

LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE Members' Edition

Loughton Residents Association newsletter
February 2014



Oakwood Hill estate

Residents and LRA Cllrs have become increasingly concerned about the condition of this former 1970s Greater London Council estate (133 houses, 144 flats and 136 maisonettes). LRA is therefore delighted that, following discussions with LRA Cllrs Lance Leonard and Chris Pond and others, the District Council is now proposing an estate enhancement scheme, covering mainly improvements to the paths, roads and street lighting.

If funding for this is agreed with Essex County Council, the District Council will set up a taskforce including senior housing officers, local Cllrs and interested residents.

District Council restructure

For some years, LRA has felt that the District Council could be better organised, and would benefit from external experience. The new chief executive, who has been in post for just over a year, has such experience.

Having consulted staff, Cllrs and the Trade Unions, he is now reorganising the way in which the Council works, with the intention of enabling the Council to manage the challenges ahead whilst delivering cultural change. The proposals also produce savings of £353,700 a year, for one-off costs of £371,400. There are no compulsory redundancies and the aim is for an orderly and effective transition to the new arrangements with effect from 1 April 2014.

Making a difference

Have you thought of standing as an LRA councillor at this year's District Council elections on 22 May? Now's a good time to find out what's involved, and how you could make a difference! Please contact Cllr Chris Pond on 020 8508 2361 or email contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk Training is provided and you would be working as part of a strong and experienced group.

Alternatively you could consider joining LRA's Executive Committee, which gets involved in the local issues we take up. You're welcome to come along without commitment to see how this works.

High Road fountain damaged

LRA Town Cllr Caroline Pond says that the fountain is "an historic landmark in the High Road and is one of the few working drinking fountains left.....we hope CCTV will identify the culprits". The Town Council has removed the stone fountain to safe storage until repairs and reinstatement can be arranged (early estimates suggest repairs could total around £1,200). This cost will mostly be met by the council's insurers. Anyone with information on this incident should call the Council (020 8508 4200) or the police non-emergency number (101), quoting incident number CF1048211213.

8pm THURSDAY 3rd APRIL 2014
PUBLIC MEETING & AGM

Talk to be followed by refreshments
and LRA's AGM, including proposed changes
to the LRA Constitution (see back page).
Full details of the talk will be given in the
next edition of *Loughton Life*.

Please support LRA

We are very grateful for our members' support. Your copy of *Loughton Life* should enclose a letter asking you to renew your membership (only £5 a year) or, if you've already paid for 2014, confirming that you have done so. LRA is run by volunteers and we keep our costs to the minimum. We depend upon our volunteers and your membership to produce these newsletters and run our campaigns, and you can help us greatly by renewing now.

Farmers' markets

The LRA organises farmers' markets on the first Sunday of each month (9am–2pm) on Centric Parade, Loughton High Road - come and meet LRA Cllrs and representatives. LRA makes two stands available free for charities and other local voluntary organisations (to find out about free dates please contact contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk).

Members' newsletters and local news by email
£5 for 2014

Lights out!

Now that part-night street lighting has finally started, please let LRA know of particular problems, including any faulty lamps, with its number (on small square sticker), so it can be reported.

The light outside 67 Traps Hill is the subject of a long-running dispute between the County Council and UK Power Networks. LRA Cllr Chris Pond is still pressing for some illumination!



Planning & licensing matters

The LRA Plans Group looks at all planning and licensing applications in Loughton. It consults residents and supports, or objects to, individual applications as appropriate. Details of current cases are on LRA's website.

Sir Winston Churchill development: This planning application for a development on a site owned by the Council was not heard by the usual local planning committee, but by a different committee on which there were far fewer local Cllrs. The LRA Plans Group and lots of residents objected to the proposals. At the meeting, eight LRA Cllrs spoke "against", but the Conservative majority on the committee approved it. Details are available on the Council website. More in our next issue.

Sainsbury's, Debden: Work has started on removing the empty shops, creating a larger car-park and refurbishing the store.

