



LRA's Loughton News

13 March 2021

This month we provide [an update on the proposed Clean Air Zone](#), [news on the County Council about turn on Debden Library](#), and [what may happen to Loughton Library](#).

With elections on May 6th, **we urge all residents to [ask for a postal vote](#)** as nobody can foresee what Covid conditions will be at the time. The form to complete is just one page. It's easy to complete. [Details below](#)

Murray Hall on Borders Lane is now a local vaccination centre, and [there is further information on the local vaccines rollout](#).

We've also got an update on the units in [the Landmark Building](#) and [the shops on the High Road](#).

You can also read about how the sculpture in the [Garden of Remembrance in Roding Road](#) has been beautifully restored, the question on [whether you can heat your home sustainably](#), [find out the ways you can dispose of your waste](#), and don't forget the 10 yearly census is on Sunday March 21st so [remember to complete it](#).

Thank you for being an LRA member. LRA operates only because of your support and [we will be very grateful for your 2021 subscriptions](#) as we have not been able to send out our usual subscription reminders. If you've been wondering why LRA's Loughton Life newsletter has not appeared in your letterbox for a while, [here's why](#).

You can always contact us by email at contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk to raise an issue, to give your views, or to offer help.

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You receive these news bulletins because you're an LRA member.

At only £5 a year, we think it's a real bargain, especially as LRA is run 100% by volunteers in your town.

We'd be very grateful if you could pay your 2021 subscriptions now, preferably by bank transfer or standing order, or even with a cheque: [here's how](#).

Because of the Covid-19 crisis, we can't deliver our usual subscription reminders.

And if you're not sure whether you've paid for 2020, you can check by emailing membercheck@loughtonresidents.co.uk

LRA News

The proposed Clean Air Zone and Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy

After the recent Extraordinary District Council meeting on the District Council's Interim Strategy, social media comment has continued. One resident managed to sum up the situation precisely and pithily: *"We have listened to the Conservative Councillors rhetoric and reject it. They knew two years ago of the effect of air pollution on the forest. They knew they had a legal duty to protect it and help restore it due its status as a SAC. At the same time the Inspector of the Local Plan gave them the opportunity to decrease the number of houses to be built in the district which they declined. They even prepared plans for various building proposals in Epping in the light of all this. Let's not pretend local residents, other Councillors and the Inspector of the Local Plan are at fault. It was their choices and their responsibility alone that have created this situation."*

At the meeting, Conservative Cllrs were at pains to present the current delays in providing decisions on planning applications as affecting local residents wanting to make changes to their properties. LRA Cllr Michael Owen made a Freedom of Information request and asked how many Granny annexes and extensions have been on hold.

The answer was: **zero**.

In fact, the postponements only affect proposals for new homes that would increase the number of car movements.

LRA comment: While Clean Air Zones in principle can work well, these need to be considered carefully to ensure the claimed environmental benefits can be practically realised, and without simply shifting the burden to other areas, such as traffic travelling longer distances and polluting local roads. Thought also needs to be given to those residents who can ill afford additional transport costs to enjoy a natural asset that should be available to all, irrespective of financial means.

[More background on our website](#)



Debden Library

In a surprising about-turn, the Leader of the District Council has said he will look at the possibility of moving the library to a shop in The Broadway. This follows an announcement by Essex County Council and College chiefs that they have been unable to find a mutually agreeable lease arrangement for the College to run the library as a Community Run Library in its current position

inside the College.

LRA Cllr Chris Pond has been pressing for a move to The Broadway for years, as have independent Cllr Stephen Murray and SOLE (a group of local residents - [find out more](#), and [sign their petition](#)). SOLE's next Zoom meeting is at 7.30pm on Tuesday March 16th.

Loughton Library Redevelopment

Essex County Council is proposing to demolish the existing library building on Traps Hill and to replace it with flats and a smaller library. The site is in the draft District Local Plan for redevelopment to give a smaller library, with (at the moment) 20 flats above. However, LRA Cllr Chris Pond suspects that the County Council wants to build higher than the expected three storeys, with a garage floor below, as their rebuilding budget of almost £12.4m would otherwise imply a cost per flat of at least £600,000. The County Council is refusing to reveal its plans.



