

## #WATERSAVINGSELFIE

Essex & Suffolk Water's (ESW) latest communications initiative shows that the possibilities are endless when working with teenagers! This innovative project was a result of working collaboratively with teenagers to identify a problem, create an innovative solution and then make it reality... all within the space of a year.

The #WATERSAVINGSELFIE project is a 'first of its kind', blending water efficiency with social media. Using the platforms of Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, students at The Gable Hall School in Corringham were encouraged to wear a t-shirt provided by ESW, take a creative selfie and post their picture along with a creative water saving hint, tip or pledge on their preferred social media site. They were encouraged to "WEAR IT, SNAP IT, SHARE IT".



The journey to #WATERSAVINGSELFIE goes back to Spring 2014 when ESW joined a project run by Thurrock Council called Thurrock's Next Top Boss (TNTB). TNTB is an annual project working with twelve education partners (secondary schools, academies and colleges) within the Thurrock area of Essex. This engaging and exciting project provides young people with the chance to work with employers on real business challenges, learn about the range of career opportunities and develop employability skills that employers really want. ESW's involvement in 2014 was to set the students a 'Green Solution Business Challenge'. The challenge asks pupils to develop a workable and innovative solution to a business issue of ours. ESW's water efficiency challenge for the participating students was to **help us change the way teenagers and young adults use water**. We asked for ideas that could be implemented in our home retrofit projects and our wider education programme.

And so #WATERSAVINGSELFIE was born! The 'Fresh Thinking' team at The Gable Hall School in Corringham, Essex won the competition with their concept. The concept was to use social media as a platform to engage with teenagers and young people in such a way that long-term and sustainable behaviour change is realised. The team came up with the idea that ESW should provide teenagers with a t-shirt which can be worn to post a selfie about saving water. ESW were so impressed with the idea that, with Fresh Thinking's help, it has now been implemented and delivered in their own school. ESW took their concept and developed it further, working alongside the winning team of teenagers.

On 4<sup>th</sup> September 2015, the #WATERSAVINGSELFIE project was launched at The Gable Hall School. A tube, containing the t-shirt and a series of leaflets, was distributed to over 1,600 students at an assembly and a subsequent stall held over lunchtime. With immediate effect students, adorned in their t-shirts, were posting selfies on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, sharing water saving tips, messages, hits and pledges with their friends and family.

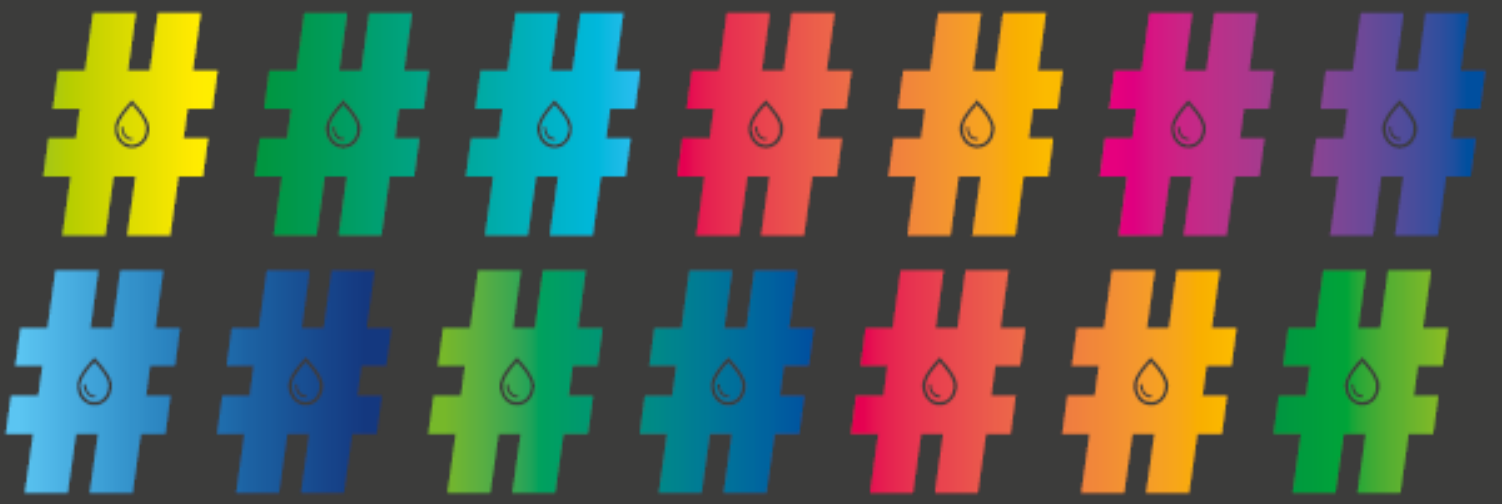
To encourage teenagers to post their #WATERSAVINGSELFIES, ESW offered a prize (an iPad Air 2) that would be awarded to a lucky winner. A winner is to be selected at random from all of the posts submitted on any of the three social media platforms listed in the month of September 2015.

The initiative was a huge success. As seen on the following page, a real hype and buzz was created at the school. We are confident that the programme will have had a lasting impact on those that it touched. And the story doesn't end there for ESW either. Our plan is to tweak and improve the project based on feedback, and then to deliver it at another school in 2016. This is a truly innovative campaign designed by teenagers to help teenagers save water...with a little help from ESW!

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# #WATER SAVING SELFIE



**ESSEX & SUFFOLK**  
**WATER** *living water*

#WATERSAVINGSELFIE  
FRESH THINKING