

LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE Newsletter

Members' Edition July 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.*

Loughton Library demolition public consultation results

The County Council held a public consultation last July on their plans to replace Loughton Library (Traps Hill) with a five-storey building, namely a ground floor library and 4 floors on top containing 38 flats. The flats would be owned by "Essex Homes" a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Council, who would pay for the development. There would be no encroachment onto the public car park, but the parking area for library staff and visitors would be lost, without replacement.

As we'd heard nothing from the County Council since, we used the Freedom of Information Act to get a copy of the report. Not many people responded, given the size of the Library's catchment area (which may indicate a certain cynicism about such consultations). Even the rather loaded question "Do you in principle support a new library for Loughton at zero net cost to the Essex taxpayer?" got support from less than half of the respondents. Overall, the responses from respondents were quite negative or very negative, although the report tries to play this down. As a result of the comments, the Council has made some minor changes to the design.

LRA comment: *Five storeys still seem to LRA's Plans Group (LRAPG) to be wholly out-of-character with its surroundings (the Traps Hill car park, the cricket field and the bowls club ground, an area which used be designated as "Urban Open Space"). The new building would be close to the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (EFSAC), and the extra basement parking for residents would, in LRAPG's view, be in breach of the legal requirements on air quality for the EFSAC. LRA County Cllr Chris Pond spoke recently at a County Council Cabinet meeting about the cavalier attitude Essex Homes have towards embodied carbon, and also how they were intending to sell swanky flats in a building out-of-character with its surroundings (in this case in Waltham Abbey) for capital receipts. What they propose for Loughton certainly has no demonstrable local support.*



District Local Plan

A new Inspector, Jonathan Bore, has been appointed to complete the examination of the draft Epping Forest Local Plan. In a letter to the District Council, he has stated "I think it unlikely that I will be recommending further large-scale substantive changes to key aspects of the plan, including the general amount of development, the spatial strategy or the choice of allocated sites".

The new Inspector has now proposed some minor changes to the District Council, and LRA is considering these.

Election 2022

LRA offered great candidates for the May 5th election, and they were all elected. In summary, residents across our town voted for:

Loughton Ward	Candidate	% of vote
Alderton	LRA Independent	63.7%
Broadway	LRA Independent	61.7%
Fairmead	LRA Independent	68.3%
Forest	LRA Independent	62.2%
St John's	LRA Independent	67.0%
St Mary's	LRA Independent	68.3%

In Roding Ward, Stephen Murray, Independent, was returned with 82.7% of the vote.

A more detailed picture of all of the results can be seen at <https://tinyurl.com/electionresults2022>

Thames Water declines to make donation

After their recent poor service in the town, Thames Water had been asked by the Town Council to make an appropriate donation towards a local project. Instead, they have suggested providing groups of volunteers to help with local projects, or technicians to speak to schools and youth groups.

Have you renewed your membership?

If not, renew now until the end of 2022 for
£5 per household

Not sure if you've renewed?

Email membership@loughtonresidents.co.uk
or call 07922 048758

LRA's membership information is not shared with anyone.

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. Epping and Loughton Town Councils, however, declared their intention to assert the right to become market authorities themselves, and have been in discussion leading, 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.

Street Advertising

LRA was approached by a resident for an affliction that seems to be affecting Station Road, this time by a plethora of banners, advertisements, and promotional gear at the dentist at 21 Station Road. Rules relating to ads on commercial premises are complex, and does a dentist count as commercial or professional?

The complainants were advised in the first instance to report it on the District Council's website. If there isn't a satisfactory outcome, LRAPG can be engaged.

Town Council grant for Lopping Hall Art Exhibition

The Council has agreed a grant of £300 towards the costs of publicity and the transport of materials.

Ward boundaries in Epping Forest

The Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBCE) for England is asking for your views on their electoral review of Epping Forest District Council. The review will agree new ward boundaries across the council. LGBCE has not yet proposed any new wards, however it has proposed 54 councillors, rather than the current 58.

- Do you have suggestions about where your ward boundaries should be?
- Where do people in your area go to access local facilities, such as shops and leisure activities?
- Which areas do you identify as your local community?

