

LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE

The newsletter of Loughton Residents Association

July 2009
Members' edition



Chris Pond trebles majority in County Council elections

LRA's County Councillor, Chris Pond, has been re-elected in the recent elections. Chris once again stood as the LRA candidate for Loughton Central, which covers St Mary's, St John's, Fairmead and Alderton wards, and more than trebled his majority to 1,853. With turnout a respectable 38%, he secured 55% of the vote. Chris praised all who had supported him. "I'd like to thank everybody who worked so hard in my election campaign, composing literature, delivering, canvassing, and organising. Thank you to all who voted for me, and I promise to continue to serve Loughton to the best of my ability."

In Buckhurst Hill and Loughton South, Valerie Metcalfe retained the seat for the Conservatives, replacing Colin Finn who was stood down. In Chigwell and Loughton Broadway, John Knapman, ex chairman of the District Council, also held the seat for the Conservatives, following Mike Tomkins' retirement. LRA did not field a candidate for either seat but hopes to have candidates in next year's District Council elections in all the Loughton wards.

A few years ago, despite LRA's objections, the Boundary Commission changed the County Council seats for Loughton to Loughton Central (St John's, St Mary's, Alderton and Fairmead), Buckhurst Hill & Loughton South (Forest and Roding plus all of Buckhurst Hill) and Chigwell and Loughton Broadway (Broadway and all of Chigwell and Chigwell Row). This makes it much harder for LRA to field candidates for the two seats that cover more than Loughton. In the BH&LS county division, talks were opened with the Buckhurst Hill Residents' Society last autumn to see if a joint candidate could be agreed, so as to give all residents the option of an independent, locally accountable councillor, but unfortunately a suitable name was not found. However, LRA will continue to seek such a person for the next ECC elections in 2013 and to work with the BHRS on matters of common concern.

Local news by email

If you would like to try LRA's brief regular internal bulletins, covering local news and events, please send an email to contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk headed "News Items please" (Members only).

Candidate	Party	Votes	%
Chris Pond	LRA	2,764	55
Cohen	Conservative	911	18
Law	BNP	529	11
McGough	UKIP	317	6
Lawford	Labour	250	5
Briton	Green	120	2
Spence	Lib.Democrat	117	2

Parking delays

The long-awaited parking review in roads around Debden station has been delayed yet again but LRA has been given 'absolute' assurances that public consultation will start in August. The process may take a long time and the very earliest the plans will be put into place is around nine months later. It is a long time since LRA persuaded the District Council to take action on this problem, which has been the topmost concern of local residents, and we are now concentrating on keeping the Council to its promises.

The Council turned down a request from residents near Loughton Station and the High Road for a full scale parking review in this area two years ago but did agree to consider small scale schemes, in particularly vulnerable roads. There is a concern that by just looking at individual roads there will be an impact on adjacent roads but we are very concerned that there has been no progress on this issue and will be vigorously taking it up this year under a new Highways scheme to target specific local issues across the district.

LRA is monitoring progress on parking schemes on housing estates where we strongly argued for a significant increase in the budget to tackle the backlog in dealing with problem areas. Action on verge parking is currently under discussion at cabinet level in the Council.

Ken Angold-Stephens, Rose Brookes, David Wixley

LRA membership

Members get extra newsletters each year, and are vital in supporting our work. Please help us by using the form on the back page to renew your membership. The LRA subscription has been £4 for many years. At our AGM this year, it was agreed that this would increase to £5 for 2010 and after (we will be writing to members who pay by standing order).

**For more information about LRA or Loughton please visit
www.loughtonresidents.co.uk**



College update

In recent years, LRA has been very concerned about Epping Forest College's finances, and poor performance, culminating in its recent poor Ofsted report. We recently visited the College and discussed with the new team in charge how it intends to put things right. We will support the college's efforts, and hope it will hold a public meeting to explain its plans. The A level courses on offer are being reviewed, in discussion with the four local schools which do not have 6th forms. Although A level courses get most of the publicity, they relate to only a very small proportion of the 2,000 students on-site, most of who are on vocational courses.

LRA and local residents are very worried that travellers might gain access to Lucton's Field (pictured, across Borders Lane from the College), which the College owns. The College undertook to investigate installing a gate asap. It is considering installing an all-weather sports pitch on the field, fenced off for security, but without levelling the land and without any sports hall. Space would be provided for dog-walkers.

Loughton Hall has now been sold. The Sports Hall is now back in use, but will be sold off by the College to raise money. Work has now started on bringing the Borders Lane pedestrian crossing into action.

