

LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE Newsletter

Townwide Spring Edition

For all residents in IG10: March 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.*

Water, water, everywhere

Just before Christmas, residents will be all too aware that 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. 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.

The problem is that Thames Water is unresponsive in general, and has underinvested for decades in its 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 had two sessions with Thames Water, and Thames Water has now promised a better service; the Town Council will be monitoring their performance.

Thames Water has said that compensation payments will be made automatically, and they should have written to you if you were affected. If you think you should receive compensation but haven't heard from Thames Water, you can make a claim within three months of the incident. You can claim online at <https://tinyurl.com/LRAWater> (choose 'Water supply not duly restored after interruption'). Be aware that compensation may not be paid if the supply failure to your property does not meet specific criteria of water pressure and the timings of outages.



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 on the back page?

Housing developments in Epping Forest District

Many residents 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.

Epping Forest is among 51 local authorities that delivered less than 75% of their housing requirements for the period 2018-2021. Only two councils consented to less housing 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.

In theory, however, the NPPF provides clear reasons to refuse inappropriate new housing developments so we will wait to see what the outcome is.

We believe that housing developments near the EFSAC 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.

Join us in LRA and keep up with what's happening between issues of Loughton Life

Join LRA now for £5 a year and get our regular Loughton News emails before they are published on our website.
See <https://tinyurl.com/LRANews> for Loughton News past issues.

Find details of how to join at <https://tinyurl.com/LRAMembership>

If you're not online, please call our membership secretary on 07922 048758 to join.

Your support will enable us to pay costs such as printing newsletters, maintaining the website and supporting LRA at elections.

Your views and support are the backbone of the organisation.

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 the 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.

Weed control

The County Council has a contract with the District Council to undertake weed control. The contract outlines what needs doing, how it is done, what chemical to use and the months it is carried out. Following discussions a few years ago when budgets were reduced, it was agreed to reduce the budget and the service to the following:

- The number of weed sprays reduced from 3 to 2
- The areas covered restricted to the urban areas of the District
- Cost reduced from £60k to £30k per financial year.

Any complaints on the service should be made to the District Council. If you are not happy with the response, you can speak to your LRA District Cllr who can take the issue up with the Council.

Note to members

In this Townwide edition of Loughton Life, we're repeating a few important articles from your recent members' edition.

Loughton station car park

It appears that some visitors to the drop-off area are getting fined for short stays. When the cameras and charging were first introduced, there were lots of similar complaints and it took months of complaints and LRA lobbying for NCP to admit there were problems with the cameras. The drop-off area is part of the car park and is covered by the same cameras, but drivers shouldn't be charged if they leave within 20 minutes of entering. Some drivers however, do a daily drop-off or pick-up; if the cameras miss a vehicle leaving one day but photograph the same vehicle leaving the next day, then NCP assume the car was there overnight.

If you get a Parking Charge Notice, you can appeal, if possible with evidence that the vehicle wasn't left there overnight if that's the issue. If appealing to NCP fails, then you can go to POPLA (Parking on Private Land Appeals), an independent appeals service.

Local Police activity

Officers from Loughton Community Policing Team, assisted by the Disruptor Team, Community Safety Team and Dog Section, have had some good results over the past few weeks on their operation to deny criminals the use of the roads in Loughton and surrounding areas.

The operation saw five people arrested for knifepoint robbery offences, one suspect who was wanted on warrant, six people investigated for drug possession, one person wanted by two other forces for theft offences, and one person arrested for dangerous driving, having no licence or insurance, and drugs supply. A cloned vehicle was also seized. In all, 18 stop-searches were completed by the teams.

LRA AGM

There will be no Annual General Meeting this spring but, if the Covid situation continues to improve, we hope to hold one in the autumn, when outstanding items of LRA business held up by the pandemic will be resolved.

