

LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE Newsletter

Townwide Spring Edition

For all residents in IG10: Spring 2021

*Loughton Residents Association is independent
and focuses on looking after Loughton.*

*We have Cllrs on the County & District Councils, and
hold 20 out of the 22 Loughton Town Council seats.*

Charging to drive through an Epping Forest Clean Air Zone?

Late on a Friday just before Christmas, the District Council announced a decision to introduce an Interim Air Pollution Strategy, including a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) for the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC), essentially the main Forest south of Epping. It is common ground that the Forest is in a poor state from the effects of pollution from vehicles and from domestic gas boilers.

Groups of District Cllrs, led by LRA Cllr Chris Pond, used Council procedures to challenge the decision at a committee meeting in January, and at an Extraordinary Full Meeting of the Council. On both occasions the Conservative administration closed ranks to defeat the challenges. It was very clear from comments on social media in the run-up to Monday's meeting that a large number of District residents were upset about the Council's approach, which will allow much extra housing to be built close to the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation. LRA believes the Council should have waited until the whole subject could be properly and publicly discussed in front of the Planning Inspector as part of the debate on the draft Local Plan Modifications.

At the second meeting, the Conservative administration forced through a change to the motion which retained their original decision and set up an all-party advisory group to consider the Interim Strategy and possible additions to it to reduce the likelihood of a CAZ being needed.

This is ironic, as the Conservative administration could have approached the problem this way after a preliminary paper on the topic last July; instead, they stayed silent and produced the Interim Strategy as a fait accompli in December. Public pressure has now forced them to agree to this being discussed in detail. They obviously hoped it would go through "on the nod".

The District Council can now start granting planning permission to applications that have been held up, (although this does not include sites allocated in the draft Local Plan such as those on Borders Lane - see next item). However, there will now be no way of reversing the permissions once they've been granted, if the Inspector rules against the Interim Strategy.



LRA comment: we are disappointed by the Conservative administration's response and by some of the petty party-politicking some of their Cllrs indulged in. We will continue to resist damage to the Forest SAC by drowning Loughton and Epping in extra housing.

See our website for links to more about the Council meetings.

Developments on Borders Lane: Lucton's Field and the College Middle Site

The College sold these two sites on Borders Lane to Fairview Homes and both are in the District Local Plan for building new homes. Fairview Homes have appealed because the District Council has not made decisions on its planning applications. A Public Inquiry will start on April 13th and the decision for both planning applications will be taken by a Government appointed Planning Inspector.

Lots of new homes have been built in Loughton in the last 30-40 years but our lovely town has reached saturation for road traffic, congestion, air pollution, effects on the Forest, parking spaces, Central Line capacity, school places, open spaces for exercise, recreation facilities, police enforcement and it's hard to get a doctor's appointment. The District Council has encouraged development of both sites and Fairview Homes have proposed an increased number of flats - 25% and 30% more than is prescribed for each site in the District Local Plan.

Proposed details: Five of the eight blocks of flats are four and five storeys high. This is a total of 402 flats and 19 houses but the District Council's Local Plan specifies 328 homes. This is a total of 769 bedrooms but only 327 car parking spaces - less than half a space per bedroom. A one bed flat will have 1-2 people and 1-2 cars but many flats are intended for families and would result in 800-1000 extra cars using our roads several times a day. They would add to the congestion we already suffer for much of most days.

Many residents and the LRA Plans Group have now submitted objections to the Planning Inspector in advance of the Public Inquiry.

Support LRA cllrs - independent and non-political

LRA Farmers' Markets



We're very sorry that the continuing Coronavirus crisis and organisational problems mean that we won't be holding our Loughton High Road markets until further notice. When they do resume, we look forward to seeing everyone.

New Next distribution depot on 25 acres to the north of Dowding Way, Waltham Abbey

Local residents are very concerned about the extra traffic and pollution that this proposal would bring to the Forest and the surrounding area. When it was turned down recently at a District Council planning meeting*, 4 Conservative Cllrs used a procedural option to over-rule the decision by referring the application to a Full Council meeting.

*The reasons for refusal were: (i) the adverse impact of the development on Waltham Abbey; (ii) by reason of its obtrusive height, length and bulk, the proposed development would cause significant harm to the Green Belt and to the environs of Waltham Abbey; (iii) the effects of the proposal on the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as the air pollution mitigation strategy had not yet been adopted and was likely to be insufficient. *Application EPF/2503/19.*

High Road

The HSBC bank branch in the High Road, there since 1901, is to close in August - one of 82 branches in the UK to shut between April and September.