The site is only four minutes' walk from the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (EFSAC), and LRA believes that any development here would adversely affect the EFSAC. In addition, anything over 3 storeys would be wholly out-of-character with its surroundings, at a time when the Government is emphasising the need for new developments to reflect "the character of each place and local design preferences".

If the scheme goes ahead, Chris says that a larger vacant High Road retail unit, such as the former Clinton Cards and New Look stores, would be a "good possibility for a decamp" while any building work was taking place at Traps Hill for about a year. Chris thinks that these District Council owned units could also provide enough temporary space for the library and the Citizens Advice Bureau ([see the item below](#) on the vacant High Road shops owned by the District Council). The National Jazz Archive will also need relocating.

Covid Safe Postal Voting

County and local elections are on May 6th and there will be four Ballot Papers. Choose your safe voting method from:

1. A Postal Vote

The safest, secure and most convenient method where you vote at home. Ballot Papers come through your front door 14 days before Polling Day. You mark your choices and simply post the Ballot Papers back in Freepost envelopes. The [one page application form is here](#). The only information needed is name, date of birth, address and signature. Most people tick the box 'until further notice'.

In 2018, 21% of votes counted in Loughton were postal votes but this was before Covid. The expectation for the May 6th poll is a massive increase because we all know no contact voting alternatives are the best way to reduce transmission of Covid.

2. In person at a Polling Station

Screens, social distancing and sanitised pencils will help but these inside spaces will have lots of voters passing through from 7am until 10pm.

3. Proxy voting

This is where you ask someone you trust to vote for you. The [www.gov.uk website](http://www.gov.uk) has seven Electoral Commission forms ranging from two to seven pages depending on the reason why you ask for a Proxy Vote. For most people these forms are unnecessarily complex for their purpose.

Loughton Cricket Club Ground protected

LRA-led Loughton Town Council have achieved a “Deed in Dedication” agreement from Fields in Trust so the Traps Hill/ Church Hill cricket ground will be retained as a green space in perpetuity. Cricket continues as usual, and it is envisaged that the ground will host a “Loughton Day” for local community groups once the covid crisis is over. This is the culmination of a considerable period of work to arrange the transfer of the ownership of the ground to the Council, with a lease for the club, which was founded in 1879. The field, with its picturesque thatched clubhouse, is one of very few cricket grounds in Essex still functioning in the heart of its community.

Hills Councillor Forum

This popular annual meeting will take place on Zoom on Wednesday March 17th from 7.30pm. Five LRA Cllrs who live in one of the three Loughton Conservation Areas and/or represent this area on one of more of the Town, District and County authorities have agreed to take part. All Hills Residents are welcome to join the meeting - last year about 100 people did. Just email hillsamenitysociety@gmail.com to receive the link.

Are you inquisitive?

Could you skim through Council agendas and minutes to spot items for these enews bulletins?

We need someone to join the team who produce the bulletins to spend a few hours a week online to help us identify items of interest to residents.

Interested? Contact David Linnell
at david.linnell@loughtonresidents.co.uk or 020 8508 2932 (9am-5pm).

Conversion of office block to residential

LRA Cllr David Wixley spotted work underway on an office block which looked as though it was being converted to residential accommodation, although there was no planning application listed on the District Council’s system.

David queried this with the LRA Plans Group (LRAPG), who said that although such changes are now much easier for developers, they still need to apply for Prior Approval from the Council. LRAPG has told the Council about the work in progress, and we await a response.

Bus Routes 418 and 542

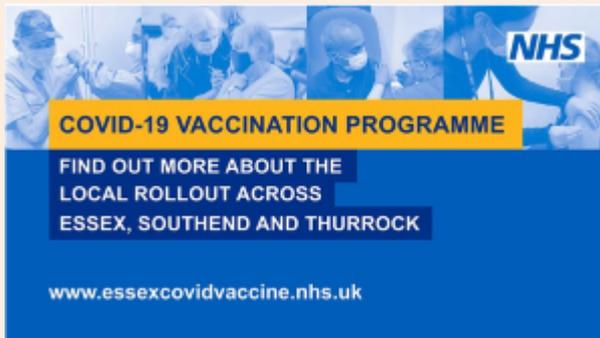
The County Council told LRA Cllr Chris Pond that they intend to merge routes 418 and 542 to achieve savings necessitated by low ridership during the pandemic. This was precipitated by Galleon Travel notifying the Council at very short notice they would withdraw the 418 route.

