

ESSEX CARES

...of opportunity and unfortunately, having
...these causes we are able to support.
...of first things we've done is get
...involved in the devolution process currently
...ing its way through local government
...Essex. We feel it very important that
...voice of the voluntary sector is heard
...out needs considered in the debate on
...devolution is enacted in Essex. We've
...published joint statements with other
...nificant organisations involved in the
...community sector, setting out our shared
...sions. Through this we are building

**'We are in a unique
position to understand
the wide spectrum
of the voluntary
sector in Essex'**

...structive voice that's grounded in
...cience and focused on positive solutions.
...a practical level, we know our funders
...are personal involvement with the causes
...we want to support. This contributes to
...success, and it would be foolish to lose
...ing of it.

The team at ECF is passionately "local"
and very hands on. It's very clear to me that
that closeness with our fundholders and
supporters is part of our DNA and culture,
and everyone works hard at maintaining that.

It's also very important we don't lose sight
of our grant-making and fundraising role as
that's core to our purpose.

I'm finding my work with ECF very
challenging. I do know my part of Essex a bit
better than I did, but there are large swathes
of the county I know very little about. I hope
being chair of ECF will give me exposure to
the whole of Essex and I'm looking forward



Atul and Carole on a recent visit to BOSP with CEO, Jodie Connolly and Frankie Webb. Headline from Essex Community Foundation

to learning a lot more about the county I've
lived in for nearly 20 years.

'I came here to the UK from Uganda in 1972,
months before President Idi Amin expelled
Asians from the country. We arrived with
nothing when I was 10 years old. Luckily, I
had a sister already studying here and she
helped us to settle down. We needed to work
for everything we had, and I feel fortunate
that I was able to build up a rewarding career.

'Knowing that I had enough money to live
comfortably I wanted to give to good causes
but didn't know the best way of doing that. I
had given to some causes on an *ad hoc* basis,

but wanted something that would endure,
where we could see the results of the support
we are giving. I didn't want to set up my
own charity and have the burden of all the
necessary administration and governance
that involves.

'It was my financial adviser who first
introduced me to Essex Community
Foundation, and I found that setting up a
family fund with them was an ideal way of
achieving my aims.

'I was very struck by a question he poses
to people who want to give. He asks them,

"Wouldn't you prefer to give your money
away with a warm heart rather than a cold
hand?" In other words, he suggests giving
while you can, in your lifetime. Through our
family's Manek Foundation, we've supported
a wide range of groups, including Cricket
without Boundaries, which uses cricket
to reach communities in Lugazi, Uganda;
Micro Rainbow, which helps support LGBTQI
asylum seekers in accessing employment,
training, financial services and housing in
Thurrock; and BOSP (Brighter Opportunities
for Special People) in Basildon, which
works with children and young people who
have complex disabilities in South Essex.

The Manek Foundation supported the
employment of an activity coordinator.'

As ECF celebrates 30 years of giving, Atul
is making a major contribution to Essex, not
only through his family fund, but also as the
new chair of an organisation making such
a difference to the county, now and in the
years to come. ●

essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk



Chair of Essex Community Foundation, Atul Manek, with other trustees

Brighter Opportunities for Special People

EDM (Early Day Motion)2101: tabled on 21 October 2025

Tabled in the 2024-26 session.

This motion has been signed by 2 Members. It has not yet had any amendments submitted.

Motion text

That this House recognises the outstanding work of BOSP (Brighter Opportunities for Special People), a charity based in south Essex providing essential care and short breaks for children and young adults with complex disabilities; notes that this vital support enables families to receive much-needed respite while ensuring that young people with disabilities can access enriching activities; further recognises that BOSP has been operating for 35 years and supports over 120 children, with over 150 more on their waiting list; congratulates the charity on being awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2022; and urges the Government and local authorities to consider how support for organisations such as BOSP can be increased to meet the growing demand for disability respite and inclusion services.

BASILDON town centre has been branded "lawless" by the council leader as he slammed Essex Police for failing to attend a day of action to crack down on antisocial behaviour.

According to Labour leader Gavin Callaghan, officers were supposed to be attend the day as part of the council's Community Safety Day but failed to attend.

Essex Police have defended their absence as being caused by an "urgent operational matter".

Following the proposed day of action, designed and cracking down on e-bikes and e-scooters in the town centre, Mr Callaghan described the town as "utterly lawless".

He also claimed residents and

businesses were "left to fend for themselves while Essex Police are nowhere to be seen".

