

Water shortage fears

LEAKY water pipes in Essex are losing millions of litres of water every day.

A parliamentary committee has warned parts of the country will run out of water within the next 20 years if water company's do not address the issue.

Data from OFWAT, responsible for regulating England and Wales' water industry, has revealed Essex and Suffolk Water loses 7,592 litres of water per kilometre of pipe every day.

The worst performing company, Thames Water, is losing 22,200 litres per kilometre of pipe.

Demand for water is about 14 billion litres per day in England and Wales.

Due to rising demand and falling supply of water the Environment Agency now estimates that England will need an extra 3.6 billion litres per day by 2050 to avoid shortages.

The Public Accounts select committee has further warned that some areas are facing water shortages during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Household waste being left in charity's donation bins

Sorting rubbish from genuine donations is costing EHAAT £1,000 a week

By Lewis Berrill

A CHARITY is being plagued by rogue rubbish-tippers using its donation bins to dump household waste.

Essex and Herts Air Ambulance (EHAAT) is spending £1,000 a week sorting and disposing of the waste being left in bins meant for donations to be sold in nine shops across Essex and Hertfordshire.

The air ambulance charity, which receives no regular government funding and relies on donations and fundraising events, is calling on people to stop disposing of rubbish at its collection warehouse, which reopened on June 29.

Donna Lee, the charity's head of retail, said: "As well as staff facing the disgusting and time-consuming job of sorting through other people's domestic waste, it's currently costing us in the region of £1,000 a week to dispose of it using industrial skips.

"That is money that should be helping to keep our life-saving service operational.

"The first box I opened this morning was full of old birthday and



EHAAT staff with bags of rubbish clogging up the charity's donation bins.

Christmas cards. Someone had even gone to the trouble of cutting out the names so that we couldn't see who they were from.

"Inside the box there were used tissues, empty bottles of aftershave, a mouldy deodorant stick empty, empty bottles and petrol receipts.

"This is a daily occurrence at the moment.

"We will now be asking donors to put their items in clear plastic bags or open the bags so that we can see what is inside.

"This will add to the time it takes to leave donations, but we are confident that anyone who genuinely wants to support their local air ambulance by donating items that can be sold will be happy to spend a few minutes longer doing so."

Newly-donated items are quarantined for 72 hours before staff handle them.

EHAAT asks people to make sure all donated items are sellable: that toys are in full working order, games contain all the pieces, and that all clothes are sent in clean and stain-free.

The charity is currently unable to accept donations of CDs, books, videos and DVDs due to the huge volume of these items received recently.

EHAAT's shop in Hitchin will be the first to one to have reopened on July 11, followed by Royston on July 18 and Buntingford on July 25.

Photo: EHAAT

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Tilly Nelson was a runner-up in the digital final of the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge

Tilly is runner-up in Speak Out Challenge

WHEN is "soon"? This question earned a teenager a runner-up place at a regional public speaking competition.

Tilly Nelson, a Year 10 pupil at Epping St John's Church of England School, was among ten speakers at the final of the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge.

The regional final traditionally takes place in a school hall, with students from schools around west Essex competing against each other.

But owing to the coronavirus lockdown, Tilly delivered her speech via online video to a panel of judges, winning a certificate, a

trophy and a gift certificate. She said: "I have really enjoyed the Speak Out Challenge as it is a new experience to me which has allowed my voice to be heard. Listening to other people's speeches was also very interesting and gave me something to think about."