

2009 Essex Best Green Village Guidelines 2009

Best Green Village 09

The Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) is fully committed to a sustainable future for the rural communities of Essex and as a result we are keen to encourage a greener and more sustainable county through our Best **Green** Village (BGV) Competition. The competition asks entrants to demonstrate how they, as a rural community, are creating a sustainable future locally.

The Best **Green** Village Competition allows community groups to assess what difference they are making at a local level to what is now widely recognised as a global issue. Entrants are asked to complete the Green Questionnaire. Our panel of judges will then visit the top scoring village in each category and choose an overall winner.

We have been fortunate to gain the backing of Essex County Council in sponsoring this competition – they recognise the importance of the ‘green agenda’ and how it has an impact on all our communities.

How to enter:

It's simple. Just tick the boxes next to the green actions your village is undertaking or let us know what else, that is not in the list, that makes your village green. The list is not exhaustive and includes examples of best practise gathered during BGV 08.

Complete as much of the Green Questionnaire as possible, it may be that you complete it on your own or work with other community members (such as the village hall manger, head teacher at the local school, local children or the parish council). Don't worry if, as a community, you are not able to complete every section. It may be that your village does not have a shop or a school, however, it is important to remember you will be judged against similar sized villages therefore you have a good chance of making the final, just fill in as many sections as possible.

Finally don't forget to complete your ‘village statement’ explaining why you feel that your community is Green. Tell us how, as a community, you are making a difference, what plans you have for a sustainable future, what grant applications you have made, what areas have been identified for improvement etc. This will be used by RCCE in the result of a tie break on points.

Winners will be announced at the next RCCE AGM.

Judging

RCCE will assess the completed questionnaires. The highest scoring village from each class (see below) will then be invited to give a select panel of judges a tour of their village, guiding them through their green agenda. The judges will then make a decision on the Best Green Village in Essex 2009.

Deadline for Entries:

24th April 2009. Entries must reach RCCE at the address below by this date.

Completed Questionnaires.

Completed Green questionnaires should be sent to our competition administrator:

Email: enquiries@essexrcc.org.uk

Post: RCCE, Threshelfords Business Park, Inworth Road, Feering, Essex, CO5 9SE.

Competition Enquiries:

Tel: 0844 4773938

Fax: 01376 573524

Email: enquiries@essexrcc.org.uk

Web www.essexrcc.org.uk

Classes

Class I. Population Over 5000, less than 10000

Class II. Population over 2000, less than 5000

Class III. Population 800 to 2000

Class IV. Population 300 to 800

Class V. Population under 300

Prizes

Thanks to ECC sponsorship prizes will be available for the overall winner and the winner in each class.

Winners in 2008 received:

Essex Best Green Village 2008. The overall winner received:

Bespoke environmental advice and assistance from the Quality of Life Team at ECC

Engraved Tree Plaque

Tree Vouchers to the value of £150

BGV Class Winners. The winner in each class received:

Engraved Tree Plaque

Tree Vouchers to the value of £50

Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)

Threshelfords Business Park,
Inworth Road,
Feering,
Essex CO5 9SE

Tel: 0844 4773938 *calls are charged at local rate*

Fax: 01376 573524

Email: rcce@essexrcc.org.uk,

Web: www.essexrcc.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 1097009

Company Limited by Guarantee and registered in England No. 4609624

“To provide local communities with the skills, resources and expertise necessary to achieve a thriving and sustainable community”



2009 Essex Best Green Village How to become a Best Green Village

Mary Maskell, who helped organise Great Bentley's successful application in the Best Green Village (BGV) in Essex competition 2008, talks to the Oyster (RCCE's tri annual publication) about entering the 2008 competition, shares some tips on what makes a Green Village and tells us how being BGV 2008 has benefited their community.

Mary Maskell, who campaigned for Great Bentley answers some of our questions:

Village: Great Bentley

Population: Class II Population over 2,000, less than 5,000.

Did the community think you were a 'Green' village before you entered BGV?

I don't think many people really thought of Great Bentley as a "green" village apart from the fact that we have the largest village green in the country. Recycling has been important for all of us in the Tendring District and we have our own permanent bottle, can and textile collection points.

Why did Great Bentley decide to enter RCCE's Best Green Village Competition 2008?

