

HIGHWAYS HIGHLIGHTS

Additional pothole funding to focus on local concerns



Earlier this year Essex County Council provided £2.4m additional funding to tackle the scourge of potholes.

As a result, County Members have now been invited to work with their local parishes and districts to identify the 20 worst road potholes that most concern local communities.

Armed with these lists from each County Member, Essex Highways will, during the next few months, get extra gangs out on the highways of Essex to deal with the specific defects that local people are most worried about.

Where possible, defects will be grouped to ensure they are repaired together, saving time and money. Essex Highways have also been trialling various innovative repair tools (see separate article) and, where suitable we will use these techniques to deliver speedy, long-lasting repairs during this programme.

The good news is that these repairs will be additional to the ones we already have prioritised, meaning that more local roads will see more repairs completed – provided of course that the weather lets us!

Councillor Kevin Bentley | Comment

Deputy Leader, Essex County Council
and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

As we ensure our Highways service becomes more responsive to the needs of the Public I am determined that County Councillors are at the forefront of decision making in their Divisions.

We are making changes to the way we deliver our services and this includes asking every County Councillor for their top 20 defects in their area so that 10 can be fixed up to Christmas and 10 in the Spring. I recently made a brief video detailing the Local Pothole Repair Programme - you can access it by clicking on the photo opposite. We have also introduced a liaison system for County Members which enables you to have direct contact with Highways Officers and ensuring that each of you has a place on LHPs. I hope this edition of Highways Highlights is useful to you.



Innovation and Trials

The severe winter left the county with a significant increase in potholes. Our efforts to deal with these have led us to look into several techniques and equipment to improve and speed up the process of repairing potholes and improving carriageways.

Recently, we have been trialling some different machinery as we look to quickly further reduce potholes and hone road surfacing techniques. Click on a photo to see the video...

Jet Patchers were used in Essex up to 2012, and are being re-considered as part of our efforts to catch up with the significant backlog of potholes following the severe winter. The Jet Patcher enables a two-person crew to fill a lot of potholes in one day. High-pressure "jet" air clears any loose material, then switches to spray asphalt emulsion to seal the surface, before blasting a mix of stones and binder to build up the new layers. A whacker is used to then compact the patch.

Multihog is a multi-use, adaptable vehicle which, for our purposes, is fitted with a road planer ideal for areas larger than a single pothole which don't need to be completely dug out, enabling a fast patch repair. Trials suggest that the Multihog does a great job of planing off the road and speeds up the process of patching.

The front end of the **Greenswift** vehicle operates like the Jet Patcher, able to blow away debris and spray bitumen/stone mix to fill potholes. The back-end of the vehicle, however, is able to carry out a surface dressing operation.



Big reduction in potholes on Essex main routes, as focus turns to local roads

Following the work completed by gangs over the summer months and better weather, the number of potholes on our main roads ('county routes', the PR1 and PR2 roads) has more than halved from 988 in June to 407 now.

Councillor Bentley commented: "That's a major improvement for the safety and comfort of drivers and riders on our faster roads where most of the traffic is. We will now work to keep that figure low, while shifting more of our crews' efforts to fixing more potholes on local roads, whether in villages or town estates."

In August we repaired 1,485 potholes in Essex, 679 on main roads and 806 on local roads. As well as our patch repairs, the summer-only Surface Dressing programme is now complete, with over 2 million square metres of road improved and proofed against potholes for years. Other techniques, including resurfacing and microsurfacing, continue into Autumn. You can see the programme map at www.essex.gov.uk/surfacing



Potholes fixed

Potholes fixed per district/city/borough in August are as listed below: When considering these numbers, remember that there are many more miles of road in Uttlesford than in Harlow, for example, and the balance of types of road (main, secondary, local) are different too, so a direct comparison is misleading. Pavement (what engineers call footways) defects fixed in August are in the fourth column.

