

# HIGHWAYS HIGHLIGHTS

HELPFUL  
TIPS AND  
INFORMATION  
FOR LOCAL  
COUNCILLORS



## GETTING THROUGH THE DEEP FREEZE

Winter is certainly not over yet, and forecasters are predicting possible further cold spells, but Essex weathered the February snow and ice.

Between 6 and 10 February we used nearly 6000 tonnes of salt spread from our gritters – one salt supplier said it was the worst winter they had to provide salt for (over the whole UK) for 25 years! Through careful resource management, our crews sometimes did 3 grit runs in 24 hours despite temperatures down to -10C. In a few days we had more people checking the “Track the Gritters live” page on our website than in the previous 3 years combined!

Although we get questions asking whether roads have been gritted when conditions are poor, we do also get compliments. For instance, Mr. R, a Colchester resident, phoned to say ‘well done’ to the team for keeping the roads open’ and went on to comment ‘you’re doing a wonderful job. The roads are as clear as I’ve ever seen.’

Thank you to everyone who either stayed off the road network during the bad weather, and those who drove with even more care.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Essex Highways Gritters have been out 76 times already this winter, (countywide equivalent treatments), compared with just 55 for the whole of last year’s season.

We’ve used 23,500 tonnes of salt this season so far - roughly the weight of the Statue of Liberty! That’s almost double the capacity of salt we can store, when full (14,000T max storage) – we get top-ups as our stocks get used.



Statue of Liberty photo courtesy oxa10c



## COMMENT COUNCILLOR KEVIN BENTLEY

### DEPUTY LEADER, ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

We have seen one of the coldest and wettest winters for many years and obviously this has caused many more defects on the road and made existing ones worse. The weather coupled together with COVID restrictions has slowed up our work to get them fixed. However, this is now changing and although COVID safety measures are still in place, the better weather and lighter afternoons means we are out there and our crews are working extremely hard to fix the potholes and other repairs as quickly as humanly possible. I would ask that everyone is patient and we will get to repair the defects.



## ROAD SURFACING: WHY, WHERE AND WHEN

Despite lockdowns, in this past financial year we remained busy improving the surfaces of many miles of our roads.

We assess each one for its condition and then consider what technique is most appropriate to improve it.

Of 232 road surfacing schemes completed this financial year so far, 104 were Surface Dressing, where a new, thin layer of binder and chippings is spread on top of the existing surface, often for several miles. 60 more schemes were full resurfacing, where the existing surface is planed off and brand new asphalt laid.

This is much more intensive, and expensive, per square metre of road, and isn't always necessary. Other techniques we use include micro-surfacing and joint/crack repairs.

Some of our planned schemes had to be postponed from town centre or residential areas due to Covid lockdown complications. For instance with more people at home, parked cars were more of a problem; but these schemes will be carried out as soon as practical.

Unfortunately this has meant doing some more reactive pothole repairs to these relatively worn-out roads.

Schemes coming soon include: Borwick Lane, Wickford 1-3 March; Slip road A127 to M25 Westbound at Warley Monday night 15 March, Asheldham Bends the B1021 Southminster Rd for seven nights from 4-12 March and final surfacing on the A133/Ipswich Rd roundabout in Colchester from 15 March for ten nights. (most surfacing is done during warmer weather).

[See our webpage for technical details and videos.](#)

# SAFER, GREENER, HEALTHIER - ESSEX LEADS THE WAY FOR NEW RIDER SIGN-UPS



In 2020, Essex had the highest proportion of new bike riders join the **Love to Ride Essex** community out of over 20 regional sites in the UK, showing a huge appetite for cycling in the county.

Love to Ride is the online community engaging and encouraging more people to cycle. 481 new riders in Essex

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Transforming travel in Essex

have signed up since the platform launched in Essex.

Essex Love to Ride is a collaboration with the Sustainable Travel Team at Essex County Council who are leading on the Safer, Greener, Healthier campaign. One Essex rider said: "I live just over 2 miles from my place of work and understand that it's not doing myself or the environment any good by taking the car to work.

"I am now cycling to work Monday to Friday and hope I'll see the benefit on my waistline and in my wallet. And less fossil fuel being burnt, win win!!"

**Find more information about the Safer Greener Healthier campaign here.** You can also email: [SGH.Routes@essex.gov.uk](mailto:SGH.Routes@essex.gov.uk)



**MIGRATORY TOAD CROSSINGS, FLASHING LIGHTS NEAR SCHOOLS, NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SIGNS... WE'VE GOT A PRACTICE NOTE ON THAT..!**

From Accident Signs to Zebra Crossings, Highways Practice Notes (HPNs) help the people in the highways service deliver consistent, fair practice on all manner of highways products, assets and services.

Essex County Councillors can find HPNs on the ECC Intranet and can refer to these to answer questions from residents.

HPNs can also help Local Highway Panels deliver improvements across the county. The Members Guides - which can be found here - can also be referenced by the public. New Members Guides are added as needed.



# COUNCILLORS GET EXTRA POTHOLES FIXED

As at early February, we have repaired 1,472 extra potholes logged by Essex County Councillors as part of the latest 'Member-led' scheme.

Work continues to fix the total of 2,899 requested. Lists of those to be fixed each week are sent to County Councillors, and summary info is published at <https://twitter.com/essexhighways> These are additional defects fixed with extra investment provided by Essex county Council, in addition to the normal safety-priority repairs.

The recent heavy rains followed by extreme cold has done more damage to road surfaces creating more potholes than in recent winter seasons, but crews are now working flat out to catch up. Road conditions will improve as the weather causes fewer potholes and we work steadily on repairs in better conditions.



## ROUTINE REPAIRS DURING JANUARY 2021

In January we continued to clear out drains on local roads in Basildon and drains at higher risk of blockages on main roads in Basildon, Brentwood, Epping, and Rochford.

DISTRICT	COUNTY ROUTES	LOCAL ROADS	PAVEMENT DEFECTS FIXED	DRAINS CLEARED	STREETLIGHTS FIXED
BASILDON	61	23	39	1868	699
BRAINTREE	58	62	8	158	230
BRENTWOOD	23	12	59	690	86
CASTLE POINT	19	39	18	0	182
CHELMSFORD	21	34	28	0	289
COLCHESTER	57	73	52	0	368
EPPING FOREST	30	33	35	820	192
HARLOW	6	87	18	428	226
MALDON	20	11	5	353	85
ROCHFORD	11	2	4	486	122
TENDRING	18	33	33	183	268
UTTLESFORD	51	31	3	0	20
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>4986</b>	<b>2767</b>

