

LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE Newsletter

Members' Edition February 2022

*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.*

Developments in Epping Forest District

Many LRA members feel that Loughton has all the housing it can cope with. There are already serious concerns about the pressure on local services, such as doctors' surgeries, the amount of traffic causing congestion on our roads and, crucially, air pollution in the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (EFSAC).

Local residents, the LRA and others had to fight long and hard to prevent the District Council forcing through development on Jessel Green, a key feature of the design of the Debden Estate. In addition, the District Council has taken far longer than necessary to get its draft Local Plan approved; we are still awaiting the Planning Inspector's decision.

The latest development is that Epping Forest is among 51 local authorities that delivered less than 75% of their housing requirements for the period 2018-2021. Only two councils had a worse record than Epping Forest's 35%. This means we are about to become subject to the Government's toughest penalty, the application of the National Planning Policy Framework's (NPPF) presumption in favour of sustainable development.

We will need to wait to see what the practical effect of this failure is. The NPPF says that the District Council will have to grant permission for new housing developments unless:

- "i. the application of policies [in the NPPF] that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies [in the NPPF] taken as a whole."*

In theory, this should mean no new developments near to the EFSAC, because the NPPF provides clear reasons to refuse such developments. This would protect much of Loughton. We believe that such developments are illegal anyway, under other environmental legislation. We continue, however, to be concerned because the District Council has failed to acknowledge this, and we will carry on challenging their position. As always, the LRA Plans Group will monitor planning applications carefully.



Can we have a normal and regular water supply?

As residents will be all too aware, just before Christmas there was either no water or low pressure in large parts of Loughton for three days.

We understand water normally comes into Loughton through four trunk mains. The one at Valley Hill/Oakwood Hill was out of action from an earlier incident (see the other Thames Water articles on the back page). Then another main alongside the High Road leading from Buckhurst Hill burst, leaving the town dependent on the two trunk mains that come in along Earls Path; that's why the water pressure was low or non-existent for many residents. There were exposed cables near the burst pipe which required assistance from UK Power Networks on site, thus delaying the pipe repair. Thames Water couldn't just double the pressure in the remaining mains because these would then be in danger of bursting.

Thames Water's inconsistent and incomplete messages during these incidents were unhelpful, to say the least.

Thames Water has said that compensation payments will be made automatically and they will be writing to you if you're one of the households that has been affected. We know, however, that some residents are sceptical about the process of getting automatic compensation from Thames Water. You can claim online at <https://tinyurl.com/LRAWater> (choose 'Water supply not duly restored after interruption'). The problem is that Thames Water are a foreign-owned private company, unresponsive in general. They have underinvested for decades in their decayed infrastructure and many of our pipes are made of Victorian iron. Like residents, LRA are completely fed up with the number of repeated leaks across the town, and the poor service Loughton has been receiving.

The LRA-led Town Council has recently had two sessions with Thames Water about. As a result, Thames Water has promised a better service; the Town Council will be monitoring their performance.

Please renew now

Your copy of *Loughton Life* should come with a letter either confirming that you've already paid for 2022 or asking you to renew your membership (only £5 a year). 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.

Our thanks to all the residents who support LRA

LRA Farmers' Markets



The District Council ran a public consultation on how the Council should deal with proposals for private, commercial and/or charity markets, together with car boot sales or similar across the District.

A lot of this dealt with technical matters, and LRA reviewed proposals and commented appropriately.

Once the Council has adopted a new markets policy, we hope to be able to restart the High Road markets this year; as before they will be run by a commercial operator with strong LRA input.

Fingerposts re-painted

At the LRA-led Town Council's request, the District Council Rangers have re-painted the town's fingerposts; these are two of Loughton's traditional aspects. This is a good example of the sort of relatively small but useful jobs the Rangers are there to carry out.



Borders Lane parking

Parking in Alderton ward can sometimes be problematic, especially around Borders Lane and Colson Road. Residents of Borders Lane brought to LRA Cllr Chidi Nweke's attention the District Council's plan to



prevent residents parking on its land. This is the grassed area with trees on the south side of the Borders Lane from numbers 24 to 60.

This would have caused a lot of problems for disabled residents who need to park close to their properties. Although Chidi understood the reasons behind the proposed parking enforcement, he contacted the Council who agreed to stop all enforcement action until a solution was found. A meeting was also held with residents on site to discuss a way forward. The ideas generated were then put forward to the Council to help to resolve the situation for now.