The original plan to merge would have meant that Newman's Lane would longer be served. However once LRA Cllr Chris Pond pointed this out, the Council delayed the planned date for the change (which was April 19th) and are reconsidering what to do.

Pothole Progress

The pothole, where York Hill turns into Kings Green, was repaired on February 27th. This was one of LRA Cllr Chris Pond's priority potholes (of which there were 50 but

From March 8th, step 1 of the roadmap out of lockdown began. [More](#)



Vaccine Information for Essex

Information and support on the Covid vaccine for Essex, including FAQs, Mythbusters, and details on the vaccination process [is online](#).

All people aged over 56, or in special categories, who have not had their first dose should come forward and book their

appointment [online](#) or by calling 119.

If you live in Essex and need help to book an appointment you can ring 0344 2573 961 (open 10am to 4pm, local rate).

Please do not turn up at a vaccination site without an appointment and do not book an appointment if you are not in an eligible group as you will not receive a vaccine until it is your turn.

The NHS will be in touch with all clinically extremely vulnerable people in Essex, so that they can receive the Covid vaccination and offer further advice and support. [More](#).

The NHS are using [Murray Hall](#) as a Covid Vaccination Centre.

How the virus is spreading locally

Infection rates have fallen significantly since early January. [More local data](#). While the drop of infection rates is positive news, following the guidelines to keep infection rates down will remain important for some time to come to help control the spread of the virus.

For statistical purposes, Loughton is divided into four areas - you can see data for Loughton [North](#), [East](#), [West](#) and [South](#).

More details can be found on [this interactive map](#), [data for Essex is here](#) and the Office for National Statistics also publish [full national data](#).



As children across Essex head back to school, Dr Mike Gogarty, Essex County Council's Director of Public Health tells us why it's still so important we continue to social distance. Watch the [full video](#).

Covid compliance and Enforcement

In February the District Council reported that its focus had been on compliance in supermarkets, convenience stores and corner shops. Officers worked with police and Council marshals to ensure compliance by both shop staff and management. Another area of concern was controlling the increased numbers of people in Epping Forest, particularly at weekends, working with partners including NEPP, the City of London, the British Transport Police and the Council's community police, marshals and Environmental Health Officers.

The Council's Private Sector Housing Team contacted residents with positive test

results where the Essex and Southend Contact and Trace Service had been unable to contact them, to offer welfare support and assistance, as well as making sure they were able to properly self-isolate and that all contacts had been traced. The Council had been expecting less than 10 call requests per day but at points received 200 per day.

District Council Support

The District Council has [further information and guidance here](#), plus support for [residents](#) and [businesses](#), and [help for getting you back on your feet](#).

Loughton Covid-19 Mutual Aid Group

This Loughton group connects neighbours to offer practical help during the pandemic, through Facebook and WhatsApp groups. [More](#)

Planning and Licensing

[Read more on our website](#) about Planning and Licensing, the role of the LRA Plans Group (LRAPG), how to get more information and how to comment to the Town Council and the District Council.

The District Council takes the decisions on planning applications. The application will be decided upon by a Council Officer or by Cllrs in a District Council Planning Committee, and residents' comments on the proposals will be taken into account but not necessarily agreed with. This is a quasi-legal process, and decisions have to be taken **on planning grounds only**, based on the national planning legislation and the District Local Plan, whatever the views and feelings of the individual Cllrs involved.

If you wish to comment, don't delay. The process is time critical with several stages along the way. If you wish to make comments please try to submit them before the deadline set by the Council. Although submissions can be made and have to be considered up to the time a decision is made, once the statutory deadline has passed, the application might be determined before your comments are received.

The process for alcohol licensing applications is similar to the process for planning applications, except that objections must relate to one or more of [the four Licensing Objectives](#) (page 4, section 1.7) and any comments received after the end of the formal consultation period won't be taken into account by the District Council.