We have also observed with regret that in the block of 12 units between 202-224 High Road, five are now vacant. This includes what was Pak Choi, Clintons, Rush Hair, New Look, and Thomas Cook/Hays Travel. The District Council have placed posters on the windows saying 'Support Local Businesses' or 'Love Loughton High Road'. The District Council, which now owns the block, has advertised the Pak Choi and Clintons premises to let. This would imply that McDonalds will no longer take the Pak Choi unit which they recently confirmed to the press.

Roding Valley Recreation Ground

The Town Council is grateful to County Cllr Valerie Metcalfe (Cons.) for her donation from her allocated Essex County Council Locality Fund towards replacing two benches.

Oakwood Hill estate

LRA Cllrs Chris and Debbie Roberts inspected the estate last month with the District Council Officer who is now looking after the estate. Some progress has at last been made on all the maintenance items Chris had last raised during a site meeting back in August. Chris remains concerned about the many blocked grey water drains; the District Council has cleared those they're responsible for, but County Highways are dragging their feet.

LRA's Loughton Life newsletters

Because of the continuing coronavirus crisis, we are for the second time taking the exceptional step of paying to have this Townwide newsletter delivered by a delivery firm instead of our usual volunteer deliverers.

We hope that in the not-too-distant future we will be back to normal deliveries and will be able to resume our members-only *Loughton Life* newsletters

CONTACTING LRA

D=District	Enquiries:	contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk	8508 2361
T=Town	Membership:	Josephine Gilbert, 112 Jessel Drive, IG10 2EQ	07922 048758
COUNCILLORS	FAIRMEAD WARD	ST MARY'S WARD	
ALDERTON WARD	Carol Davies (T) Colebrook Gardens 07817 230372	Barbara Cohen (T) Traps Hill 07957 141197	
Adam Omer (T) 07904 919701	David Wixley (D) Goldings Road 8418 9284	Howard Kauffman (D) Church Lane 8508 1098	
Chris & Debra Roberts (D) Colson Road 8279 0053	Kevin Latchford (T) 07505 377886	Judy Jennings (D&T) York Hill 8508 1861	
Mick Stubbings (T) Greenfields 07766 480522	Louise Mead (D) 07746 875952	COUNTY: Loughton (Central)	
Philip Abraham (T) Lancaster Drive 8502 2925	FOREST WARD	Chris Pond Staples Road 8508 2361	
BROADWAY WARD	Amy Beales (D) Harwater Drive 07507 341956	COMMITTEE	
Chris Pond (D) Staples Road 8508 2361	Jill Angold-Stephens (T) Lower Park Road 8281 0674	Anne Harriman 8502 1779	
Jayna Jogia (T) The Drive 07983 713389	Roger Baldwin (D) Burney Drive 8281 5488	Chidi Nweke 07403 489455	
John Mahoney (T) High Road 07909 517145	Tessa Cochrane (T) Shaftesbury 3643 7492	John Walker 07779338868	
Michael Owen (D) Baldwins Hill 07467 430145	Trevor Downing (T) Smarts Lane 8508 8877	Judith Walker 07855 265835	
Stella Murphy (T) High View Close 8508 2794	RODING WARD	Juliet Pollard 8502 0552	
ST JOHN'S WARD	David Wixley (T) Goldings Road 8418 9284	Lance Leonard 8502 0771	
Bob Jennings (D) York Hill 8508 1861	Mark Dalton (T) Highland Avenue 07719 736901	Mark Hickey 07774 682299	
Caroline Pond (D&T) Staples Road 8508 2361	Rose Brookes (D&T) Lower Park Road 8502 5981	Michael Benbow 8508 4457	
Chris Pond (T) Staples Road 8508 2361	LOUGHTON LIFE EDITOR Eva Blasco 8923 0065	Steve Eaton 8923 0065	
SECRETARY Jill Angold-Stephens 8281 0674	MINUTES SECRETARY Susan Creevy		
TREASURER Miriam Murphy 01992 815525			<i>*Dial 020 before numbers starting with 3 or 8</i>

LRA councillors are Independent and non-political

Planning & licensing

The LRA Plans Group (LRAPG) looks at all planning and licensing applications in the town, and takes action where appropriate. It consults residents and supports, or objects to, individual applications as appropriate. It works entirely separately from LRA's Cllrs on Council planning committees.

