

LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE Newsletter Members' Edition February 2019

Loughton Residents Association is independent and focuses on looking after Loughton. We have Cllrs on the County & District Councils, & hold 20 out of 22 of the seats on Loughton Town Council.

Annual talk & AGM *Loughton 100 years ago*

Please come along to see Chris Pond's pictures of Loughton as it used to be and ask your questions. Starts 8pm on Monday April 8th. Talk followed by refreshments and our brief AGM. All are welcome. Loughton Cricket Clubhouse (entrance in The Uplands, off Church Hill).



Broadway area residents' parking

As we sent this edition off to the printers, we hadn't heard when NEPP will produce a report on their public consultation (they failed to involve LRA Cllrs in its preparation of the consultation, and so it was a shambles). The report will go to the District Council for a decision. LRA Cllrs will be urging the Cabinet member to limit immediate parking controls to those roads where residents are already suffering from commuter parking – other roads should only be included later on if appropriate, based on the experience of those roads once the degree of commuter displacement becomes apparent. When we know more we will issue a special email news bulletin and we'll update our website.

Please subscribe now

Your copy of *Loughton Life* should come with a letter either confirming that you've already paid for 2019 or asking you to renew your membership (only £5 a year) – if so, *you can help us greatly by doing so now.*

LRA is run by volunteers and we keep our costs to the minimum. We depend upon volunteers and membership to produce these newsletters and run our campaigns.



Photo courtesy of marksoanes.com

Draft Local Plan

A Planning Inspector has been appointed to examine the District Council's draft Local Plan. Her role is to determine whether the Plan is legally compliant and sound as it stands (not to improve it, or make it "more sound"). Based on the Council's draft and all the objections, she has set out a series of topics and a set of searching questions on each one.

The Inspector will hold sessions on various aspects of the Plan. We hope to be selected to attend several of the sessions, and expect to be accompanied by representatives of Loughton Town Council, SaveJesselGreen and the City of London (defending Epping Forest).

LRA have appointed a planning expert to advise us. She is helping us prepare our written submissions to the Inspector, and with deciding how we should handle the sessions in front of the Inspector.

The final version of the Plan will significantly affect how Loughton changes in the next 15 years. In addition to establishing the target for the number of new dwellings in the District, the Plan covers employment sites and infrastructure (such as schools, surgeries and roads) and the Green Belt and other open spaces.

As well as persuading the Inspector that the Council are wrong to suggest building housing on Jessel Green, and indeed that they are proposing far too many new homes in Loughton, there are several other issues which we think need to be resolved before the Plan is approved.

We need help to produce our email news bulletins

We're forming a small group, working mainly on email, and need two people:

- some-one to look for news on Twitter and Facebook
- some-one to edit these and other items into short news paragraphs.

If you can help us continue our email news bulletins, please email david.linnell@loughtonresidents.co.uk or 020 8508 2932.

Our thanks to all the residents who support LRA

Our Farmers' Markets



Meet LRA's volunteers at our Farmers' Market on the second Sunday of each month, 9am–3pm, on Centric Parade, High Road, and browse our second-hand books.

Police & crime

District Council officers

The Council is employing a Sergeant and two PCs for 3 years, at a cost of £555,000. They work alongside the Council's Community Safety team and other front-line Council workers.

Crime in Loughton

DI Lewis Basford has responded to concerns about a burglary in the Deepdene Road area by successfully applying for funds to mount specific burglary and robbery patrols in this area (both overt and covert).

20 bus route

A new operator, CT Plus, will take over this route on 23rd March, and will carry on the present level of service on the current route to and from Debden. They will be using a fleet of new hybrid electric buses and have a 7-year contract with Transport for London.



Station/Sainsbury's car-park

Last year we saw several near-accidents caused by drivers thoughtlessly stopping on the joint approach road to pick up or let out passengers, particularly children and particularly in the dark or wet. We met NCP on-site and agreed that yellow cross-hatching – to suggest No Parking – could help, and this is now in place – **so please don't stop on it** (use the 20-minute drop-off area to the left, or a safe space in Sainsbury's car-park to the right).



We've also asked for better signage for the 20-minute drop-off area, as the main sign is too far round into the area itself.

LRA Christmas Quiz 2018

Well done and thank you to everyone who entered. You'll find the answers, and the name of the lucky winner who'll receive a book token or a bottle of fizz, on our website www.LoughtonResidents.co.uk

Rubbish on verges

Chigwell Lane

A resident informed us that materials left over from the roadworks were still on the verge, and LRA Cllr Michael Owen is following this up with the District Council.

Hillyfields

There's a recurring problem with rubbish being dumped on the verges, possibly by tenants who haven't checked the collection days or who fail to contact the Council to arrange collections when they move out. LRA Cllrs report problems when they see them.

Please help by reporting them too (in Hillyfields or elsewhere) to erefuse@eppingforestdc.gov.uk



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LRA Cllrs are Independent and non-political

Planning & licensing

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

13-15A Alderton Hill

We're waiting for a new application for 89 elderly-persons' flats (EPF/2115/18) will go to District Council Plans South committee for consideration. The plan's proposed size, height and parking are similar to those in the plans refused last April (EPF/2499/17 - in February there'll be a formal appeal hearing on this appeal).

30 The Crescent

The District Council has approved an application to add a floor to this bungalow. The District council say in the new draft Local Plan that the loss of bungalows and specialist accommodation will be resisted, but the Plan provides no mechanism to carry this out.

76 Algers Road

LPG and Loughton Town Council have objected to a proposal to replace the existing house with a block of flats. Although the design is better than most, the proposal is still too bulky and overbearing to neighbouring properties; it would be out-of-character and would set an unfortunate precedent for further proposals nearby.

