

LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE Newsletter Members' Edition February 2025

*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.*

Local government restructure and elections

The Government has proposed significant changes to how local government operates at what is currently the District and County levels. The proposals cover all of England.

The key change is the creation of unitary authorities to cover perhaps about 500,000 people each, replacing existing district and county councils. This would mean that Epping Forest District Council and Essex County Council would cease to exist. Essex would then be served by between two and five 'unitary authorities' that cover a yet to be determined area of Essex.

There would also be a Combined County Authority covering all of Essex with an elected Mayor. The Mayor would also take on the responsibilities of the existing Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

The County Council discussed this at a council meeting on 10th January, and has now written to the government to request inclusion on the government's Priority Programme.

If the government agrees, which appears likely, details of how the new structure would operate and how the transition from old to new would be worked out. The immediate impact would be that County elections planned for May 2025 and possibly 2026 would be set aside. Existing Cllrs would remain in place in their existing county divisions and district wards until new elections are held, with the boundary changes that created two county council divisions to cover Loughton from May 2025 being put on hold. Postponement has generally been a feature when local government reorganisation is taking place, as it was, for example, with abolition of the Greater London Council (1985) and the abolition of Buckinghamshire County Council (2021). The government was planning to make their intentions clear by a Statutory Instrument to be issued around about 1st February, while Loughton Life was in the press, therefore the above was a best estimate.

For Loughton, the existing Town Council would continue. The proposal only briefly mentions parish and town councils with 'we will also rewire the relationship between town and parish councils and principal Local Authorities, strengthening expectations on engagement and community voice' however what this means in practice remains to be seen.



The existing Epping Forest District Council would be folded into a much larger unitary authority, presumably combined with nearby areas. The District Council currently serves around 135,000 people, so the new authority would be much larger though the number of Cllrs would undoubtedly be reduced. Much detail remains unknown, including any changes to how the new bodies would be funded; a reorganisation could result in saving money, however this would be insignificant compared to the well-known scale of underfunding for local government. LRA thinks there is also a risk of a democratic deficit with larger unitary authorities not being responsive to local needs, especially around approving local developments and planning applications.

Restoring peace and quiet for a family in Oakwood Hill Estate

One of the most pressing concerns LRA Cllr Chidi Nweke has encountered recently came from residents in the Oakwood Hill Estate who had endured nearly three years of disruptive noise from a nearby business.

Frustrated by the District Council's lack of action, the residents reached out to Chidi for assistance. Together with LRA Cllr Ian Allgood, they visited their home and immediately recognised the severity of the issue; the noise was emanating from a cooling system that was significantly affecting their quality of life. Notably, this cooling system was installed without obtaining the necessary permissions.

Chidi knew that this situation required persistence and a creative approach. Engaging constructively with Council officers, he advocated for the residents' needs, emphasising the detrimental impact the noise was having on their daily lives. The family were forced to sleep in their sitting rooms just to escape the constant disturbance.

After several discussions and follow-ups, Chidi is thrilled to report that he successfully persuaded the District Council officers from the Noise Team, and then the Tenancy and Estate Team, to take a firmer stance against the business in order to mitigate the intrusive noise. This included the relocation of their cooling units.

Thanks to Chidi's determination and commitment to action, the residents can now enjoy the peace and quiet they deserve in their homes.

Our thanks to all the residents who support LRA

Intelligence and the Criminal Behaviour Order

Sergeant Jamie Shepherd of the police's Town Centre Team gives an insight into the way the police uses intelligence and Criminal Behaviour Order. "As per the national retail crime plan, theft and retail-based offending has increased in the past year. To tackle this my team have been putting in extra work to identify and bring to justice the offenders. To identify more suspects, we have been working with retailers who use a system called Auroa. This is a database that allows businesses to report thefts and upload pictures nationally and link offending between stores. Police can review these images and use them to search our facial recognition system and we often can identify prolific offenders who commit thefts on a regional level. Building the intelligence picture is key in tackling this type of offending as suspects often cross policing borders to commit crimes. Second to this is the use of the Criminal Behaviour Order. You may have heard of an ASBO however this is now known as the Criminal Behaviour Order. The power comes from Part 11, Chapter 1 of the Sentencing Act 2020. Criminal behaviour orders are civil orders that police apply for on behalf of victims. The purpose is to impose conditions on offenders to reduce harassment, alarm, and distress on victims. This is used in context of retail crime to prevent offenders from attending certain locations prolifically used by them to steal. Criminal behaviour orders can be imposed for a maximum of 5 years. Breaching the order is a separate offence and therefore allows for tougher sentences."



Fatal collision in Buckhurst Hill

After a fatal collision in Buckhurst Hill on Christmas Eve shortly after 7:30am, police arrested a 20-year-old man from Loughton, a 17-year-old boy from Dagenham, and a 16-year-old boy from Chingford on suspicion of a number of offences including causing death by dangerous driving and failing to stop at the scene of a collision.