Molen's, 209D High Road

Over the years, Molen's have made various planning applications to use their rear garden for customers. Unfortunately, because the houses behind Molen's have very short gardens, this would inevitably disturb residents, particularly in summer when residents would want to use their gardens and to be able to leave their windows open. The District Council turned down Molen's latest attempt, which involved a 2m+ high sound barrier around the garden boundary. Molen's may now appeal against the decision. (Application [EPF/2794/20](#))

Aubrey House, Unit 2 165H High Road

This is an application to install an air conditioning unit on the roof and a variation to opening hours.

LRAPG have objected to this application as the air-conditioning plant is likely to disturb nearby residents, particularly in the evening when the ambient noise level drops. The clicking on and off of plant can be very disturbing for nearby residents at night during the summer when they are trying to sleep and have their windows open.

Plant of this nature should be placed at the top of the building and should be conditioned not to operate between 10pm and 8am when residents are trying to sleep.

Application [EPF/0284/21](#). The formal consultation period ends March 17th.

25 Mornington Road

This is an application to convert an existing House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) into seven self contained flats.

LRAPG has noted that the applicant never sought or obtained planning permission to convert the family house into an HMO. The existing plans show nine small bedrooms which are proposed to be self-contained. However the existing HMO use is unlawful and the proposed self-contained flats are substandard in floorspace terms, deficient in a reasonable standard of amenity and below national prescribed standards. They are inappropriately stacked with, for example, toilets above bedrooms. Unless properly soundproofed they will cause noise and disturbance to the occupiers.

Using this family dwelling for seven flats will also result in more car pollution and a subsequent impact on the air quality to the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation.

LRAPG has therefore objected to this application and stated the property should be returned to its previous lawful use as a single dwelling house. The council has been asked to take appropriate enforcement action and use the Proceeds of Crime Act to recover any income illegally obtained whilst the property has been used unlawfully. This will also act as a deterrent for others thinking of subdividing houses into flats without consent.

Application [EPF/0207/20](#). The formal consultation period ends March 16th.

Roads, Parking and Travel



DaRT87 bus service extended Public transport to Epping Forest Retail Park, Langston Road

The [DaRT87 bus](#) is the only bus that goes into the Retail Park in Langston Road. You can now book the bus on the day you want to travel. Call Epping Forest & Harlow Community Transport on 01992 579556, and they can advise where to wait on the route.

The District Council has been running this as a three-month trial as a 'hybrid' Demand Responsive Transport (hence DaRT87) service to replace Arriva's 87 service which the County Council felt unable to subsidise further. As well as Loughton and the Retail Park, the service serves south west Harlow, Epping Green, Epping and Theydon Bois. During January (Monday-Saturday), 186 single trips were

taken - the last three months have been encouraging but have not provided a suitable test of the service, and so the trial is being extended for a full year from 1 April. [More](#) (item 14).

LRA comment: it would be a pity if this service fails for lack of use and bureaucracy, as not to have an alternative to using private vehicles to access the Retail Park would fly in the face of the District Council's declaration of a Climate Change Emergency. As well as reducing vehicle emissions in the area, it enables those without their own vehicles to get to the Retail Park.



Parking Enforcement levels

All patrols returned to normal on March 8th which includes all single yellow line restrictions which apply for one hour and any 'dual-use' limited waiting bays and, presumably, resident parking zones. [More](#)

Zebra crossing on Willingale Road

County Highways intend to install a zebra crossing on Willingale Road, near to the junction with The Broadway; details [here](#) (TRAF/7498).

This was requested some years ago, and has finally worked its way through the system.

Traffic Calming on Local Roads Denied

At the last meeting of the Local Highways Panel, which brings together local councils and Essex Highways, it was reported that the speed survey results for Forest Road, Colebrook Road, Colson Road and Ladyfields did not indicate a speeding issue there, and therefore traffic calming would not be considered. In addition the pedestrian/vehicle conflict survey for Colebrook Road did not meet the level required to install a crossing point.