CONTACTING LRA

COUNCILLORS D=District, T=Town	Enquiries: contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk	8508 2361
	Membership: Josephine Gilbert, 112 Jessel Drive, IG10 2EQ	07922 048758
ALDERTON WARD Chidi Nweke (D) Hillcroft 07403 489455 Chris Roberts (D) 07481 904831 Katie Valentine (T) Habgood Road 07477 012213 Mick Stubbings (T) Greenfields 07766 480522 Philip Abraham (T) Lancaster Drive 8502 2925	FAIRMEAD WARD Carol Davies (T) Colebrook Gardens 07817 230372 David Wixley (D) Goldings Road 8418 9284 Louise Mead (D) 07746 875952 Sebastian Fontenelle (T) Etheridge Road 07941 365850 Will Kauffman (T) The Greens Close 07799 148740	ST MARY'S WARD Barbara Cohen (T) Church Lane 8502 3242 Graham Wiskin (T) Traps Hill 8925 2003 Howard Kauffman (D) Church Lane 8508 1098 Judy Jennings (D&T) York Hill 8508 1861
BROADWAY WARD 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	FOREST WARD 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	COUNTY: Loughton (Central) Chris Pond Staples Road 8508 2361
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 Michael Benbow 8508 4457 Steve Eaton 8923 0065 Tessa Cochrane 3643 7492
SECRETARY Jill Angold-Stephens 8281 0674 TREASURER Miriam Murphy 01992 815525	LOUGHTON LIFE EDITOR Eva Blasco 8923 0065 MINUTES SECRETARY Susan Creevy	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.

32 Alderton Hill

The application proposes demolition of the existing house, outbuilding and garage, replaced by a two/single storey detached house with rooms in the roof.

LRAPG have objected to this application. The existing dwelling is of merit; this being one of the last remaining Arts and Crafts homes on Alderton Hill which has not been altered much over the years. Replacing it with a large mock Georgian replacement building harms the character and history of the area. The proposed site layout would also remove the attractive green frontage, which is a (diminishing) feature of Alderton Hill.

LRAPG feels very strongly that this building should be listed and have urged the Council to make representations to Historic England for its listing, and to carry out an audit of the last few buildings of merit in the area with a view to listing or the creation of conservation areas to protect the character of areas which are being eroded by piecemeal developments such as this.

Reference EPF/3230/21. The formal consultation period has ended, but you can still comment to the Council.

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.

Debden tree planting

The District Council has secured £65,000 funding, through the Forestry Commission's Local Authority Treescapes Fund, for tree planting on Jessel Green and Rochford Green.

Led by LRA Cllrs Chris Pond and David Wixley, a group of LRA Cllrs formally questioned the Council's original proposal, to ensure that the open nature of Jessel Green is maintained, and discussions continue.

Roding Valley

Recreation Ground trees

A recent survey of trees at all council sites identified many of the trees on the Recreation Ground as in need of extensive works or needing to be felled completely. The Town Council is getting quotes for the work involved.

Parking on roads through the Forest

The City of London has reported that since car park charging was introduced, Forest users now have space to park in car parks that used to have significant issues with commuter parking. Car parks, such as those in the High Beach area, are much less likely to be over-full, and car use has reduced through the Forest. The introduction of the temporary traffic order during the pandemic, with red lines around the Forest, significantly reduced the amount of dangerous and damaging verge parking, and we wait to find out whether or not this traffic order will be renewed. The gating of Pillow Mounds has almost eradicated the previously nightly anti-social behaviour in the area. However, public opinion remains firmly against the charges, the price of the season ticket (£150) is seen as too high, and six hours is seen as too short for a whole day visit.

In the dark

LRA Cllrs Chris Pond and Bob Jennings have raised with the County Highways the fact that over half of the streetlamps in the busiest part of the High Road are "dead". This is apparently because the design of the luminaires (the entire light fixture including the lamps) is obsolete (they were installed in 2003) and cannot easily be replaced by LEDs. Cllr Lee Scott, the County Highways Portfolio Holder, says they have bought up a lot of spares, which may help, but in the meantime replacing the luminaires is a priority.