Mr Callaghan said: "I am so disappointed with Essex Police because it was meant to be a joint operation day to go after the people who are riding on bikes and scooters through the town centre.

"Council officers worked really hard to join up with the police and get a day when we were going to be able to get officers in the town, seize those bikes and scooters and crush them, and the old bill just didn't turn up.

"This is starting to become a little bit of a theme now, that the Essex Police officers in Basildon are not turn-

ing up and not doing their job.

"I spent about an hour after the Community Safety Day event walking around the town centre with councillor Kerry Smith and we went into the Eastgate and it's absolutely lawless."

Wednesday's Community Safety Day saw teams from Essex's emergency service host stalls and demonstrations in the town centre.

The event has been described as a success by Mr Callaghan and other Basildon councillors.

Responding to the leader's claims, Chief Inspector Paul Hogben said: "Every police officer, staff member and volunteer who works in Basildon

is committed to keeping our neighbourhoods safe, whether that's in the town centre or in towns and villages across the district.

"With regards to the community event which Mr Callaghan has cited, there was representation from specialist Essex Police teams on the day, which we understand went down well with members of the public at the event.

"Our neighbourhood policing team had planned to attend but an urgent operational matter, which led to the successful execution of a warrant in which drugs and other significant items were seized, meant unfortunately they could not."



■ Praise - James McMurdoch MP with a representative from BOSP

MP praises 'tireless' charity

AN MP has praised a charity in Basildon for its "tireless" work over the last 35 years.

James McMurdoch, MP for South Basildon and East Thurrock, celebrated BOSP for its continual dedication to changing the lives of young people with complex disabilities and their families.

The charity provides vital support for more than 120

children, offering much-needed respite care to parents and siblings.

Mr McMurdoch said: "For 35 years, a local charity in my constituency, BOSP, has been working tirelessly to change lives for young people with complex disabilities, as well as their families."

BOSP has also helped design an inclusive playground in Wat Tyler

Country Park, where disabled children can play with their siblings.

However, the charity struggles to meet demands, with a lengthy waiting list and an urgent need for more space to ensure no family is left unsupported.

Mr McMurdoch added: "I'm proud to support BOSP and will continue to raise their incredible cause in Parliament."

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Department for Culture, Media & Sport

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23 September 2025

James McMurdock MP
james.mcmurdock.mp@parliament.uk

Our Ref: MC2025/08707/RM

Dear James,

Thank you for your correspondence of 28 August to the Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP, regarding championing the incredible work of the charity BOSP. Your letter has been passed to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as your issue falls within our remit. I am replying as the Minister for Sport, Tourism, Civil Society and Youth.

It is fantastic to hear about the support they provide to children and young adults with complex disabilities and their families. I'm delighted to hear this was recognised with a Queen's Award for Voluntary Services in 2022.

Voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations (VCSEs) play a vital role in supporting communities up and down the country with a huge variety of issues. However, I recognise that the last few years, challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic and cost of living have created a difficult environment for VCSEs, and many are seeing increased demand on their services, including, it sounds like, BOSP.

Reforming children's social care is critical to giving hundreds of thousands of children and young people the start in life they deserve. We have announced the biggest overhaul to children's social care in a generation to ensure opportunity for all children. This includes increased investment and landmark legislation through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. In addition, through the Families First Partnership programme, Government is committed to delivering the national rollout of Family Help to make a real difference to children and families. We want these reforms to mark a step-change in how services are delivered locally and make a tangible difference to children and families.

Alongside these reforms to children's social care, this Government has made it a priority to reset the relationship with civil society and build a new partnership to harness its full potential by developing the Civil Society Covenant, which was [launched by the Prime Minister at a major summit](#) on 17 July. The Civil Society Covenant symbolises the Government's recognition of civil society as a trusted and independent partner in tackling the deep seated challenges of our time.

DCMS is supporting VCSEs with their financial sustainability, including through the delivery of a number of grant programmes, supporting the viability of local government contracts, and growing other sources of funding such as the social investment market. For example, the Government recently announced the Better Futures Fund: a £500 million, 10-year fund that will help up to 200,000 children, young people and their families have a safe home, access to a good education and support to secure a better future. Investing in early support to tackle challenges like school absence, mental health, addiction and re-offending, the fund will help give children the stability and opportunity they need to thrive.

