

County Councillor's report, January 2020

May I wish you all a Happy New Year!

The period before Christmas saw exceptional rainfall on already saturated ground, and consequently, many roads flooded as the drains were unable to cope with the volume of water runoff. A number of drains became blocked due to silt, and these are being rectified as they are notified to ECC Highways. Not all drains connect to ECC pipes, many join the sewerage network managed by the water companies. We work closely with them to ensure that any problems are resolved as quickly as resources allow.

Fortunately, it has remained relatively mild, but the wet conditions have caused some road surfaces to break down, and I would urge that any defects are reported via the County Council website.

Specific and recurrent flood susceptible areas have been notified to me and I have asked the ECC flood team to investigate these.

Make an investment in yourself this year



With the excitement of Christmas and New Year's Eve now over, we can be left feeling a little bit flat. This combined with the dark nights and cold weather can eventually come to affect our overall mental health and wellbeing as we approach a new month and year, and the pressure to make this the best one yet.

That's why it's so important that we recognise these feelings, accept them as completely normal, but also that we take steps to improve our wellbeing, before those feelings escalate.

Lots of New Year resolutions typically involve stopping something; things like giving up chocolate, or staying off social media all feel like easy, quick fixes to being healthier, but in reality, we probably become more miserable because we feel like we're denying ourselves something.

So, this year, why not resolve to start something new? By making some small changes and taking the time to invest in ourselves – our physical and mental health - we can not only improve how we feel, but also how we view ourselves and the world around us.

Making smaller, manageable changes, such as incorporating 10 minutes of activity into our daily routine also means they're more sustainable, we feel more in control and we're less likely to give them up after a few weeks.

To find out how you can make an investment in yourself in 2020, check out the [Livewell campaign website](#) which has lots of information, advice and links to local support, including [seven steps to wellbeing](#) which are a great way of starting this year in the right way.

Volunteer in Essex



Volunteering is a great way of learning something new, meeting new people and giving back to your local community. Volunteers can make a real difference to individuals, charities and smaller organisations in Essex who benefit from the different skills and experiences local people can bring to placements.

There are lots of volunteering opportunities across the county, within a range of different areas - from animals and the environment, to children and homelessness. They include one off and longer-term placements that you can fit around your life and existing commitments.

Volunteering is a truly rewarding experience, so why not try something new and see what difference you can make? Find out more and search for local opportunities on the [Volunteer Essex website](#).

Simon Walsh

County Councillor for Thaxted

January 2020