

# LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE Newsletter

## Townwide Autumn Edition

For all residents in IG10: Autumn 2021

*Loughton Residents Association is independent  
and focuses on looking after Loughton.*

*We have Cllrs on the County & District Councils, and  
hold 21 out of the 22 Loughton Town Council seats.*

## Lucton's Field and Middle Site, Borders Lane



We are sorry to see that building work has begun on these sites, which have now been enclosed by hoardings. LRA Plans Group (LRAPG) has opposed these developments, root and branch. Planning permission was granted by an unelected government inspector after the District Council hadn't the courage to do the right thing by refusing the plans.

On Lucton's Field, a mobile phone mast has been erected as a temporary measure to replace the mast on the college across the road. There's now a planning application to the District Council to put masts on top of the new flats; the Town Council and LRAPG have objected to the application because the extra height would increase the visual impact of the proposed building, which is already too high, and anyway we don't think you're allowed to apply to alter a building that hasn't been built yet!



### Keep up with the Loughton news

Due to the Covid-19 situation, we've produced fewer *Loughton Life* editions than usual.

Keep up with the Loughton news through our monthly *Loughton News* emails.

See [www.loughtonresidents.org.uk](http://www.loughtonresidents.org.uk) for past issues.

**For more information, please email  
[contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk](mailto:contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk)**

*We don't share our membership information.*



## Loughton Library Demolition

The County Council plans to demolish the Traps Hill library and replace it with a four-storey block, with lots of flats on the upper floors, over a smaller library. This won't be decided by the District Council, but by a Conservative-dominated development committee in Chelmsford, although the Town and District Councils are able to comment on the proposals.

LRAPG comment: "the County Council says that one reason for the redevelopment is the poor state of the current building; this appears to be the result of the Council's past neglect. They say that £1.2m would be needed to right it; however these plans would produce a smaller and poorer library in a building wholly out of character in its surroundings, and residents' vehicles would contribute to air pollution in the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation, which would be in breach of the relevant legislation."

## Proposed changes to Local Plan



The proposed changes, called Main Modifications, are now available on the District Council's website. They are complex changes to a complex document! LRA has been through them very carefully, and has made its views known to the Council as part of the formal consultation. The headline news is that, thanks to the hard work put in by LRA and many others, the number of new homes to be foisted on Loughton by the District Council has been reduced drastically, from 1,021 to 455. This reflects the dropping of Jessel Green and the two station car parks from the list of sites for development.

## Christmas Window competition

Loughton Town Council invites all Loughton businesses to participate in their Christmas Window Competition. For information on the competition contact Debra Paris on 020 8508 4200 or [contact@loughton-tc.gov.uk](mailto:contact@loughton-tc.gov.uk)

**Our thanks to all the residents who support LRA**

## LRA Farmers' Markets

We're very disappointed that we've been unable to re-start our Farmers Markets in the High Road this year. We work with a firm of market organisers who handle all the dealings with traders and need a licence from the District Council to hold the markets. (Council licences aren't needed for the market in North Weald, which is held on private land owned by the Council, or for the markets in Waltham Abbey and in Epping, which are "Charter" markets. Ongar market already has a Council licence.)



Our previous organiser closed down because of illness just before lockdown started last year. This spring we found a new organiser and started discussions with the Council. Unfortunately, they decided that their previous procedures for licensing markets are inadequate. They have decided to develop a new markets policy and licensing procedure, which will take 6 to 12 months. Although they tried to provide a short-term "fix" for the situation, this is commercially unattractive, particularly as the delays involved mean we would not have been able to start the markets until around now. We hope that early next year the Council will be well-advanced with their new policy and we can get on with making arrangements for the markets to start in the spring.

## Tuesday shopping in Chelmsford

There's a free bus service for OAPs following an intervention by Cllr Chris Pond.

Why not take the new number 35 bus from any number 66 or 20 bus stop in Rectory Lane, at 8.45am on Tuesdays only? It takes just under an hour from Debden to Chelmsford, and it returns at 1.21pm from the Cathedral bus stop in Duke Street.

## Local surgeries

There's been growing dissatisfaction among residents around the problem of getting appointments with doctors and nurses during the pandemic. Practice staff have been dealing with a significant increase in calls at a time when, inevitably, some staff have been off sick or have had to stay at home because of covid contact. Staff and their families are particularly at risk because by definition they need to deal with people who are ill, and surgery visits have therefore been avoided where possible but are gradually becoming more available.

We're aware of phone and video appointments which worked well, and were easier for the patients too, as they could avoid being in the surgery waiting room with other ill patients and didn't have to travel to and from the surgery. Phone or online appointments, however, can be difficult or impossible for some patients, and there are situations where a face-to-face appointment is preferable for the patient.