DISTRICT	COUNTY ROUTES	LOCAL ROADS	PAVEMENT DEFECTS FIXED
BASILDON	67	59	33
BRAINTREE	45	78	4
BRENTWOOD	63	14	51
CASTLE POINT	59	55	10
CHELMSFORD	33	58	25
COLCHESTER	46	86	16
EPPING FOREST	181	150	33
HARLOW	75	57	5
MALDON	25	25	26
ROCHFORD	11	64	7
TENDRING	47	42	40
UTTLESFORD	22	118	4
A127	5	-	-
TOTALS	679	806	254
GRAND TOTAL (ALL)			1739

Follow the feed!



<https://twitter.com/essexhighways>

Are you into social media? If not, you can join twitter in a minute and start following all or any of our information feeds. Local MPs, councillors and many parishes already follow us. There's loads of live, useful info as well as interesting ideas.

Five Twitter feeds you might find useful:

[@essexhighways](https://twitter.com/essexhighways) – for warnings of major road closures for our works, progress reports and general useful highways info

[@Essex_Travel](https://twitter.com/Essex_Travel) – followed by almost 50,000 people, the Essex Travel Control Centre tweets live incidents, congestion and roads cleared Monday to Friday 6am-8pm

[@Essex_pt](https://twitter.com/Essex_pt) – the Council Passenger Transport Information team publish bus-related changes and news

[@SaferEssexRoads](https://twitter.com/SaferEssexRoads) – Safer Essex Roads Partnership for road safety campaigns and information

[@HighwaysEAST](https://twitter.com/HighwaysEAST) – regional Highways England feed with live incidents and congestion on their roads through Essex and beyond– A12; M11; M25; A120.

Highways Highlights is available online at: <http://bit.ly/2M2TFEQ> Please share the link

County Members Highways Briefing well-attended

In September, 32 County Members attended an interesting highways presentation, introduced by Councillor Bentley and provided by a group of senior officers. Covering highway planning; streetworks management; flooding management; green claims, and Local Highways Panel improvements, the session offered Members the opportunity to find out more about how Essex Highways manages these topics.

Following a successful round of presentations last year, a similar session is being offered to EALC members in November, and consideration is being given to running sessions in the north, south, east and west of the county, for district councillors to find out more. You can find out more about the EALC here: <http://www.ealc.gov.uk/ealc-training/>



Green Claims - the evidence we need

How you can help us achieve positives from negatives



DID YOU KNOW?

Every year we write off in excess of £500,000 because of damage to highway assets – either replacing the asset or in costs associated with clearing the highway

WHAT IS A GREEN CLAIM?

A Green Claim is any claim that the council makes against a third party who has caused damage to a highway asset – or if we have to attend to clear the highway

WHY DO WE PROCESS GREEN CLAIMS?

To charge individuals/companies or their insurers for any works/repairs undertaken To return monies to ECC budget for reuse and save taxpayers' money by charging those responsible

