



Colchester Newsletter



Hello Colchester!

Welcome to the Spring 2024 edition of Colchester's newsletter, where we share exciting news, helpful tips and much more with our residents!

Photo by Larry Burt

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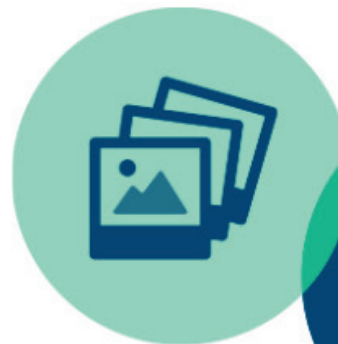
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Follow us on Social Media to see real-time updates on what we're up to!



CHECK THIS OUT!

Are you an amateur photographer in the making? We are looking to feature local photos of what's happening in Colchester!

Submit your photos to photos@colchester.ca and you will be entered to win a Colchester swag bag and could be featured in our next newsletter edition.

Be centred here.

From the Mayor's Desk

It is hard to believe that we are three months into 2024! It is proving to be a very busy year already and will be getting busier as we begin our budgeting process for the upcoming fiscal year.

In 2023, the Municipality saw many successes and achievements in various sectors. The following are just a few of these successes:



Development and construction was up significantly, with growth of roughly 36% over 2022.



The community of Debert, along with our Recreation staff, completed Heart's Haven Park in memory of victims of the 2020 Mass Casualty.



A number of park and trail enhancements including a new picnic shelter at the Fundy Discovery Site, playground upgrades and the reconstruction of bridges, boardwalks and stairs along the Mi'kmawey Debert Interpretive Trail.



Significant progress was made with several of our Carbon-free Colchester sustainability initiatives, which will not only help reduce our carbon footprint but will result in considerable cost savings now and into the future.



Completion of the fixed wireless portion of our rural broadband internet project, with continued work in 2024 on the deployment of fibre-to-homes component of the project.



A number of wonderful events such as the Airshow Atlantic in Debert and the World Jr A Challenge at the RECC returned, bringing our communities together and helping to put our region on the map.

Moving forward, we have several priorities for 2024. The completion of our County-wide Municipal Planning Strategy (MPA) and Land Use By-law (LUB), which is mandated by the province. Much of the community engagement for "Plan It Colchester" took place in 2023 and next steps will be to draft the MPS. We will continue to gain public input throughout the process to ensure the Strategy meets the needs of residents as best it can.

Although housing is not typically a municipal responsibility, this continues to be top of mind for in the new year. Staff are working with a developer on housing options on a small portion of municipally owned land in Debert and a request for proposals was issued for the development of the municipally owned former Salmon River School property. Additionally, the Municipality received a nearly 75% funding contribution from the Investing in Canada's Infrastructure Program that will go towards infrastructure improvements that are needed to service County-owned land that is earmarked for residential development.

The development of a Tourism Strategy and Destination Marketing Organization, in partnership with the Towns of Truro and Stewiacke and Millbrook First Nation, is well underway. The Organization and Strategy will be funded by a 3% tax on visitors who stay at recognized accommodation providers in the region starting April 1, 2024. This approach is common around the world, and has been done in other Nova Scotia jurisdictions for years including HRM, Cape Breton and Yarmouth County.

2024 is also a Municipal Election year. This Fall an option to vote by phone or internet will be introduced for the first time in Colchester. This will be in addition to the traditional paper ballot. Watch for more information in future newsletters and on the Municipal website more information on the upcoming Election and how you can become involved.

Lastly, we are once again approaching the anniversary of the 2020 Mass Casualty. To honour and remember, flags will be flown at half mast at all Colchester County offices and facilities on April 18th & 19th.

Kindest regards to all,
Christine Blair, Mayor

Be centred here.

Finance



Low Income Municipal Tax Assistance Program

Submission Deadline is May 3, 2024

Residential property owners may be eligible for a reduction on their 2024/2025 property taxes of \$626.28. To qualify, applicants must own and occupy the property as your principal residence and fall into one of the categories listed below:

Family Size	Gross Income
Single	Less than \$31,026
Family of 2	Less than \$40,098
Family of 3 or more	Less than \$49,177

Gross Income refers to the total gross income from all sources for the calendar year ending December 31, 2023. This must include the income of all members of the household, except full-time students.

