

## Climate comms (February 2025)

### Monthly updates/news:

**Essex Schools Climate Action Network** – A new network for schools, colleges and sixth forms to champion climate action across Essex. It is aimed at getting students involved in climate action, coming up with their own projects. Meetings are organised by Essex County Council to keep the schools engaged. Schools can register their interest [here](#) to join and get an invite to the next meeting. There is also an [upcoming conference](#) on 26<sup>th</sup> March at Anglia Ruskin University focusing on Sustainability in Education which will provide workshops to help support climate action planning for schools. This may be of interest to schools because all schools are required to nominate a sustainability lead and develop a climate action plan by September 2025 as part of the Department for Education's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.

**Solar Together scheme launches** – The popular group buying scheme for solar panels back. The scheme allows residents to express an interest in solar panels and/or battery storage systems. By using the scheme and registering with other residents, a more competitive quote is gained, lowering the price than if the resident got a quote for their individual property. Residents saw a discount of 20-37% on panels using the Solar Together scheme in 2024. All installers registering to deliver works as part of the scheme have the appropriate accreditations to deliver the works. Residents can find out more and register for free on the [Solar Together website](#). Registrations are expected to close towards the end of March 2025.

**New Essex Air Quality Strategy** – ECC have launched a public consultation on a new Essex Air Quality Strategy. The Strategy has the backing of all of the district councils, alongside Southend and Thurrock. It has some really useful information, infographic and a video on air quality. The Strategy can be viewed [here](#), and the consultation [here](#). The consultation closes on **2<sup>nd</sup> March 2025**.

**Property flood resilience grant** – ECC have launched a grant scheme to support residents who are living in properties at risk of flooding. The grant can go towards the purchase and installation costs of products which can help reduce flood damage to your property. The grant can cover costs of up to £8,000 with any additional costs above this threshold to be paid by the resident. Measures could be for door flood barriers, waterproof home tiles. Residents are eligible for funding if they are in a 'critical drainage area' – This can be checked on the [ECC website](#). More information about the grant can be seen [here](#).

**New Cycle Colchester website launches** – The new website for all your cycling needs has recently been updated. The [Cycle Colchester website](#) contains information on all things cycling such as cycle routes, cycle parking, bike hire, bike maintenance, bike training, buying a bike, cycling related events and more!

**Great Start programme for businesses** – The Great Start programme produced by Essex County Council aims to upskill local businesses to understand their environmental impact. A series of online videos have been developed to introduced sustainability jargon, guides to developing a sustainability action plan and more. Businesses can then get digital badges for each training video they watch. See the YouTube playlist of videos [here](#).

### **Event dates for the diary:**

### Funding:

#### Community/Parish

**Enovert Community Trust funding** – Regular rounds of grants (next deadline 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025) for not for profit organisations to do community environmental projects (e.g. decarbonising a Village Hall, creating or enhancing a habitat, playground improvements etc). Project locations must be within 10 miles of Bellhouse landfill site (CO3 0NN). See more details of the fund [here](#). They are particularly keen to see projects from Colchester so do check the eligibility criteria and consider applying.

**Woodland Trust free trees** – Woodland Trust are giving out packs of free trees to schools and communities. These trees would be delivered in November 2025 for planting during the winter season. There are different tree species packs of varying sizes available. Applications are **expected to close in August 2025**. Find out more on the Woodland Trust [website](#).

**Asda Foundation Outdoor Community Spaces Fund** – Asda Foundation are providing grants of between £500-£3000 to help with the transformation of outdoor community spaces for public benefit – This could be for community growing projects, community clean ups or creating a new community green space. The funding is available for a range of grassroots, not for profit groups. The application **deadline is 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025**, closing early if total budget is reached. Find out more and see example projects on the [Asda Foundation website](#).

**NatureSave Trust** – [NatureSave Trust](#) provide funding for community environmental projects led by community groups, charities, voluntary organisations or businesses etc - £500-£5000 provided – Three grant windows per year with different themes. Current funding is for Sustainable and Active Travel and is **open till 12pm on 27th February 2025**. They are looking to fund projects actively promoting sustainable travel. This includes provision of electric vehicles, any infrastructure to support active travel, energy sources to support transitions (e.g. solar panels for charge points) and initiatives directly supporting active travel. Find out about their [funding guidelines](#) and more on this theme's grant window here.

**Love Essex Fund** – The fund will launch on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and will be focused on supporting community projects that aim to reduce waste and increase engagement around the topic. Based on previous rounds, the maximum award available will be £500. **Applications close on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2025**. See the [Love Essex website](#) for more details.

**Sea Changers Funding (plus Innovation Fund)** – [Sea Changers](#) are a marine conservation charity who have small grant funding opportunities (up to £500) for conservation work throughout the year as well as a main grant (between £500-£2500) twice a year. Find out more about these [here](#). Currently they have their innovation fund open which provides up to £10,000 for innovative projects that deliver marine conservation work – This could be research based, direct action (to conserve), species protection or education/engagement based. A range of organisations from schools, community groups and businesses can apply. **Deadline to apply is 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025**, but you can ask the funder questions via email before then. Find out more [here](#).