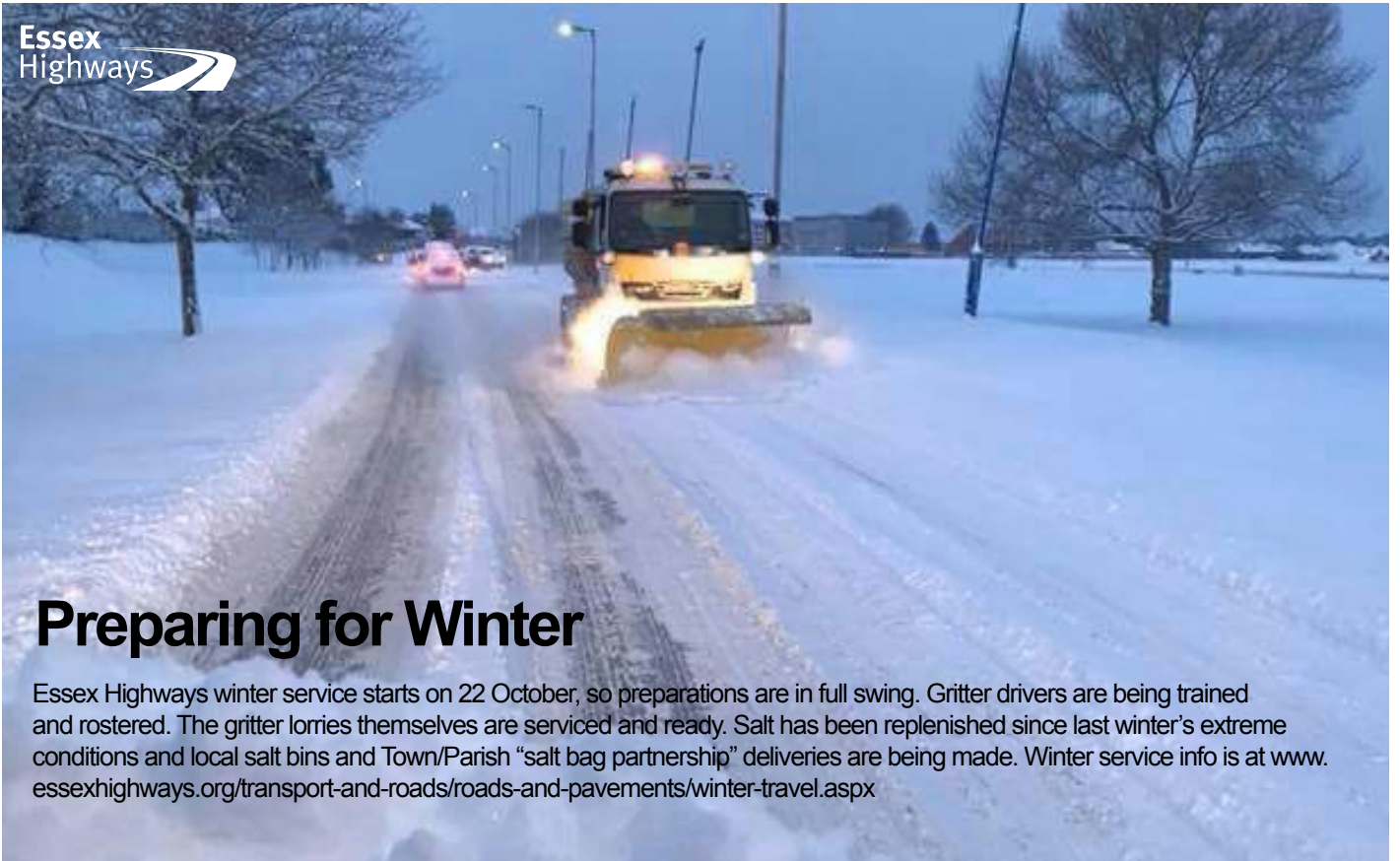
WE CAN ALL HELP TO INCREASE SUCCESSFUL GREEN CLAIMS

If you see an incident, gathering the right information is vital... to recharge our costs, we need to identify those responsible for highway asset damage and provide evidence of their involvement.

WHAT DETAILS DO WE NEED?

- Vehicle registration, make, model and colour
- Time-stamped photos of the damage, ideally with vehicle still in location
- Police Incident number/Fire Brigade reference (if applicable)
- Witness names/ contact details for a statement
- Ask witnesses to confirm in writing what happened
- Take their details so that the Green Claims team can contact them if agreeable
- Obtain details from Emergency Services if they are on the scene – but don't stop them doing their job
- Report what you can – it's better to be told something six times than not at all!

Send details to: Green.claims@essex.gov.uk



Preparing for Winter

Essex Highways winter service starts on 22 October, so preparations are in full swing. Gritter drivers are being trained and rostered. The gritter lorries themselves are serviced and ready. Salt has been replenished since last winter's extreme conditions and local salt bins and Town/Parish "salt bag partnership" deliveries are being made. Winter service info is at www.essexhighways.org/transport-and-roads/roads-and-pavements/winter-travel.aspx



Essex Highways Service Delivery Survey

Please look out for this year's Survey in your email inbox in October. This is one of our best ways of gauging what councillors think of Highways work. Other councils, including Town and Parish via the EALC, will get the same survey. With extra questions this time, your answers to the survey will guide how the service prioritises limited spending, thank you for your support.