



Essex Village of the Year Competition 2024

Entry Form

Village: CASTLE HEDINGHAM

Population:

1,186 (2021 census)

**What is your Parish Council precept?
(This question is optional)**

£32838.00

Sponsoring Organisation:

Castle Hedingham Parish Council

Contact

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Village/Parish Website Address: www.castlehedingham.org

On the following page, in no more than 500 words, please tell us what makes your village special. Please read the 'Entry Guidelines' carefully before doing this. They highlight key points you should consider including.

The deadline for entries is Monday 3rd June.

Please describe in your own words, what makes your village special (in no more than 500 words).

How do we feel about Castle Hedingham? We love the historic buildings and heritage, beautiful walks, wildlife, scenery and sunsets. Hedingham Castle hosts many events and was voted best castle for weddings in England. But Castle Hedingham is far more than this, with a special quality which comes from genuine pride in our community. The following information is from our residents:

- Activities and events that bring the community together.

Our Village Shop is community-run since 2017 and home to the Post Office. We love the volunteers who serve us and create seasonal window displays, floral planters and post box toppers.

Our Village Park created in 2020 is a welcoming inclusive space, with a gold-award-winning children's play area, public toilets and new Community Allotment.

Social activities –Beavers, Cubs, Scouts & Guides with their own hut.

Tennis club with coaching for children. Cricket club for all ages. Bowls Club celebrating its centenary year. Football Club with adult and youth teams.

Arts groups, Castle Players drama, fitness groups, Hells Bells Morris Dancers, Heritage Society, Hedingham Singers, Women's Groups. The Bell Inn with live music, annual beer festival and choir was a finalist in national Pub Sustainability awards. Social Club and Village Hall with music, bingo and quizzes.

- Initiatives that have strengthened community spirit.

During Covid we were recognised for our exceptional work together supporting the village. Our "Avenue of Hope" of daffodils was created too, suggested, donated and planted by residents.

Our Living Advent Calendar – we all love the 25 window displays, Village Xmas tree and carol singing in the square.

Our Village Hall & Social Club work together with the Parish Council to improve co-operation and community support

- Methods of engaging with the community and identifying local needs.

9 Parish Councillors actively engaged in the community: Heritage and environment initiatives, Village Shop, Post Office, Pub, Primary School, Social Club, Village Hall, Community Allotment and clubs

New Parish Council website since 2022 aims to meet all community needs at www.castlehedingham.org

Parish Council Facebook page, active on village Facebook groups

Annual Parish Assembly increasingly social event engaging village groups

Hedingham's Parish Magazine relaunched 2024, delivered free to all households, containing news and Parish Council minutes.

Always mindful of residents not on social media, we use posters and leaflet deliveries

- Activities that reduce isolation and support specific age groups.

St Nicholas Church weekly coffee mornings

Castle Hedingham Parochial Charities – hospital transport, support recently bereaved and older and isolated residents

United in Kind activity - T Club, Crafty Nannas, Thursday Club

Community Allotment – welcomes all kinds of volunteers, with fresh produce available from Village Shop for an optional donation.

“Easter Bunny” eggs and winter resilience package deliveries

- Plans and aspirations for enhancing community life

2 new heritage/museum projects at the Bell Inn and Falcon Square

Continually improving links & communication between groups

Re-introduction of historic St James Fair in July with village picnic & stalls

Community Allotment to add orchard area

Rewilding project at New Park, engaging primary school pupils and all residents in observing wildlife.



1. St Nicholas Church, Village Park, Village Hall & Club and old cottages in the centre of Castle Hedingham. Photo credit to resident IR