You should not include income from the following sources:

- War Veterans Allowance Act (Canada);
- Veterans Affairs Canada Pension; or
- GST/HST Rebate

Application forms will automatically be mailed to last years eligible applicants. If you have not received your application form by April 1st, please call 902-897-3162.

Late applications will not be accepted.

Applicants must reapply annually. You may obtain an application from the Municipal Tax Office, 1 Church Street Truro, or by calling 902-897-3162.

Exemptions are granted only for the current year. No retroactive exemptions will be granted.

For income verification purposes, please bring your 2023 INCOME TAX RETURN, which you submit to Revenue Canada. If you have filed via telephone through the File My Return service, please request a proof of income statement to provide as proof of income.

Notice of Assessments will NOT be accepted.

**Submission
Deadline is
May 3, 2024**



Contact

Website: colchester.ca/finance
Phone: 902-895-3150 Option 3
Email: taxoffice@colchester.ca

Recreation

Step into Spring: March 30 – May 24

Step into Spring is an 8-week walking program that is an easy and fun way to improve your activity level. Simply register for the program, wear a pedometer or fitness/tracking device, record your daily step counts, and submit your weekly total to Colchester Recreation by email or phone.

Registration is FREE for participants with their own tracking device, or \$5.00 for a pedometer. Step into Spring is a great personal incentive to keep you motivated (or challenge a family member or a friend!). Follow Colchester Recreation on Facebook for fun tips and challenges during Step into Spring.



NS Walks Leader Training: April 3

Do you like to walk and are looking for a way to give back? Help support less active adults in our communities enjoy the benefits of walking! NS Walks provides local community-based walking groups. We are looking for volunteers interested in leading gentle, fun, friendly weekly walks. We provide free, walk leader training to give you the skills and confidence to lead these walks.

Leader training will be held in Stewiacke on April 3 (register by April 2). NS Walks is a program of Hike Nova Scotia, supported by the Government of Nova Scotia, the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program and the Healthy Tomorrow Foundation. For more information or to register for the training go to www.nswalks.ca.

Regional Parks: Spring Opening

Is “explore a new park” on your to-do list for 2024? Maybe you have a favourite park you look forward to visiting each spring. Add a municipal park to your list!

Experience the spectacular, panoramic view of the Minas Basin at Five Islands Lighthouse Park. Stroll on the shaded paths along the river at Stewiacke River Park. At Fundy Discovery Site, watch the tidal bore and enjoy the natural playground. At Nelson Memorial Park near Tatamagouche, explore the Butter Trail (part of the Trans Canada Trail) and enjoy the coastal view. Each of these parks feature picnic facilities, playgrounds, walking paths and washrooms.

Visit www.colchester.ca/parks-and-trails for opening dates, directions and more information about these and other parks in Colchester County. As spring approaches, Municipal staff will be busy preparing regional parks for regular operation. We look forward to seeing you!



Contact

Website: colchester.ca/recreation
Phone: 902-897-3150 Option 5
Email: recreation@colchester.ca

Solid Waste

Solid Waste Closures & Curbside Collection Update!

The Balefill and Materials Recovery Facilities will be closed on Friday, March 29, for Good Friday Monday, April 1 for Easter Monday, and Monday, May 20, for Victoria Day.

If your regular collection day is scheduled for Good Friday, March 29, this collection will take place on the PREVIOUS Monday, March 25. Ensure materials are curbside by 7:00 am on your collection day.

All garbage taken by residents to the Balefill Facility, whether residential or commercial, MUST BE in clear bags or you will be asked to re-bag into clear bags.

Cash, personal cheques or interac are accepted as payment at the scales. Credit cards are NOT accepted.

Plastics in the Green Cart

Any types of plastics, including compostable and biodegradable plastic products, such as bags containers, cups and cutlery are NOT PERMITTED in the green cart. Your green cart will be REJECTED if these products are found in it.

These compostable/biodegradable plastics cause operational issues at our Compost Facility during the shredding and screening process. These materials also contaminate the finished compost product with small pieces of microplastic that cannot be removed and are then introduced into the soil.

Green Cart Liner Options – Paper bags, flyers and newsprint can be used as an alternative option to line your green cart.



