

# Marie Goldman

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POINTS OF VIEW

## Cricket club's big plans for the future after passing a milestone



Essex County Cricket Club have proposals to dramatically enhance and grow the facilities at the Cloud Country Ground in New Writtle Street, Chelmsford  
BRADLEY COLLYER

**L**OTS of good news stories to report on this week, and then a tale about combining some of my favourite pastimes.

Over the past year or so, I've had a few discussions with Essex County Cricket Club about their vision and aspirations for the future.

It has been wonderful to see them develop their ideas as time has gone on. They now have a detailed plan of what they want to achieve over the next ten years or so, which includes - very excitingly - proposals to dramatically enhance and grow the facilities at their existing ground right in the heart of our city.

Proposals include increasing their stadium capacity, and creating more player and hospitality facilities. It also means building the remaining two towers from the previous planning permission that has already seen the erection of Century Tower to the west of the cricket ground.

I'm very keen to see these plans move forward and play their role in shaping the future of our city.

In the meantime, the cricket club are achieving all sorts of other firsts, starting with something I'm especially pleased about: the club's successful bid to form a Tier One professional women's team from the

Rachel, Rach and Shakey at The Black Bull  
CLLR MARIE GOLDMAN



2025 season. John Stephenson, the chief executive officer at Essex Cricket, describes this as "a once in a generation opportunity to transform female sport in the region." I couldn't agree more. I'm already looking forward to watching their first match.

And as Essex Cricket moves forward, they have now overtaken Leyton County Ground for the record of having hosted the most Essex first-class matches. It's a significant achievement for the Cloud County

Ground and a key milestone on which to build for the future. I can't wait to see what comes next.

I've written before about the Wilderness Foundation UK (WFUK) and the wonderful work it does with young people, combining the rejuvenating effects of being immersed in nature with the healing processes necessary to help young people with mental health challenges.

I'm thrilled it has now won funding from The Biffa Award and Banister Charitable Trust to purchase 92 acres of ancient semi-natural woodland in Essex for the benefit of people and wildlife.

The purchase of Mann Wood at Great Leighs will enable WFUK to further its work in nature-based therapy, environmental education, and the protection of wild spaces.

Mann Wood is a space that WFUK have been using under licence for the past five years, but securing its ownership safeguards it for generations to come and means WFUK can continue its vital work.

It's hard to bring to life in words the beauty of this space and the

The 'Shakey Sessions' were held at The Black Bull in Rainsford Road, Chelmsford  
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importance of not just its preservation but also its role in helping people regain their sense of self and confidence.

To understand it better, I'd wholeheartedly recommend watching the short video that was made to support WFUK's fundraising submission. You can watch it on YouTube here: [youtu.be/SXfkcVOMIX4](https://youtu.be/SXfkcVOMIX4).

And finally, a couple of weekends ago, I found myself soaking up the sun in the beer garden of The Black Bull in Rainsford Road, chatting to owner, Rachel. We talked about the importance of being part of the community and the love that she, her staff and friends have for using her pub to support local talent, especially local musical talent. And boy, is there a lot of it about!

I was lucky enough to catch some of the 'Shakey Sessions', a weekend of music from local bands curated by the inimitable 'Shakey' (no, it isn't his real name, but even his wife doesn't call him anything else!).

Apart from the fabulous music from Chelmsford-born artists, it was brilliant to hear that the line-up

included generations of talent with one band of... how shall I put it... slightly more mature musicians preceding (some might say "warming up for") their children who followed on later. And all for charity, too. Brilliant.

It was a lovely event, clearly enjoyed and supported by lots of local Chelmsfordians and their families. Spending a few hours on a Saturday chatting to residents who are doing wonderful things in their community, with a glass of something nice and great music to top it off, is one of my favourite combinations. I was very pleased to have been made aware of it by someone keen to help promote more of what our lovely city has to offer.

My only concern is that not enough people know that these events are happening. We do need to work on that as a city and make it easier to find out what's going on.

If you've got any good suggestions along these lines, please do let me know.

Keep well and thanks for reading.

Marie



The purchase of Mann Wood at Great Leighs will help the Wilderness Foundation UK to further its work

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