Parking on roads through the Forest

In 2020, double red lines were installed by the North Essex Parking Partnership. These are now under review. The City of London (CoL) would prefer to protect the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation, and associated verge restoration work, from damage by verge parking through the installation of bollards or similar infrastructure and/or signage along the most vulnerable areas of High Beach. This would help reduce displacement parking but might mean parking could obstruct the use of the public highway. As from November 21st 2021, the double red lines have become unenforceable, as the order permitting them has expired

The CoL is considering a longer-term approach to visitor facilities in the Forest, with the aim of providing a more even distribution across the Forest.

CONTACTING LRA

COUNCILLORS D=District, T=Town	Enquiries: contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk 8508 2361	
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ST JOHN'S WARD Bob Jennings (D) York Hill 8508 1861 Caroline Pond (D&T) Staples Road 8508 2361 Chris Pond (T) Staples Road 8508 2361 Michael Owen (T) Baldwins Hill 07467 430145	RODING WARD David Wixley (T) Goldings Road 8418 9284 Neil MacKinnon (T) Barncroft Close 07872 324 028 Rose Brookes (D&T) Lower Park Road 8502 5981	COMMITTEE Anne Harriman 8502 1779 Ian Allgood 8502 2393 John Walker 07779338868 Judith Walker 07855 265835 Juliet Pollard 8502 0552 Lance Leonard 8502 0771 Mark Dalton 07719 736901 Mark Hickey 07774 682299 Michael Benbow 8508 4457 Steve Eaton 8923 0065 Tessa Cochrane 3643 7492
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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.

Rear of 152 Church Hill

The LRA has objected to the insertion of a house to the rear of the Newsbox Newsagents. The extra dwelling will put more pressure on the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation. It will also overlook an existing flat at the rear of the newsagents. The loss of the storage and servicing for the shop will affect its viability and will force all servicing onto Church Hill and/or off street on Millsmead Way, which will be dangerous for nearby pedestrians. There is already a degree of unauthorised servicing at the front of the shop with vans parking on the pavement. Millsmead Way is very busy, with competition for parking spaces generated from patrons using the New Hong Kong Chinese Restaurant in the evening, and the newsagents during the day. The trees that give relief to the blandness of the buildings on this stretch (which includes Lidl's) would also be lost.

Overall, LRA Plans Group considers the proposed building to be an unwelcome overdevelopment of the plot and permission should be refused.

Reference EPF/2730/21. The formal consultation period has ended, but you can still comment to the Council.

Loughton Cricket Club

There is a proposal to replace the existing three-lane cricket nets on the existing layout; LRAPG supports this application.

Loughton Cricket Club is an important major community facility alongside the High Road. LRAPG wishes to see the club continue to thrive and supports the improvements to the cricket nets and suggests, of the two colour alternatives put forward, the poles supporting the nets are painted green rather than black.

Reference EPF/2938/21. The formal consultation period has ended, but you can still comment to the Council.

District Council Planning Enforcement

When a resident fails to observe the conditions of a planning approval, the Council can issue an Enforcement Notice. If this is not complied with, the Council can prosecute. In one recent case, a transgressor was convicted and fined £30,800 (and £6,477 awarded in costs) for failure to remove a hard standing at a Loughton property. The transgressor had previously been fined £22,000 (reduced on appeal). The offending development has now been removed.

Oakwood Hill District Council Carpark

Two rapid electric vehicle charging stations are proposed for the car park, with three existing parking spaces becoming two Electric Vehicle (EV) charging bays, along with associated equipment.

LRAPG welcomes the installation of EV charging points to encourage the adoption of electric cars and better air quality and does not object to this particular application given the location in an industrial estate, however LRAPG hopes the District Council ensures better designed, smaller and less intrusive EV points are being considered for more sensitive locations than this one. There are considerably better designs on the market than this; EV charge points do not need to be the same size as a petrol filling pump. LRAPG also hopes the Council has checked this equipment is futureproofed so it can take induction charging pads and be used by disabled drivers. It should also be sustainable with all the components recyclable to avoid redundant equipment going into landfill sites.

Reference EPF/2791/21. The formal consultation period has ended, but you can still comment to the Council.

Debden tree planting consultation

The District Council has secured £65,000 funding for tree planting on Jessel Green and Rochford Green. The funding for the project is through the Forestry Commission's Local Authority Treescaping Fund. The planting aims to bring benefits such as improved local environment, increased biodiversity, carbon storage, reduced flood risk and improved air quality for the community. Going forward, volunteers will be needed to help with the planting and care of some of the trees.

LRA Cllr Chris Pond led a group of LRA Cllrs who questioned the Council's original proposal, to ensure that the open nature of Jessel Green is maintained, and discussions continue.