I would encourage BOSP to engage with their local authority to understand how they can provide further support. Thank you for highlighting the important work they do and please pass on to them my very best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Stephanie Peacock MP
Minister for Sport, Tourism, Civil Society and Youth

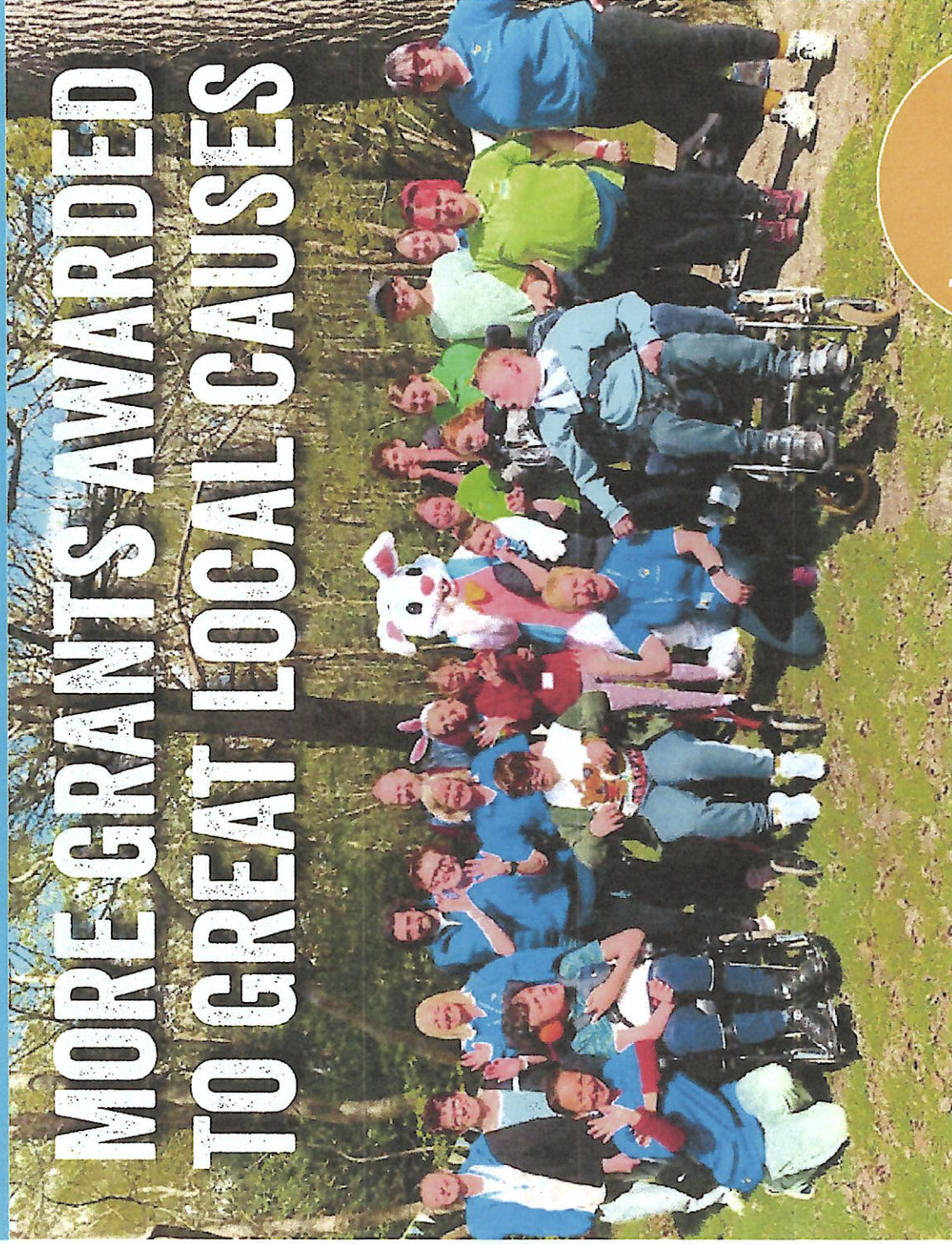


Starlight

Your **FREE** local **Co-operative** update

Spring/Summer 2025

MORE GRANTS AWARDED TO GREAT LOCAL CAUSES



We bring back
local awards
— page 2

Updates from
our AGM
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Nominate
your Hero!
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**VOUCHERS
INSIDE**

Chelmsford Star Co-op at the heart of Essex since 1867

MP praise for charity which helps disabled youngsters

A BASILDON MP has heaped praise on a charity for disabled youngsters and urged residents to lend them their support.

