

LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE

The newsletter of Loughton Residents Association

July 2011
Members' edition



Cuts latest

Essex County Council has frozen Council Tax but its Government grant settlement was £40m less than for last year, with more reductions to come in future. A number of cuts to services have been announced. From July 4th the County Council is reducing Library opening hours.

Loughton library will be open from Monday to Saturday, 9am – 5pm (closed on Sundays), while Debden will be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1 – 5pm; and Friday and Saturday 9am -1pm. This follows a public consultation which, unfortunately, gave residents the chance to choose from only two options for Loughton and three for Debden, so alternatives such as Monday-Saturday, 9.30am – 5.30pm for Loughton were not considered by the Council. However, all 73 Essex libraries will remain open.

There has been a review of the home to school transport policy, including reducing escorts and the subsidy for travel to faith schools, of special educational needs provision, and of opening times and locations of recycling centres for household waste. The reduction in Government funding has led the County Council to plan to end the Connexions service at the end of the current academic year (in July 2011). The Government is moving toward introducing a new All Ages Careers Service in the 2011-12 academic year. The County says it will continue to provide service delivery for vulnerable and disaffected youth through re-designing its youth service provision.

Crime in Loughton

In 2011 there have been burglaries, thefts from cars and vans, thefts from front gardens and distraction thefts from people in offices and in car-parks. Please look out for yourself and your neighbours! Report anything suspicious immediately - 999 for emergencies, 07968 354021 for the local beat police (this is carried by the duty officer 24 hours a day; if there's no answer please leave a message) or 000 333 4444 for the Essex control centre. A new non-emergency number 101 starts in July.

Leisure pursuits

For many years leisure centres in the Epping Forest district have been closed on bank holidays. Originally, this was done to save money, before SLM took over the management of the centres in 2006, as staff were entitled to a bonus for working on a public holiday. In April 2010 LRA began a campaign to have a trial opening of the Loughton Leisure Centre on a bank holiday.

On Monday 2nd May the pool and gym opened for a six hour trial opening at no extra cost to the District Council. The early morning adult swim proved to be very popular and the teaching pool was very busy until lunchtime. Approximately 200 people used the gym, while 100 children and over 120 adults had a swim. We hope to encourage SLM to open again on bank holidays. I should like to say a special thank you to Alan Clear, the District Council's leisure monitoring officer.

This year I have been appointed to the Leisure Management Contract board which oversees the contract with SLM. I am currently taking up a number of issues on behalf of users including lengthy waits for gym equipment to be repaired, limited openings of the new coffee bar and improving the web site to make holiday opening times clearer. Please contact me if you have any other concerns regarding the leisure centre.

Cllr Rose Brookes

Could YOU make a difference?

We are looking for LRA supporters to stand as candidates in Loughton wards next May for the Town Council and the District Council. To find out what's involved, and how you could make a difference locally, contact Cllr Chris Pond or David Linnell (see back page for contact details). Training is provided, and you would be working as part of a strong and experienced group.

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

Planning & licensing matters

The LRA Plans Group looks at all planning and licensing applications in Loughton; we consult residents and/or support or object individual applications as appropriate.

Approved by the District Council

Vodafone/O2 phone masts on Oakwood Hill, on the verge on the north side, just east of the junction with Longcroft Rise, and on east side of Pyrles Lane 15m from its junction with Rectory Lane.

Belgique Café, 200 High Road: The café has been granted an alcohol licence till 11pm so that they can serve drinks with meals. Residents in Clifton Road, which backs onto the premises, are understandably concerned about late-night disturbance, but there was never a real prospect the District Council would refuse the application in view of the number of existing licences in the area which run till 11pm or later.

Turned down by the District Council

Vodafone/O2 phone masts on Borders Lane, Baldwins Hill, Etheridge Road, next to Oaklands School and Chester Road

In progress

Sex shop application: following refusal by the District Council for a licence for a shop on Borders Lane, the applicants have put in an application at Unit E11, Seedbed Centre Langston Road.

Luxe, High Road: The Crystal Lounge has re-opened as Luxe. We understand they have a closing time of 1am, unless they obtain an extension licence. A number of residents have contacted us about the appearance of the outside of the building but unfortunately there are no planning controls over this aspect, and attempts to talk to the owner have not succeeded.

