

# RCC Weekly Bulletin

The weekly newsletter for RCC members

5th April 2010



The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and Regeneration & Renewal magazine have joined forces to create the sector's leading awards scheme – **the Homes & Communities Awards**.

## The Homes & Communities

**Awards** identify and celebrate the very best projects that have combined innovation and dedication to improve communities, making them more sustainable. The awards promote a number of priorities essential to the achievement of better places, from affordable rural housing and low carbon living to investing in skills and building cohesion.

AND THE  
NOMINATIONS  
ARE...

Homes & Communities  
AWARDS 2010



Winning projects will be lauded as benchmarks of excellence and promoted widely through the HCA's skills and knowledge website and Regeneration & Renewal magazine.

The entry deadline is 30 April 2010.  
Visit [www.hcaawards.co.uk/how-to-enter/categories](http://www.hcaawards.co.uk/how-to-enter/categories)

## Thringstone Litter Pick

On the last weekend of March, 23 volunteers from Thringstone carried out a litter pick around the village, collecting in 3 hours 28 bin bags of rubbish, plus one carpet and one tyre. This litter pick was organized through Friends of Thringstone and as you will see from the photograph, they worked with a dog team.

Llynda and Darryl Baugh who live in Thringstone were happy to let the volunteers have the use of their Newfoundland dogs, Alice and Robbie, and their carts, and it made the whole exercise a lot easier. They didn't have to carry bags any great distance before they were deposited in the cart and taken to the agreed collection points, and it created a lot of interest in the village as a whole.



As a thank you, Friends of Thringstone organized a free lunch for all litter pickers.

Their next litter pick is likely to involve the Geocache network and be in the summer.

[www.ruralcc.org.uk](http://www.ruralcc.org.uk)

Please email the Editor, Bridget Masters, with any news items: [bmasters@ruralcc.org.uk](mailto:bmasters@ruralcc.org.uk)



## Practical help for struggling pubs

Pubs Minister John Healey has announced a 12 point action plan to give practical support to community pubs up and down the country, backed by £4million in government funding.

New help will include £3.3million for business support to make pubs more successful and help communities buy into struggling pubs to keep them running. Business support is also in place for struggling membership clubs, “beer ties” will be slashed and a consultation is underway on proposals to cut the requirement for music licences in certain venues.

Councils will also be given new powers through the planning system to intervene before a pub is demolished, giving a pause in the system for the local community to have their say. Restrictions on sales which prevent premises continuing as pubs will be also banned. The planning laws will allow pubs to branch out their business without planning permission into new commercial ventures, ranging from restaurants to gift shops and books shops, without the additional expense and time of seeking approval from the council.

The measures will give landlords the opportunity to have direct access to specialist, tailored business advice through ‘Pub is the Hub’, currently a voluntary support service for community pubs. Government funding of over £1million will ensure that the group act as a specialist first-stop shop for advice on business support and diversification. Pub is the Hub will act as a gateway to advice, supporting pubs directly or passing them on to the most appropriate service such as Business Link.



The Government is also supporting proposals for councils in the Sustainable Communities Act that will stop large pub and retail companies from imposing ‘restrictive covenants’. These can prevent the property continuing as a pub when it is sold. Proposals also include an independent review of the skills that are needed in the industry, including those in working men’s clubs. This will identify where further help can be offered and ensure the long-term viability of the sector.

## Watermead Country Park - the best thing since sliced bread?

Watermead Country Park has been nominated for ‘Picnic Site of the Year’ in the Warburton’s Picnic Site Awards. Leicestershire residents and visitors alike are being encouraged to vote for the popular beauty spot.

The national awards are part of ‘celebrations’ for National Bread Week, and people have until the end of May to cast their vote. Wollaton Hall and Chatsworth House are the park’s closest rivals in the Midlands region.

Vote for Watermead online at [www.welovebread.co.uk](http://www.welovebread.co.uk)

Find out more about visiting Watermead at [www.leics.gov.uk/watermead](http://www.leics.gov.uk/watermead) or on the park’s Facebook page.