Independent MP for South Basildon and East Thurrock, James Murrice, lauded the Brighton Open-Door charity based in Pilsen and said they "lead the way on inclusivity".

Founded 35 years ago, the charity provides a range of services and opportunities for children with complex disabilities and their families. "They have achieved a lot in the last 35 years, serving over 120 children, giving parents and siblings essential respite care."

The charity truly does lead the way on inclusivity, helping to design a local playground in War Tyer Country Park where disabled children can play alongside their friends.

"24 per cent of people in the UK are registered with the disability, and so inclusion cannot just be an option, it has to be a reality."

This is huge. BOSP currently have an extensive waiting list, and urgently need more space so that no family is left without help.

"I'm proud to support BOSP and will continue to raise their incredible work in the community to ensure everyone to learn more about this incredible charity and see how you can help."

To find out more about BOSP visit: www.facebook.com/BOSPCharity

Flags remain but situation 'monitored'

BASILDON Council have responded to the mass enquiries of St George's and Union flags across the region, stating the situation is being monitored but that the flags can remain.

Flags have sprung up across the borough as part of a nationwide initiative to promote community and unity across the country.

A council spokesman said: "The council has received many enquiries about the flags displayed along the highway and has not received any formal complaints to date."

The spokesman added the council will continue to be guided by relevant legislation and will address any concerns in accordance with our usual procedures for matters involving the highways.

Displaying flags on public highways is subject to specific legal and safety requirements - under planning regulations, flags are classed as a

Plans backed for supermarket to occupy two empty units at Rayleigh Weir

Aldi set to open new store at retail park

A NEW large Aldi store looks set to open its doors off the A127 as plans have been given the go-ahead by Castle Point Council.

The giant will open a new store at two empty units at the Rayleigh Weir retail park now that plans have been approved after two years.

The takeover will see two empty units occupied by the new supermarket, which will open in 2009. The units, which closed last year, providing the space for the discount chain.

The cover fitted for the applica-

By PETER SPRIGGS

tion said: "This application represents an opportunity to bring these long-term vacant units back into active economic use in an area which is undergoing significant redeveloping in the Castle Point Local Plan."

"The proposal will deliver around 20 to 30 new jobs in total full-time of which will be available to residents."

"There will also be jobs created through the supply chain and the work associated with the centre."

tion and fit-out of the store."

Planning officers had raised concerns around the appearance of the building to go hand in hand with its proposed use.

However, the submission of amended plans, the applicant has shown an additional section of full-scale architectural drawings and a secure glazed, would give an impression of greater transparency.

On balance, the appearance of the building is considered appropriate to its use as a supermarket and the planning authority would not wish to raise a further objection on this point.

On balance, the appearance of the building is considered appropriate to its use as a supermarket and the planning authority would not wish to raise a further objection on this point.

Essex Cricket support Help for Heroes

ESSEX Cricket has announced a special Help for Heroes event as part of their action-packed Metro Bank One-Day Cup campaign.

The Essex men's team will face Gloucestershire on September 4.

The match will support the veterans' charity by wearing commemorative shirts for the Help for Heroes campaign. The shirts will feature activities, fundraising opportunities, and recognition of the Essex men's team will face Gloucestershire on September 4.

Dan Pugh, chief executive of Essex Cricket, said: "Ambassadors of the Help for Heroes campaign, supporters of the charity in recent years, and hosting these dedicated Help for Heroes events are a very special occasion for the club."

The Essex women's team will also wear the commemorative shirt for the Help for Heroes campaign. The match will be held at the County Ground on September 4.



Special kit - Alice Macleod and Grace Schrems, from Essex Women's team, with Noah Train from the men's team.

26.02.25 – Report by Joe Ieppler in the Charity Times following BOSP's CEO response to his earlier article.

charitytimes

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Almost half of social justice funding is spent on services and more than a quarter is directed to influencing decisionmakers.

Half of social justice spending is for national initiatives and regionally London continues to receive the most funding on a per capita basis, at £411 of grants per 100 people.

As with its previous analysis of grants in 2021/22, the same regions continue to miss out and receive the lowest amounts of per capita funding. These are the East Midlands, East of England, South West and South East.

Disability charities also missing out

Meanwhile, concerns have been raised that funders are no longer prioritising disability charities. One disability charity CEO, who has asked to remain anonymous, told *Charity Times* they have noticed that several funders have recently removed disability charities or disability specific programmes from their funding criteria.