Read more about Planning and Licensing, the role of the LRA Plans Group (LRAPG), how to get more information using the application and reference numbers provided, and how you can comment at <https://tinyurl.com/LRAPPlanning> Where there are residents in flats above licensed premises, for example on the High Road, The Broadway or nearby, the LRAPG objects to late-night licensing applications.

The Chestnuts, Ollards Grove

This is an application for prior approval for an additional storey with two flats.

LRAPG has objected to this application given the impact on parking and as the extra storey will be detrimental to the external appearance and out of character to this part of Ollards Grove.

Application EPF/2783/20. The formal consultation period has ended.

Gods Own Pizza, 151 High Road

The District Council has granted a new premises licence for alcohol sales for a new pizza restaurant, opening hours Monday to Saturday 11:00-01:00 Sunday 11:00-00:00. (Reference WK/202042716)

179-181 High Road (was Café Rouge)

The District Council has granted a new premises licence for alcohol sales for a new restaurant, lounge and bar, opening hours Monday to Thursday 10:00 to 00:30, Friday and Saturday, 10:00 to 01:00 and Sunday 10:00 to 00:30. (Reference WK/202047392)

Slots of Luck, 65 The Broadway

Essex Leisure, who already have an operating Gambling Licence, have been granted a premises licence to open an adult gaming centre in Debden Broadway.

Slots of Luck will occupy the former Come "n" Play Café which was a children's soft play venue. It will be open 7 days a week, from 10am-10pm on weekdays, 10am-8pm on Saturday and 10am-6pm on Sundays. A buzzer system will be used to admit people to the premises, and they will also ask for proof of age for anyone who appears to be under 25.

LRAPG and the Town Council objected to the application. This is a residential area with young families living above and around the Broadway, with schools and colleges close by. However, the District Council granted the licence after receiving assurances over the way it will be managed. (Reference WK/202044968)

Cafe Mosaic, 4 Goldings Hill

This is an application to install an aluminium conservatory to the front. LRAPG has objected to this application given its design, materials and projection is harmful to the streetscape and this part of Goldings Hill. It may also be distracting for motorists because of glare from winter sunshine and when it is illuminated during hours of darkness. However, if the District Council is minded to approve this, LRAPG thinks the conservatory should be finished in glass and timber to make sure that the appearance of the building is suitable. *Application EPF/2971/20. The formal consultation period has ended.*

Interest in our town, and Common Sense

LRA is a diverse group of people looking after our town and wider area.

We need a few more, like-minded people to help our experienced teams, and influence LRA's future aims and achievements. Can you help us?

LRA works because it represents the views of many residents collectively.

You may be surprised at how you can help protect and shape our future.

Please call Michael 020 8508 4457 or Chris 020 8508 2361, or email contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk

Easy Voting at Home

2020 Elections were postponed by Government because of Covid-19 so elections are now planned for Thursday 6th May this year.

Some people enjoy voting in person but many busy residents choose the convenience of a postal vote. At the 2018 local elections, 2,009 Loughton residents received their ballot papers by post 13 days before Polling Day. In 2018, Postal Votes were 1,630 (21%) of the 7,803 votes counted.

Sometimes there are several ballot papers but only vague national political party information is received. Having the ballot paper early allows voters to research candidates, their policies and where they live. So often candidates only disclose a political party address in order to hide that they live miles away from the people they aspire to represent.

Voting by post is Covid-19 safe, secure, Freepost and very easy. You simply post a one page application form to the District Council. The only information needed is name, date of birth, address and signature. Most people tick the box 'until further notice'.

The form and instructions can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/EFDCpostalvote>. LRA has a stock of District Council forms which we can email or deliver to you. Please email contact@LoughtonResidents.co.uk and say how many voters there in your household. You can also leave a message on 020 8508 4457 or contact the District Council on 01992 564411.

Keep up with the Loughton news

Due to the Covid-19 situation, we've produced fewer Loughton Life editions than usual.

Keep up with the Loughton news through our monthly *Loughton News* emails.

See www.LoughtonResidents.org.uk for past issues and how to join LRA now for £5 per household until end-2021.