**Kew Garden 'Grow Wild' community programme** – This programme is looking to fund communities who want to transform urban space to help people connect with nature. Projects could include planting/growing activities for UK native plants or fungi and should aim to engage with different target audiences. Grant needs to be spent by end of October 2025. **Deadline for applications is 3pm on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025**. For more information visit their [website](#).

**Community Energy Fund** – The Greater South East Net Zero Hub has launched its Community Energy Fund, providing funds to community groups to set up community energy projects in their areas. The projects can be to do with energy advice or for feasibility and development costs of a renewable energy generation project. More details can be found [here](#).

**National Lottery Climate Action Fund** – Minimum £500,000 per bid for community led environmental projects. Bid deadline Spring 2025. Further information can be found [here](#).

**Matthew Good foundation 'Grants for good'** – This foundation provides funding for small charities, community groups or similar organisations (with less than £50,000 average income in last 12 months) to deliver work that has an impact on communities, people or the environment. Funds can be used for any of the organisation/project costs. Grants are offered quarterly with the current window for applications **open till 15<sup>th</sup> March 2025**. There's lots of examples of organisations that have received funding in the past. See these examples and also further information about the grant [here](#).

**Sport England Movement Fund** – The fund aims to fund projects that reduce inequalities and get more people physically active. Projects can be conducted by a local authority, sports club, school, charity, not for profit companies and community benefit societies. Applications can be for between £300-£15,000. Find out more [here](#).

**One Stop Community Partnership programme** – One Stop stores and Groundwork have joined up to provide up to £1000 of funding to community organisations that are aiming to tackle food poverty, improve the local environment or reduce waste in the community. Applications are open each quarter. Your organisation will need to be based/operating within 2 miles of a One Stop Store. For further information visit the [website](#).

**Aviva Community Fund** – [Aviva](#) provide matched funding for donations to community projects, with 'climate action' one of the eligible causes they will provide funding to. Just upload your project for approval and featuring on their website. For every donation to your project, Aviva will match the donation amount (up to £250). See more details of the fund [here](#).

**ECC Public Health Accelerator Bid Programme** – This 3 year programme offers small grants (£500-£15,000) and major grants (from £15,000) for projects that aim to boost mental and physical health at an individual or community level. Projects must complete by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. See more [here](#)

**Funding for outdoor schools equipment** – Up to £500 for equipment or training through 'Learning through landscapes' – See [website](#) for further information. **Applications are currently open till 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025.**

### **Personal**

**Property flood resilience grant** – ECC have launched a grant scheme to support residents who are living in properties at risk of flooding. The grant can go towards the purchase and installation costs of products which can help reduce flood damage to your property. The grant can cover costs of up to £8,000 with any additional costs above this threshold to be paid by the resident. Measures could be for door flood barriers, waterproof home tiles. Residents are eligible for funding if they are in a 'critical drainage area' – This can be checked on the [ECC website](#). More information about the grant can be seen [here](#).

**Boiler Upgrade Scheme** - The Government is providing £7,500 in grants off the cost and installation of air source heat pumps and biomass boilers (in rural off gas grid areas only), and £6000 off the cost and installation of ground source heat pumps. For more information see the [Government website](#).

**Love Essex discounts** - [Love Essex](#) have several schemes where residents can access discounts/refunds on purchasing [reusable nappies](#) and [compost bins](#). They also have lots of useful information on recycling in Colchester.

**Electric Vehicle Chargepoint grants:** There are different grants available for installing electric vehicle chargepoints. The scheme is currently focussed on providing grants for landlords, owners/renters of flats, those with on-street parking and workplaces. See further details on the Government's [website](#).

**Energy Grants information** – The Council has been working hard to enable ways for residents to access grant funding for energy efficiency/decarbonisation improvements for their homes (e.g. variety of insulation types, air source heat pumps) and will be launching these in the next month. There are 2 main current grant schemes; Energy Company Obligation and Great British Insulation Scheme, all of which are explained at [www.colchester.gov.uk/energy-grants](http://www.colchester.gov.uk/energy-grants). Residents can also email their queries to [EnergyEfficientHomes@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:EnergyEfficientHomes@colchester.gov.uk). Please let us know if you would like any flyers/promotional materials or have ideas of where we could promote these grants and energy advice – We're keen to get round to events and hold pop-ups throughout Colchester.

**Green Doctor** – Green Doctor provide support to help residents with energy based queries

such as understanding bills, helping with energy switching, applying for grants and support, joining priority services registers and more. They are particularly aimed at helping those on low incomes, over 65, young families, living with physical or mental health conditions, living in poor housing. The Green Doctor can do telephone and in-person consultations. To refer please visit <https://groundwork.my.salesforce-sites.com/CadentEnquiryForm> or call 07702941440 (this can be done by a carer/work professional on behalf of a resident).

