

Scary Hallowe'en fun at Daisy May's

Frightening Friday at the Farm will give visitors to Daisy May's Farm in Elsenham a spooky Hallowe'en experience.

The popular visitor attraction in Hall Road is holding the fun event on Friday, November 1, with two sessions available to pre-book: 10am-noon and 4.30pm-6.30pm.

Children can join in a spooky treasure hunt, try out pumpkin carving, a fancy dress competition, sit round a camp fire and get a chance to meet and feed the animals.

Visit daisymaysfarm.org for more details or to pre-book tickets and pre-order food.

New PCSO joins rural police event

The new police officer for Stansted, Henham and Elsenham will be at Henham village hall on Friday to meet residents as part of Essex Police's Rural Information Day.

PCSO Nikki Morris will be covering the area as part of Uttlesford's community policing team.

She will be on hand to chat and offer advice from 11am to 4pm and will be joined by other agencies, including Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, Uttlesford District Council, Essex Watch, Neighbourhood Watch, the NFU and Crimestoppers.

Students bid for national success in garden challenge



Students from Forest Hall School are working on their garden design

Young garden designers are aiming for national success in a competition to create an outdoor space for their community.

A team of six Year 8 students at Forest Hall School are taking part in the Royal Horticultural Society's 'The Green Plan It Challenge'.

Darcy Ayliffe, Emma Erasmus, Courtney Joynson, Jack Clarke, Eden Armstrong and Ollie Law have been working with mentor Anthea Harrison – an award-winning garden designer from Stansted – who has been offering guidance on creating a garden from scratch and practical plant knowledge about what will work in the space used.

The 10-week project involves the team using a wide range of skills such as maths, computing and English as they will prepare a report and a presentation on the garden they have designed to be judged by a panel of horticulture experts in November at RHS Hyde Hall, Chelmsford.

Head of school Hannah Jones said: "Our students have shown a real passion in improving the environment for all, which is great to see."

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Surgery launches new online doctor service

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Stansted doctors' surgery has become the first in West Essex to go live with a new online patient triage system.

People can register for Doctorlink and detail symptoms either for themselves or on behalf of another. The system will determine whether they need to see a doctor straight away or advise on another course of action. If the outcome deems it necessary to see a doctor, patients can book an appointment there and then.

The system was launched on Monday and Castle Maltings practice manager Teresa Buglass said that 30 people used the new service, which is free to patients, in the first day.

"We weren't sure how it would be received, but we were very pleased that 30 people tried it and the hope is that the facility will become permanent."

The surgery received funding from the NHS West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group to trial the system, which has been created by doctors.

Mrs Buglass said that Doctorlink

was already used successfully in other parts of the country and linked into the NHS's forward plan to introduce new ways for patients to use technology to communicate with their doctor.

By either downloading the app or using the Doctorlink website via www.thestanstedssurgery.nhs.uk, patients can explain their symptoms, which are checked against built-in algorithms.

"Whatever symptoms you're describing it will produce an outcome," said Mrs Buglass.

"It might be you need to see a doctor today or in three days or that you don't need to see a doctor and you'll be sent to a pharmacist."

"Every time a patient makes contact through Doctorlink, and whatever the outcome, we get a report attached to the patient's medical records."

Mrs Buglass added: "What's also good is that you can ask questions for somebody else. On Monday, one woman asked about her father, another did it for her daughter."

"It's a handy tool and while it doesn't directly link with our system in terms of ordering medication, you can order for your symptoms or

request a sick note – it's giving people another way to get in touch."

The trial will run for two weeks, after which a video consultation service will be added, giving patients the option to talk to a doctor without visiting the surgery.

And while it does not create additional appointment slots, the hope is it will offer patients more flexibility with easier access to advice – it can be accessed during the night – and will relieve pressure on reception staff.

Mrs Buglass said: "The 30 people who used the system were 30 people who would have phoned, so it will divert pressure off the girls on reception who will be able to give those who do phone more time, so it will definitely be of great benefit."

Mrs Buglass added that the doctors had been keen to trial the system "but it would take a few weeks for them to get used to the reports it sends and to debate the quality of triage".

The system is also designed to pick up on worrying signs such as unexplained injuries on children or mental health issues, and will send out separate safeguarding emails to the practice to alert medical professionals of a potential problem.