

ECC January 2020 Report

Statement on flooded roads in Essex from Cllr Kevin Bentley, Deputy Leader of Essex County Council and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure.

Just before Christmas Cllr Kevin Bentley, Deputy Leader of Essex County Council and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, released a statement on flooded roads caused by persistent rainfall, which had been reported throughout Essex for the best part of December 2019.

Cllr Kevin Bentley said: “Several roads in Essex just before Christmas did have standing water over much of the surface as drains struggled to cope with prolonged heavy rain overnight. As we are still in winter this situation is likely to reoccur in the coming weeks, as we progress through winter 2020.

“Drivers are asked to please take great care, slow down, beware other drivers moving to the centre of the road and test your brakes after going through water. If you’re not sure you can easily get through, don’t chance it as you won’t be rescued quickly – emergency services are under pressure.

“If there are cyclists and pedestrians nearby, please do not splash them, slow right down and if necessary, wait until you can move ahead safely and with no risk to others.

“Road drains are built to cope with most situations, but cannot immediately drain all water from the road, particularly where in flat, low-lying areas the land the water would drain to is already water-logged.

Please report significant flooding at www.essex.gov.uk/highways

Grandfather gets his own unique piece of Chelmsford history with Army and Navy flyover gift for Christmas

A piece of the Army and Navy flyover might not have been top of most people’s Christmas lists, but that is exactly what was unwrapped by a former conveyancing search agent with a unique link to the structure.

David Leavy, 67, was given the unusual gift by daughter Dawn Tyler after she wrote to Essex County Council having heard that the flyover was soon to be removed, ahead of a new long-term solution at the junction.

The flyover has special significance to the family after Mr Leavy's heart stopped while he was driving over it in February 2010 and his car came to rest on the roundabout. Thankfully he survived and had a pacemaker fitted at Broomfield Hospital, with the episode revealing he had a previously undiagnosed heart condition.

Mrs Tyler said: "Dad's life changed dramatically after that and it was a lucky escape in many ways. He retired within a year or so and it just made him really think about the things that are most important in life.

"When we saw the flyover had closed and was due to be taken down, we thought it would be a great idea to try and get him a small piece of it."

The piece of the flyover that was given to the family – a small core from one of the trestle bases – was removed during repair works last year.

Mrs Tyler added: "We got a box frame to present it in and gave it to him on Christmas Day. He loved it and I am eternally grateful to Essex County Council for making it all happen."

The permanent closure of the Army and Navy flyover was announced in September on safety grounds following the recommendation of a detailed engineering report. Signage on the approaches to the flyover has already been removed and main works to dismantle the structure are expected to take place early in the new year.

Cllr Kevin Bentley said: "The Army and Navy flyover has been a well-known feature of the Chelmsford skyline for 40 years and its removal will be a historic milestone for the city. I was very interested to hear about the special significance of the flyover to Mr Leavy and pleased we were able to give him his own small piece of Chelmsford's history.

"It is certainly one of the more unusual Christmas gifts I have ever heard of, but I am very pleased to hear it put a smile on his face. With the flyover due to be removed very soon, we are continuing to assess potential options for a long-term solution at this crucial junction.

"Steps are already being taken to reduce the programme wherever possible and we will progress the project as quickly as we can. However, we must also ensure we get it right and any improvements encourage more sustainable travel and avoid putting additional pressure on other roads in the city centre."

For more information about the project and to sign up for the Army and Navy email newsletter, please visit: www.essex.gov.uk/armyandnavy

Switching off duplicate street lights to save co2

Essex Highways is taking action to switch off some duplicate street lights where they perform no useful function and waste energy.

Across Essex there are several street lights that illuminate the same area; often this duplication has happened when a new development has installed street lights which were then adopted by the Council and in one or two cases then overlap with existing illumination.

Essex County Council now plans to switch off the small proportion of identified duplicates – working with district and borough councils in the process.

Cllr Bentley said: “Our move will not greatly reduce light or affect safety. It means that we will not be burning lights that are unnecessary and ensures we are doing all we can to reduce carbon emissions, helping with our climate change work. Each county councillor will be notified of lights to be switched off before we do so, in case there are any circumstances they are aware of. Safety will not be compromised.”

The proposal is to do a detailed “desktop” mapping exercise and then follow this up with on-site investigations of each light which has been identified as possibly duplicate. Only where the light is found to be lighting the same area as another street light, and where there are no safety concerns, will that light be switched off. Signs will be put on switched-off lights, so people do not report them as being faulty.