We just decided to give it a go, nothing ventured nothing gained. Whatever the outcome of both this and the Best Kept Village Competition you can always learn from the judges comments.

Did entering the competition raise awareness of the Green Agenda in your community?

Undoubtedly the Green Agenda has received a boost and the best thing of all was that we learnt a lot about our village, especially the excellent work of the children at our village primary school, future plans for the village hall, and work at the church. This was all thoroughly publicised via the village magazine.

Has there been a change in attitude since winning the competition?

We are all determined to do better in the future and to promote new initiatives.

What will you do differently next time you enter BGV?

Most definitely prepare much earlier. We need to find out a lot more especially about private homes and their efforts to live a greener lifestyle and also define the attitude of our many and varied businesses.

What tips would you give other communities thinking of entering the competition?

Please, have a go. I think you will learn a lot about your village and community and be amazed at just what is going on in your locality. This will I'm sure, be especially highlighted if you have a school in your village. The children will be our salvation, they are so keen.

Would you recommend that other rural communities enter the competition? If so why?

Yes, do have a go. You can learn a lot and whatever the outcome act on the successes and/or failures. There's always room for improvement and so much can be learnt from other parishes.

Great Bentley was featured along with the other finalists (Messing and Great Waltham) on BBC Radio 4's Open Country Programme. Did this generate further interest in the community?

The interview with Elinor Goodman for Open Country on Radio 4 was brilliant. She is very easy to communicate with and very knowledgeable about village life. I would never have believed that so many people were up at 6.30am on a Saturday morning! I even had a phone call from Lord Bassam of Brighton (born and bred in Great Bentley) who had heard the programme.

Finally RCCE would also like to extend congratulations to you personally. We understand that as a result of your commitment to the Best Green Village competition you have been invited to join the Essex Rural Commission. What will this involve?

I was thrilled to be asked to become a part of the Essex Rural Commission. It is a real honour and you know that I will truly do my best for village life in our county. This independent initiative by Essex County Council is aimed at supporting rural communities. The knowledge gained will inform the recommendations the commission will put to Essex County Council's economic development and environment policy and scrutiny committee. As Elinor Goodman herself a member of the commission states, "Generally the County has an excellent quality of life but people who live in the countryside are presented with a range of challenges that those who live in urban areas do not have to face". Watch out for the launch on October 6th.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the RCCE for their support in so many ventures that our village has been involved with. You have always supplied advice and practical help when requested. You have opened so many doors for me personally via my work on the village magazine and now I have the chance to serve on the Rural Commission all thanks to the Radio 4 interview. Thank you all.

Mary Maskell

The Best Green Village competition was launched in 2008 by the RCCE thanks to funding from Essex County Council and Inspire East. The competition has been designed to encourage rural communities in Essex to think about what they are already doing to make them sustainable, how they can change their habits to improve their Green credentials and how they could bring their community together to make a difference locally to a global issue.

The entrants were asked to complete a Green Questionnaire and the highest scoring from each class hosted a panel of judges to demonstrate why they should be nominated Best Green Village 2008.



2009 Essex Best Green Village Further Information.

Further information on creating a Sustainable Community can be found at:

Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)

RCCE is an independent charity helping people and communities throughout rural Essex build a sustainable future. Services available at the RCCE include Energy Efficiency Advice for your village hall.

www.essexrcc.org.uk

Action for Communities in Rural England, ACRE.

ACRE aims to promote a healthy, vibrant and sustainable rural community sector. It also acts as the national umbrella organisation for 38 Rural Community Councils (RCCs) throughout England. RCCs provide advice and guidance on parish planning.

www.acre.org.uk

Climate Challenge

This website contains valuable information about what the challenge is and the difference everyone can make. It includes climate change facts and case studies.

www.climatechallenge.gov.uk

Community Transport Association

The CTA is a rapidly growing national charity giving voice and providing leadership, learning and enterprise support to a wide range of organisations delivering innovative and flexible transport solutions to achieve social change in their communities.

www.communitytransport.com

CRed

CRed Essex is a not for profit organisation, helping those of you who live, work and run a business in Essex to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. CRed, have developed a set of pledges for use at home or work to help you reduce your emissions. These range from making easy changes like swapping to low energy light bulbs through to adjusting your lifestyle to reduce your carbon footprint.