Tragically, sixty-five-year-old Ruth Marina Campos Silva Myers died at the scene.

The police have appealed for any information, CCTV, dash cam or other footage in relation to this incident, which you can report at <https://tinyurl.com/existingcasereport>, or by calling 101 (quote incident 171 of 24th December).

Shoplifter jailed

A prolific shoplifter has been jailed for more than a year and a half for a string of offences across the district.

Billy Greenwood, 29, of no fixed address stole from shops and vehicles. He targeted Boots at the Epping Forest Retail Park in Langston Road on six occasions, stealing more than £10,000 of skin care goods and make-up items.

He also stole between £100 and £200 worth of meat from the BP service station in Chigwell Lane, as well as attempting to steal items from a car in Burney Drive, Loughton.

At Chelmsford Crown Court on 28th October he was jailed for a total of a year and eight months.

LRA Extraordinary General Meeting

Monday 7th April 2025, 7:30 pm
Loughton Cricket Club, The Uplands, IG10 1NQ
(limited car parking available).

Purpose: Approve amendments to LRA Constitution.
Main revisions relate to the structure of committees.

The amended Constitution can be found at
<https://tinyurl.com/lraconstitutionchanges>
Email membership@loughtonresidents.co.uk
or call 07968 174388 for a paper copy.

Contacting LRA

Councillors key: D = District T = Town		Membership: membership@loughtonresidents.co.uk Laura Blake, 9 Woodbury Hill, Loughton IG10 1JB 07968 174388 Enquiries: contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk or call 020 8508 2361	
Loughton Fairmead District Area LRA Cllrs 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		County: Loughton (Central) Chris Pond Staples Road 020 8508 2361 Loughton St John's District Area LRA Cllrs 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	
Loughton Forest District Area LRA Cllrs 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		Loughton Whitebridge & IG9 East Area LRA Cllrs 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 Committee 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 Martine Groman-Marks 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	
Secretary: Vacancy - Please apply 020 8508 4457 Treasurer: Miriam Murphy 07966 177961		Loughton Life Editor: Eva Blasco 020 8923 0065 Minutes Secretary: 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.

Decisions on planning

The Government has published a consultation paper aimed at modernising planning committees to facilitate better decision-making in the planning system, with planning committees to be reformed to take away decision-making powers from elected members.

The paper proposes three main reforms:

1. A national scheme of delegation to standardise the criteria over when a planning application can go to a planning committee. The Government considers minor applications are routine and should be left to "skilled" planning officers. Three potential solutions have been mooted:

- Delegate decisions to officers for applications that comply with the development plan
- Delegate all applications to officers by default, with exceptions for specific circumstances such as departures from the development plan; and
- Set a prescriptive list of application types that must be considered by committees, providing greater clarity and consistency.

2. The creation of smaller, targeted planning committees specifically for strategic development.

3. Mandatory training for planning committee members.

LRAPG considers the consultation paper is naïve; not all local authorities have multi major developments to contend with and the most contentious schemes can be small schemes such as householder applications where neighbours can be impacted. To lose the right to have these applications determined by elected members where all parties have the opportunity to make their case would be a backward step.

The mandatory training is not contentious; most councils provide training for members before they sit on their planning committees.

Davenant Foundation School

This application proposes demolishing the existing sixth form and library block and replacing them with new partial two-storey sixth form including library and SEN classrooms.



Notwithstanding the proposed building is on green belt land, it will replace the existing storm water damaged sixth form structure which will be demolished completely. LRAPG is delighted the school has come up with a solution that means the temporary classrooms which had to be erected after the storm damage will be replaced by a permanent solution.

Debden Hall, England's Lane

This application proposes the erection of a dwellinghouse and associated works to provide access, parking and landscaping. This also includes refurbishment and repair of Grade II listed gates and piers.



Whilst LRAPG is very disappointed planning permission was granted for a dwelling on this site within the protected Green Belt, the previous consent was for a passable copy of an 1820 house, putting back what was there and maintaining the heritage value. The current plans are for a larger dwelling that bears no resemblance to the historic past. The proposed design is too large, and the top floor will be visible, particularly in the winter and evenings when the large, glazed areas are illuminated. LRAPG considers the top "carbuncle" in particular devalues the design and this floor should be omitted.

Reference EPF/0757/24. The formal consultation period ended 16th December.

Proposed Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are defined as an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Loughton currently has three areas: most of Baldwins Hill and Staples Road, and all of York Hill.

The Town Council is now looking to protect The Uplands (and also Loughton Cricket Club), Ollards Grove and 313 High Road, and will instigate the formal application process.

Revitalising our green spaces

During one of LRA Cllr Chidi Nweke's regular walkabouts in his ward, he noticed a situation that needed addressing. There were broken jockey rails around the green space in Alderton Hall Lane, opposite Alderton Primary School.