165 High Road

LPG are objecting to an application for one-storey roof extension to provide two flats on top of the 5-storey building already approved here. Although slightly set back from the front edge of the building, the flats would be visible for the High Road, and would be out-of-character with the human scale of the High Road. Approval would also set a very unfortunate precedent for other proposals.

69 Church Hill

The District Council Plans South committee has turned down an application to demolish the existing bungalow and replace it with a block of 10 flats. LPG had objected to the proposal as out-of-character with its surroundings and as having wholly inadequate parking provision.



Annual Town Meeting

Wednesday March 13th

Find out what your Town Council has achieved and its plans for the future, and raise your concerns during the public question time.

Local organisations' displays.

Voluntary sector speakers.

Light refreshments after the meeting provide the ideal opportunity to speak to your local councillor.

Murray Hall, Borders Lane from 8pm

All-night street lighting

The District Council has obtained the County Council's agreement to having street-lighting on all night, if a local town and parish council is prepared to pay for it.

Loughton Town Council will be considering the proposal, which for Loughton would cost about £35,000 a year, an increase in your Council Tax of around £2.50 to £3 per household. In Loughton the lights on main roads stay on all night; on other roads they're off between 1am and 5am.

District Council office move

The Conservative-controlled Council plans to move most of its Epping staff to new offices in North Weald, letting some space in Epping to other organisations, and selling off land at the rear of the Epping site for housing.

LRA welcomes the Council's attempts to improve the way in which it deals with residents. Our experience, however, of past Council relocations mean we are concerned about these proposals.

Thirty years ago, LRA opposed the Council's office move from Loughton to Epping, and the eventual conversion of the Town Hall on Old Station Road into a supermarket, so that homes could be built on the site. The Council's lack of foresight enabled a developer to sell the site on, at a vast profit, so that Sainsbury's could build their supermarket, and the 'much needed' homes on the site never materialised.

Readers with long memories will remember that the original cost of £4.5m had ballooned to £14m by the time the building was completed. 30 years later, our item on the Landmark building (page 4) is not reassuring about the current administration's level of competence in building matters!

Thirty years ago, it was suggested all sorts of savings would result from having the staff under a single roof. Now the current administration is proposing the exact opposite

We also think that it makes no sense for staff to move to a car-dependent rural location several miles away from the District's main towns, to somewhere not on a railway line and served by very unreliable bus routes.



Help produce our printed newsletters

We're looking for some-one to join the team who produce our *Loughton Life* newsletters, to oversee the process by making sure that the team makes things happen on time, from producing the first draft through to copies dropping through letter-boxes.

To find out more, please email david.linnell@loughtonresidents.co.uk or phone 020 8508 2932.

Get our news as it arrives on Twitter (@LoughtonRA)
& at www.facebook.com/LoughtonResidents

Red faces in Epping

The Conservative District administration has admitted serious errors in designing the "Landmark" building at the end of The Broadway which led to extra payments out of residents' council taxes of £84,000 in construction fees and £56,000 in specialist legal costs.



The Council gave a 153-year lease to Higgins Homes Plc to provide 64 homes and retail units at the old Sir Winston Churchill Public House. The Council kept the freehold of the site and gets the income from the commercial units which, many months after the flats above have been let, are still not usable by tenants.

LRA Cllr Chris Pond commented: "This development has scarred the Broadway and the Loughton skyline permanently. The Conservative administration failed to consider the basic needs of shops, pub and restaurants. It was a rash and unconsidered decision to build it, and they've now have to raid the public purse to provide ventilation equipment so the commercial units can coexist with people who've paid through the nose to buy the flats above."

Epping Forest College to sell off land

The Estates Gazette reports that the College have instructed Knight Frank to sell off two sites in Borders Lane, the site of the former College buildings (to the west of the current College building) and Lucton's field (opposite the College). Knight Frank expects offers in excess of £20m. The District Council included the sites for housing in their draft Local Plan (around 630 homes).



In 2016, the District Council's Conservative councillors voted to remove the covenants on College land which restricted uses to for education or healthcare, despite strong opposition from LRA Cllrs.

When last year the College was taken over by New City College Group, LRA feared for the future of the College's Loughton facilities, and was concerned that the takeover would lead to assets being sold off.

Library consultation

Essex County Council has announced a review of library services, including various library closures, including Debden Library, and cutting back the hours at Loughton Library.



The consultation is highly flawed because it only looks at the number of book borrowings and omits all the other uses that communities make of their libraries.

At a recent Full Council meeting, to bring home the potential effects of the proposals, LRA Cllr Chris Pond and others moved a vote of No Confidence in the Conservative administration.

Chris did not expect the motion to succeed, but it did enable him to make the point that the provision of a comprehensive and efficient library service is a statutory responsibility of local government under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act - Chris said that this responsibility could not be fulfilled under the Council's plans.

He emphasised that the Act says quite clearly that the service must be comprehensive. For all the time that he has been an Essex County Council Councillor, there have been 74 libraries and the service has been comprehensive. But by lopping off a third of the libraries, and leaving sizeable towns without a library (for example Chigwell and Buckhurst Hill), the Council would simply be putting itself on the wrong side of the law; the terms of the Act would not be met.

In addition, he commented that the consultation process is a mockery because the decisions appear to have already been taken; it says so in the consultation document.

We expect Debden Library will close because our previous attempts to get it moved to somewhere more convenient (for example, a shop in The Broadway) were rejected by the District Council.

Nevertheless, please give your views to the County Council at <https://libraries.essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation>

Editing skills needed

David Linnell would like help with compiling and editing LRA's fortnightly email bulletins to members.

If you're interested in helping, please ring 020 8508 2932 (leave a message if out) or email david.linnell@LoughtonResidents.co.uk

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& at www.facebook.com/LoughtonResidents