www.credessex.org

Defra's Community Building website

This is a Defra one-stop information website for community halls.

www.defra.gov.uk/rural/communities/halls

Directgov: Environment and greener living

A wide range of practical ideas to help you make everything a bit greener, from green food labels to your local recycling service.

www.direct.gov.uk/en/environmentandgreenerliving/index.htm

Energy Efficiency Advice Centre

Your local advice centre can provide free, local and independent advice on saving energy.

www.nef.org.uk/index.asp

Energy Saving Trust

The Energy Saving Trust is a non-profit organisation whose aim is to cut emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) by promoting the sustainable and efficient use of energy. They provide impartial information and free advice and have a network of advice centres in the UK specifically designed to help people take action.

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Essex County Council

Essex County Council has developed a website to encourage Essex residents to consider their impact on the Essex environment. The website allows individuals to calculate their own Environmental Footprint.

www.agreeneressex.net contains information on what can be done to minimise everyone's environmental impact, and reduce the Essex Environmental Footprint. www.agreeneressex.net

Every Action Counts

Every Action Counts is an initiative supported by Defra and delivered through a consortium of voluntary and community sector organisations. For advice, materials and games to help community groups take simple and effective actions to protect and improve the environment.

Tel. 0845 241 0957

www.everyactioncounts.org.uk

Environmental Transport Association

Founded in 1990, the Environmental Transport Association (ETA) aims to raise awareness of the impact of excessive car use and help individuals and organisations to make positive changes in their travel habits.

www.eta.co.uk

Freecycle.com

Encourages the reuse of household items ranging from furniture, baby clothes, computers and even cars. Its free to use and at the same time reduces the impact on landfills. www.freecycle.com

Renewables East

Helps the region meet its renewable energy targets whilst ensuring the area gains the widest economic benefit.

Renewables East will be working with the [Community Renewables Initiative](#), which aims to help groups and individuals realise that renewable energy can form part of the regeneration of remote rural areas, market towns, farmed landscapes, villages, and even cities and their outskirts.

www.renewableseast.org.uk

Soil Association food and farming: Local Food

The Local Food team facilitates, informs and builds capacity in the local food sector and seeks to assist in making local organic food available to all.

Tel. 0117 914 2424

www.localfoodworks.org

The Environment Agency.

Has tips for water saving at home, at work and in gardens.

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Transport and Rural Communities

To find out more about local and regional support, funding and concessionary fares.

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/>

Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP). Material change for a better environment

WRAP works in partnership to encourage and enable businesses and consumers to be more efficient in their use of materials and recycle more things more often. This helps to minimise landfill, reduce carbon emissions and improve our environment.

www.wrap.org.uk



2009 Essex Best Green Village Jargon Buster

Biofuels: Gas or liquid fuel made from plants, such as sugar cane, maize, palm oil or flax. Unlike petroleum, they are a renewable source of energy and do not contribute to climate change, since the carbon dioxide produced when they are burnt is cancelled out by the carbon dioxide they take when growing.

Biomass: Forms of living matter that can be used as fuel, including wood, manure, and plants. Renewable energy sources which do not contribute to climate change.

Carbon Footprint: The total amount of carbon dioxide produced by any activity, area or household.

Carbon Neutral: Not contributing to the overall production of carbon dioxide. For example, using wood for heating is carbon neutral because the carbon dioxide it produces when burnt is cancelled out by the carbon dioxide it took in when it was growing.

Energy Audits: Review of a business or building to assess current energy use, how this can be reduced and where renewable energy might be used.

Food Miles: The distance food travels from farm to plate. The often considerable distances food is transported makes traffic congestion worse, as well as contributing to climate change.

Green Tariff: A green tariff supplies all your electricity needs from renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and wave power.

Offsetting: Cancelling out the carbon dioxide produced by an activity (like flying) through paying for activities (e.g. Energy Efficiency), which save carbon dioxide.

Peak Oil: This is when the demand for oil can no longer be met by increasing production, as oil gets harder to extract and no new large reserves are found. The world economy depends on cheap oil, so rising oil prices are likely to have a major impact.

Parish Energy Champion: Can work out which actions on climate change best suit their community, and inspire everyone to get involved.

Renewable Energy: Energy from renewable sources, like the sun, wind, water or wave, that do not generate the greenhouse gases that cause climate change.