A pilot project has been mapped out where 36 potentially duplicate lights out of a total of 2260 in the area have been identified for potential switch-off. This is approximately 1.5% of lights estimated as duplicates. If the same ratio is consistent across Essex, then about 2,000 lights out of 127,000 ECC lights in total could be turned off.

- Whether the street lights are all-night or part-night and LED lights or not, they will be considered in the programme. Where 30mph speed limits are

demonstrated by street lighting, this will not be affected; ECC will only switch off duplicated lighting.

- Lamp columns will not be removed until they fail a structural or an electrical test as part of the annual testing programme, or unless other damaged/failed columns are being removed or replaced in the same area and it is therefore economical to carry out the work.
- The programme will be carried out district by district, with relevant county and district councillors informed of intentions so they can make representations before any street light is switched off.
- ECC manages over 129,000 street lights and it is estimated, depending on engineers' onsite investigations, that up to 2,000 street lights could be switched off. To show which street lights have been turned off, a recognisable sticker will be placed on each lamp column.
- For further information for members of the public when any action has been taken, the switched-off street lights will be shown as such on the "Tell us about something" reporting tool at <http://www.essexhighways.org/transport-and-roads.aspx>

Apply now for primary school places

The admissions window for primary school applications is very quickly coming to an end. If your child is due to start in Reception in September 2020, you can submit your application online now.

<https://www.tlc-essex.info/getting-ready-for-school/>

The deadline for applying for a primary school place is 15 January 2020. Offers will be made either by email or letter on 16 April 2020.

Starting school is an exciting time for children and there are lots of different ways you can help them to get ready. Visit the Talk, Listen, Cuddle website to find out more. <https://www.tlc-essex.info/getting-ready-for-school/>

Volunteer in Essex

Volunteering is a great way of learning something new, meeting new people and giving back to your local community. Volunteers can make a real difference to individuals, charities and smaller organisations in Essex who benefit from the different skills and experiences local people can bring to placements.

There are lots of volunteering opportunities across the county, within a range of different areas - from animals and the environment, to children and homelessness. They include one off and longer-term placements that you can fit around your life and existing commitments.

Volunteering is a truly rewarding experience, so why not try something new and see what difference you can make? Find out more and search for local opportunities on the Volunteer Essex website <https://www.volunteersessex.org/>

Make an investment in yourself this year

With the excitement of Christmas and New Year's Eve now over, we can be left feeling a little bit flat. This combined with the dark nights and cold weather can eventually come to affect our overall mental health and wellbeing as we approach a new month and year, and the pressure to make this the best one yet.

That's why it's so important that we recognise these feelings, accept them as completely normal, but also that we take steps to improve our wellbeing, before those feelings escalate.

Lots of New Year resolutions typically involve stopping something; things like giving up chocolate, or staying off social media all feel like easy, quick fixes to being healthier, but in reality, we probably become more miserable because we feel like we're denying ourselves something.

So, this year, why not resolve to start something new? By making some small changes and taking the time to invest in ourselves – our physical and mental health - we can not only improve how we feel, but also how we view ourselves and the world around us.

Making smaller, manageable changes, such as incorporating 10 minutes of activity into our daily routine also means they're more sustainable, we feel more in control and we're less likely to give them up after a few weeks.

To find out how you can make an investment in yourself in 2020, check out the Livewell campaign website <https://www.livewellcampaign.co.uk/>

which has lots of information, advice and links to local support, including seven steps to wellbeing which are a great way of starting this year in the right way <https://www.livewellcampaign.co.uk/livewell-articles/7-steps-to-wellbeing/>

Transform a child's life, be the parent they need.

It could be the best thing you'll ever do. We best match children to your family. Training is local, support is 24/7 and your family could receive up to £483 per child, per week. Foster with our support. Think Fostering. Think Essex County Council.

If you would like to find out more about the challenges and rewards of fostering, please come to one of our information events.

At these informal events, you can hear first-hand from people who foster and learn about some of the children who need homes. Social workers and foster carers will be on hand to chat and answer your questions.

Events are held around Essex and you can search by your nearest town below. If you would like to attend, please call us on 0800 801 530

https://www.essexadoptionandfostering.co.uk/fostering/events?utm_medium=campaigns%20banner&utm_campaign=Fostering&utm_source=ecc%20website&utm_content=&utm_term=