

# LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE Newsletter

## Townwide Spring Edition

For all residents in IG10: Spring 2023

*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.*



## District Council objects to Loughton Library demolition

LRA was recently able to obtain the District Council's comments on the County Council's planning application to demolish Loughton Library and replace it with a smaller library with 38 flats on top.



The District Council has objected to the application, with the key issue being that the 38 flats exceed the 20 flats allowed for in the draft Local Plan and that there would be an adverse effect from pollution on the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation and, as the District Council say, visually on the York Hill Conservation Area as well.

## LRA Membership

This edition has gone to every household in Loughton, however some editions are members-only, therefore receiving this copy doesn't necessarily mean you're a member of LRA.

Around eight hundred Loughton households support LRA with a £5 a year membership payment. This supports our work and means that members receive additional news about Loughton in our monthly members-only Loughton News emails, as well as extra member-only issues of Loughton Life.

For details of how to join, and past issues of our news bulletins, see [www.LoughtonResidents.org.uk](http://www.LoughtonResidents.org.uk)

If you'd like to become a member but don't have access to the internet, please call 07968 174388 to speak to our membership secretary.

We never share our membership information.

## New District Local Plan adopted

Further changes to the draft Local Plan (known as Main Modifications) thought necessary by the Planning Inspector were proposed last year and consulted on. The Inspector then issued a final report to the District Council with amended further Main Modifications.

The Inspector's report concluded that the Local Plan with the Main Modifications was 'sound' and capable of adoption by the Council. This was considered at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on 6<sup>th</sup> March and the Plan was duly adopted, on which LRA Cllrs (as always) had a free vote.

The Council has decided to adopt the Local Plan; it is now subject to a legal challenge period of 6 weeks, when the Plan could be challenged through an application to the High Court under Section 113 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

LRA Comment: A Section 113 challenge is rare and not likely to be successful. LRA has concluded that the new Plan, though far from ideal by not protecting the Forest from polluted air via an effective mitigation strategy, now provides a way forward. By LRA and Town Council efforts (and money) and much effort at a public enquiry (especially by LRA Cllr Chris Pond and David Linnell), the imposition of 1021 new houses for Loughton in the original Plan published in 2017 has been reduced to 455. Of these, over 300 are now in the course of being erected on Lucton's Field and the Middle Site, which were previously owned by Epping Forest College (which was the result of an aberrant decision of another Inspector).

LRA Plans Group will keep all this to the fore in considering planning applications (of which there will no doubt be plenty) post-adoption of the Local Plan.

## Loughton has 33,353 people

Data from the Census 2021 for Loughton is now public. Some highlights for our town are:

- there is a population of 33,353 people in 13,500 households.
- 27.4% of households contain only one person, and most (66.5%) contain just one family.
- 61.2% of people are in employment, 3.6% are unemployed, and 35.2% are economically inactive.
- 30.8% of households own their property outright, and 35.9 own with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership.

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

## District Council buys the former Princess of Wales pub

The District Council has bought out the lease of the former Princess of Wales pub (aka The Clydesdale) at the corner of Westall and Etheridge Roads at a cost of £687,500, to release the land for housing development.

## Advance booking required to use recycling centres

You will need to book in advance to use a County Council recycling centre. There is no charge to book, but a booking will be needed for each visit, and the latest you can book is the day before. This covers all County Council recycling centres including the one at Luxborough Lane in Chigwell. You can book at <https://tinyurl.com/ECCRecyclingBooking>



Once your booking is complete you will receive a confirmation email. You will need to take the booking confirmation and a proof of address when you visit.

Blue Badge holders, pedestrians and cyclists are not required to make a booking. Please remember to take proof of your Blue Badge with you.

## Electrical waste items

A resident has reported that after bagging up small electrical items and placing them on a bin for collection, Biffa put the bag into the black bin which was then emptied into the collection vehicle as normal waste. This is contrary to the District Council guidelines which says small waste electrical items are to be put in separate plastic carrier bags and left on top of your bin to be collected.

The District Council has confirmed that such waste is not supposed to be treated by Biffa in this way and is investigating. If residents observe this happening, or see batteries being treated in the same way, they should report it to the District Council online or by calling 01992 564000.

## Council Tax from April 2023

**County Council:** The Council has agreed a 3.5% increase (an extra £49.05 per year for a band D property), which includes a 1.5% general council tax precept and a 2% adult social care precept as set out by the Government. Under Treasury rules the maximum the increase could be without a referendum is 5%.

**Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service:** Increases have been agreed that will result in band D Council Taxpayers paying an extra £14.94 per year for policing and an extra £4.95 a year for fire and rescue services (a 6.8% and 6.6% increase respectively). There's no maximum which requires a referendum.

**District Council:** The Council has agreed a 2.98% increase (an extra £4.69 per year for a band D property). This is the maximum that could be imposed without a referendum.

**Town Council:** The Council has agreed a 9.56% increase (an extra £6.23 for a band D property). The Town Council does not receive funding from central Government, so the tax increase must reflect inflation that the Council must bear. There's no maximum which requires a referendum.

Where charges are levied for Council services, most will increase to reflect inflation.

**Support for those on Low Incomes:** Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) is provided to people on low incomes to help with their Council Tax bill.

## Loughton Wombles

The Loughton Wombles productively carried out their eighth group litter pick marking their 1st anniversary. The community venture has proved to be a great success with a healthy number of regular volunteers. This time around, two teams of Wombles were out litter picking with lots of rubbish collected, and it was noted that numerous shopping trollies were left in the brook. The Environment Agency has been advised accordingly.

If you'd like to join in and help, please call 020 8508 4200.

## Jessel Green Fun Day

The Fun Day is planned for Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June. To minimise costs to the Town Council, sponsorship will be sought.

## Contacting LRA

Councillors key: D = District T = Town		<b>Membership:</b> <a href="mailto:membership@loughtonresidents.co.uk">membership@loughtonresidents.co.uk</a> Laura Blake, 9 Woodbury Hill, Loughton IG10 1JB 07968 174388	<b>Enquiries:</b> <a href="mailto:contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk">contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk</a> 020 8508 2361
<b>Alderton Ward</b> Chidi Nweke (D) Hillcroft 07403 489455 Ian Allgood (D) Greensted Road 020 8502 2393 Katie Valentine (T) Habgood Road 07477 012213 Mick Stubbings (T) Greenfields 07766 480522 Philip Abraham (T) Lancaster Drive 020 8502 2925	<b>Fairmead Ward</b> Carol Davies (T) Colebrook Gardens 07817 230372 David Wixley (D) Goldings Road 020 8418 9284 Louise Mead (D) 07746 875952 Sebastian Fontenelle (T) Etheridge Rd 07941365850 Will Kauffman (T) The Greens Close 07799 148740	<b>St Mary's Ward</b> Barbara Cohen (T) Church Lane 020 8502 3242 Graham Wiskin (T) Traps Hill 020 8925 2003 Howard Kauffman (D) Church Lane 02085081098 Judy Jennings (D&T) York Hill	<b>County: Loughton (Central)</b> Chris Pond Staples Road 020 8508 2361
<b>Broadway Ward</b> Chris Pond (D) Staples Road 020 8508 2361 Kevin Rainbow (T) Audley Gardens 07921 662715 Les House (T) Avondale Drive 020 8508 3369 Michael Owen (D) Baldwins Hill 07467 430145 Philip Beales (T) Harwater Drive 020 8418 0459	<b>Forest Ward</b> Jayna Jogia (D) The Drive 07983 713389 Jon Riley (T) Albion Park 020 8508 6604 Roger Baldwin (D) Burney Drive 020 8281 5488 Stella Murphy (T) High View Close 020 8508 2794 Trevor Downing (T) Smarts Lane 020 8508 8877	<b>Committee</b> Anne Harriman 020 8502 1779 John Walker 07779 338868 Judith Walker 07855 265835 Juliet Pollard 020 8502 0552 Lance Leonard 020 8502 0771 Mark Dalton 07719 736901 Michael Benbow 020 8508 4457 Steve Eaton 020 8923 0065 Tessa Cochrane 020 3643 7492	
<b>St John's Ward</b> Bob Jennings (D) York Hill Caroline Pond (D&T) Staples Road 020 8508 2361 Chris Pond (T) Staples Road 020 8508 2361 Michael Owen (T) Baldwins Hill 07467 430145	<b>Roding Ward</b> David Wixley (T) Goldings Road 020 8418 9284 Neil MacKinnon (T) Barncroft Close 07872 324028 Rose Brookes (D&T) Lower Park Rd 020 8502 5981		
<b>Secretary:</b> Jill Angold-Stephens 020 8281 0674 <b>Treasurer:</b> Miriam Murphy 01992 815525	<b>Loughton Life Editor:</b> Eva Blasco 020 8923 0065 <b>Minutes Secretary:</b> Susan Creevy		

**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.

### *New Data Centre, Langston Road*

This application is for a new data centre on land currently used by Alandale Scaffolding.