David Linnell

Transport news

Epping Forest Transport Strategy

For a report on the responses received to the public consultation, see www.essex.gov.uk/efts. Assuming the proposed policy is agreed, the key actions (with consultation where appropriate) are development of the cattle grid network as part of the Branching Out Project; a full review of speed limits; minor road closures; crossing point design and locations; and detailed design and development of gateway infrastructure.

New highway fault reporting system confirmed

The County Council's Highways Department has a new computerised system. Faults and enquiries can be submitted by letter, email and telephone, and each one will be recorded as an individual item on "Confirm" and given a unique reference number. Please report faults on www.essex.gov.uk or highways.westarea@essex.gov.uk or 0845 603 7621.

Late developments

It looks likely that Cllr Chris Pond will part-chair the scrutiny of ECC's proposals to turn off street lights at midnight.

Seeing the wood for the trees

High Road trees

The prolonged process of obtaining replacement trees for those taken out from Centric Parade during the High Road enhancement works three years ago, against the wishes of local residents, is at last drawing to a close. Ownership of the land, previously in doubt, has been resolved by County Highways Department adopting the land and the location of the underground services has been identified. Test bores are due to be put down very soon at the chosen spots just in case any underground services were overlooked. If no problems are found, semi-mature tree planting will take place early in the next growing season from September and funding is in place to purchase and plant them.

Plant a tree

The District Council has a scheme whereby you can apply to have a tree planted, which costs £75. You can use the tree as a memorial or, as in a recent case LRA was involved in, to hide an unprepossessing view from your window. More details at www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/ (enter "tree donation" in the "search site" box).

Dealing with existing trees

If you want to get a dead or missing tree replaced, or an overgrown tree dealt with, ring 01992 564562 for trees on public land. For potentially dangerous trees on private land adjacent to the highway ring 01279 624500.

Tree Preservation Orders

A Guide to the Law and Good Practice sets out the Government's policy advice on recent changes to the tree preservation order (TPO) system, which include a mandatory standard application form, fast-track appeals and a right for all parties to claim costs for tree appeals.

See www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/tposguideaddendum. For local TPOs ring 01992 564117.

Reaching out with art

As a Local Authority governor at Roding Valley High School I am pleased to report that since the school has become a Specialist in Performing Arts the students and staff are providing outreach in the community. Ms Jen Smith is in charge of the Community Arts Provision and has been involved with setting up the "ignite" groups (including drama and other youth activities) for young people based at St Mary's church. Jen is also involved with Arts Workshops for all school age children at the school in the holidays. Roding Valley students have been working with local junior schools in projects related to drama and arts on the curriculum. Jen also has plans for activities involving young and old together at Loughton Methodist Church, working with the Christian Drama Resource Centre.

Jill Angold-Stephens.

Healthy interest

Creating patient LINKs

The Healthcare Commission, a national body charged with monitoring the quality of NHS care has recently been replaced by the Care Quality Commission. But following failures in the A & E department at Stafford Hospital and the recent story of a nurse whistleblower risking her career by exposing neglect Brighton Hospital for BBC Panorama, concerns remain.

Individuals may complain to hospital chief executives or to their Primary Care Trust but without an independent local voice for patients, relatives, and communities, highlighting problems and backing up individual concerns, failures can go on for far too long. Those who use services are also well-placed to suggest improvements and to discuss proposals for services in their area. Patient & Public Involvement Forums, set up in 2003, were last year replaced nationally by LINKs organisations. Loughton's local LINK is based in Chelmsford, but is building networks of interested people and organisations across the county.

LRA would like to be involved with LINKs, to keep abreast of its activities and encourage Loughton people to report their concerns and suggestions about health and social care services in our area and we want to hear from you if you would like to explore 'a Loughton link with LINKs'. Please contact David Linnell (see back page for contact details) for further information.

Dorothy Paddon

A&E hospitals

Thanks to LRA Cllr Chris Pond's intervention, NHS plans to reorganise hospital services in north-east London now take account of the Loughton (and Buckhurst Hill) residents who use these facilities. Chris' involvement on the relevant committee was due in no small part to the 1,000+ residents who signed LRA's petition to save Whipps Cross. Consultations are likely to start in autumn 2009 on the future of the 6 A&E hospitals -Queen's, Whipps Cross, King George, Homerton, Newham and Royal London. Helen Brown (NHS London) has indicated that it is considering splitting the consultation and will start on the relatively uncontroversial issues and leaving any exercise concerning closure of A&Es etc. to a later stage. She also confirmed that, while keeping all six existing A&Es in NE London was still an option, this was unlikely in reality and that options for between 3 and 5 were being considered. While not guaranteeing anything, she felt that either 4 or 5 A&Es were likely to be the preferred option. LRA will keep residents informed and involved.

