works therefore commuters are advised to check before they travel that the flyover is in operation.

Cllr Kevin Bentley, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure at Essex County Council thanked all Chelmsford residents and motorists for their patience during the closure of the flyover over the last three weeks. As a vital route in and out of the city it has been essential to have taken the time to properly and safely check and maintain the structure.

The list of work on the Army and Navy flyover being carried out includes: targeted concrete repairs; re-fixing of the drainage strips at the ends of the deck sections; drains taking rainwater off the road surface on the deck cleared and repaired; weeds cleared from the kerbs. Re-surfacing to improve skid resistance of the road over the deck has been ongoing this week and will continue over the weekend, subject to suitable weather conditions.

Drivers are reminded the flyover carries one way traffic (cars only) and the direction of travel changes at different times of the day so that journeys into and out of the city are as quick as possible. Always ensure the flyover is open in your direction by checking the approach and gantry signs before use.

The latest updates about the works can be found on the Essex Highways [website](#).

Time is running out to register for 'Solar Together Essex'

There are only two weeks left to register in 'Solar Together Essex' the solar panel group buying scheme.

Launched in July by Essex County Council in partnership with iChoosr- the group buying specialist, Solar Together Essex offers residents and businesses the opportunity to take part in an online auction to get high quality solar panels at a competitive price, hassle free. Over 1000 people have already registered.

The more people that register for the auction, the more competitive the offer Solar Together is able to secure. When the auction closes residents are sent personalised offers from the winning supplier should they wish to continue with the work.

Cabinet member for Environment and Waste, Cllr Simon Walsh said that having solar panels installed is one way that everyone can contribute to achieving a greener and brighter future for our county; residents can also help save money on energy bills and generate clean electricity too. If you have been thinking about getting solar panels- now is the time to do it. By registering with 'Solar Together' not only will prices be lower than on the open market, residents will also be paired up with trusted suppliers to carry out the work.

Similar projects are also operating in Norfolk and Suffolk.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Registration: Residents can register from now until 22 August on the Essex County Council Website here- www.essex.gov.uk/solartogether If you register, you are under no obligation to continue.

Auction: a supplier 'auction' will be held on 22 August, when our approved solar suppliers will bid for the work. The more people that register, the better the deal should be for each household.

Personalised offer: from 10 September you will be contacted with a personalised offer, based on the specifications of your roof. This includes your costs and return on the investment of a solar panel installation.

You decide: the decision is then yours as to whether you want to accept your offer.

There is no obligation to continue. You will have until 19 October to decide and will be invited to visit an information session.

Installation: if you accept the offer, the winning supplier will contact you to survey your roof and set an installation date. All installations are planned to be completed by the end of March 2019.

To register and for more information please visit www.essex.gov.uk/solartogether

Council gives the green light to increased fees, support and training for Essex foster carers

In recognition of the life changing work foster carers do with local children, the Essex County Council Fostering service is set to significantly increase its fees, support and training package for foster carers.

The decision will make becoming a foster carer a more financially viable option for more people in the county and brings Essex in line with the fees paid by neighbouring local authorities and independent fostering agencies.

The increased fees, when combined with the weekly allowance which foster carers receive for each child in their care, mean that from 1 October 2018, foster carers can expect to receive up to £479 a week for each child they care for. A foster carer on a specialist therapeutic scheme will receive up to £600 a week.

Aligned to this are service improvements including dedicated resources to manage initial enquiries, specialist therapeutic support for all foster carers – clinical psychologists and mental health coordinators in each quadrant – respite and peer support for foster carers and a reward and recognition programme.

There will also be increased opportunities for existing carers to be supported financially to extend their homes to provide increased capacity to care for more children.

Phase two of the project will also look at the use of digital options to enhance the marketing of fostering, to ensure immediate and positive response to enquiries and improve the experience of current foster carers. This will include a case management portal for foster carers and social work staff and implementation of an online expenses system for in-house foster carers.