The situation made the area look not only unsightly but also neglected, with several sections of the rails laying on the ground. He promptly reported this to the District Council and requested repairs.

Although it took some time for the job to be completed, mostly because the officers had trouble identifying the exact location of the damaged rails, he didn't give up. He continually followed up until the issue was resolved.

Now he is delighted to say that all the broken sections of the jockey railings have been repaired, restoring not just the beauty of our green space but also providing a safe environment for our children and families to enjoy.

Reporting road defects

Essex Highways has updated their 'Tell Us' service for reporting road defects. This now includes different types of emergencies, and if issues have worsened over time.

Issues logged via other platforms such as Fix My Street are often duplicates of existing reports, unrelated to Essex Highways-managed roads, or lack the required detail. For these reasons, users of these platforms will no longer be able to raise issues for Essex Highways.

Find us at www.loughtonresidents.org.uk

Threat to Debden Centre and campsite

Debden Centre and Campsite is a long-established touring and camping site. It is just off Debden Lane and is part of Epping Forest with approximately 50 acres of green belt land and a 19th century Grade II listed building currently used as a conference centre. It attracts visitors from the UK and from all over the world. As such it forms a major tourist attraction for the area.

The property was bought by the London Borough of East Ham in 1949 and is now owned by its successor Newham Council. The Council has recently agreed in principle to sell it with the intention to put on the market in next spring, with the hope of concluding a sale towards the end of the summer.

This is a potential threat to a nearby part of the Forest.

Oakwood Hill Estate

Community Safety Day of Action

On 23rd October, local residents took part in a Community Safety Day of Action, which is a vital initiative designed to promote safety awareness and facilitate engagement with local blue light services. The event saw a range of activities and support for residents, including:

- A crime prevention stall, where 12 community members received direct advice and materials
- Proactive police patrols, which led to the interception of a moped that fled the scene; authorities are currently working to recover the stolen bike
- Environmental enforcement patrols where officers spoke with 11 members of the public throughout the estate
- Investigations into 3 instances of fly-tipping on Highwood Lane
- Educational outreach to 9 groups of dog walkers about the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)
- The reinstatement of Crime Stoppers zone signs throughout the area
- Comprehensive graffiti removal across the estate
- Cleaning and maintenance of signage to enhance community aesthetics.
- Door-to-door engagement with over 80 properties, with residents receiving advice and informational leaflets.

School Speedwatch pupils stop 19 speeding drivers

Thanks to the pupils from Alderton Junior School, Roads Policing Unit officers stopped 19 drivers who were speeding in the vicinity of their school.

The year 6 pupils identified speeding motorists at their Oakwood Hill site and alerted the Roads Policing officers, who stopped speeding motorists taking part in the morning school run and workers on their commute.

LRA's 2024 Christmas Quiz

A bumper entry to this year's quiz, and almost half went into the hat as all-correct answers. First out, and our winners, were Charlotte and David Prosser, who will receive a £20 book token. Thank you to everyone who entered, and a Happy New Year to you all. The answers can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/Christmasquiz2024answers>



Christmas Window Competition

The Town Council thanks all the town's businesses that decorated their windows, bringing some festive cheer to the town. All Christmas-themed shop windows were automatically eligible for the competition which was split into four classes of entry. The judges this year were Town Mayor, LRA Cllr Katie Valentine, along with LRA Cllrs Carol Davies and Ian Allgood. The winners were:

- David Smith Financial Services: local/independent businesses.
- David Clulow Opticians: multiples/chain stores
- Haven House Children's Hospice: charity shops
- The Aviary Bar & Brasserie: eateries (cafes, pubs and restaurants).



Aggressive or out of control animals

Some owners of animals, particularly dogs, train them to be aggressive and threaten other people. This could either be while they are walking the animal or by leaving it tied up somewhere public. If a vulnerable person or animal strayed into its reach, or the animal got loose, this could represent a serious danger to people.

Some animals are bred and trained to take part in illegal activities such as dog fights. Not only can this harm the animal in question, it also often leads to other animals being persecuted, abused, injured or killed for sport. Like all forms of violence, if left unchecked this situation could get worse. More people would buy and raise aggressive animals so as not to be intimidated by other people's, resulting in more intimidating and less safe communities and a huge increase in abused and tormented animals.

If you've witnessed an aggressive or out of control animal, an owner using an animal to intimidate people, or you know someone who is using animals in illegal activities such as dog fighting, report anti-social behaviour to the police online or call 101. As always, if anyone is seriously injured or there is immediate danger to someone, call 999.

Coffee with Cllrs

Local residents had a chance to meet LRA Cllrs Rose Brookes and Barbara Cohen at the IG9 Cafe in Lower Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill, in November. LRA Cllrs David Wixley and Ian Allgood were also on hand during these surgeries.