There has been a lot of bad publicity about data centres recently. They are, however, essential infrastructure for the Internet and cloud storage, etc. In view of the scare stories about their thirst for water for cooling, and electricity to run them, LRAPG has asked the District Council to be content these two issues are addressed to their satisfaction.

In view of the amount of parking and increased vehicle movement the use will generate, the Council has also been asked to seek a financial contribution to improve the road junction into Langston Road which cannot cope with the existing traffic.

*Reference EPF/1165/23. The formal consultation period ended 1<sup>st</sup> March but you can still comment to the Council.*

### *The Gardeners Arms Pub, York Hill*

Last year restrictions were imposed by the District Council Licensing Committee on the Gardeners Arms to protect the amenity of nearby long-suffering residents. This included restricting the numbers of people outside the pub, which had removed the parking at the front to accommodate considerably more patrons. The decision was due to be heard at appeal but unfortunately officers have done a U-turn and agreed to allow 60 people outside the pub. This was notwithstanding continuing problems associated with the behaviour of people using the pub's seating area.

Local residents are very aggrieved by this decision. LRAPG had requested that any resolution to deviate from the Licensing Committee's decision should have been reported back to that committee. We do not believe all the affected parties were given the opportunity to make their representations and, in the absence of the correspondence with members, the decision appears to have been made behind closed doors.

The Council has been requested to make public all correspondence with respect to the changes including who finally made the decision to overrule the licensing committee. The Gardeners Arms co-existed peacefully with neighbours for decades until the increase in outdoor seating took place.

## Meet your Alderton Ward LRA Cllrs

Alderton ward councillors hold their monthly drop-in surgery every 1st Saturday of the month from 2pm-4pm at Guilloti Cafe on Borders Lane IG10 3QX. Come by to discuss any ward issues. No registration or booking is needed.

## Pyrles Lane

### former nursery site

This application proposes redevelopment of the site to provide 30 flats and 18 houses. In 2015 the site was granted outline planning permission for 36 flats and houses, however this expired. The District Council then failed to find a commercial developer prepared to buy the site so they sold it to Qualis, which is a group of companies set up as Council subsidiaries in order to develop, own and maintain properties. This new application proposes an even more intensive plan for the site. LRAPG is objecting to this application, with the key concerns being:

- Only 8% of dwellings are affordable.
- The impact on the Epping Forest SAC from more traffic and pollution from exhaust fumes.
- Four storeys being too high - the area is mainly two/three storey houses.
- The loss of trees and open green space.
- No provisions for supporting infrastructure such as doctors' surgeries and education provision.
- Consultation on an application for a previous, and now abandoned, scheme opposed a less dense development.

Because this land is owned by the District Council, the application will be considered by the District-wide committee, where local knowledge is much less prevalent than in the usual area committee. Most of those Cllrs will know little about Loughton, Debden and the local area.

*Reference EPF/2913/22. The formal consultation period ended 10<sup>th</sup> February.*

## 13-15A Alderton Hill

### *Another proposed block of flats*

As we have reported previously, this was a planning application for demolition of houses at 13, 15 and 15a Alderton Hill, to be replaced by linked blocks of 89 elderly persons apartments.

The District Council planning officers have refused permission for this development. The reasons cited included the development being too bulky for the surrounding area, loss of privacy for neighbours, insufficient information that it would not affect the Epping Forest Special Area for Conservation and it does not adhere to the draft Local Plan.

We know that over 230 households sent in objections to the application. Thank you all for your time and effort in doing so; it made a difference.

The developer is now expected to lodge an appeal and has six months to do so. We will be following this closely and will keep members and residents informed.

## Street lights

Residents may have noticed many streetlights have recently been replaced with LEDs. The swap seems to be being done efficiently and quickly.

The County Council is investing a total of £26.8m across the County for the replacement programme but will save £2.2m a year in energy and maintenance costs as LEDs use at least 60% less electricity and last up to 20 years. Studies show that our eyes adjust to the new light over a few weeks, so the Council has asked residents to wait for up to 8 weeks after installation before contacting them with any issues. The lights have been designed to dim in stages, from dusk when they are turned on, to 1am when they are turned off (in part-night lighting areas).