Planned Road Closures

Oakwood Hill

The road will be closed at the junction of Oakwood Hill/Alderton Way from March 15th for four nights (8pm-5am) to install a bus clearway, a traffic island and signs to prevent right turns into Alderton Way. Diversions will be in place. [More](#)

Longfield

The road will be closed for micro surfacing from March 19th to 26th. [More](#)

Highway Rangers

The Rangers continue to work on issues reported by the County Council, District Cllrs and residents. Their jobs have included rebuilding damaged fencing at Staples Road and repairing a number of bollards across the District that have been hit by vehicles.

Roadworks in December

In Epping Forest District, County Highways repaired 53 potholes, fixed 173 pavement defects, cleared 1,377 drains and fixed 205 streetlights.

Parking on roads through the Forest

Last year the District Council introduced Red Routes (double red lines) in Epping Forest to tackle inconsiderate parking which was breaching Covid regulations. The North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) have been patrolling daily with additional patrols at weekends and Bank Holidays.

The total number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued on the red routes to date now totals 1,070. NEPP are also using their CCTV enforcement car; one visit by the car logged 154 illegally parked cars.

This red-lining is experimental till autumn 2022.

Planned Highways projects as at January 2021

See what Essex Highways are planning in our District [here](#) (scroll down to the Reports).

Police and Crime

Police activity in our District



The police have launched a new newsletter, covering [Debden](#) and [Loughton \(excluding Debden\)](#), with details of our local beat officers, which police teams are based at Loughton Police Station, and what's been happening recently.

Also, [here are the local crime figures](#).



Arrests at Loughton Underground Station.

One early evening last month, police received word of a robbery at the station. Local officers were on the scene in just over five minutes. The train had been held, and the police found and arrested three people (two from London and one from Billericay), on suspicion of robbery. They were taken into custody, and later released on conditional bail

whilst the British Transport Police continue their enquiries.

[From Epping Forest Neighbourhood Watch](#)

District Council CCTV

The Council has worked with the Police to identify suspects in a number of cases, for example, a knife-related assault on The Broadway. Council CCTV was used to identify a vehicle involved in a High Road burglary, and it was also used to identify a High Road robbery suspect who threatened staff with a knife.

District Council-funded Police Team

Two Officers attended an incident where a dog walker had discovered a man hanging from a tree and worked successfully to keep the victim alive until paramedics arrived.

How to protect yourself from crime

Having your car broken into and losing your things to thieves can be very distressing. Stolen wheels are valuable, either as parts or for their scrap value: using locking wheel nuts reduces the risk of your vehicle's wheels being stolen. More advice [here](#) on steps you can take to help secure your belongings, protect yourself and prevent becoming a victim of crime.



Don't get caught out!

Scams are many and various but you can spot the danger signs – without checking first, never let anyone collect your credit cards or take remote control of your computer and never give out your passwords over the phone or on the doorstep. Never use the same phone as your suspected scam caller has called you on, to ring your bank or provider straightaway to check their story (the scam caller can still be holding onto the line).

Who do you report phishing, suspicious texts, emails and fraud to?

- Suspicious emails should be forwarded to report@phishing.gov.uk
- Suspicious texts should be forwarded on to 7726
- Fraud should be reported to [Action Fraud](#)

[From Epping Forest Neighbourhood Watch](#)

Police to attend District Council meeting

Hear what our District Commander and Chief Inspector Ant Alcock have to say when they speak and answer questions at the “Stronger Communities Select Committee” at 7pm on Tuesday March 30th. [Watch here](#) on the day or later.

Council News

Vacant High Road shops owned by District Council

15 months ago the Council bought the shops in 200-226 High Road (including Centric Parade) & associated flats, and the Clifton Road car park. Since then, McDonalds has pulled out of moving into the former Pak Choi restaurant (202 High Road), leaving that shop vacant.

Also empty are the former Clinton's shop (204 High Road), Rush Hair Salon premises, Percy Ingle bakers (220 High Road) and Thomas Cook travel agents branch (224 High Road). The Council has served a break notice on New Look (216 High Road) to end their tenancy "in order to achieve a greater income for the Council" than New Look are prepared to pay in the current crisis, and they may do the same to Clarks (4 Centric Parade) for the same reason.

The Council have agreed a new lease with Holland and Barrett (212 High Road) and are in negotiation with WH Smith (5 Centric Parade) and a number of the other properties.

