

Building for new future

A HOUSEBUILDER has teamed up with a national charity to support community businesses in Essex to ensure their survival from the coronavirus pandemic.

Hopkins Homes has partnered with the Plunkett Foundation to provide free support from the charity's network of advisors under the Hopkins Plunkett Communities Scheme.

The scheme will focus on one-to-one support to community businesses, including farms, bakeries, pubs and shops in rural Essex.

Businesses can get support, advice and guidance on a range of issues, including governance guidance, cash flow advice and business planning, volunteer recruitment and management, accessing funding and navigating Government support schemes.

For more information, contact Plunkett on info@plunkett.co.uk

Appeal for phone pals

AN independent charity working with elderly people has launched an appeal for more telephone volunteers.

Age Concern Colchester and North East Essex is looking for befriending volunteers.

With elderly people having to isolate, many of whom are frail and vulnerable, volunteers would provide them with reassurance they need by keeping them company over the phone.

For more information and to apply, visit buff.ly/2jH6Zd.

Army appeal for help

THE Salvation Army in Harwich has renewed its appeal for more financial donations to help it feed struggling individuals and families.

As part of Harwich Helps, the charity supplied 31 food parcels providing food for 108 people in the community between June 18 and 24.

A charity spokesman said: "Even though restrictions are being lifted, there are many in our community who are still finding it difficult to provide food for their families." To donate money, visit bit.ly/2ZaKMwO.

Let us pray...virtually

ALL Saints Church, in Dovercourt, is holding Zoom coverage of prayer and worship for its congregation.

Call John and Dawn Wallace on 07825 044940 or email dawnwallace0967@gmail.com for more information.

Sigma's chief executive says Covid-19 will have big impact on schools

New boss takes over at big schools trust



■ Retirement - Jeff Brindle



■ New chief - Lyn Wright has taken over as chief executive of the Sigma Trust

THE former head of education at County Hall will be taking over the reins of 12 schools in north Essex.

Lyn Wright joined the Sigma Trust last year as director of standards, having worked in secondary schools and pupil referral units for more than 20 years.

She is set to replace founding chief executive, and former Clacton County High School principal, Jeff Brindle as he retires from the role after a 40-year career in teaching.

They will continue to work

By JAMES DWAN
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closely together after September, when Mr Brindle takes on a part-time role within the organisation, which looks after 12 primary and secondary schools in north Essex.

Mrs Wright, who previously held the role of head of education and early years at Essex County Council, said: "We feel it is a really sensible approach for Jeff to stay on within the trust as there is an awful lot of anxiety and an awareness there is a lot of change

happening, due to coronavirus, that will last for quite some time.

"This way, we can keep some stability among the schools and lead the staff through these changing times.

"The role I was appointed to is almost not the role I have now.

"In the short-term, it is going to be quite different to what it would have been if coronavirus had not happened.

"The first part in September is going to be about consolidation and smooth transition, making sure our schools are able to open with the right offer, whatever that might be, and that staff are well looked after.

"This is, as always, about every child in every year group. Some children will not have been in the school building for six months, so that transition of all students returning to school will be the overriding priority.

"The trust is about 'no child being left behind' and so we will ensure all children are transitioned back to school as quickly and safely as possible."

Mrs Wright said that while coronavirus has brought big challenges to schools to operate in a new way, other areas of the role

will continue as normal.

Mrs Wright and Mr Brindle will continue to work on a number of projects, including building and expansion work at their schools and the launch of the Sigma Sixth provision for sixth formers in north Essex.

The Sigma Trust is responsible for Clacton County High School, St Helena School, Stanway School, Thomas, Lord Audley School, Monkwick Infant School and Nursery, Monkwick Junior School in Colchester, Harwich and Dovercourt High School, Colne Community School and College in Brightlingsea, Philip Morant School and College and Paxman Academy in Colchester, Alton Park Junior School in Clacton and Holland Park Primary School.



■ Secondary - Philip Morant School, Colchester, is part of the trust

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Auction raises vital cash for animal charity

A FUNDRAISING auction has raised hundreds of pounds for an animal charity which is in desperate need of cash.

The National Animal Welfare Trust, which is based in Clacton, has been closed since the start of the coronavirus lockdown.

As a result, the non-profit organisation has been unable

to rehome the same amount of abandoned cats and dogs it usually would.

Due to the financial impacts of the pandemic, the future of the animal safe haven also remains uncertain and now more than ever, bosses are relying on donations from the public.

In a bid to generate vital fund-

ing, the trust recently auctioned off 17 hampers, packed with a variety of donated prizes.

With bidding going down to the final minute, the online auction eventually closed, having raised just under £600 for the charity.

A spokesman for the National Animal Welfare Trust said:

"Thank you to everyone who bid, helping to edge up the total right until the final minute.

"You never fail to warm the cockles of our hearts with your generosity and unfailing support."

For more information on the group, go to www.nawt.org.uk/centres/essex-clacton.