

# LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE Newsletter Members' Edition July 2024

*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.*

## May election success for LRA

We thank everyone who voted for LRA candidates on 2<sup>nd</sup> May. Thanks also to the LRA volunteers who helped, and to Michael Benbow for his work during the election campaign.

Residents voted convincingly for LRA candidates for Loughton Town Council. They also voted in 13 LRA candidates for District Council. Results for the Town Council and District Council are on the District Council website.

An error on ballot papers for the Town Council wards of Loughton Broadway and Loughton Debden was noticed so the results were declared void. The (delayed) election results for Loughton Broadway and Loughton Debden wards were declared later, with three further LRA candidates elected as Town Cllrs.

We thank the people of Loughton and Buckhurst Hill East who voted for LRA candidates. There were 26,738 crosses next to the LRA Logo on Ballot Papers; not bad for a non-political residents association. These voters are concerned people, anxious to defend the amenities of the locality. Since the Boundary Commission's redrawing of wards, LRA is privileged to represent part of Buckhurst Hill adjoining Loughton and east of the railway. Next year, it looks as if we will have to do the same for Buckhurst Hill West.

## Demolition of Loughton Library

As reported previously, the County Council gained approval to demolish Loughton Library and provide a 5-storey block containing a smaller new library with 38 flats above it.

The County Council has now issued an application for the demolition, although they have not announced the next steps or timings. Council budget forecasts imply work will start before the end of this financial year (April 2025).

The Town Council will monitor progress. Protection would be put in place for the playground, and safety of the public and provision for the Holocaust Memorial. Also, the provision of public library service will be sourced whilst the development takes place. LRA Cllr Chris Pond has been chasing this up with the County Council cabinet member. No consideration has yet been given to where or how a temporary library will be provided in Loughton's town centre.



Image: Town Council

## New Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor

We are delighted that LRA Cllr Katie Valentine has become the Town Mayor for 2024-25, and LRA Cllr Les House her deputy.

Katie grew up in Loughton, is married and has two young children. She works in technology, currently for Marshmallow an Insurtech startup. Her interests in her spare time are running, music and the arts, writing and travelling. She says "we have a strong local community here in Loughton and it's an honour to be elected for the Town Mayor for 2024-25 and I will enjoy meeting the many diverse groups and organisations we have in our town".

Les was elected to represent the newly formed Debden Ward and has been a member of Loughton Town Council since 2021.

Outgoing Mayor LRA Cllr Mick Stubbings has said that his year has been a very enjoyable rollercoaster, and he would highly recommend the position. He is now looking forward to relaxing, and thanked the Town Clerk and his team for all their work behind the scenes.

## LRA at the District Council

Following the May local election, a new Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the District Council have been elected by Cllrs, with LRA Cllr Louise Mead elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council. In addition, former LRA Cllr Caroline Pond, who has also been a District Council Chairman, received a gold long-service medal in recognition of 22 years as a District Cllr.

## County Council wrong!

The County Council has maintained for years that the concrete ramp off Clifton Road (on the High Road side) was not part of the Highway, and thus not theirs to repair.

Now they have said it was adopted in 1966-69 when the Co-op supermarket, with its rooftop car park, was in full operation. Thanks to Maggie Burley for the tip-off.

LRA Cllr Chris Pond commented that getting the road repaired will still be a major task. This is because concrete roads are not easy to repair. He says he has been able to get one concrete road fully repaired, which was Burney Drive ten years ago, which at the time had 15 11-ton buses traversing it every hour, which caused the concrete slabs to move about 4 inches each time.

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

## Unwanted and neglected banners

Residents have been increasingly concerned about the number of advertising banners (typically advertising events or functions) left in place long after events have taken place, causing unsightly clutter. Essex Highways has reported that this would be 'an offence under the Highways Act 1980, [but] this would be a low priority for enforcement, [and] we don't currently have the resources to remove this type of signage'. The District Council has powers to remove and issue penalties in relation to illegal flyposting. The Town Council has pursued the issue with the District Council who has now agreed that their Highway Rangers will remove the offending advertising banners from around the town.

