

# LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE Newsletter

## Townwide Spring Edition

For all residents in IG10

*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 agreed to the County Council's request to include Essex in the Priority Programme for devolution.

Unitary authorities would be created to cover about 500,000 people each, replacing existing district and county councils. 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. The whole of Essex would be divided into two and five 'unitary authorities' that each 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, who would take on the existing Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's responsibilities.

The immediate impact is that County elections planned for May 2025 and possibly 2026 will be set aside. Existing Cllrs will 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).

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 councils will now begin working with each other and the Government as part of the programme. There will be an enormous amount of planning and work required over the next 2-3 years to deliver the new structures and organisations. LRA Comment: a democratic deficit may result if larger unitary authorities are unresponsive to local needs, especially when approving local developments and planning applications.

Much detail remains unknown, including any changes to how the new bodies will 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.



## Princess of Wales Pub, Westall Road

This application proposes the demolition of the unoccupied Princess of Wales pub and replacing it with 15 affordable homes targeting Passivhaus standards, an integrated front landscape and internal courtyard design and associated works. LRAPG has objected to this District Council-led redevelopment. There has been no community engagement whatsoever before submitting the application. This is a Council-owned site. They claim "Early public engagement is encouraged" in its own Statement of Community Engagement however if the Council is not engaging with the public on its own schemes, how can it expect private developers to do so?

There is also no planning application form available on the website; more shoddy work from the Council. Only when this was pointed out by LRAPG, did they then add it.

This part of Loughton is characterised by two storey dwellings. There are no three-storey buildings on Westall Road, so three storeys will dominate the streetscape. The Design Access Statement says the scheme is "appropriately designed to fit within the architectural vernacular of the site", which does not reflect the reality, which would be angular, stark and forbidding.

Had the community been consulted, they would have been told the third floor needs to be reduced in height and have less sheer components in order to reduce the height and bulk. A third floor can be included, but the current approach is the wrong approach. LRAPG has also asked whether the scheme has been presented to the council's Quality Review Panel and, if so, make a copy of the report available.

The building is surrounded by open space and has a communal garden so there is no need for balconies. Losing the ugly balconies at roof level will help reduce the bulk of the building and there is no need for balconies at ground floor level; these should be removed for traditional front gardens.

The building was about to be demolished until LRAPG said that this was breaking the law because pubs are protected by permitted development rights from demolition.

Notwithstanding the protections pubs have, the LRAPG supports the loss of the pub which caused all sorts of antisocial behaviour problems when it was open.

LRAPG hopes that, when the District Council is abolished under the Government's devolution plans, we might get access to better council officers and an authority that will engage on its own development.

*Reference EPF/0039/25. The formal consultation period ended on 6<sup>th</sup> February.*

## 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."



## Fly-tipper caught and prosecuted

A fly-tipper was identified after mattresses were illegally dumped from the back of a van at a hotspot in High Beach were captured on CCTV. The van was successfully traced via a Police National Computer request. The fly-tipper pleaded guilty to the offence against section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and was fined £2,400.



## Fake QR codes at car parks

Fraudsters have been adding fake QR codes to car parking signs. When these are scanned by your phone, you are directed to a fake website which will ask for your details and can fraudulently take your money. QR codes on car park signs can be convenient however if you are uncertain, pay by cash (if available), card or via an official app downloaded from your smartphone's app store.

## Closed Churchyard

The Town Council will take over the maintenance of the churchyard of St John's Church on Church Lane as a Closed Churchyard. As a Closed Churchyard, and having given appropriate legal notice by the Church, it's the law that the Town Council must take it over, including its maintenance. A mutually agreeable Service Level Agreement between the Church and the Town Council will now be agreed.

## 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 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>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 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	
<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.

### 227 High Road (previously The Last Post)

This application is for a change of use from a pub to a shared space comprising retail, a café, meeting space, health and wellbeing services, and office accommodation.



The developer has decided to appeal the recent refusal of this application. LRAPG are disappointed the applicant has decided to appeal rather than amend the scheme. This is an important site in the heart of Loughton. As such LRAPG have asked the Planning Inspectorate to handle the appeal via a hearing rather than written representations so local community members can attend and make their views known.

Reference EPF/1693/24

## Jessel Green

The Town Council is progressing with the adoption of Fields in Trust status for Jessel Green. In 2021 the Loughton Cricket Club ground was similarly protected as a green space in perpetuity. Local residents will be consulted for feedback. This year's Jessel Green Community Funday will be held on 6<sup>th</sup> July.

## 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 has been looking to protect The Uplands (and also Loughton Cricket Club), Ollards Grove and 313 High Road. The formal application process has been started however the District Council has already said that it is unlikely that they would consider the request.

## Loughton Wombles out and about

The Wombles have been out and about in January, with one group clearing litter from the green opposite Lidl and up Goldings Hill, and another group tackling Chester Road. Please make the Wombles' lives a little easier by remembering litter doesn't disappear. It can take a long time to break down - plastic bags around 5-100 years and plastic bottles 450-1000 years.

## Central Line

For the past year Central line trains have been experiencing higher than normal rates of motor failure which means Transport for London (TfL) have had fewer trains available for service each day and therefore introduced a temporary timetable with fewer services.