## Town's official Christmas card competition

Loughton Town Council invites all local budding artists and photographers to showcase their talents by entering the competition to design the Council's official Christmas card. Create an original Christmas themed design of A5 size, portrait or landscape, colour or black and white. The format can be a photograph, drawing, picture or illuminated script, but remember it needs to be reproduced as a printed card. The closing date is Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

Competition categories, rules and the entry form can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/lccardform2021>, and full details of last year's winners can be seen at <https://tinyurl.com/tlcchristmascard2020>

## CONTACTING LRA

<b>COUNCILLORS</b>	<b>Enquiries: contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk</b>	<b>8508 2361</b>
<b>D=District, T=Town</b>	<b>Membership: Josephine Gilbert, 112 Jessel Drive, IG10 2EQ</b>	<b>07922 048758</b>
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<b>BROADWAY WARD</b> Chris Pond (D) Staples Road 8508 2361 Kevin Rainbow (T) Audley Gardens 07921 662715 Les House (T) Avondale Drive 8508 3369 Michael Owen (D) Baldwins Hill 07467 430145 Philip Beales (T) Harwater Drive 8418 0459	<b>FOREST WARD</b> Jayna Jogia (D) The Drive 07983 713 389 Jon Riley (T) Albion Park 8508 6604 Roger Baldwin (D) Burney Drive 8281 5488 Stella Murphy (T) High View Close 8508 2794 Trevor Downing (T) Smarts Lane 8508 8877	<b>COUNTY: Loughton (Central)</b> Chris Pond Staples Road 8508 2361
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Dial 020 before numbers starting with 3 or 8

**LRA councillors are Independent and non-political**

## Planning & licensing

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

Read more about Planning and Licensing, the role of the LRAPG, how to get more information using the application and reference numbers provided, and how you can comment at <https://tinyurl.com/LRAPPlanning>

Where there are residents in flats above licensed premises, for example on the High Road, The Broadway or nearby, the LRAPG objects to late-night licensing applications.

### 1 Langston Road

LRAPG regrets to see that officers have railroaded through an application to turn one of the biggest employment sites in Loughton into 57 flats, without fully considering their objections. The Higgins office building next to Langston Road will be lost to flats with inadequate parking, and some of the rooms could be without windows if an extant planning consent for a new building adjacent to the site is implemented. Traffic around Langston Road has got significantly worse since the retail park opened. Whilst this type of development is permitted development, subject to some limited criteria such as parking, we believe there was good reason to refuse permission. Officers were more interested in imposing conditions about wheel washing, broadband internet connections and double glazing which are not allowed to be considered for this type of application. A revised application has been submitted and we hope officers fully justify their decision this time.

Unfortunately, the Council cannot take the impact of the Forest on these types of applications into account. LRAPG considers the District Council should issue an Article 4 Direction which will remove the rights to convert offices into flats without the need for planning permission and consideration over the loss of employment space and impact on the EFSAC.

*Application EPF/2090/21. The formal consultation period has ended.*

### The Hive, 38b Chigwell Lane

This is an application to extend the closing time to midnight. LRAPG has objected to this application. The Hive obtained permission for their café in this location to serve the industrial estate during working hours. At the time they stated that they would not wish to compete with the food outlets on The Broadway. They have gradually pushed their opening hours allowed by their planning permission later although a previous application to open until 10pm was refused on the grounds that the noise and activity in the vicinity of the site would cause excessive harm to the living conditions of nearby residents, particularly during the summer months when bedroom windows are normally open. LRAPG considers the reasons for refusing the 10pm application to be even more relevant for opening until midnight, and that the application should be turned down. Also, there are unauthorised structures outside the café which have grown in size over the last few months. We have asked the Council to take enforcement action to ensure they are removed.

*Application EPF/1645/21. The formal consultation period has ended.*

## Willingale Road pedestrian crossing

We were very pleased to see that the new zebra crossing outside Thomas Willingale School has finally been completed.

This was funded through the Local Highways Panel with money supplied by the County Council. LRA County Cllr Chris Pond, who is the District Cllr for Broadway ward, is on the Panel and firmly supported the proposal for the crossing.



## Swimming at the Loughton Leisure Centre pool

LRA Cllr Rose Brookes was contacted by regular lunchtime swimmers who had lost most of their lane swimming at the pool during the summer holidays. Many of these residents have been travelling to Waltham Abbey to enjoy a lunchtime swim because the lane swimming there had not been reduced over the holidays. Places Leisure had run many family swims and inflatable sessions at the Loughton pool; however while the family swimming was undersubscribed, it was difficult to book a place for any lane swimming. Loughton has by far the busiest pool in the District.

Rose talked to the contract manager and, as a result, more lunchtime swims were added when the schools went back, and the new timetable began on 6<sup>th</sup> September. Rose should also be consulted on next summer's timetable.

Most swims still need to be booked up to seven days in advance via the website or app.

## Antisocial behaviour (ASB)

The District Council responds to complaints of ASB, although its powers are limited. Recent new activity includes:

- aggravated burglary in Highwood Lane; enquiries continuing
- possible cuckooing in Hillyfields
- establishing further links with Epping Forest College security
- Partnership Work/Intelligence passed to "Operation Raptor" (Essex Police)
- passing intelligence to Essex police on a case in Barncroft Green
- joint monthly meetings with "Operation Raptor", which shares information about properties that are involved in drug dealing.