Traps Hill surgery

The contract for the new GP Led Health Centre was signed on Monday 30 March with the new providers, Loughton Community Health, taking over the management of the Traps Hill surgery. With the exception of the practice in The Drive, Loughton Community Health runs the GP practices in Loughton: Traps Hill, Pyrles Lane, Station Rd and the High Road as well as the Out of Hours consortium and the community health practitioners for Loughton.

In memoriam: Howard Kleyn



Founding LRA member Howard Kleyn died on Wednesday 25 April, at his home in Norfolk. LRA owes a great deal of its early success and long life to his steady hand and foresight in the early 80s.

Howard was LRA's first councillor, contesting the Essex County division of St Mary's in 1981, as a protest against a high-handed district authority. He was as surprised as the then Conservative incumbent, and others, to win the seat with a clear majority. He also served on Epping Forest District Council (Forest ward) from 1984-88. Howard leaves a widow, Margaret (a former editor of Loughton Life and inspiration behind the one and only Loughton Day), a daughter Catherine, a son Jeremy, and six grandchildren.

Dorothy Paddon

Planning battles

Take-aways in the High Road

The LRA Plans Group recently objected to two applications for take-aways (at 244 and 276 High Road), and is pleased that both have been turned down. The District planning limit of not more than 30% non-retail shops in the High Road has already been exceeded, and the Plans Group generally fights any further applications for changes to retail premises as such outlets almost never revert to real retail shops. Although there are a number of empty shops on the High Road the proportion of empty shops is far smaller than in many other shopping areas round the country.

12-30 Church Hill

LRA and local residents have finally lost the planning battle to prevent the existing buildings being replaced by a bulky block of flats. However, a little comfort can be taken from the fact that as a result of our efforts the latest design includes three small shops, and is a very significant improvement on the earlier designs. We are very grateful to all those residents who wrote to the District Council and/or to the Planning Inspectors, and to the volunteers who delivered letters to residents. There is currently no information about whether the applicants now intend to proceed with the re-building, or when any work might start.

Browns Garage

Browns has applied to change the existing buildings into shops and a restaurant. This will not involve re-building, and the famous tree will be preserved. LRA understands that this is a precautionary move due to the economic climate, and that there are no immediate plans to make any changes.

Debden Day

This year's Debden Day will be held on Saturday 29 August, with Dickens as the theme. This is later than in previous years due to the Broadway refurbishment scheme.

New mayor takes up chain



District and Town councillor, and active LRA member, Ken Angold-Stephens has been elected as Mayor of Loughton. A retired chartered engineer, Ken has lived in Loughton for over 40 years. In his inaugural speech he promised to further enhance the reputation of the Town Council and paid tribute his predecessor, Cllr Chris Pond who becomes chair of planning. Ken's deputy is David Wixley.

Brook project update

A landscape architect has produced a proposal to improve a section of Loughton Brook alongside Roding Road and a public display was held at St. Michael's Church hall in Roding Road over two weekends at the end of April. Around 70 written responses were received, 96% of which were strongly in favour of the project. Such was the response that several new ideas have been put forward, some quite radical, all of which will be seriously considered. A conservationist from the Environment Agency has visited the site and is very supportive of the project. The best news is that it is prepared to put some capital into completing the scheme in 2010/11 although this timescale will be tight in view of the need to seek matched funding from elsewhere. In addition the EA wants to continue the works right down to the Roding across the playing fields using a combination of its expertise and the Council's Countrycare volunteers.

Ken Angold-Stephens

Monthly farmers' market

LRA has a presence at farmers' markets on the first Sunday of each month (9am – 2pm) on Centric Parade, Loughton High Rd. Come along and meet your local councillors and LRA activists.

Renew membership now

LRA needs your support - please renew NOW. To check when you last paid, or for a Standing Order form, contact david.linnell@loughtonresidents.co.uk or 020 8508 2932.

I enclose £4 for 2009..... £4.....

I enclose a donation for LRA's work £.....

Name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Phone.....email.....

Please add £5 if you would like to pay now for 2010.

For a receipt, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Please send to LRA Membership Secretary,
14 The Hawthorns, Loughton, IG10 3QT.

All membership information is held by LRA for its own purposes and is not made available to any other body.

LRA who's who

Email: contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk

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2 Copper Beech Court Goldings Road IG10 2QH 8418 9284

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