Councillor Dick Madden, Essex County Council's Cabinet member for Children and Families, said that he was delighted to be able to reward foster carers with a new financial package and increased support and training. Stable foster placements provides the best experience for children in care and investing in our own in-house

fostering service ensures the continued support to carers, in order to provide the best outcomes for local children

ECC needs more local carers to meet the needs of children in Essex, in their own communities and the main aim is to ensure as many of our young people as possible are well-matched with Essex's own foster carers and can benefit from the excellent support networks we provide.

For more information about the new scheme and to find out how to register your interest to become a foster carer please visit www.essexadoptionandfostering.co.uk or call 0800 801 530.

Hot and dry summer creates the perfect conditions to reveal local archaeological sites

Archaeologists in Essex have been celebrating as the prolonged spell of hot and dry weather over the summer has helped to create the perfect conditions to reveal hidden archaeological sites.

Aerial archaeology has been carried out in Essex since the 1970s identifying new sites each year, a further 20 new archaeological sites have been recorded in the county for the first time this year. The Historic Environment team at Place Services uses aerial photography of cropmarks to uncover buried archaeological features such as ditches and walls. The exceptionally dry summer has created the perfect conditions as crop marks have been more visible.

Over the 2018 season, 14 hours of flying have taken place and highlights have included new details, showing for the first time, within the Scheduled Roman Temple at Great Chesterford. The lines of roads, possible temple, numerous pits and property boundaries within the Scheduled Roman Town of Great Chesterford also showed extremely well. A group of three large round barrows were revealed near Little Chesterford. Elsewhere in the county particularly good parch-marks within Tilbury Fort reveal the location and layout of former buildings.

Aerial archaeology in Essex is currently funded by Historic England (formerly English Heritage) and delivered by Place Services, a traded service of Essex County Council.

Know your alcohol limits and Don't Bottle It Up

With the recent unprecedented levels of hot weather, Essex County Council's Public Health Team (PHT) is encouraging residents to have fun in the sun but know their limits when it comes to alcohol.

The team is aiming to highlight the signs of risky drinking, including the associated dangers of alcohol abuse throughout the summer.

Local people are encouraged to take part in a short online quiz – 'Don't Bottle It Up' - to find out how risky their drinking habits are. The quiz will also direct them to relevant support and services available locally.

The exceptional levels of hot weather experienced in last few weeks have made this summer as a great time of year to get together with friends and family and have fun in the sun.

Barbecues and social gatherings usually involve alcohol and it's sometimes easy to forget how much you're drinking when you're out enjoying the sun together. This can lead to more serious situations if people end up drinking beyond their limits.

The PHT urges everyone to know their limits this summer. If anyone is worried about their drinking habits, or concerned about someone else, don't bottle it up and take the free online test.

Ben Hughes, Head of Wellbeing and Public Health, added: "The Don't Bottle It Up tool is a quick and easy way for people to see if their drinking is risky. We know alcohol-related incidents increase over the summer months, so we're keen to highlight the dangers and support residents to know their limits.

"With the temptation to drink alcohol when out in the sun with friends, it's easy to get carried away and end up drinking beyond your limits. If you're also relying on alcohol to make you feel more sociable or to have fun, you may want to seek further support or advice.

"It's important that people know the dangers associated with drinking, how to stay safe and where to go for help."

To take the free test and find local support, visit www.dontbottleitup.org.uk/

The proportion of dependent drinkers not in treatment in Essex is 82.6% (2016/17)

- 7% of adults in England regularly drink over the Chief Medical Officer's low-risk guidelines, and 2.5 million people report drinking over 14 units on their heaviest drinking days.

- In 2016, 21% of the population reported not drinking at all and overall consumption has fallen by around 18% since 2004.
- In the UK, in 2015 there were 8,758 alcohol-related deaths (around 14 per 100,000 people). The mortality rates are highest among people aged 55-64.
- In England, there are an estimated 595,131 dependent drinkers, of whom only 108,696 are currently accessing treatment.
- Alcohol misuse is the biggest risk factor for death, ill-health and disability among 15-49 year-olds in the UK, and the fifth biggest risk factor across all ages.
- Alcohol harms are estimated to cost the NHS around £3.5 billion annually.
- While the price of alcohol has increased by 36% since 2005, it remains 60% more affordable than it was in 1980.

(Source: <https://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/alcohol-statistics>)