Did you know
30-50% of household
waste can be recycled
through composting
programs?

Visit our website for
more info!



NEW Provincial C&D Regulations - Pressure Treated Wood

Due to the new Provincial C&D regulations, treated wood must now be separated so it can be ground up and sent to the Municipal Solid Waste landfill for disposal.

Pressure-treated material must not contain any large metals attached to it. Nails, screws, joist hangers and gang nails in decking are fine. However, NO large or thick metal objects can be attached, as material will be put through a wood grinder as part of the new process.

Pressure-treated material will be charged at the garbage rate with a tip fee of \$113 per tonne as it will need to be separated, ground up and sent for disposal in the Municipal Solid Waste Landfill.

Contact

Website: colchester.ca/garbage-and-recycling

Phone: 902-895-3150 Option 1

Email: helpline@colchester.ca



Colchester

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Municipal Dates & Meetings

March 2024

26 TUES	Council Committee Meeting Grant Presentations	6 PM
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27 WED	Council Committee Meeting	6 PM
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29 FRI	Municipal Office Closure Good Friday Holiday	
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30 SAT	Step Into Spring Begins This program runs until May 24th. For more information, see the article on Page 4.	
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April 2024

01 MON	Municipal Office Closure Easter Monday Holiday	
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09 TUES	Council Committee Meeting Maintenance Budget Meeting	6 PM
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11 THURS	Council Committee Meeting	6 PM
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16 TUES	Council Committee Meeting Additions/Deletions	6 PM
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22 MON	Council Committee Meeting Additions/Deletions	6 PM
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25 Council Meeting 6 PM
THURS



26 Colchester Home Show Begins
FRI
County Staff from multiple departments will be in attendance to answer your questions!
Hours of Operation
Friday 12 PM - 6 PM
Saturday 10 AM - 6 PM
Sunday 11 AM - 4PM



May 2024

04 Compost Giveaway Begins
SAT
188 Mingo Road, Kemptown
Giveaway continues May 6th-11th



06 Council Committee Meeting 6 PM
MON
Presentation Meeting (on an as needed basis)

Local Senior Games
Games run from May 6th - 10th.
Register by April 29th.
For more information, follow [Colchester County Recreation](#) on Facebook.

16 Council Committee Meeting 6 PM
THURS



20 Municipal Office Closure 6 PM
MON
Victoria Day Holiday

25 Paper Shredding Event 9 AM - 12 PM
SAT
RECC Parking Lot



Community Development

Are You Paying Too Much for Heating This Winter

It might be time to improve your home's energy efficiency. Check out the Cozy Colchester & Solar Colchester financing programs!



Eligible Projects Include:

- Heat Pumps
- Exterior Doors & Windows
- Insulation
- Air Sealing
- Electric Thermal Storage
- Solar Panels
- Smart Thermostats
- And More!

Do You Qualify?

If your property tax account is up to date with a history of timely payments, you could qualify = no credit checks

We Offer:

- 4.75% Interest Rate
- Loans up to \$30,000
- Low-Income Incentives
- FREE Home Energy Assessments
- No Upfront Costs
- Support Throughout the Process

Contact

(902) 920-0615
info@cozycolchester.ca
info@solarcolchester.ca

Contact for more information and to book your FREE Home Energy Assessment. All loans are subject to a one-time administration fee.



Plan It Colchester Project Update

The new Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law are currently being drafted by the project team and will be available for public review in the Spring. We will be conducting another round of public engagement at that time to hear your feedback on the draft documents!

The engagement will include:



Community Meetings



Online Zoning Map



Stakeholder Meetings



Fact Sheets

Stay Tuned for Details!
colchester.ca/plan-it-colchester

Changes to Dog Tags

Council is considering moving from annual dog tag licensing to lifetime tags. Stay tuned to our Facebook page and our website for updates on these changes!



Contact

Website: colchester.ca/community-development
Phone: 902-897-3170
Email: comdev@colchester.ca

Public Works

Call Before You Dig!

The Municipality has over 200 kms of sewer main and 36 kms of water main, all buried out of sight. While most pipes run under the street, some can cross onto private property. If you live in an area with public water and sewer services, it is always important to call before you dig. Public Works keeps records of where sewer and water lines are located on or near your property, and we can help make sure you don't dig up any lines.