Planning and Councillors

Councillors often have to deal with concerns from residents about planning. These come from both those favouring applications, and those objecting. Please don't think we are being unhelpful if you telephone us. Because of the code of conduct we cannot express a view on specific applications in case they come to committee. Most of LRA's district councillors are on planning committees, as are some of our Town councillors. However, we can give advice about speaking at the Town and District committees, consulting planning officers, Conservation Area rules, the Local Plan, or the appeal system. Objectors can send us, for information, their reasons for objecting to applications or indeed applicants can send reasons for agreeing. And please contact David Linnell, as the LRA Plans Group also looks at all Loughton applications (see above). **Time is of the essence** if you want to object to a planning application. Make your views known the same day.

Cllr Caroline Pond



LRA appointments

At Loughton Town Council's annual meeting on May 11th, LRA Cllr David Wixley handed over the Town Mayor's chain to LRA Cllr Caroline Pond. David reported how much he had enjoyed his year particularly meeting people in the community. He attended over 60 engagements as town mayor and his charity fun run in April raised £510 for the Dream Factory. LRA Cllr Stephen Pewsey will serve as Caroline's deputy.

LRA Cllr Ken Angold-Stephens has joined the roll-call of honoured councillors to become the 37th Chairman of Epping Forest District Council since its creation in 1974. Nominating him, LRA Cllr Caroline Pond and ex-chairman herself described his conscientious work as a district councillor in Loughton over the previous seven years and his work for the Town Council, for which he served as Mayor in 2009-10. Ken will make Epping Forest Home Start and St Clare Hospice his Chairman's Charities.

Chris Harper has been co-opted onto the Town Council for St Mary's ward. His term will expire in May 2012.

Extensions to properties

There have been a spate of applications recently for extensions to properties and outhouses of various kinds, perhaps due to the recession which has made it more difficult for people to move home. In some cases this has caused difficulties under the planning regulations which householders may not have been aware of and, in a few cases, developers have tried to exploit the regulations which are quite complicated.

Planning permission is not required if the development is within strict limits in terms of height, size and use to which it is to be put. This is of particular concern if any outbuilding is to be used for living accommodation or for business purposes. A breach of these regulations could prove quite costly to the householder to put right. Recent examples have consumed large amounts of officer and Councillor time, even involving costly legal opinion in one case which is still ongoing after many months. In another a large extension may have to be either removed or modified at huge cost to the householder. To save embarrassment and cost it is wise to consult with planning officers at the District Council before going ahead, especially as these regulations may be subject to change.

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Latest Highways news

The District Council Cabinet has approved 24 new parking bays for Colebrook Gardens and 38 in Hillcroft. Schemes for Chester Close, Harvey Gardens and Audley Gardens will go to the feasibility stage but LRA is concerned that progress will depend on a further review of the Council's capital programme. Torrington Drive has been added to the council's longlist of potential off-street parking schemes.

There are many verges in Loughton that have been disfigured by unsuitable or thoughtless parking. Where it can, LRA presses for suitable arrangements to meet parking needs and protect verges, but in the current financial conditions it is very hard to get councils to act. Some residents have taken matters into their own hands and placed obstructions on the verges outside their properties. If you would like a copy of the highways guidelines on when such obstructions will be accepted please email david.linnell@loughtonresidents.co.uk (These do not apply to verges on District Council Housing land.)

LRA has been opposing the County Council's proposed closure of Fairmead Road because it provides a route into the heart of the Forest for disabled and less able people, it is much used for access by Epping Forest District Council Lifewalks and would be contrary to wider recreational access for the public. Fly tipping, if a serious problem, could be controlled by video surveillance. Speeds are low already and road safety is not an issue as there is no through traffic. Cllr Chris Pond has confirmed that the closure is now on hold and will not proceed unless the Epping Forest Conservators decide to close the Fairmead Road parking areas. LRA will be pressing for these to remain open.

Broadway performance

My first year as a district councillor has been very interesting. I hold a surgery in Sprays on the Broadway 9-10am on the first Thursday of the month. Parking and housing are major issues. Through the persistence of a resident we now have jockey-rails along part of Torrington Drive protecting the verges and preventing commuter parking. I am trying to get more lighting installed by the County Council on Brickclamps Path. I also hope there will soon be better signage to help shoppers locate the car parks behind the Broadway shops. I've been involved in cases where the district council has fitted outside lighting for a senior citizen in sheltered housing, a new boiler for another, and a much needed new door for a young family in a flat.

I enjoyed joining in the Seated Exercise at Parsonage Court with local residents at the Healthy Living Festival, run by an inspiring instructor, David Hogg. David also organised an Active Health Open day at Willingale School and set up a gardening project with the pupils.

