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The e-newsletter of Linking Communities

In this Issue:

- **Linking Communities.**
- **The Oyster**
- **Better access and road safety top the transport LAA priorities**
- **Grassroots Grants**
- **Travel Planning to improve Colchester Station.**
- **Finally, transport gets recognised!**
- **Don't use your car to get to work day.**
- **Reducing food miles is plain sailing!**
- **Did you know?!?**

Linking Communities

Led by Kris Radley, the Linking Communities project has a unique role in the county working closely with rural communities to develop a range of transport and access projects.

Areas of work include:

- **Offer independent advice on transport and access options.**
- **Develop partnerships and facilitate projects** that improve access to those services that are key to rural communities: employment, education, health, shopping and leisure facilities. PO, village shops.
- **Seek, explore and test innovative forms of transport and service delivery in rural areas**
- **Influencing Policy.** Providing a direct, independent link between community and policy.

Rural transport has an impact on people's ability to access employment, education, shopping, health services and can influence their quality of life. Lack of access to basic services and a poor rural transport network affect the viability of rural businesses, and can determine the character of the countryside itself.

By working closely with local communities to identify areas of concern, particularly those of the disadvantaged and socially excluded, we can find solutions that address needs.

For more information contact the Rural transport and access adviser, Kris Radley, on [0844 4773938](tel:08444773938).

The Oyster

As a valued member of the Rural Transport and Access Network (RTAN) you are now entitled to a free copy of the RCCE publication, the Oyster.

The Oyster is a community focused publication with a wide and far reaching readership which includes members of the public, RCCE members, Village Hall managers, Parish Councillors, District Councillors, County Councillors, MEP's, Essex MP's and many more. The magazine is distributed as a hard copy via a well established RCCE network while the eco-friendly version is sent as an email via a number of networks (Including RTAN), data bases and distribution lists.

There is plenty of news from the RCCE and there is always a feature on rural transport and access in the county. In the latest edition there is a focus on the experience of a Z-biker (P10).

As the editor I am always keen to encourage external contributions to the magazine, therefore if you have a story to tell please feel free to drop me a line at kris.radley@essexrcc.org.uk.

Better Access and road safety top the transport LAA priorities?

Improving access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling is the most popular transport priority selected by English local authorities for Local Area Agreements, figures published by the Department of Communities and Local Government reveal.

Fifty-four of the 150 local authorities chose the access indicator as one of their key priorities. The second most popular transport indicator was to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents (48 authorities).

Source Local Transport Today (LTT498 11 July – 24 July 2008)

Grassroots Grants

£2million in Grassroots Grants available in Essex until March 2011!

If you are, or you know of a small charity, voluntary or community organisation established for more than 12 months with an annual income of less than £20,000, you or they could benefit from Grassroots Grants between July 2008 and March 2011.

Essex Community Foundation has been successful in securing £2million from a £130 million nationwide programme run by the Office of the Third Sector, to support the capacity building of small local voluntary and community groups.

The foundation will distribute the grants to voluntary and community groups over the next three years. A maximum of £5000 is available per organisation throughout the life of the programme, to support the activities or services groups deliver including capital purchases, local events, staffing costs, training for volunteers and rental costs.

For more information on how **RCCE** can support your application please call 0844 4773938.

Travel Planning to improve Colchester Station.

Travel plans are to be drawn up for 31 rail stations across England in an attempt to encourage passengers to arrive at them by non-car modes.

Cycle storage, better bus interchange and better passenger information will be among the measures implemented under the initiative being led by the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC).

ATOC's integrated transport manager, Alex Veitch, said there were four criteria for the plans: modal shift from car; more rail passengers; reduce CO2; and improve customers satisfaction.

Feasibility work will be funded by ATOC, the Rail Safety Standards Board, and Passenger Focus over the next few months. The plan is then to implement measures from next April. Veitch said that there was no dedicated implementation fund but that he hoped train operators, local authorities and other stakeholders would contribute.

Source: Local Transport Today LTT499.

Finally, transport gets recognised!

Transport can be key to helping Local Strategic Partnerships meet their objectives according to a new guide prepared by the DfT, the Local Government Association, Sustrans and the Campaign for Better Transport. The 20 page guide explains how transport can help meet objectives of access to services, safer communities, health and economic well being of young people, the economy and the environment.

Sounds like this document could be the answer to a lot of questions!

Meeting Targets through transport is available via the DfT website:
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/ltp/guidance/targets.pdf>

Don't use your car to get to work day.

The Environmental Transport Association's (ETA's) **Green Transport Week** and **Bike Week 2008** took place from the 14-22 June 2008. While Green Transport Week events were designed to highlight real alternatives to the car for every day journeys Bike Week was a national celebration of freedom promoting cycling as a source of fitness and fun.

Up and down the country thousands of people, including staff at RCCE, were encouraged to leave their car at home and find alternative ways to travel. As a result of our recent Travel Blending campaign and with a passion for encouraging change in attitude I declared Thursday 19 June 2008 as RCCE's '**Don't Use Your Car to Get to Work Day**'!

Seen as a great opportunity for staff members to discover whether alternatives to their cars are a viable option, I provided staff with bus timetables and my knowledge of transport provision in Essex to see if staff might buy into the idea of leaving the car at home for one day. As an incentive, I also offered a **bacon sandwich** to each member of staff that made it to the office having used public transport, walked or cycled.

While understanding the difficulties and challenges this might present I believed that with a bit of inventive thinking, use of flexible working and some good old bulldog spirit the staff at RCCE could make a little bit of difference.....and they did.

Reducing food miles is plain sailing!

Concerns about the environmental impact of 'food miles' has prompted a French shipping company to charter five sailing vessels to ply their trade around Europe - the first consignment was a full cargo of wine carried aboard a 100-year-old British schooner.

Source: E-news from the Environmental Transport Association.

Did you know.....

Across the country, local authority surveys identify public transport and traffic congestion as two of the most important ten factors people consider in deciding somewhere is a good place to live.

Walking or catching the bus are the main ways of travelling for nearly half the journeys made by the fifth of households with the lowest incomes. In comparison, for the fifth of households with the highest incomes only one fifth of journeys are made by bus or on foot.

There are 6.9 million people of working age in Britain who are registered disabled.

23% of car journeys are less than 2 miles long, 56% less than 5 miles. Smarter travel choices, in the form of walking or cycling, are real options for many people for many of these journeys.

Three quarters of the transport sector's contribution to global CO2 emissions is from road transport.

DfT's Meeting Targets through transport. 2008

Want more news from Linking Communities? Join the Rural Transport and Access Network for regular Networking Lunches, updates & discussion – for details email kris.radley@essexrcc.org.uk

For more information on Linking Communities work contact **0844 4773938** or kris.radley@essexrcc.org.uk

The Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) is an **independent charity** helping people and communities throughout rural Essex build a sustainable future. As one of England's 38 county Rural Community Councils (RCC's) we are a member of Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) and Rural Action East the network of RCC's serving the East of England.

RCCE, which hosts the Linking Communities Project, is an influential voice for rural communities at local, regional and national level. We are an active partner in the Essex Partnership and in a number of local strategic partnerships established at district level. We also participate in a wide-range of multi-agency partnerships such as the Essex Rural Partnership and Essex, Southend and Thurrock Infrastructure Consortium (ESTIC).

RCCE also played a prominent part in shaping the Essex Rural Strategy, and with our partners in Rural Action East we enjoy a strong working relationship with the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)



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