## Tackling drug gangs

Essex Police's Operation Raptor teams, who tackle drugs gangs, have been busy in the first six months of 2021. They have:

- carried out 104 warrants
- made 272 arrests
- seized £207,517 in cash
- recovered 27 weapons.

Their work has also seen the ring leaders of one organised crime group jailed for a total of 40 years.

**Get our news as it arrives on Twitter (@LoughtonRA)  
and at [www.facebook.com/LoughtonResidents](http://www.facebook.com/LoughtonResidents)**

## What do your Councillors do?

Your local Cllrs spend a lot of their time in council meetings on your behalf. They also deal with residents' personal enquiries. These may simply be requests for information, or to try to get something put right; your Cllr can follow these up with the relevant Council Officers. When we can, we report these cases in our email bulletins (without revealing the name of the resident concerned, or any details that could identify them). We can't normally report on the most difficult and time-consuming cases, because these usually involve a resident's personal problems, often in relation to their council housing, or need for council housing. Fortunately, these are rare, but they do occur and can be very distressing for the resident and sometimes for the Cllr involved. But there can also be great satisfaction for a Cllr in resolving a difficult enquiry.

Find out more about becoming an LRA Cllr by emailing [contact@LoughtonResidents.co.uk](mailto:contact@LoughtonResidents.co.uk).

### Housing help

LRA Cllr Michael Owen was recently contacted by a Debden resident who needed to fix various problems around his home. These included access through the front door for his wheelchair, problems with the rear door, the condition of flooring in the communal area and lack of cleaning of the block. Michael raised these issues with the District Council, who then visited the resident. As a result, various actions have been agreed to, which include a new front door and making adjustments for a wheelchair, new communal flooring, and clarification of who is responsible for cleaning and rubbish arrangements.

### Weed spraying

LRA Cllr David Wixley had noticed an excessive amount of weeds growing in our streets this summer, with residents also mentioning it to him. He therefore raised the question with the District Council at a full Council meeting. The portfolio holder for Environmental & Technical Services, Cllr Nigel Avey, advised that weed spraying is a County Council Highways function which is contracted to the District Council and carried out by Biffa. There are two spray treatments a year across built up areas. Vigorous growth of weeds this summer is being blamed on current weather conditions but spraying is underway. District Council Officers are due to meet with Biffa to discuss progress and matters relating to the work. Apparently other Cllrs have also raised this issue.

### Debden station

The new lifts installed at Debden station have become operational. This means, along with Buckhurst Hill, the station is now step-free and can be accessed by wheelchair passengers. Ramps are also available to help travellers cross the couple of inches difference between the platform height and the floor of the tube carriage.

### High Road fingerposts

The fingerposts are one of the High Road's attractive features. The District Council's High Road Rangers have agreed to renovate them, and Town Council Officers will follow this up to ensure that the work is carried out.

## Next Distribution Depot in Waltham Abbey - planning application refused!

We're pleased that LRA and other District Cllrs combined to turn down, 25 to 10, the planning application for the Next distribution depot in Waltham Abbey, with all its associated HGV movements near the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (EFSAC), when the Officers and Conservative administration tried to push it through. Next will probably appeal, and the LRA Plans Group will defend the turn-down if they do. In the meantime, in the forthcoming debate on the Council's "Main Modifications" to their draft Local Plan, we will be raising the question of whether any developments near the EFSAC should be allowed, and if so which ones, for a full and proper debate.

### Hillyfields litter bins

Currently there are no litter/dog waste bins for the large green expanse of 'Hillyfields'; two dog waste bins disappeared some time ago. Similarly, a litter bin has been removed from the junction of The Meadway and Valley Hill. The Town Council took this up with the District Council, and this revealed a state of some confusion about the responsibility for the repair and replacement of these and other litter bins, which the District Council is working to sort out. Hopefully this will lead to replacement bins being installed in due course.

### Murray Hall, Borders Lane, vaccination centre

Murray Hall is no longer being used as a vaccination centre. The NHS has now handed the Hall back to the Town Council. The Council is checking the repairs needed for the minor damage caused by the NHS's use of the Hall; the NHS will pay the cost of these repairs.

Regular hirers will be able to return to the Hall this month, and private hire will be available from January 2022.

### Vaccine information for Essex

The COVID-19 vaccination programme across Essex is well underway, with thousands of people vaccinated already. This is part of the biggest immunisation programme in NHS history.

If you want to book an appointment, go to <https://www.essexcovidvaccine.nhs.uk/coronavirus-vaccine/getting-your-vaccine/> or call 119.

If you want help booking an appointment, you can phone 0344 2573 961 (open 10am to 4pm, local rate).

Walk in clinics are also being operated and details are available for the West Essex area at <https://www.myhealthsex.co.uk/walk-in-centres> and the wider area at <https://tinyurl.com/widerareacovidclinics> (these are updated frequently; check these websites before travelling any long distances).

Please remember that even if you've had both jabs and feel fine, you could still catch Covid-19 and pass it on to others. Take a self-test before and after meeting friends and family.