## Unexpected doorstep callers

The police advise that you should only let someone into your home if you're absolutely sure that they're genuine. Any genuine person will have ID that they won't mind showing you. You don't need to open the door to them, and if you feel uneasy you can always ask someone to come back another time. Anyone legitimate will not object to this. Bogus callers can trick their way into your home by pretending to be someone they aren't, whether that's a meter reader, police officer, council official, or just someone who needs help. Doorstep traders aren't always honest. They can try to trick or push you into buying goods or services at high prices. Don't agree to anything, sign a contract, or pay for anything until you've talked to someone you trust, and don't be afraid to tell them to leave.

## Bus route 542A replaced

Bus route 16C has replaced the existing 542A bus route (anti-clockwise) between Loughton station and The Broadway on Sundays, and is now part of a longer route to/from Waltham Cross.

## Central Line service disruption

Transport for London's new timetable has enabled long gaps between trains to be minimised but you may still have to wait longer for a train than before the disruption. Their intention is to run trains every 5-8 minutes. According to the current ("temporary") timetable, there are no trains starting at Loughton during the 7am – 9am peak, so you will continue to be lucky to find a seat on the morning commute.

## New app for forest walks

The Epping Forest Heritage Trust has launched the new GPS supported Epping Forest Walks App, which is now available to download for both Android and Apple phones.

Find out more at <https://tinyurl.com/ForestWalksApp>

The walking app offers access to 20 unique trails, with details of how to get to them by public transport. You can find:

- 10 official waymarked trails by the City of London Corporation
- the entire 14-mile route of the Epping Forest Big Walk (Centenary Walk)
- 5 specially curated trails of various lengths, all accessible by public transport.

## 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> or call 020 8508 2361
<b>Loughton Fairmead District Area LRA Cllrs</b> Louise Mead (D) Goldings Road 07746 875952 Arash Ardakani (D) Shelley Grove 020 8257 0230 Will Kauffman (D) The Greens Close 07799 148740 Carol Davies (T) Colebrook Gardens 07817 230372 Neil MacKinnon (T) Barncroft Close 07872 324028 Ceejay Ubah (T) Barrington Road 07983 535992 Ruth Sylvan (T) Englands Lane 07958 813014 Sebastian Fontenelle (T) Etheridge Rd 07898906371	<b>County: Loughton (Central)</b> Chris Pond Staples Road 020 8508 2361 <b>Loughton St John's District Area LRA Cllrs</b> Chris Pond (D&T) Staples Road 020 8508 2361 Howard Kauffman (D) Church Lane 020 8508 1098 Graham Wiskin (D) Traps Hill 020 8925 2003 Stephen Harriman (T) High Road 07740 409374 Michael Owen (T) Baldwins Hill 07467 430145 Ian Allgood (T) Greensted Road 020 8502 2393 Joyce Obaseki (T) Whitehills Road 020 3004 7286	<b>Loughton Whitebridge &amp; IG9 East Area LRA Cllrs</b> Barbara Cohen (D) Church Lane 020 8502 3242 Rose Brookes (D&T) Lower Park Rd 07391 879412 David Wixley (T) The Meadway 020 8418 9284  <b>Committee</b> Anne Harriman 020 8502 1779 Chris Kent 07825 249777 John Walker 07779 338868 Judith Walker 07855 265835 Juliet Pollard 020 8502 0552 Kevin Rainbow 07921 662715 Mark Dalton 07719 736901 Michael Benbow 020 8508 4457 Philip Abraham 020 8502 2925 Steve Eaton 020 8923 0065 Tessa Cochrane 020 3643 7492 Trevor Downing 020 8508 8877
<b>Loughton Forest District Area LRA Cllrs</b> Ian Allgood (D) Greensted Road 020 8502 2393 Michael Owen (D) Baldwins Hill 07467 430145 Roger Baldwin (D) Burney Drive 020 8281 5488 Jon Riley (T) Albion Park 020 8508 6604 Kin-Wan Lee (T) Meadow Road 07940 807483 Stella Murphy (T) High View Close 020 8508 2794 Raj Minhas (T) Alderton Hall Lane 07889 121518 Wendy Dodd (T) Deepdene Road 07871 964682	<b>Loughton Roding District Area LRA Cllrs</b> Chidi Nweke (D) Hillcroft 07403 489455 Sheree Rackham (D) Hillcroft 07722 511107 Katie Valentine (T) Habgood Road 07477 012213 Les House (T) Avondale Drive 020 8508 3369 Alan Fricker (T) Stonards Hill 07508 332342 Mick Stubbings (T) Greenfields 07766 480522	
<b>Secretary:</b> Vacancy - Please apply 020 8508 4457 <b>Treasurer:</b> Miriam Murphy 07966 177961	<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.