Majestic Wine Warehouses Ltd has applied to sell alcohol (off the premises) at Unit 2, 2 Station Road (was Brown's Garage), Monday – Sunday, 8am – 11pm.

72 Alderton Hill: after they had discussions with a concerned resident and with the LRA Plans Group about potential traffic hazards, the applicants withdrew their application to convert this house into a doctors' surgery.

Licensing applications: the licensing department at the District Council has just completed a nine-month experiment in holding premises licensing meetings in the evening - this turned out to be an expensive flop. It was started against the recommendation of the licensing committee, including the chairman, LRA Cllr Ken Angold-Stephens. It was nevertheless pushed through by the Conservatives, having been proposed by a Loughton Conservative Cllr. It cost the Council thousands of pounds without any discernible benefit and has been abandoned. The Council is, however, now consulting with all residents within 150m of each new licensing application site; this has been welcomed by all concerned and will continue.

Councillor action

Great Eastern Path

The accumulation of litter on Great Eastern Path is a constant concern. Despite several bins there are some who do not seem to care, not helped when the Council forgets to empty the bins which then overflow. LRA Cllrs David Wixley and Ken Angold-Stephens regularly nag the Council when the bins are full and even litter-pick themselves rather than leaving the unsightly mess, which also attracts vermin.

Garage sites

There are a number of garage sites around Loughton that have become derelict. Those owned by the Council are being surveyed with a view to building housing on them but those that are privately owned are proving more difficult, not least in contacting all the owners, some of whom have not used their garages in years (and so they have become a place for fly-tipping and other undesirable activities).

LRA Cllr Ken Angold-Stephens has been working with the residents of Valley Close and Council officers to track down the owners of garages and Independent Cllr Stephen Murray has been engaged with residents in Barncroft over a similar row of garages.

Litter

The District Council has recently given three fixed penalty notices to litter offenders, two resulting from pre-arranged patrols in Debden and one from reliable evidence from a member of the public who challenged somebody littering from a car near his property.

If you see litter being dropped and can identify the offender, or want to highlight a problem area or property, phone 01992 564608.

Visit www.loughtonresidents.org.uk
for more information

Festive quiz answers

There was a bumper entry this year and lots of correct answers – so well done everyone! Winners were Peter and Joy Gordon.

1. Final seasonal drink (4, 2, 3, 6, 4) *Last of the Summer Wine*
2. Saturday wedding? (5, 2, 3, 3) *Match of the Day*
3. The best dad (3, 2, 3, 4) *Top of the Pops*
4. Rural rasp (11) *Countryfile*
5. Under starter's orders (5, 6, 2) *Ready, Steady, Go*
6. Dark china (3, 5) *Pot Black*
7. A wide, religious building (11) *Broadchurch*
8. Is that the correct cost? (3, 5, 2, 5) *The Price is Right*
9. Best dress? (3, 4) *Top Gear*
10. Eggheads loyalty (3, 6, 5) *The Brains Trust*
11. A burial measure (3, 4, 2, 3, 5) *One Foot in the Grave*
12. Looking N, S, E and W (6, 2, 4) *Points of View*
13. Not a bunch of amateurs (3, 13) *The Professionals*
14. Captured (3, 8) *The Prisoner*
15. A fine existence (3, 4, 4) *The Good Life*
16. Conquer the cook (10) *Masterchef*
17. Cabbage whites (11) *Butterflies*
18. In one's road (4, 4, 3) *Down Your Way*
19. Dark blue bird (3, 4, 4) *The Navy Lark*
20. A thousand sit here? (10) *Grandstand*
21. Virtuous study (1, 4, 4) *A Good Read*
22. Trevor's street? (7, 3) *Howard's Way*
23. Never closed (4, 3, 5) *Open All Hours*
24. Bowmen (3, 7) *The Archers*
25. Encircle an instrument (5, 3, 4) *Round The Horn*
26. Leisure for staff (7, 8) *Workers Playtime*
27. A wide vista (8) *Panorama*
28. A jumping timepiece (11) *Springwatch*
29. They have influence (3, 10) *The Persuaders*
30. Crowning way (10, 6) *Coronation Street*

Bus news

LRA Cllr Chris Pond reported to Essex County Council the lack of any route indicator and short-running on routes 541/2/3. The Council contacted the operator, Galleon Travel, who said that buses were turning outside the BP garage to stay on schedule, because of cars blocking The Broadway.