If you plan on installing a fence, installing a deck, fixing your water or sewer line, installing a pool, or planting a tree, please check with us first!



Applications and Permits

Do I need a permit? If you are installing a new driveway, filling in your ditch with a buried culvert, or installing/repairing a connection to municipal sewer or water, then the answer is YES.

How do I get started? The permit process is quite simple. Fees for each permit can be found on our website and some are free of charge. Call ahead to find out if your permit is free and can be issued by phone. Permits with a fee can be obtained from our Community Development Office at 1 Church Street. It is important to follow the conditions as outlined on your permit. Most importantly, remember to contact us 24 hours in advance to schedule an inspection.

Any questions or need additional information? Contact the Public Works Office at 902-897-3150 Option 2 or email engineer@colchester.ca.

Sewer Backups and Sump Pumps

With the winter snow soon melting and wet spring weather on the way, sump pumps will be actively running which may lead to some sewer backup issues in your home.

How can you avoid this? Make sure your sump pump is not connected to your sanitary sewer line as this can often overload our system and have water come back up your pipe and into your basement. If your sump pump is tied to your footing/foundations drains and you have it piped out into the ditch in front of your home, make sure the pipe is not buried with water, ice, or snow. It's also a good idea to have a backflow preventer installed on your sewer connection to prevent backups.



Contact

Website: colchester.ca/public-works
Phone: 902-897-3150 Option 2
Email: engineer@colchester.ca

Regional Marketing Levy

Colchester is announcing the implementation of a Marketing Levy, effective April 1, 2024. More information can be found at: colchester.ca/regional-marketing-levy

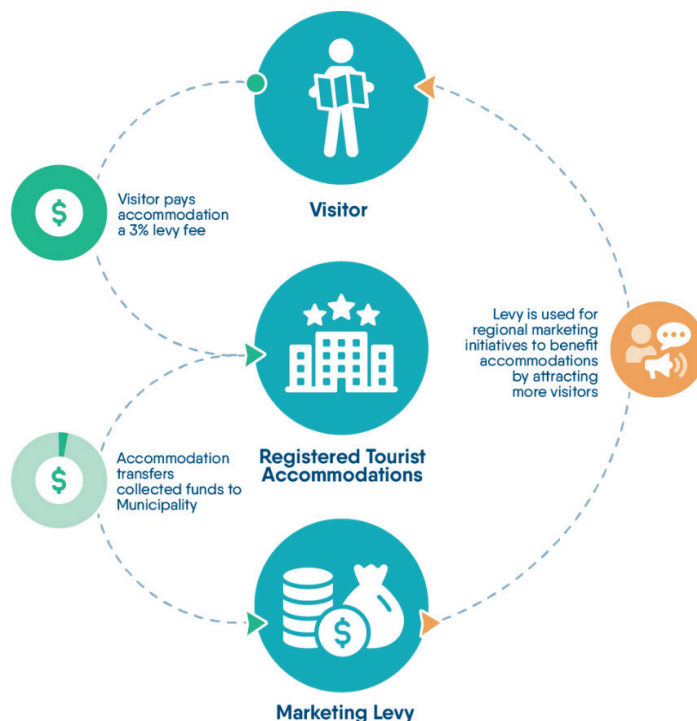
What is a Tourism Marketing Levy?

Common around the world, across the country, and already implemented in several jurisdictions throughout the Province (e.g., HRM, Cape Breton, Yarmouth County), a marketing levy is a tax upon visitors who stay at recognized accommodation providers within a municipality.

Accommodation operators throughout the County will collect the levy from visitors and remit it to their respective municipalities on a quarterly basis. The municipalities will disburse the funds to a regional destination marketing group, who will use the funds to implement its annual tourism marketing and event attraction strategy.

Who Pays for the Levy?

The levy will be paid by visitors when they stay in registered tourist accommodations within the boundaries of Colchester, Truro, Millbrook, and Stewiacke. A tourist accommodation is a roofed accommodation that is rented for 30 days or less at one time.



Why a Tourism Marketing Levy?