LRA comment: the Council is making optimistic noises about letting the vacant properties, as they did for the vacancies in the Epping Forest Shopping Park on Langston Road, and for the Landmark Building at the end of The Broadway – in practice, both these Council developments were slow to fill.

Landmark Building

Units B, C & D have been re-let after a year's vacancy. A potential tenant for Unit A has dropped out and the unit is being marketed yet again. Unit G is now occupied by Wenzel's the Bakers, and there are potential tenants for Units E and F, subject to completion of legal and planning requirements.

Epping Forest Shopping Park

The District Council is still trying to sort out poor roofing and drainage work from when the shops were built.

District Council draft Local Plan update

[Report](#) giving an update on progress and lists of potential developments (item 8).

Business support

There are in excess of 8,000 businesses in the Epping Forest District. 92% of these are categorised as micro (0-9 employees), with a further 3% defined as small. Epping Forest businesses have, like so many other businesses in the UK, suffered severe disruption with the effects of the pandemic and need support and advice from our local authorities.

The District Council has reviewed its support for businesses. It has also bought a database which includes contact and email addresses in order to further develop its capacity to engage with and support local businesses. [More](#) (items 11 and 13). Business support is also provided by the [County Council](#).

Qualis (the District Council's property investment arm)

A few weeks ago the Epping Forest Local Councils' Liaison Committee had a presentation from Qualis about their progress. You can see the webcast of the meeting and discussion [here](#), and the minutes [here](#).

Loughton Town Council grants 2021/22

Organisation

Amount

Purpose of Grant

	Granted	
Citizens Advice - Epping Forest District	£8,500	Running costs
Grow (Restore Comm.)	£4,000	Mobility Path & Running Costs
Oakwood Hill Community Centre (Restore Comm.)	£3,000	Operational Costs
Noah's Ark Play Group (Restore Comm.)	£2,500	Crafts, Toys & Running Costs
Rotary Club of Loughton - 3Food4u	£2,500	Venue Rent
Oakwood Hill Youth Club (Restore Comm.)	£2,000	Supplies & Crafts
Willingale Community Garden (Restore Comm.)	£2,000	Activities & New Shed
St Michael & All Angels Church Loughton	£2,000	Play Area
Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF)	£1,500	Providing Benefits Advice
Tinder Sticks CIC	£750	Outreach Events
Samaritans - Redbridge Branch	£600	Running Costs
Loughton Voluntary Care Association	£450	Running Costs & Hyacinth Bulbs
Affordable Counselling Epping Forest (ACEF)	£400	Counselling Sessions
Alfie James Productions	£200	Performance Skills Workshop
Epping Forest Re-Use	£200	Tools



Libraries update

You can still [reserve items](#) and you can now collect these from your chosen library when they're available. However, from early April the library catalogue will be unavailable as libraries transfer over to a new Library Management System. This will mean that some library services will be unavailable for approximately 3 weeks - more details will be available [here](#) in due course

Private Sector Housing.

Last month the District Council reported that Officers had successfully taken enforcement action against two rogue landlords who unlawfully sub-let 3 properties in Chigwell and Buckhurst Hill, creating large houses in multiple occupation which have been operating without licences and without the required safety precautions. Financial penalty notices were issued, and tenants were helped to reclaim rent paid during the unlicensed period via Rent Repayment Orders.

Officers have also helped to rehouse a vulnerable gentleman found living in a dilapidated mobile home, without any connection to electricity, water or drainage. The conditions were appalling and urgent referrals to colleagues in the Homelessness Team resulted in him being offered emergency alternative accommodation.

The Council provides an often-forgotten service of Public Funerals, offered in

circumstances when no next of kin can be found.

The Council supports vulnerable, elderly and disabled residents with essential home adaptations.

Roding Valley Recreation Ground

New benches

The Town Council has ordered two new metal benches to replace the recently fire-damaged benches close to the lake.

Quagmire area

The Town Council is still trying to get something done about the impassable strip of land behind the lake and adjacent to the River Roding.

Refuse collections

Biffa have been seeing higher levels of staff sickness due to Covid, and self-isolating because family members have tested positive. Collection rounds have still been completed but additional loaders have been being deployed from other services once they have finished their rounds. Mop-up crews consisting of Supervisors and Operations Manager have also been going out.