**Community Energy Colchester** - This community energy group are offering FREE in person visits to resident's homes to provide energy saving advice, help with understanding utility bills and much more. Enquiries about the offer or to book visits, call Chris from Community Energy Colchester on 07799494797. Information can be found at [www.colchester.gov.uk/energy-grants](http://www.colchester.gov.uk/energy-grants)

### **Useful information/resources/websites (updated periodically)**

**Colchester City Council sustainability webpages** – For information about the Council's climate and environmental actions, including advice and resources for residents. These can be navigated from the main [sustainability homepage](#).

**Colchester City Council 'what you can do' document** – Contains details of useful resources and websites to help residents understand their environmental impact, and activities they can do to reduce their environmental impact.

**Clean Air Colchester toolkit resources** – Resources that support Colchester's air quality campaigns to encourage vehicles to switch their engines off when stationary for long periods. Available from this [website](#)

**Cycle Colchester website** - The website for all your cycling needs has recently been updated. The [Cycle Colchester website](#) contains information on all things cycling such as cycle routes, cycle parking, bike hire, bike maintenance, bike training, buying a bike, cycling related events and more!

**Colchester eCargo bike library** – For information about the Council's electric cargo bike project, providing free short term loans of ecargo bikes to interested organisations, business and communities/charities. For more information, visit [the eCargo bike library webpage](#).

**Free Adult Cycle training provided by Essex County Council** - These courses are ideal for gaining confidence in cycling on the roads, and 'adult advanced cycling 1-2-1' must be completed before anyone can use electric cargo (eCargo) bikes available from the secure bike park - <https://www.essexhighways.org/safer-greener-healthier/safer-greener-healthier-cycling>

**Love Essex website** - For information, tips and guidance on reducing waste and recycling more including [discounts available](#) on water butts and compost bins - <https://www.lovesessex.org/>.

**ECC TravelEssex app** - ECC have produced a TravelEssex app, for navigating around Essex, with a variety of different modes of travel shown for journeys. It can provide real times updates of bus/train times and track journeys in real time. Find out more [here](#).

**Colchester BID Travel Planner** - InColchester have created an online travel planner to help with navigating in and around the city centre. The map was specifically made to help promote more sustainable modes of travel before using private modes of travel (e.g. cars), and notifies individuals of the carbon emissions associated with their journey. Find out more [here](#).

**Essex County Council Climate Advice Packs** - ECC have produced [climate advice packs](#) to provide detailed advice packs for residents, schools and businesses to understand and lower their environmental impact. Please share these with any who may find them of use.

**These were all updated in May 2024 and are a go to resource for information on a variety of environmental topics.**

Links to the advice packs from the Essex Climate Commission website: [Residents](#), [Residents \(easy read version\)](#), [Schools](#), [Early Years/childcare](#), [Business](#)

**Eco Colchester** - The [Eco Colchester website](#) and [Facebook page](#) are also great resources for education and learning about environmental issues, as well as keeping up to date on environmental news and events, both locally and further afield.

**Carbon Cutting Essex App** - ECC have launched an app developed by [GreenRedeem](#) to help residents understand more about their carbon footprint and what actions they can take to lower it in their lifestyles. The app provides quizzes, blogs, videos and other activities on a weekly basis on a variety of different topics including food, waste, energy and transport. In return for completing activities, residents get 'points' which can be redeemed for rewards or donated to charities. The app can be downloaded from the App Store, Google Play or the [Green Redeem website](#).

**Colchester Institute Sustainability courses:** Colchester Institute are offering a course for organisations to understand how their activities contribute to carbon emissions. The 1-day course (delivered over 2 half days) is delivered online and at the end you get a Carbon Literacy City and Guilds accredited certificate. For more information and to enquire about applying visit <https://www.colchester.ac.uk/course/practical-carbon-literacy/>

**UK Business Climate Hub** – The Government has launched a climate hub full of resources for businesses to help increase their environmental awareness and reduce their carbon footprint. Access to training, webinars, carbon calculator, funding opportunities and more will be hosted on the hub. Access the hub [here](#).

**Solar Together Essex** – Closed scheme at moment but offers discounts on solar panels through bringing together a collective of residents to show demand for solar panels and then doing an auction for installers to bid to deliver the works at the best price. See the [website](#) and sign up to the waiting list to find out when the next offer launches.

### **For Parishes:**

**Community Energy Colchester** – For information on securing installation of electric vehicle chargepoints for free, reach out to [Community Energy Colchester](#) who are working with [ChargemyStreet](#) to provide parish Councils with access to charge points for their car parks. Chris can also provide support for installing simple energy efficiency measures like draught proofing and radiator reflector panels.

**Friends of the Earth 20 actions for parishes** – [Friends of the Earth](#) have produced information on 20 actions town and parish councils can take to respond to the climate emergency.

**Impact tool** – This [tool](#) produced by the Centre for Sustainable Energy gives you a breakdown for your town/parish emissions produced from different datasets. It also gives a really useful guide on activities you could think about doing in your town/parish based on the breakdown of your carbon footprint. The [website](#) also provides case studies of others who have used the tool.

**Neighbourhood Plan guidance** – See information and guidance document produced by the [Centre for Sustainable Energy](#) on writing a sustainable neighbourhood plan.

**National Association of Local Councils (NALC) website** – The [NALC website](#) contains information on case studies from local parish and town councils taking climate and environmental action.