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

## Disruption to waste and recycling collections

Poor performance by waste and recycling contractor Biffa over Christmas and the New Year resulted in full bins and piles of recycling being on the streets well into January. Whilst the pre-Christmas cold snap exacerbated difficulties, the recent problems are part of a longer-term trend.

The District Council has now decided to run a full procurement process for the Waste/Street Cleansing contract when the current contract expires in November 2024. The Council is also reported to be looking at options at North Weald Airfield for parking and maintaining refuse vehicles when they are not on the road, plus washing and parking facilities for the crews. No waste will be processed there. The aerodrome is the only place they have to do this, though of course it is a long way from most of the population in the district. They say that this will put the Council in a better position when procuring the new contract and potentially brings down costs for more companies to bid, knowing that there is a central council-owned place to park trucks to keep, clean, and maintain all the refuse fleet when not on their rounds. One of the reasons Biffa won the contract is that they could do this. In reality there are not many firms who are in a position to bid anyway. The Council are also making budget provision to buy new refuse vehicles to replace the current ageing fleet.

LRA Comment: The District Council should not have been so quick to sell off its Langston Road depot 8-9 years ago, which was much more central to the population. They used it for the Epping Forest Shopping Park, and in doing so created a traffic bottleneck.

## Town Mayor Civic Celebration

This year's Civic Celebration was, for the first time, held at the Loughton Synagogue on 26<sup>th</sup> February, and was organised by the current Town Mayor, LRA Cllr Barbara Cohen.



Barbara reflected on her year in office, and highlighted the many engagements she attended, including the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the beacon lighting on the Hillyfields Open Space and the death of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, after which she read the proclamation at Loughton Library proclaiming the new King, Charles III.

## The Broadway

This application proposes various works including replacement of the existing defective roof with a new waterproofing system including a 15-year guarantee.

Whilst LRAPG supports the upgrading of the flats along The Broadway, it objects to the loss of the distinctive green copper roof. This is an important feature for these buildings, and it should be retained. The guaranteed lifespan of the new roof at 15 years is much too short and a more durable and longer lasting solution should be found. The works are going to have a significant impact on the shops below, and LRAPG has asked for a condition seeking details of a construction management plan to ensure the impact on the retailers is kept to a minimum. They should also be consulted with respect to these details. *Reference EPF/2922/22 and EPF/2923/22. The formal consultation periods have ended.*

## Damage to the Borders Lane grass verge

There have been problems recently with parking on the grass verge of Borders Lane, creating a muddy mess of the area. This has been caused by the use of the area by contractors and deliveries related to the Lucton's Field/Epping Gate housing development nearby. Residents have used the grass verge for parking or accessing their driveways for a long time without problems of this scale happening.

LRA Cllrs Chidi Nweke and Ian Allgood have been engaged with residents and the District Council.

The Epping Gate Site Manager has confirmed that the security guard on site will now be monitoring staff parking in this area and will direct contractors and deliveries related to their site away from parking on the grass verge and the surrounding pavements. New grass turf has been laid where the grass was damaged.

## Talking with the police

LRA Cllr Chidi Nweke represented LRA at a recent meeting of the Essex Police Independent Advisory Group (IAG). This group comprises individuals from a diverse range of communities across the district, who come together four times a year to provide insight and constructive feedback to Essex Police on a variety of policing issues.

Some of the key points discussed included:

- Complaints against the police have been taking 120 days to resolve, however efforts are being made to improve the length of time this takes.
- There was a high level of complaints from residents who had their cars stolen but were later found by police. These residents weren't told that there was a fee to get their vehicles back. Officers have now been trained and told to explain the procedure to residents in advance.
- Concerns over inadequate street lighting, especially in the Oakwood Hill Estate. The police don't have the power to pressure the County Council to do something about street lights, so residents need to report problems to the Council.
- A Stop and Search review panel is going well and more sessions are booked. This is a panel that reviews the body worn camera footage involving stop and search. Police were given constructive feedback on what is going well and what needs improvement.
- Some residents have been out on patrol with the police to see how real-life situations are dealt with. Police are encouraging more members of the public to do this. Any resident that wants to ride along should contact Chidi.
- The crime rate is coming down however it is worth noting that the rate of solving some crimes remains low. The solve rate of hate crime in Loughton is at 12% and this is the lowest in the county.
- Members of the far-right political group Patriotic Britain were seen out and about in Epping. They were at Epping St. Johns giving out leaflets. The police gave assurances that they are aware of the activities of the group but encouraged residents to report any activities to the police.