District Festival of Culture 2021

[This online Festival](#) runs through until the end of April, with a wide range of events for residents. Check for new events.



Remembrance Garden sculpture restored

The Town Council has had the sculpture in the Garden of Remembrance in Roding Road beautifully restored. Our



thanks to Independent Cllr Stephen Murray for drawing its condition to the Council's attention, and for the before and after photos. (Former LRA Cllrs Ken Angold-Stephens and Jennie Hart played a major part in planning and achieving this Garden.)

[Click to enlarge photos](#)

Local News

York Hill benches

The City of London, who are the landowners, have removed the two benches overlooking the big panorama over London and Kent at the top of York Hill. This was because of complaints from nearby residents about incidents of anti-social behaviour and because pubs do not have the right to use Forest land as their outside drinking space. Other residents have been upset by the removal, and doubt that it will stop people assembling during lockdown. We're told that the seats will be put back when

the ASB stops and things quieten down.

All enquiries to the Forest direct please (020 8532 1010; attention: Martin Newnham).



Much more to Loughton Brook than meets the eye

Most of us only think about Loughton Brook when it floods.



However, there's a wealth of hidden history and geography to be found [here](#), in an article Chris Pond has adapted from one by Verderer Paul Morris (with his permission), and you can [watch Loughton Brook on video](#), on the ground and from the air.

North Weald Airfield

Although we value and appreciate the work the Police & Air Ambulance helicopters do for our communities, there may be times when you wish to comment about their noise. You can do this

- via [the District Council's website](#)
- via the National Police Air Service (NPAS) [complaints procedure](#)
- by emailing the Airfield Operations team nwoperations@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
- You may also find the [NPAS FAQs](#) a useful source of information.



Essex & Herts Air Ambulance (EHAAT)

EHAAT crews provide advanced critical care to critically ill and injured patients across Essex & Hertfordshire - find out more about their missions [here](#)

Click image to enlarge

Epping-Ongar Railway chuffed!

Two new steam locomotives have joined the Railway's steam locomotive fleet; numbers 56 and 63 are Robert Stephenson and Hawthorn saddle tank locomotives which worked at the Corby steelworks. [More](#)



Health and Wellbeing

Whipps Cross Hospital redevelopment

[Updated designs](#) for the hospital have been released. You can still have your say - [details are here](#).

Epping Forest

Visiting Epping Forest

Current guidelines for visiting Epping Forest are [here](#). Many locations are closed including the Visitor Centres at Chingford and High Beach and Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge so [check before you go](#).

Epping Forest Management Strategy

With an estimated 4.2 million visits to the Forest every year, it is the City of London Corporation's aim that all those local to the Forest continue to value Epping Forest, and that visitors from further afield benefit from all that the ancient woodland has to offer. According to their new [Management Strategy](#), this ambition translates as five new strategic priorities, which together reflect their statutory obligations and their commitment to conserving and protecting the Forest as London's largest biodiverse green space for the health, recreation and enjoyment of everyone.

Epping Forest and Commons Committee

The Committee met on March 8th, and discussed the following topics (page references below are to the [agenda papers](#)). We will report on the discussions and decisions when details are available.

Charges for parking in Forest car parks

The City of London has decided to introduce charges in some car parks to increase income, to prevent commuter parking where this occurs, and to manage visitor numbers, which have increased drastically over the last year and have led to considerable damage to the Forest (page 49 onwards).

LRA comment: this has led to considerable controversy, with a majority of respondents to the Conservators' consultation opposed to the charges and/or the level of charges proposed.

Cycling strategy

The aim is to introduce a Cycling Strategy in the Forest (page 77 onwards).

High Beach Individual Site Plan

The aim is to introduce a site plan, in part to deal with damage from excessive visitor numbers and anti-social behaviour (page 159 onwards).

Cattle grazing

Five cattle were grazed successfully across Chingford Plain and Fairmead areas until the end of December. This was part of a trial on the feasibility of winter grazing with GPS collars.

Wood Pasture Management

Around 120 new pollards created over the last 10 years have been reworked with their second re-pollarding on Ditches ride, Grimston's Oak ride and Almshouse Plain.