"The disability sector is already in crisis...and it feels that we are being dismissed, with organisations such as ours feeling like we are climbing up a marble mountain with a teaspoon, when it comes to applying for grants," they said.

"For some we no longer fit because our turnover is over £500k which is far enough, but to remove disability causes from their aims when they have supported them in the past, indicates they think enough is being done in this area and it's not important enough."

Among funders she cites one is now specifying that disability charities are no longer eligible to apply for its major grants programme.

The screenshot shows the CharityTimes website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like Home, News, Videos, Guides, Opinion, Reports, Digital Editors, Jobs, Awards, Conferences, Become a Member, and Login. Below this is a large banner for the "Charities Times Awards 2023". The main content area features articles about social justice funding, with headlines like "Almost half of social justice funding is spent on services..." and "Disability charities also missing out". There are also sections for "Mitigating Risk and Reducing Claims" and "CharityTimes Awards 2023". The bottom of the page includes a footer with contact information and a search bar.

Essex Life Article



By BOSP

BOSP Brighter Opportunities for Special People

Tuesday, 23 January 2024

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

BOSP Brighter Opportunities for Special People Contributor

[VIEW ALL ARTICLES BY THIS AUTHOR \(/community/bosp-brighter-opportunities-for-special-people-13333/news/?strAuthor=BOSP\)](#)

This month's theme is 'caring' and in this article Essex Life magazine highlights three local charities, including BOSP, supported by the Maypole House Charitable Fund, which is managed by the Essex Community Foundation.

Contact Information

BOSP

01268 553117

[www.bosp.co.uk \(https://www.bosp.co.uk\)](https://www.bosp.co.uk/)

BOSP is a lifeline for youngsters will additional needs and their families

FREE charity Bosp Opportunities for Special Needs (BOSP) has been helping children with additional needs and their families for more than 40 years.

Based at Wat Tyler Country Park in Pilsen, they offer respite care six days a week at their main location.

Jodie Connolly, chief executive of the charity, said: "The charity has been providing a lifeline for families with children who have additional needs would benefit from a respite care service. It gives them the opportunity to give their children a break from their daily lives and allows them to enjoy their lives without the pressures of caring for a child with additional needs."

BOSP improves the lives of children and young adults with complex needs and their families, by providing fun, educational activities, support and respite care. The charity also offers a range of services including: baby toys, sensory sessions, music therapy, youth club, counselling, and more.

BOSP relies on the kindness of charitable trusts, personal donations, and corporate and community support to fund its services. The charity is a registered charity and a member of the National Fundraising Partnership.

BY JESSIE HAWESON

and the team to raise the £250,000 each year to enable the team to deliver the service.

Heidi said: "We provide families with a respite care service for up to 12 months in advance. This means they know what respite care they have coming and it means they can plan from people falling me when they see the BOSP dates on the calendar."

The charity employs more than 80 staff, which is the equivalent of an entire primary school. The team provides the respite care. The vital service, which has 100 youngsters on its waiting list, is a lifeline for families.

In 2021, BOSP was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, which is the equivalent of an MBE. It is a recognition of the charity's achievements and the dedication of its volunteers.

Heidi said: "It meant a lot to be awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. It is a great way to highlight the work that our volunteers do."

To find out more about BOSP call 01927 831111 or visit www.bosp.org.uk

This year the annual ball will take place at Wat Tyler Country Park in Havant on 22 July.



Queen's Award - Peter, Jodie, Lord Lieutenant Simon Brice and Lady Rosemary Ruggles-Brice



Laughter - A youngster having fun at BOSP



NEW PLAY AREA OPENS AT POPULAR BASILDON PARK



■ Celebration - Council bosses and members of the public at the opening

A NEW play area has opened in Wat Tyler Country Park, ready to be enjoyed ahead of the summer holidays.

Basildon Council announced the opening of the revamped playground on Friday.

Bosses say it is packed with a whole variety of fun and

inclusive features, and is suitable for wheelchair users and children of all ages and abilities.

It comes as part of the council's Play Review, a ten-year programme of approximately £9 million investment in the borough's

play areas, to create a network of the highest-quality play facilities for residents across the borough.

Jeff Henry, councillor responsible for leisure, said: "This new play area really is something to get excited about, making one of our

most popular play sites in the borough even better for our borough's young people.

"I'm also proud of the new changing places toilet facility installed in the park, which will complement our new play area and make it a truly inclusive."