

LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE

The newsletter of Loughton Residents Association

April 2009
Member's edition



Help LRA continue a Loughton presence at County level in forthcoming elections

LRA's serving councillor for Loughton Central division, Chris Pond, is seeking re-election to Essex County Council (ECC) on 4th June. Chris has been a very hard-working councillor. He is constantly badgering ECC over Loughton problems, particularly roads and footways, and in the last four years through him, LRA has achieved some notable successes. These ought to happen without LRA pressure, but often it needs an enthusiastic locally-based county councillor to achieve them.

Key achievements include

- Hillyfields, Jessel Drive, Chester Rd, Castell Rd reconstructed after the patched and cracked roadway led to severe vibration problems.
- 418 emails, phone calls, and site meetings by Chris led to the kerbs being reset in the Drive and the bottom of the road being resurfaced.
- The Staples Road School's old canteen, full of asbestos, was closed and a superb new hall building erected.
- Speaking at every council meeting to remind the Chelmsford-centred ECC that Loughton is part of Essex and deserves spending on every bit as Colchester or Maldon.
- Saving the Oakwood Estate mobile library stop and changing the whole emphasis of county policy on this.
- Stopping a disastrous traffic light scheme for Brooklyn Parade that would have caused an impossible rat-run.
- Starting the campaign that led to over-60 bus passes being available at 9am rather than 9.30am.

Chris has also been on two important London joint committees on health, with particular reference to stroke and trauma centres of excellence.



How you can help

Please email contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk or ring 020 8508 4457 if you can deliver our manifesto.

And vote LRA on June 4th!

If you would like to vote by post, please contact us at contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk or 020 8508 4457 for an application form.

Michael Benbow

PUBLIC MEETING & AGM ON APRIL 20TH

DEFENDING LOUGHTON'S GREEN SPACES!

Tricia Moxey (CPRE - Council for Preservation of Rural Essex) and Town/County Cllr Chris Pond will bring us up to date and answer your questions at 8pm in the Wesley Hall, Loughton High Road (behind the Methodist church), followed by refreshments and LRA's AGM.

Battles that continue

- Getting the Debden bus stops back to original position.
- Getting new bus stops to serve College on Borders Lane.
- Pressing for renewal of the pavement near Morrison's.
- A major scheme of resurfacing estate roads in Loughton and Debden.
- Some recognition that Loughton is hilly and its local roads gritting and salting.
- Stopping the absurd idea of switching off all street lights at midnight (see piece on next page).
- Getting the High Road enhancement finished. The Conservative-run District Council have washed their hands of it so pressure on ECC has to be maintained.

Fighting the BNP

The BNP have woken up to the fact that Loughtonians voted out two of their councillors last year and replaced them with knowledgeable, concerned LRA candidates who listen to resident concerns rather than pursuing a national agenda which is quite irrelevant to the town. We have recently noticed some BNP attacks on LRA and its councillors on the web and in newsletters – so we must be doing something right.

Be a local Councillor

You can have a say on what goes on locally, on behalf of residents. LRA has councillors on Essex County Council, Epping Forest District Council and Loughton Town Council. To find out more, ring Chris Pond (020 8508 2361) or email contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk. LRA is independent. We are focused on looking after Loughton for residents. We believe national political parties are divisive at a local level. If LRA is opposed to an issue or development, we try to offer sensible alternatives, and strive to turn active proposals into reality.

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

Green spaces battle latest

LRA continues to fight hard to preserve the green spaces on the Debden Estate against the threat of housing development. When Conservative cabinet member Dave Stallan tried to earmark the green spaces for possible development, vigilant LRA Cllrs took fast and effective action at a District Council Overview and Scrutiny (O & S) Committee meeting. LRA also sent letters to many of the surrounding houses (thanks to all of those that helped to deliver them) and had well over 400 replies. The vast majority objected to Loughton's green spaces, children's playgrounds and nature reserves being built on at all.

Almost 99 per cent of respondents said that the green spaces should not be built on, although 30 per cent acknowledged the need for more affordable homes. A petition of 700 names was presented to the District Council, to confirm the strength of the opposition. LRA also sought evidence of the green spaces being used for informal recreation (see picture below). Since last Spring, LRA town councillors have been working with the Town Council to go through the complex processes needed to register six green spaces in Loughton and Debden as "village greens". This is possible where we can prove that they have been used for informal recreation for at least the last twenty years.

The District Council now appears to be working out an overall plan for where housing developments in the district might go, before considering individual sites.



Loughton Cycling Club using the space at the corner of Newmans Lane and Rectory Lane in the 1950s.