### **The Standard, 126 High Road**

This is a retrospective application for the first-floor roof terrace for open air restaurant tables.

LRAPG has objected to the principle of using the terrace for eating and drinking. People using the terrace can generate a significant amount of noise, which will impact on neighbours, particularly in the summer when bedroom windows are open. Music being played on the terrace, whether a noise limiter is used or not, will also disturb neighbours. Sound and vibration can travel easily, and users of the terrace will raise their voices over music.

Reference EPF/0867/24. The formal consultation period ended 24<sup>th</sup> May.

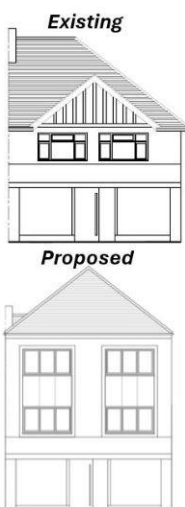


### **251A High Road (Above Totally Wicked)**

This application proposes a change of use of the first floor from D1 cookery school to C3 residential flat, and creation of an additional floor, with a two-storey new build to the rear containing one flat with associated works.

LRAPG has objected to this poorly drafted planning application. This is the second time the application has been submitted but LRAPG considers the extensions, by reason of their height and bulk at the front and back, are detrimental to the character of this part of the High Road. The building forms part of a consistent roof form and this should be retained. There will be an unacceptable amount of overlooking from the terrace and one of the parking spaces cannot be safely accessed. LRAPG notes there are four parking spaces shown on the proposed block plan, but the application form says there will be two spaces. The proposed ground floor plan shows two spaces. The rear extension comes out in front of the rear of 249 High Road. This will enclose the occupiers of this building. The front elevation does not show the rear addition extending towards No 249. The drawings are therefore inaccurate. Overall, LRAPG considers this is an over-development of the site that will provide low standard residential accommodation and permission should therefore be refused.

Reference EPF/1005/24. The formal consultation period ended 24<sup>th</sup> May.



### **Connaught House, 112-120 High Road**

This application is for prior approval for the construction of six new flats on top of the existing building.

LRAPG has objected to this application. Placing a vertical addition on top of the building looks ridiculous and is harmful to the building and the surrounding area. The additional flats will also impact on parking and surrounding streets for spaces.

Reference EPF/0739/24. The formal consultation period ended 2<sup>nd</sup> May.



### **Aura Grill and Bar, 179-181 High Road**

We previously reported that the Planning Inspector dismissed appeals against an enforcement notice to demolish a steel framed extension at the rear of the property and a second notice to remove an extraction system. The inspector agreed the structures were harmful to the area and adjoining residents and should be removed.

The District Council allowed a further 13 weeks for removal. As there was no action taken by the owners, the Council is now taking the matter to the Magistrate's Court to enforce the ruling.

## Local planning decisions

The District Council cabinet has agreed to recommendations made following a recent review of the Council's development management function conducted by PAS (Planning Advisory Service, which is part of the Local Government Association).

Amongst the recommendations is the reduction of planning committees in the District to one or two. This would affect the existing Planning Sub-Committee South that reviews planning applications in the south of the district including Loughton.

LRA Comment: The impact on planning committees would be a bad one for Loughton, as it means that local Cllrs would no longer be in the majority on the committee which decides local applications. Of course, Cllrs have to apply the planning rules fairly, but local knowledge has often been essential in coming to decisions.

## Royal Mail deliveries

Royal Mail now runs a Delivery to Specification system which allows them to hold second-class mail until the last day they are allowed to deliver, in the hope other items for the same address will arrive. Royal Mail says that this improves efficiency by reducing the number of visits made to each address. It insists that it has had no effect on service quality.