Highway diversions

When Essex Highways provide a diversion route for a road closure, it has to be on roads of a similar or higher classification to the road that's been closed. So, if an "A" road is closed, the diversion has to be on "A" roads. Similarly for a closure on a "B" road, the diversion has to be on "A" or "B" roads, so that all sorts of road users can follow the route (including larger vehicles). Locals may well know a much shorter route!

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

Streetlight columns fixed

Whilst out on a walkthrough in Alderton Ward, LRA Cllr Chidi Nweke noticed a streetlight column where the metal covering protecting the cabling had fallen off, exposing the wires inside. This was a potential health and safety hazard for children walking past on the link road within the Oakwood Hill Estate. Chidi contacted the District Council Neighbourhoods Team who got it fixed.

Also, whilst out walking on Christmas Day, Cllr Chris Pond noticed a lamp column in York Hill with no lower door and reported that.



Ten years ago

We've been thinking about some of the changes in our Town in recent years. In February 2012, for example, we reported that the District Council was about to take a decision on the planning application to build the Langston Road Retail Park, and that discussions with Punch Taverns (the then owners of the long leasehold interest) on what to do with the Winston Churchill Public House had so far failed to reach any firm proposals. Both of these are now history.

We also reported that the District Council had started work on a new draft Local Plan, and we would be concerned with following their progress closely, as we knew from past experience how important it was to get the details of such background measures right; in this event, we and others have had to fight tooth and nail to correct the Council's mistakes, and we are still, ten years later, waiting for the final decision from the Planning Inspector on the Plan!

Loughton utilities; a wider view

We all know that water and electricity don't mix. Much of Loughton's electrical infrastructure dates from the early 1900s to 1940. UK Power Networks replaced their equipment at the corner of Habgood Road/The Drive last September; what they took out looked very antiquated and was marked CLESCO (County of London Electric Supply Co), which ceased to exist in 1948.

For gas, Cadent have at least had a programme of replacing their Victorian mains over 20 years (which in itself gives rise to numerous complaints). It is a bit ironic that natural gas will eventually be phased out for domestic supply under climate change!

Copper telephone wires are largely above ground. The telecoms part of the GPO (now BT) got around to burying telephone cables in only a few streets in the 50s, though of course all the streets were trenched and cabled with fibre-optic cables c1996 by a company called NTL; after various corporate changes, these are now used by Virgin Media. The cables were not used much at the time, but virtually every pavement in the town now has a collapsed trench!

Deepdene Rd rubbish cleared

The state of a side lane off Deepdene Road came to LRA Cllr Chidi Nweke's attention. The road seemed to have not been swept for a while and there was rubbish all over the side road. Chidi got in touch with the District Council and arranged for the rubbish to be cleared and the areas swept.

Higgins Office and Hotel Development

LRA Plans Group (LRAPG) has received several comments over the proposal to build new offices and a 100-bedroom Travelodge hotel on Langston Road. LRAPG will be examining the proposals carefully.

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

Report water supply problems

Please report any issues to Thames Water online or call 0800 316 9800. They are under an obligation to provide bottled water if supply is not back to normal within 12 hours.

For anyone who needs a little extra support, Thames Water has a free priority services register. You can find more details about this service at <https://tinyurl.com/TWPriority>

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?



What are the Councils are up to? Can you help find out?

Are you interested in what happens in local councils? Many news items you read here and in LRA's Loughton News emails 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 might find, and at the same time you can help Loughton and LRA be more informed. Full support will be given, and you can start off slowly to see how it works for you.

Keep us in order

Later this year our membership secretary will be moving away, and we'd like to give their replacement a good handover period. The job involves maintaining our Excel membership list and dealing with new member subscriptions and changes.

Help deliver Loughton Life newsletters

This needs someone with good (not advanced) Excel and Word skills to look after the lists of deliverers, updating them when needed, and printing letters for deliverers (printing costs would be reimbursed).

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 for a no-obligation chat.