Stamp out foul play

LRA would like to remind dog owners of their responsibilities with regards to dog mess. There have been concerns expressed by members that the problem is increasing in parts of Loughton, particularly near schools. If an area you use is bad please report it to the animal warden at the District Council on 01992 564608. If you have seen an incident, or know it happens at a certain time that is useful. The Town Council is considering whether it can adopt some of the powers of the Clean Neighbourhood Act.

In the dark

Essex County Council is considering turning off streetlights in Loughton and other towns after midnight. LRA County Councillor (and Town Mayor) Chris Pond spoke out at the West Essex Forum against a blanket imposition of a midnight switch-off. Cllr Pond stated that "life in Loughton carries on past midnight, especially in the High Road and with people returning from London." Although the LRA recognises that there are sustainable and economical benefits to reduced lighting, it believes that these can still be achieved either with a shorter switch off time or by reducing the number of lights switched on after midnight. Visit www.loughtonsafe.webs.com for more details.

Clean start for Station Approach

After many years of LRA pressure through Cllr Ken Angold-Stephens, the District Council has accepted responsibility for the cleanliness of Station Approach. The shrubs by the bus-stops have been cut back and rat traps set. Rubbish still accumulates there and proposals that were accepted several years ago to hold back wind-blown rubbish have not been implemented, but this is a start. Initially the street cleaners did not think it was their job to clear the rubbish on the shrub beds but it has been made clear to them that any rubbish within the reach of their litter pickers is their responsibility. The four missing trees have also finally been replaced

Second wheelie bin

Epping Forest District Council has decided to give households a second wheelie-bin, for green waste and food waste collection. There will be weekly collections of food waste, which will reduce smells and decay, especially in summer months. The Council will also supply a kitchen caddy and a kerbside caddy for waste food. Residual waste will be collected fortnightly all year, using the current wheelie-bins. Dry recycling collections (paper, plastic bottles, tins and glass) will continue as now.

LRA is not opposing the second wheelie-bins because the Audit Commission has strongly criticised the present system of green waste collection. The present degradable green waste sacks are very expensive, which residents pay for in their council tax. Unlimited numbers of sacks can be put out, which is often abused by professional gardeners. However, we are pressing the Council to make the second wheelie-bin optional for those with physical, access or storage difficulties, clarify whether people will be allowed to wrap food waste in paper (plastic bags will not be permitted), clarify whether people will be allowed to put out the kerbside food caddy if they have no garden waste, give people the option of a larger wheelie bin if they have a large garden and be more proactive in encouraging residents to compost their garden waste at home.

Cllr Caroline Pond

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

LRA tackles College worries

Epping Forest College has had a chequered recent history, with principals coming and going, and LRA has been very concerned about its poor performance. With its excellent new building it ought to be one of Loughton's crown jewels. Instead, its recent Ofsted report was truly appalling, with the lowest possible mark in most areas. The words poor, unsatisfactory and inadequate appear in it no fewer than 52 times (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). If the College was a state school, it would be a candidate for closure. By any measure, it is failing our young people. Ofsted do judge arts teaching good, and criticism should not be levelled at individual teachers. But the Corporation, the 17 governors who run this college, and who are unaccountable to any local body, must surely now consider their position very seriously. The Learning and Skills Council have in law reserve powers to take control, and could do so if the governors cannot remedy the situation promptly, so as to turn the institution round quickly.

LRA is also investigating the circumstances behind the possible closure of Loughton Sports Centre, owned by the College and sited on its campus, in Borders Lane. It has provided a base for Debden Community Association (DCA), and a variety of clubs for decades, but was suddenly closed for health and safety reasons in March. The College is deeply in debt following the construction of its recent £35m building, and minutes from its Finance and General Purpose committee last November state that "the sale of the Sports Hall was crucial to the financial viability of the College in 2009." It is believed that a deal has been in place in principle for months to sell the building for £1.75m to a local developer. Minutes from a January meeting mention the possibility of building a new sports hall on nearby Luctons Field with government money. However, this will now not happen owing to the poor Ofsted report.



Cllrs Ken Angold-Stephens and Chris Pond

Essex Highways

The District Council is set to endorse the County Council's highways localism project, intended to enable districts to engage directly on highways matters. In order for this to be implemented, the Council will have to establish a Highways Panel, which will be tasked with considering options and priorities for local highway works. LRA has been very concerned about the state of local roads and pavements and welcomes the new arrangements. However, the cabinet member at Chelmsford will still make all the decisions, so a strong councillor at ECC is vital. We have doubts about how effective this new approach will be, but will press for Loughton to be well-represented on the panel.