LRA Comment: despite Royal Mail's denial, the system must have had an effect on the service that residents receive, because it means that some second-class letters are delivered to them a day or two later than they would have been under the previous system. Royal Mail, of course, has not actually been hitting its targets for second-class or first-class mail anyway.



## Redevelopment of the former Pyrles Lane Nursery

The proposal to build 43 dwellings on land between Pyrles Lane and Hillyfields on part of the old District Council's plant nursery has been approved by the Council's District Development Committee.

The land had previously been part of the erstwhile (and large) Pyrles Lane allotment site, on which at least one member spent much of her childhood as her father was a plowholder. Because of work done by the late Ian Strugnell, it was possible to research fully the means by which this land was acquired by the former Chigwell UDC (CUDC) of which Loughton was part in the immediate post-war period, when food shortages were widespread.

In 1946, the CUDC resolved to acquire land for permanent allotments of about 10 acres in extent [this was partly to replace wartime emergency plots]. To cease allotment provision on such land, the consent of the [national] Secretary of State is necessary. On 5 May 1947, under the Smallholdings and Allotments Acts 1908 to 1925, the Loughton Allotments (No.1) Compulsory Purchase Order was issued, requiring the Gould family to sell the land, 11 acres, at a price of £2366. It was duly sold, and by April 1948, 78 plots had been created and tenanted.

In the more affluent 50s and 60s, allotments began to fall out of favour and demand, and the site was much reduced in size. The northern end of the allotment site was converted to use as the CUDC nursery, the greenhouses of which were sited on adjacent private land in the apex of Hillyfields and Pyrles lane, behind the houses that had been built there in the 30s. But seemingly they did not obtain ministerial consent for this diversion of purpose, so if that is the case it would mean that strictly speaking the land is still bound by the Allotment Acts.

What does all this mean for the 43 dwellings now approved? It may mean there has to be an approach to the Secretary of State to obtain release of the land from allotment controls, which might involve a public inquiry, particularly as there is now renewed demand for allotments in Loughton (a waiting list is kept by the allotment authority which has been Loughton Town Council since 1996). Or someone may find a certificate of release from some long-forgotten secretary of state; Or they may just take a chance.

## High Road lights the way

Members will recall we have reported before that over half the streetlights in the busiest part of the High Road were "dead" and have been for up to three years. The lights have now been converted to LED by the County Council and they shine once again, which will be a relief for those forced to walk, cycle or drive in darkness on the High Road pavements at night in the past few years.



## Trees planted around Loughton

LRAPG have complained to the District Council about the number of trees being planted around Loughton with no public consultation. It appears no thought has been given to where they are being placed. Whilst LRAPG supports additional tree planting, the ones being planted are at the expense of some areas used as play areas and Qualis seem unable to cut the grass around them. The County Council has been planting the trees but the District Council will have to maintain them.

LRAPG has asked for neighbours to be consulted before trees are planted and sought assurances the grass will be properly cut around the trees by Qualis. The District's Ground Maintenance Team has since replied and assure us the quality of grass cutting around the trees will be improved in the next few weeks.

If you are concerned about any local trees not being maintained you can email the District Council at [Trees@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:Trees@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

## Lighting of Loughton's Beacon

On 6 June, the Town Council was honoured to host the lighting of the Beacon at Hillyfields to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings. Over 1,500 beacons were lit across the length and breadth of the



Image: Town Council

country and overseas. Town Mayor LRA Cllr Katie Valentine welcomed everyone to the ceremony which included a tribute, read by the 41st Epping Forest Cubs, and prayers were delivered by Reverend Chris Davies representing Churches Together in Loughton. Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Essex, Mr Amrik Sandhu, one of the King's official representatives for the country led the countdown and lighting of the flame. A large crowd of Loughton residents attended and supported this historic, commemorative event.

## Dates for your diary

- 4<sup>th</sup> July: General Election
- 7<sup>th</sup> September: The Loughton Horticultural Show
- 21<sup>st</sup> September: Loughton Day.

## Please subscribe now

Have You Renewed Your Membership?

A few of our membership have not paid their subscriptions for 2024.

For details on how to renew, or to check that you have paid for this year, please email [membership@loughtonresidents.co.uk](mailto:membership@loughtonresidents.co.uk)

It is still only £5. We rely on your subscriptions and donations to fund our newsletters and run campaigns.