For more information, please email contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk

Please ring 020 8508 2932 if you'd like to join LRA but aren't online.

We don't share our membership information.

Join LRA now for only £5 per year

Government proposal for new developments' standards

The Government has published proposals which will require all new developments to meet local standards of beauty, quality and design, under new rules to be drafted by local Councils.

LRA comment: it is difficult not to feel cynical about these proposals, coming as they do from a Government that has been removing local democratic controls from many aspects of the planning process, so as, for example, to allow extra storeys to be built on top of existing buildings; to allow changes of building use (including conversions of shops to residential which will wreck the few remaining viable high streets); and which is forcing local councils to cram ever more buildings onto valued green spaces.

However, on the basis of the pace of our District Council's progress with the draft Local Plan, it will be many years, if ever, before it gets round to producing suitable local rules.

Road Repairs

A number of carriageway defects in Loughton Central have been marked for repair under the long list submitted by LRA Cllr Chris Pond, and some have already been dealt with during drier periods, including huge potholes in Brooklyn Avenue, a mysterious subsidence in Staples Road, and numerous defects in Highwood Lane. Chris inadvertently went over his quota (there were a lot on the list!) and asked if he can have a few more done out of the Members' Locality Fund, which was agreed.

New nursery at 1 Connaught Avenue

LRA Cllr Roger Baldwin was asked about a change of use from offices to a nursery here, which in the past would have needed a planning application. We replied that last September the Government changed the Use Classes Order so that nurseries, creches etc are now in the same Use Class as offices, and so no planning application is needed.

LRA comment: in the past the planning system allowed change of use proposals to be properly and publicly examined and LRA and residents have been able to oppose unsuitable changes. Unfortunately, despite objections from the LRA and many other bodies and individuals, the Government has removed this local democratic control mechanism, along with many others, leaving residents with significantly less influence over the town we live in.

Harley Watson's death outside Debden Park High School

This was discussed at a recent meeting with the police, at which LRA was represented. The defendant in this tragic incident had recently been convicted for a number of cases of attempted murder, and manslaughter by diminished responsibility and sentenced to an indefinite hospital order and a life sentence with a minimum of 15 years.

Marlescroft Way Green



Local residents and Cllrs were very concerned when the District Council announced plans to build 24+ housing units on Marlescroft Way Green. However, prompt intervention by LRA Cllr Chris Roberts and Independent Cllr Stephen Murray has led the Council to withdraw the proposal. It seems no-one at the Council had bothered to check the history of the site - in 2019 residents, organised by local LRA Cllrs Chris & Debbie Roberts, defeated plans to destroy this green when the Council planned to build a car park for the vehicles used by the 70 to 80 council maintenance staff working at Oakwood Hill.

We understand that the green was under water after the recent heavy rains so, apart from its great value as a green space, it is obviously unsuitable for either parking or housing. See also LRA Cllr Chris Roberts' comments on the Facebook page "Save Marlescroft Way Green".

Donations to charities

The Town Mayor, LRA Cllr Stella Murphy, received a generous £10,000 donation from The Joseph and Lilian Sully Foundation, and has passed £5,000 each to 3Food4U and Epping Forest Foodbank.

Annual Town Meeting

Because of the continuing Covid-19 crisis, the Town Council has decided to hold the Annual Town meeting virtually via Zoom on March 10th. Joining details will be published on the Town Council's website, and we will also let you know on LRA's social media.

NHS use of Murray Hall, Borders Lane

The Town Council has agreed to let the National Health Service (NHS) use the Murray Hall as a Covid-19 vaccination centre to combat the current pandemic, 8am to 8pm each day, 7 days a week and initially for 6 months from March 3rd. The Council was mindful of the potential inconvenience to the regular hirers and the loss of income to the Town Council but agreed in order to support the NHS, which is under intense pressure.

Current data for each district in Essex: can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/ECCDistrictCovid19> under Epping Forest.

Loughton Covid-19 Mutual Aid Group: this Loughton group connects neighbours to offer practical help during the pandemic through Facebook and WhatsApp groups and can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/LoughtonCovid19MutualAid>

District Council Support: information and guidance at <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/coronavirus> plus support for residents at <https://tinyurl.com/EFDCCovid19Residents> and businesses <https://tinyurl.com/EFDCCovid19Businesses>

Check the latest Covid-19 online advice regularly.