You can have your say online until July 18th by going to <https://tinyurl.com/EFwardboundaries>

LRA Comment: *We think that it's very important that, as far as possible, ward boundaries are drawn around areas that residents will recognise as local communities, and that wards don't artificially link parts of Loughton with parts of surrounding communities (as is the case for County Council election boundaries).*

Knocking down houses again

The LRA Plans Group (LRAPG) is becoming increasingly concerned about the steady number of planning applications to knock down perfectly decent houses for even larger ones. LRAPG believes it is not sustainable to knock down existing buildings and replace them with completely new builds just for the sake of it. An existing building represents an enormous investment in carbon and energy already, and to simply throw it into the skip is unacceptable. Whilst there may be a case to replace some houses that harm the area because of their poor design/appearance or layout, LRAPG believes the time has come to stop houses from being demolished purely because the owner wants to live in a brand-new house rather than improving and extending the existing building.

So far, all the responses received support our concerns. If anyone else wants to comment, please email us at applications@loughtonresidents.co.uk

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 Ian Allgood (D) Felstead Road 0208 502 2393 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 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.

46 Pyrles Lane

This is an application for a change of use from a vacant shop (Class E) to takeaway (Sui Generis) with the installation of an extractor flue to the rear, and a new shopfront. This was Martin's Newsagents which closed some time ago.

Whilst it is disappointing that the unit is being changed to another takeaway in Loughton, LRAPG considers this is better than leaving it vacant.

Reference EPF/0627/22. The formal consultation period ended April 30th, but you can still comment to the Council.

Specsavers, 231 High Road

Specsavers has applied for retrospective planning permission for an air conditioning unit which they erected without consent. LRAPG has been alerted to the fact that it is disturbing nearby residents.

LRAPG has objected to the planning application to retain the unit because the acoustic report is wholly inadequate; it does not go into any detail about the noise generated from the unit or the existing background noise acoustics.

The residents on Priory Road will still be severely affected by the plant, and the Council's officers have been urged to make an inspection of these properties so they can measure the sound before agreeing to any more equipment on the roof. LRAPG considers the units need to be encased with an acoustic screen to protect the amenity of nearby residents.

Reference EPF/0654/22. The formal consultation period ended May 3rd, but you can still comment to the Council.

179-181 High Road (Aura, was Cafe Rouge)

The building is currently being refurbished for a new restaurant. Residents in Station Road have raised concerns with the building work, and enforcement notices have been issued by the District Council. These notices, however do not appear to be having the desired effect.

LRA Cllr Howard Kauffman has been following up with the Council's planning enforcement team, unfortunately with not much success to date. The amending licensing application for Aura was considered by the District Council on 7th June and was granted. Residents are worried that the restaurant will turn into a nightclub.

Lidl, 140 Church Hill

Local residents had told us that Lidl were taking deliveries long outside of their permitted hours.

LRAPG reported the matter to the District Council. Lidl management has now apologised for the deliveries and says this was an error on their part, and they have reviewed it to ensure, moving forward, they do not have any issues. With regards to the Sunday delivery, they said this was a delivery coming from one of their other warehouses and again they apologised for the error. They have also spoken to the store team with regards to delivery times to ensure they do not accept any deliveries outside of the window.

LRAPG will continue to monitor for compliance.

202 High Road and 204 High Road

Works seem to be taking place inside these two units that were previously occupied by Pak Choi and Clintons. So far, no planning or licensing applications have been submitted. There was talk of both units being combined to be used for several pop-up shops but nothing has been confirmed to date.

Gardeners Arms pub, York Hill

The District Council Licensing sub-committee recently reviewed the licence and decided, amongst other things, to restrict the outdoor seating to 30 persons on the stone terrace only, and not on the area outside the main frontage of the pub. We have now been told the pub has bought new seating and is ignoring the new restrictions.

We trust the Council will take the necessary action to enforce the conditions the sub-committee has imposed on the pub to protect nearby residents.

We understand the pub has now appealed to the Magistrates Court.

High Road and The Drive/Brooklyn Avenue junction adjustments

The County Council is proposing the following:

- To refurbish the three sets of traffic signals and pedestrian crossings at this junction to Extra Low Voltage (ELV) technology as part of the refurbishment of traffic signal technology across Essex. The traffic signal poles will be fitted with near-sided pedestrian signals (not far-sided signals).
- The crossings will remain in the same location, except for Brooklyn Avenue, where it will be relocated 2.4 metres southeast from its current location to ensure that the new installation is to current standards. The double yellow lines are to be repositioned and reinstated either side of the crossing. Reference TRAF/7827.

This upgrade is separate to the addition of red lines to Brooklyn Avenue/Priory Road/The Drive that we reported previously.