These problems shouldn't happen again, but if they do – or other problems occur – please let us know. Any further similar incidents on these routes will impact upon Galleon's Key Performance Indicators, which the Council use to assess how reliable operators are and which may influence decisions on awarding future contracts to them.

Please let us know about bus problems at contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk, or phone LRA Cllr Chris Pond (details on page 4)



Highways action

Potholes

LRA Committee Member Michael Benbow reported potholes at the Alderton Hill/Brook Road junction on 26 November. They were repaired properly 9 days later. Inspired, he recalled a very bad pothole for years on the north side of Church Lane. Next time he passed, he slowed to check the pothole only to find a conscientious resident had beaten him to reporting it and the pothole had been repaired. If we don't report then Essex won't know, so next time you pass a pothole use www.EssexHighways.org so County can't claim ignorance - and please let us know too!

Meanwhile, LRA Cllr David Wixley has reported the defective street light outside of 66 Valley Hill, and the pothole outside of 64 Valley Hill.

The Broadway

LRA Cllr Jennie Hart has succeeded in getting the District Council to plant a shrub border along one of the walls of Brickclamps Path. In addition, The Broadway's central reservation is being planted with roses and ground cover; we wait to see whether the plants will survive. LRA has so far failed to persuade the council to put paving on the central reservation beds at the places where people actually cross ("non-designated crossing points").

Brooklyn Parade kerbstones

LRA has been chasing County Highways about the missing/displaced kerbstones for over a year, and we are pleased that the kerbs have finally been repaired.

The Hawthorns "hump"

After months of pressing Highways to flatten the hump that's taking off car exhaust pipes, they have finally put it on the list for removal but as usual can't tell us when.

Street-clearing and leaf-clearing

This is the District Council's job. The district's roads are meant to be inspected (and cleansed if necessary) on a regular basis. Additional street cleansing is undertaken for heavily leafed areas during the autumn leaf fall season. To find out when your road will be cleansed, or to report problems, call 01992 564608.

**Not getting LRA's local news bulletins by email?
Email contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk**

Royal Mail office

Royal Mail has announced plans to move its Loughton and Woodford Green operations to the British Postal Museum & Archive site in Imprimo Park, Debden, by the end of 2014. This is due to the increase in the number of parcels compared to letters, which means the existing sites are no longer fit for purpose.

However, for residents the disadvantage will be a longer trek if you need to collect something, well away from public transport.

Stay in touch

Our website address is now www.loughtonresidents.org.uk (although www.loughtonresidents.co.uk will still work).

For technical reasons, our LRA email addresses will still end in “.co.uk”). Members can get our email bulletins of local news (email contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk if you aren't on the list and would like these). We will also be putting out occasional topical messages on Facebook and Twitter – please follow us at www.facebook.com/LoughtonRA and @LoughtonRA

LRA Constitution changes

Every so often we need to tidy up the wording to bring it into line with how we are actually doing things. Proposed changes include removing the requirement for an Autumn General Meeting, deleting the post of Chairman and recognising how we currently run LRA, and changes to the numbers of elected and co-opted places on the Executive Committee. The full set of proposals will be published on the website before the AGM, and the current proposals (which may change) are available from David Linnell at contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk or 020 8508 2932.

Minute taker?

We need someone to take the minutes (topics and decisions only) at the LRA Executive meetings on the first Monday of each month, except August. We meet in the High Road Methodist Church, 8-9.30pm.

If you would like to have a go, please send us an email (david.linnell@loughtonresidents.co.uk) or leave a message on 020 8508 2932.

CONTACTING

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LRA

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