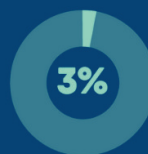
A marketing levy will generate revenue to help grow the local tourism industry through enhanced regional marketing initiatives.

In addition to industry stakeholders expressing support for a levy, in November 2022, the Province passed new legislation Bill No. 24 through the Municipal Government Act to introduce a levy.



The levy will be implemented in partnership with the Municipality of Colchester, the Town of Stewiacke, Millbrook First Nation, and the Town of Truro.

How Much is the Marketing Levy



The levy fee will be 3% of the accommodation purchase price. The marketing levy is subject to HST.

When Does the Levy Start Getting Collected?

Operators will be required to begin collecting the levy on April 1, 2024.

The first deadline for reporting and remittance will be July 30, 2024. (For the reporting period of April 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024.)



Accommodations Included

Tourist accommodations that will be required to collect a levy:

- Apartments, condos, houses and vacation homes
- Bed and breakfasts
- Cottages, cabins and tiny homes
- Dormitory-style rooms and hostels
- Hotels, motels and inns
- Resorts
- Rooms (including a room in a home)
- Self-contained secondary suites (like a basement apartment or a loft above a garage)
- Unusual lodgings (like yurts, domes and camping trailers)

Exemptions from the marketing levy:

Tourist accommodations that will be required to collect a levy:

- Accommodations charging less than twenty dollars per day
- Campgrounds that are not roofed (like campsites where travellers bring their own tents or trailers)
- Rentals in a building owned or operated by a post-secondary educational institution renting to students that are registered at and attending a post-secondary educational institution
- Long term accommodations (over 30 days)
- Family lodging related to medical reasons

Registering a Business

If you are an accommodation operator, you are required to register by March 8, 2024.

Registration and reporting will be completed through a contracted online platform called CheckIn Analytics.

Is There a Penalty for Not Collecting or Remitting the Marketing Levy?

The penalty for failing to collect or failing to remit payment from collections of the Marketing Levy is between \$500 to \$1,000 for a first conviction, and between \$1,500 to \$5,000 for subsequent convictions. Interest on overdue levy payments will be charged at a rate of 15% per annum. For full details for your requirements as a Tourist Accommodator, please refer to the Colchester Marketing Levy By-law.

Contact Information

Jennifer Mantin - Economic Development Officer

1 Church St, Truro, NS B2N 3Z5

jmantin@colchester.ca

P: (902) 897-3160

C: (902) 890-6780

colchester.ca



2023 Colchester Courage Award Recipients

The 2023 Colchester Courage Awards were handed out at a Council Committee meeting held December 14, 2023. This year's winners were Bruce Lake, Danielle Legere and Benjamin Donkin.

During the summer of 2023 Bruce Lake was with his wife and friends hiking in Fundy National Park when they noticed a struggling swimmer at the base of a waterfall. Torrential rains in the preceding days had made swimming conditions there extremely dangerous. Recognizing the swimmer was in serious trouble, Lake risked his own life by jumping into the turbulent water to pull the swimmer to safety.

Danielle Legere and Benjamin Donkin were recognized for their courage in rescuing young children who were stuck in waist-deep mud as the tide was quickly coming in near Little Dyke. Their quick actions helped change the outcome of what could have been a serious tragedy that day.

We commend Bruce, Danielle, and Benjamin for their brave and heroic efforts and congratulate them on each receiving their well-deserved Colchester Courage Award.



Accessibility & Inclusion

Do you, or someone you know, have challenges accessing municipal information or services, or participating in programs or community engagement opportunities (for example a visual or hearing impairment, mobility, or cognitive challenge)?

Please contact Devin Trefry by calling 902-897-3182 or email dtrefry@colchester.ca to discuss ways that we may be able to accommodate or assist.



Connect With Us Online

-  Website: Colchester.ca
-  Facebook: [@ColchesterNS](https://www.facebook.com/ColchesterNS)
-  Instagram: [@ColchesterCounty](https://www.instagram.com/ColchesterCounty)
-  LinkedIn: [@Municipality-of-Colchester](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Municipality-of-Colchester)
-  X: [@MunColchester](https://twitter.com/MunColchester)

Contact

Phone: 902-897-3150
Hours of Operation: Monday to Friday
8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
For evening and/ or weekend emergencies, call 902-897-3175