## Improvement Grants for Heating & Insulation, FREE Energy Advice



- \* Are you a Tenant, Land Lord or Home Owner living within Blaby District?
- \* Would you like to improve energy efficiency, cut down on fuel bills whilst reducing your carbon footprint?

Blaby District Council is promoting Grants, Nil Interest Loans, free Energy Advice and information as part of its Affordable Warmth Scheme. For advice and to find out more please call the Affordable Warmth Freephone line: 0800 043 6320 or [www.blaby.gov.uk/affordablewarmth](http://www.blaby.gov.uk/affordablewarmth).

## Minimum wage rises from October

The Minimum Wages Rates have been announced for October this year:

- Workers age 21 and over will increase from £5.80 to £5.93 ph.
- Workers between 18 and 20 years, the rate will increase from £4.83 to £4.92 ph.
- Workers between 16 and 17 years, the rate will increase from £3.57 to £3.64 ph.

## Further flood funds for County

Leicestershire has received a substantial grant to deal with flooding in the area. The £75,00 grant, from DEFRA (Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs), follows previous funding of £100,000 allocated in 2009 to develop surface water management plans for Loughborough.

The new funding is for the development of a sustainable urban drainage system to alleviate surface water flooding in the Swithland area.

Leicestershire County Council leads a surface water flooding-related board that involves representatives from highways, the district councils, the local resilience forum and water authorities.

Professor Mike Preston, County Council Cabinet Member for Climate Action, said: "Over the last two years, the County Council has already invested £500,000 in flood alleviation schemes, including works in Syston, Blackfordby and Market Harborough.

"These flooding issues are with us now and need addressing. Climate predictions indicate an increase of intense rainfall events so it is vital we endeavour to make sure our highway systems have the capacity to cope.

"A plan to tackle the problem of surface water in Loughborough is already under way and this funding will enable us to forge ahead with work on key local flood relief projects in the area."

For information on climate change adaptations for highways, visit:

[www.leics.gov.uk/climate\\_change\\_adaptations.pdf](http://www.leics.gov.uk/climate_change_adaptations.pdf)  
[www.defra.gov.uk/environment/flooding/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/flooding/index.htm)



*Children from Packington C of E school watching the bridge construction in progress*

Children from Packington Church of England Primary School have been paying close attention to a bridge being built close by. The footbridge over the Gilwiskaw Brook in Packington is being replaced as part of a scheme to ease flooding in the area.

Leicestershire County Council is working on behalf of the Environment Agency to replace the bridge.

### Bridging the gap on the school journey

The construction of the new timber bridge has involved some careful considerations as the site is just 100 metres upstream of the River Mease Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Lesley Pendleton, County Council Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, said: "We are delighted that the children could come and watch the bridge being built. This is a great way for them to find out more about the new bridge that many of them will cross on their way to school. It also gives them an opportunity to learn how construction and conservation can go hand-in-hand and, who knows, there might even be a future highways engineer among the group!"

Children from the school will officially open the bridge with Mrs Pendleton in a ceremony during April.

To keep up to speed on Leicestershire's road network, including bridges and other school route projects, visit [www.leics.gov.uk/roadsandtransport](http://www.leics.gov.uk/roadsandtransport)

### Message from Chris Garnham, Temporary Assistant Chief Constable

You may read in the media of Leicestershire Constabulary's plans to restructure the Force in order to find savings in the region of £15 million. This is due to the fact that the Force faces cuts to its budget in 2011/12. We have a team of staff undertaking work to reshape the Force in a way which will make it more efficient and cost effective. Inevitably though, the scale of the financial challenge is such that police staff redundancies are unavoidable. We have already made some savings by implementing a freeze on recruitment and streamlining some of our systems and processes.

However, I am very aware that much of what we do affects people's lives and I wish to reassure the residents of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland that the new structure will not dilute our commitment to neighbourhood policing and dealing with local issues that matter most to our communities. In fact, neighbourhood teams have recently been enhanced with additional sergeants who now head up each team. We will do everything we can to minimise the impact of the savings to the public

I am unable at this stage to give you details of the future Force structure, but once this has been finalised, I will ensure that you are kept updated with further information. Thank you for your continued support.

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