Coral Tooth Fungus

It has rarely been recorded here in the last 15 years. This particular fungus is generally found on beech trees. Our wonderful range of fungus is one of the reasons much of the woodland is designated as [SSSI/SAC](#).



Epping Forest Consultative Committee

This Committee brings together representatives of local bodies and those running the Forest. Here's the webcast of their last meeting. See [here](#) for the agenda and [here](#) for the recording of the meeting.

Archaeological Protection Areas (APAs)

The City of London propose to expand the APA centred on the Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge and the Forest grass-scrub mosaic at Dannett's Hill, Chingford Plain. This expansion to 12 hectares will see a greater area of below-ground archaeology recognised and protected, including Bronze Age burnt flint mounds to the north of the Lodge.

Chingford Green hub proposals:

London Borough of Waltham Forest officers have held a public consultation on the proposals for the re-development of the Chingford Assembly Hall and North Chingford Library complex, which lies adjacent to Chingford Green and Epping Forest land. The proposals involve a possible 6-storey residential, assembly hall and library building to replace the existing two-storey complex. This proposal is subject to a further public consultation with a planning application likely in May 2021.

LRA comment: although this is outside Loughton, LRA is concerned that the extra housing so near the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (EFSAC), if approved, would result in further damage to the EFSAC.

Volunteers looking after the Forest

If you are interested in the conservation of Epping Forest, you can see [the latest newsletter](#) from the [Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers](#) (EFCV). The EFCV did manage to complete a number of conservation tasks late last year before lockdown came into effect. If you'd like to be involved with the EFCV group, please contact efcv2@yahoo.co.uk indicating your interest in future tasks once they can resume.

The end of the road for rhododendron

In Victorian times rhododendron was one of the most popular bushes for planting in landscaped gardens. Unfortunately, by the 1990s it had become the favourite host for "sudden oak death", which also attacks beech, sweet chestnut and larch. The organism favours wet or humid conditions and may spread in water, on footwear, tyres and animals. So rhododendron and larch need to be kept away from our best loved deciduous trees.

Although in Epping Forest there's no natural mixing between these plants, problems

can arise where domestic gardens border woodland, or where parkland is reincorporated into the forest, such as at Oak Hill, Wanstead Park and Knighton Woods and at the City of London Cemetery (which was established and landscaped at the height of Victorian era and borders the forest on three sides). Over the last few years there has been a programme to remove rhododendron from these areas. EFCV is involved in clearance work at the Cemetery and at Oak Hill ([see item above](#)).

There are mixed public feelings about the rhododendron cull. The rhododendrons in Knighton Wood were one of the sights of the area in past decades.

And More

How to heat your home sustainably - can it be done?

This question is increasingly asked, and the answers are not always easy. [Read more](#) on if it could be possible without breaking the bank.

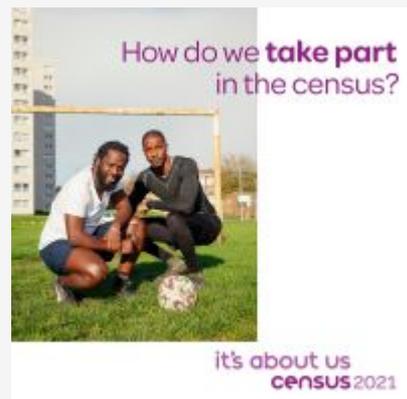
How to get rid of your waste

Want to find out all the ways you can dispose of your waste? Simply visit [the Love Essex website](#). At the top of the page you can type in an item and then enter your postcode. Once you click the search button you will have all the options to dispose of that item, with the most environmentally-friendly options at the top of the list. So why not have a try today and dispose of your unwanted items the right way?

Census 2021

The Census takes place this month. Letters are going to every household giving access codes so they can take part online. There's plenty of help available for those who need it [here](#).

The future allocation of funds to our local councils will depend on the results of the census, so it's important that coverage is as complete as possible. Individual records are kept secret for 100 years (a source of frustration to family history researchers!)



Thank you for being an LRA member. Our next Loughton News email is due to be issued Saturday April 10th although that date could change.

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