Chris commented that "while planting more trees is obviously beneficial in many ways, Jessel Green has been open downland since Tudor times; it hasn't been wooded since Saxon times. Historically it was the area's 'horkey down' where the harvest home was celebrated. 2,300 trees on ten acres is just too dense and would change the character of the Green."

Epping Forest Community Transport (EFCT) call for volunteers

EFCT is a long established local registered Charity based in the Epping Forest District. They are experiencing an ever-growing demand for their services and would like to recruit volunteers to help in many areas of the organisation.

EFCT supplies transport across the District to the elderly, the disabled or those who are rurally isolated and unable to access public transport. Volunteers would receive expenses of 45p per mile and would not need to make any alterations to their insurance.

Further information on how to volunteer can be found at <http://www.efcommunitytransport.co.uk/volunteers-needed>

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

What to do about water supply problems

Please report any issues to Thames Water online or call 0800 316 9800. If the situation becomes urgent, do tell them and request bottled water. They are under an obligation to provide water if supply is not back to normal within 12 hours, and should arrange for an alternative supply.

If you are out walking, keep an eye out for any new mains water leaks and report them too, as the leak may be the start of yet another problem.

If you, or someone you know, needs a little extra support, perhaps because of their health, disability, age, or if they're going through a difficult time in their life, Thames Water has a free priority services register. This provides additional support when the water is off and when leaving the house is not possible, including bottled water deliveries where possible, and prioritises those who are dependent on water for medical needs. You can find more details about this service at <https://tinyurl.com/TWPriority>

Higgins Office and Hotel Development

LRA Plans Group (LRAPG) has received several comments over the proposal to build new offices and a 100-bedroom



Image Higgins Proposals

Travelodge hotel on Langston Road.

Some residents question the need for a hotel but most concerns are in connection with the horrendous traffic problems at this junction which have got significantly worse since the retail park opened. One of the solutions put forward by our members is to install a roundabout. This was considered and approved back in 1996 but was never implemented. The loss of the mini roundabout on the junction of The Broadway and Chigwell Lane has made traffic in that area worse. A new roundabout with part-time traffic lights during peak times would help the current situation at Langston Road but the air pollution from the additional cars from the development would damage the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation.

LRAPG will be examining the proposals carefully.

Further details on the proposal are on the Higgins consultation website at <https://higginshqconsultation.co.uk>

LRA Christmas Quiz 2021

There were a record number of entries for this year's quiz, and first out of the hat with their all-correct answers were Colin and Diana Turner. Congratulations! A prize will be on its way to them very soon.

Thank you to everyone who entered and who wrote to say how much they enjoyed the quiz, and a Happy New Year to you all.

Answers can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/LRAQuiz2021>

Valley Hill/Oakwood Hill burst water main

As a result of the burst water main on December 2nd, Valley Hill was closed pending the repair of the pipe by Thames Water. This caused significant problems to residents, with traffic diversions causing speeding or congested traffic on back roads, and the 167 bus service diverted away from the area.

The burst pipe was a complex repair. Loughton Brook runs in a concrete channel culvert under Valley Hill, and the pipe needing repair is under that. The culvert needs to be carefully protected during any work to stop it collapsing. Thames Water promised various dates for completion of the work.

The LRA-led Town Council continued to highlight the problems for residents to both Thames Water and Essex Highways and urged them to get the work done without further delay, and to communicate better with residents and Cllrs about what is going on.

Help wanted!

LRA is 100% run by volunteers in your town, and we need a little more help. Can you take on one of the activities below?

Keep us in order

Later this year our membership secretary will be moving away, and we'd like to give her replacement a good handover period.

The job involves maintaining our Excel membership list and dealing with new member subscriptions and changes.

Help Loughton Life newsletter get delivered

We are looking for someone to maintain the list of volunteer deliverers for our Loughton Life newsletter.

What are the Councils up to?

Can you help find out?

Many news items you read here and in LRA's Loughton News are around subjects that come up in Council meetings. We are looking for people to skim read Council documents from meetings, and highlight subjects that are interesting for us to report on. You never know what nuggets you'll find, and at the same time you can help Loughton and LRA be more informed.

To find out more

If you, or someone you know, would like to find out more about any of these activities, please contact David at david.linnell@LoughtonResidents.co.uk or 07958 984278 (office hours).

Vaccine information for Essex

Booster doses are available on the NHS for people who have had a 2nd dose of a vaccine at least three months ago.

For more information of getting a vaccine locally, visit <https://www.essexcovidvaccine.nhs.uk/coronavirus-vaccine/getting-your-vaccine> or call 119.