Cllr Chris Pond

Parking matters

The Debden parking review is moving ahead but far too slowly as far as residents are concerned. Consultation with residents on the proposals is due but is held up while reviews of the parking schemes in Epping and Buckhurst Hill are completed. There has been little progress on roads near Loughton High Road and LRA is becoming increasingly frustrated by the failure of the District Council and County Highways to move this problem forward when residents in some of our roads are becoming desperate. Cllr Chris Pond has been trying to hurry it along and hopes that the Debden proposals will be issued by early summer.

Quick wins for LRA

Green boxes

Following repeated LRA pressure, a number of graffiti covered green boxes around Loughton have now been repainted by the District Council.

Baylis News

The District Council Licensing sub-committee has rejected the application by this High Road newsagents to sell alcohol till 2am on Fridays and Saturdays. The LRA Plans Group objected strongly, and LRA volunteers delivered letters to local residents, warning them of the application.

Adverts on roundabouts

LRA Plans Group objected to ads on three local roundabouts. On March 2nd, the District Council's Development Control Committee unanimously rejected plans for the proposed sites at the Wake Arms, the Robin Hood and the M11 junction. This was due in part to robust speeches by the Conservators and LRA Cllrs John Markham and Caroline Pond.

What's on in Loughton

For updates on local events visit Loughton Community Network at www.loughton-tc.gov.uk/2diary.htm

Loughton Festival

The 2009 Loughton Festival will be taking place this April. The Loughton Festival Showcase is on 18 April between 11am - 2pm at the Loughton Club. Quite a few volunteers will be needed to help with events. Contact Sue Taylor on 020 8508 2512, info@loughtonfestival.org.uk or see www.loughtonfestival.org.uk for details.



Book storage needed

Do you have a large hatchback or van? Could you help the LRA by sorting and storing second-hand books for each monthly farmers' market? We continue to receive new books and have a dozen trays at any one time – the sale of which helps pay for our display boards. Any that don't sell are donated to Oxfam so you'll be doing your bit for charity too. You would need to have storage space for the books but there is no obligation to attend all of the markets. Contact david.linnell@loughtonresidents.co.uk or 020 8508 2932 for further information.

David Linnell



Brook project flows ahead

With grants from the Town and District Councils, a landscape architect has been commissioned to produce an outline plan for the Loughton Brook improvement scheme. On 25th April and the 2nd May there will be a display of the outline proposals at St. Michael's Church in Roding Road. The public are invited to come and see the ideas being put forward and comment on them on the questionnaire provided. The architect and members of the management team will be on-hand to discuss the proposals between 9am and 5pm. Clear public support is needed for an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund or any other funding agency to stand any chance of receiving a grant.

Cllr Ken Angold-Stephens

Monthly farmers' market

LRA always 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.

Join LRA now

LRA delivers two newsletters each year to most of Loughton. Members get extra newsletters each year, and are vital in supporting our work. Please join NOW.

I enclose £4 for 2009.....£4.....

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

Name.....

Address.....

.....postcode.....

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

For a receipt, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope. Please send to LRA Membership Secretary,
14 The Hawthorns, Loughton, IG10 3QT.

Members who have yet to renew for 2009

Please use this form to renew your membership. To check when you last paid, or for a Standing Order form:

david.linnell@loughtonresidents.co.uk or 020 8508 2932

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

CHAIRMAN: vacant

VICE CHAIRMAN David Linnell

20 Eleven Acre Rise 8508 2932

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59 Wroths Path IG10 1SH

MINUTES SEC. Sharon Cannaby 8532 0050

47 Roding Gardens IG10 3NH

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64 Spring Grove IG10 4QE

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28 Brook Road IG10 1BP

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Chris Harper 8508 4770

Kevin Latchford 8502 4568

Charles MacKenzie 8508 2909

Tony Paddon 8508 2238

David White 3225 5006

Bela Yorke 8508 4729

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3 Lower Park Road IG10 4NB

FAIRMEAD WARD

Carol Davies (T) 8508 4234

13 Colebrook Gardens IG10 2HS

David Wixley (D) 8418 9284

2 Copper Beech Court Goldings Road IG10 2QH

FOREST WARD

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89 Lower Park Road IG10 4NE

Suzanne Harper (T) 8508 4770

23 Algers Road IG10 4NG

Peter House (T) 8532 1275

10 Connaught Avenue IG10 4DP

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Margaret Chalk (T) 8508 2226

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David Wixley (T) 8418 9284

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59 Wroths Path IG10 1SH

Caroline Pond (D&T) 8508 2361

7 Staples Road IG10 1HP

Chris Pond (T) 8508 2361

7 Staples Road IG10 1HP

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Issue 239 © LRA 2009

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Promoted by and on behalf of Independent Loughton Residents

Association, of 20 Eleven Acre Rise Loughton IG10 1AN

Printed by Sema Printing Co Ltd. 81 Grove Road, London, E17 9BU

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