

County Councillor's Report

August 2019

Too good to throw away?



It's all too easy to throw away items when we've fallen out of love with them - you're probably a different person now to who you were years ago when you first bought that mustard coloured settee and matching armchairs.

But what if there was a different way of getting rid of the things that no longer bring you joy, or that you simply do not have space to keep?

In Essex it's easy and quick to pass on your unwanted items and you may not even need to leave your home to do so.

There are many local projects, which not only support Essex residents, but also benefit local communities. So, by de-cluttering your home, you're also giving back.

If you have an item that is too good to throw away, find out more about how you can [Love Essex](#) and support great causes across the county.

And if you're on the lookout for anything from furniture and clothing, to garden ornaments and children's toys, check out your local [Freegle site](#) – a space where you can give or receive items for free!

Listen and you could save a life



Recognising that someone is struggling and knowing how to help them can be daunting, especially if the person is close to you. You can often feel helpless and it's difficult to know where to begin.

However, in some cases, simply listening to that person can be the first step to helping them to feel better. Giving people the opportunity to work through what's on their mind and communicate this within a safe space can help them make sense of their feelings.

The skill of actively listening can take time to develop and practise but can sometimes be the difference between someone sharing their thoughts out loud and them truly feeling like they're being heard.

If you know someone who is struggling and you're not sure how to help them, visit the [Samaritans website](#) and find out more about their active listening tips and how you can be better prepared to have a difficult conversation.

There are also lots of local organisations across Essex who can help if you, or someone you know, is struggling to cope, or you notice you're feeling differently. Visit the [Livewell campaign website](#) for links to local, confidential advice and support.

We often don't recognise the importance of taking time out to consider our own emotional wellbeing and mental health, before we start to see the negative impact of not doing so. So, listen. Listen to yourself and listen to those around you. When people feel listened to, it can save a life.

Country Parks gain Green Flag Accolades

All seven of ECC's County Parks have been awarded Green Flags this year. This is an increase on previous years and recognises how well managed the parks are for visitors, wildlife and the environment in general. Many of the County Parks now have catering so it is a perfect time during the summer to visit and enjoy a whole day out.

Library Plan given the green light

Following one of the largest consultations this Council has undertaken, the Library Plan has been agreed by Cabinet. Still subject to call-in, the plan has taken on board many of the concerns raised by residents and seeks to ensure a modern fit for purpose Library Service continues well into the future. The Council Leader has made it clear that no libraries will close, and the Council will be working closely with communities that have submitted expressions of interest, to help shape their local service.

Highways

Over the next few days I will be collating requests for footway repairs and submitting a list to Highways. It is anticipated these will be prioritised and attended to soon.

Great Bardfield bridge remains closed as it is undergoing essential repairs, extensive diversions are in place, and drivers are asked to not use the narrower lanes, particularly

during harvest time. It is anticipated that work will be completed by the beginning of September.

Plans are being worked up to repair the culvert in Stebbing High Street, and it is expected this work will commence late September.

Gigaclear remain active in the area, installing highspeed broadband cabling in the more remote rural areas. Please check the ECC Highways website for the latest road closure details along with designated diversion routes.

This dry weather has caused a number of watermain leaks which require immediate repair, these will not have been notified to parishes due to the nature of the leak. Please be patient if your local road has been shut urgently to deal with this.

When the weather does break and heavy rainfall occurs, road drains can get blocked. Please use the ECC Highways defect reporting tool to report these.

I hope you all have a good summer.

Simon Walsh

County Councillor for Thaxted Division