Cllr Jennie Hart



Oakwood Hill crossroads

I recently received a petition from householders in Southview Road about the traffic congestion at the Oakwood Hill/Roding Road junction. Such is the frustration of some drivers, they have been seen to mount the pavement at the Southview Road junction and exit into Roding Road thus bypassing the traffic lights. This is, of course, extremely dangerous. Recently a small child was nearly knocked over and there are a lot of elderly residents living in the area whose hearing is not good and who are unable to take evasive action if this happens.

It is a busy pedestrian area, with shops located nearby which has resulted in people parking on the pavement to do their local shopping. I have taken it up with County Highways but have had no response so far and will keep chasing them. An easy solution would be to install bollards on the pavement, but a much more attractive solution would be to add a further flower bed to compliment the one already there. However, such is the pressure of public finance at the moment the latter would be extremely unlikely unless paid for by public subscription. I am continuing to chase Highways for a response.

Cllr Ken Angold-Stephens

Travel to High Beach by bus

845, the new Sunday and Bank Holiday fully accessible shuttle bus will be running throughout the summer between Loughton Station, High Beach and Chingford Station. The fare is £2 and you can hop on and off all day (concessions ride for free). It is a 'hail and ride' service - as long as it is safe to do so, the bus will stop anywhere along the route when hailed. It is a white 12-seater minibus with magnetic panels on the side stating it is the Epping Forest Service 845.

**For more information about LRA or Loughton please visit
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£5 if you value Loughton

We are very grateful to all members who have already paid their 2011 subscriptions. If you haven't done so yet, please send a cheque for £5, payable to LRA, to LRA Membership Secretary, 14 The Hawthorns, Loughton IG10 3QT. To check if you've paid, or to pay direct from a bank account, or by Standing Order, ring 020 8508 2932 or email contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk.

PLUS: Tell your friends and neighbours they are missing out if they don't receive our weekly News Items emails and ALL editions of Loughton Life. Encourage them to pay the £5 annual subscription.

LRA who's who

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21 Graylands Theydon Bois

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Bela Yorke 8508 4729

LRA councillors

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Chris Pond 7 Staples Road 8508 2361

DISTRICT (D) AND TOWN (T) COUNCILS

ALDERTON WARD
Rose Brookes (D&T) 8502 5981
3 Lower Park Road

Lance Leonard (D) 8502 0771
25 The Lindens

BROADWAY WARD
Jennie Hart (D) 8508 3661
74 Queens Road

Katie Nicholson (T) 07904 069998

Southern Cross Homes

LRA Cllr Chris Pond has passed on reassurance from the County Council that there have been few reported concerns expressed by service users and their families of Southern Cross homes in Essex. Even more importantly, there have been no safeguarding concerns raised. Plans are in place to deal with the possibility of it going into administration.

Monthly farmers' market

LRA organises the farmers' markets on the first Sunday of each month (9am – 2pm) on Centric Parade, Loughton High Rd. Come and meet your local councillors and LRA helpers.

FAIRMEAD WARD

Tessa Cochrane (D) 8508 4148

16 Shaftesbury
Carol Davies (T) 8508 4234

Colebrook Gardens
David Wixley (D) 8418 9284

2 Copper Beech Court Goldings Road

FOREST WARD

Jill Angold-Stephens (T) 8281 0674

89 Lower Park Road
Colin Finn (D) 8508 5577

16 Church Close
Suzanne Harper (T) 8508 4770

23 Algers Road
Peter House (T) 8532 1275

52 Baldwins Hill

RODING WARD

Ken Angold-Stephens (D&T) 8281 0674

89 Lower Park Road
Margaret Chalk (T) 8508 2226

49 Southview Road
David Wixley (T) 8418 9284

2 Copper Beech Court, Goldings Road

ST JOHN'S WARD

John Markham (D) 8508 1945

77 Queens Road
Stephen Pewsey (T) 8508 5582

59 Wroths Path
Caroline Pond (D&T) 8508 2361

7 Staples Road
Chris Pond (T) 8508 2361

7 Staples Road

ST MARY'S WARD

Richard Cohen (D) 8502 3242

61 Traps Hill
Chris Harper (T) 8508 4770

23 Algers Road IG10 4NG
Lucette Howe (T) 8508 3719

19 Sparelease Hill
Tracey Thomas (T) 07508 193187

110 Grosvenor Drive