Timetable changes on 27<sup>th</sup> January work towards resumption of Working Timetable no. 70, which was introduced in January 2020. TfL has said that these changes will enable them to run an average of 25 to 28 trains per hour in the weekday morning and evening peaks between White City and Leytonstone, compared to 21 trains per hour with the previous temporary timetable. This assumes that TfL have the required number of trains operational.

This means some trains from London are turned at Loughton, giving empty trains starting at Loughton, and hence more seats. One downside of this is that the service at Debden is no better, giving rise to crowded trains that have come through from Epping.

You may be lucky before 8:30am to find a seat on an empty train during the morning peak under the updated timetable. At Loughton station the timetable shows westbound trains starting at 7:28am, 7:37am, 7:52am, 8:07am, 8:15am and 8:28am Monday to Thursday. At Debden station the timetable shows empty westbound trains starting 7:41am and 8:17am Monday to Thursday.

There are still fewer trains overall with a 71-train service during the morning and afternoon peaks, versus 77 that operated before the current problems started.

Refurbishment of Central Line trains remain behind schedule. We understand only two refurbished trains are in service, with another three planned to come into service this year.

## Children and young person officers

The district has two School Officers who regularly attend the district's senior schools and hold Let's Talk sessions, so that students can talk to Police about any concerns they have. The Officers have recently given talks in classrooms about keeping safe when outside of school and how their behaviour may have an effect on others.

The police have recently had incidents where social media challenges may have encouraged young people to kick front doors and run away. Some instances have caused damage and scared the residents who were home. The police ask that parents and guardians talk to their children about keeping safe and to make sure their behaviour when in public does not have a detrimental effect on others.

If students want to speak to the School Officers, the school's safeguarding team will have the times and dates of when they will be on site at the school.

## Never mind the bollards

In 2018 a resident reported to the Essex Highways that a bollard on Connaught Avenue near the junction with Ollards Grove had fallen, alongside one that had already fallen. Recently, the resident received an email from Essex Highways to say that they "have investigated, risk assessed and recorded this issue and [they] are in the process of scheduling works." Six years is a short time in the life of a bollard it seems.

Find us at [www.loughtonresidents.org.uk](http://www.loughtonresidents.org.uk)



## The Roding Rises - have your say and get involved locally

The River Roding is London's third longest river. Rising near Stanstead Airport, it runs south towards the Thames, through Loughton and Buckhurst Hill and into urban East London. Over the last century, the river has been straightened, dredged and subjected to pollution from agriculture, industry, road run off and sewage. We are fortunate to have good access to the river via the recreation ground and the Roding Valley Meadows nature reserve.



The Roding Rises is a landscape scale project, working alongside both the Essex farming communities at the top of the river and the communities in the river's lower reaches. All those along the Roding are invited to feed into this project ahead of it starting on the ground next year.

You can find out more information and fill out the survey at <https://tinyurl.com/rodingrisessurvey>

Early fruits of local input on the Roding saw the publication of a report on water quality in the river that included citizen scientists from Loughton taking samples at the Charlie Mould bridge. The results show persistent issues but the potential for our river to reach bathing water quality again.

If you are interested in participating in a Friends of the River Roding group working across Loughton and Buckhurst Hill, please email LRA Cllr Alan Fricker at [cllralanfricker@loughton-tc.gov.uk](mailto:cllralanfricker@loughton-tc.gov.uk)

### Become an LRA member

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

Around eight hundred households are members of the LRA. Their annual subscriptions of £5 a year support the work we do to make Loughton an even better place to live. The LRA represents a wide range of ideas and concerns. We seek out the views of people in the community and ensure that their voices are heard. The LRA makes great efforts to provide a public arena for the residents who care about Loughton.

**Help Look After Loughton.** We are always looking for new members to support our work. Members receive additional news about Loughton in our regular members-only Loughton News emails, as well as extra members-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 Laura Blake.

We never share our membership information.

## A beautiful return to Parkmead: the rose garden revival

Last year a decision made by Qualis to remove a beloved rose garden in Parkmead created quite a stir in the street.



This beautiful large garden, located opposite 61 Parkmead, was taken down as part of a cost-saving measure, without any consultation with residents or ward Cllrs.

The situation came to LRA Cllr Chidi Nweke's attention thanks to a concerned resident who expressed dissatisfaction with the messy state the area was left in after the unprofessional removal of the garden. He completely understood their frustration and shared the sentiment that this cherished public space was a vital part of our community, appreciated by dog walkers, passersby, and local residents alike.

In response, he took action and reached out to Qualis, demanding that they reconsider their decision and restore the rose garden. After several discussions, Qualis acknowledged their oversight in removing the garden without proper consultation and agreed to reinstate it.

He is pleased that the garden is now being replanted (the work being done is pictured). This is a fantastic outcome for the residents of Parkmead, and a testament to the power of community advocacy.



### Blue lidded wheeled bins for recycling

Currently recycling is collected on a fortnightly basis via single use plastic sacks, with glass collected separately via a blue box container. This method of collection means residents use more than 9 million single use plastic sacks per year which cost a minimum of £405,000 per year. £28,512 is also spent on replacement blue box containers for glass per year.

The District Council has now decided to replace recycling sacks with a blue lidded wheeled bin starting from June. This follows a pilot that has been running in several roads in Theydon Bois, as well as use by additional households who have requested wheeled bins for recycling. It is now estimated that 5% of properties in the district now recycle via a blue lidded wheeled bin. Some exemptions would be allowed if space and access is limited in specific cases.