Double Red Lines in the Forest

The North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) is in the process of converting the double red lines to single red lines. These will be operable between April and October only, with no restrictions in the winter. NEPP hopes to complete this by the end of June.

Can you examine LRA's financial accounts once a year?



After five years Independently Examining the LRA accounts, our local examiner has retired, and we need a new volunteer. This only takes place once a year after our year end in December, and our accounts are not complex. To find out more, please contact David at david.linnell@LoughtonResidents.co.uk or call 07958 984278 for a no-obligation chat.

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

New Parking Restrictions and Zones

As we reported in our March 11th news email, NEPP has proposed new parking restrictions and zones in Loughton. These are awaiting signoff from senior NEPP management; once granted, July and August have been earmarked for putting them in place.

Mental Health of Children and Young People

The Non-aligned Group of Cllrs on the County Council (of which LRA Cllr Chris Pond is Leader), in a major motion at a recent full meeting of the County Council, raised concerns about the mental health of children and young people resulting from bullying and the legacy of lockdowns. This originated from concerns in Uttlesford, but Chris has since been told this problem applies in Epping Forest including in Loughton.

Colson Road/Colson Path Streetlights

Residents have reported streetlights that have been broken for some months in the area. LRA Cllr Chris Pond has followed this up with the County Council. In one case, however, a concrete column has been found to be structurally unsound, and it must be replaced with a modern lamp column. This will take some time and will also need to be connected by UK Power Networks.

In The Dark (Still)

In December we reported that over half 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. At the time LRA Cllr Chris Pond raised this with the County Highways Portfolio Holder, Cllr Lee Scott.

At a recent full meeting of the County Council, LRA Cllr Chris Pond raised this problem again. Cllr Scott responded that he would deal with the problem and has subsequently said they will be changed as part of an 'LED phase 4 project'. This means that they won't be fixed until they are replaced by LEDs, although Chris understands that the Council cannot get LED adaptors for the current luminaires, which implies the entire luminaire will need replacing.

New Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor

We are delighted that LRA Cllr Barbara Cohen (right) has become the Town Mayor for 2022-23, and LRA Cllr Michael Stubbings has become her deputy.



Image: Town Council

Planning Reforms

Reforms to the planning system have been proposed by the Government to give residents more involvement in local development, as the Government intends to introduce more consultation with local residents on design codes. There will be a fresh approach to how the planning inspectorate enforces local housing targets, with areas constrained by the green belt able to sidestep "unrealistic" targets if they can produce a plan that is "well evidenced and drawn up in good faith". The Government will also seek to force landlords in England to let out empty high street shops.

The main reforms include:

- Introduction of nationally set "Development Management Policies" which cannot be contradicted or repeated in local plans. This is likely to cover standards such as daylight and sunlight, parking, internal space standards, etc. LRA Plans Group (LRAPG) is concerned about this top-down, one-size-fits-all approach which may prevent councils from adopting their own bespoke standards to address the local needs of their area.
- Street votes - no detail has been provided on this part of the Bill yet. It is likely to allow the occupiers of streets to vote on what development they would like to see on their streets, particularly vacant sites. LRAPG is concerned about the implications for other residents who don't live on, but instead back onto, these streets.
- All councils must adopt a design code for their whole area. LRAPG is concerned where the resources are to write these codes, and how they can address the variation of design in streets in council areas. LRAPG also doesn't know if street votes can override local design codes.
- A new Infrastructure Levy to replace the current Community Infrastructure Levy and Affordable Housing policies.
- Simplification of Neighbourhood Plans.
- Tighter planning enforcement powers.
- A new power to force owners to auction high street shops where they have been vacant for longer than 12 months.
- Councils will no longer need to maintain a rolling five-year housing supply if their Local Plan has been adopted within the last 5 years.
- Planning Section 106 agreements to be restricted to large-scale developments. We are concerned how the council will enforce its mitigation measures for protecting the EFSAC if the means of securing financial payments for every new home granted is removed.
- A new discretionary tax for councils to impose on second homes.

More detail will be released by the Government over the coming months.

LRA comment: *94% of our District has Green Belt (or equivalent) protection. We would obviously welcome an end to the Government's pressure on the District Council for more housing in areas of the District, like Loughton, that are already heavily-built up, and where more building will inevitably adversely affect the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation. The other measures, as far as they can be determined, look like mere tinkering with the planning rules.*