

LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE Newsletter

Townwide Autumn Edition

For all residents in IG10: Autumn 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 Reorganisation

The government's proposals to reorganise how local government operates are progressing, with options for the size and what areas the new Unitary Authorities being considered. The whole of Essex could be divided into three, four or five Authorities, replacing existing district and county councils, including Epping Forest District Council and Essex County Council which would cease to be. For Loughton, the existing Town Council would continue.

The County Council will have decided on 17th September (after we went to press) on the option they will propose to the Government. If the option proposed is for three Authorities, it would be Epping Forest District Council combined with Brentwood, Chelmsford, Harlow, and Maldon Councils.

At the end of September, the County Council will submit to the Government their proposal for the reorganisation. In March next year, the Government will decide the way forward, with elections to new shadow unitary councils expected in May 2027; new unitary councils could be fully live in April 2028.

Much detail remains unknown, including 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. LRA thinks there is also a risk of a democratic deficit with larger unitary authorities not being responsive to local needs, especially for approving local developments and planning applications.

Weeds in the streets

In August a resident complained to LRA Cllr Rose Brookes about excessive weeds and dirt in Lower Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill, and reported it to the District Council.

The street cleansing team had been very involved in the roll out of blue bins all over the district, so they didn't attempt any work until the week before the August Bank Holiday.

After the work was done, Rose inspected their efforts but felt it was disappointing and requested the waste management team manager ask for the team to revisit the road.

The County Council currently provides funding to the District Council to carry out weed spraying, and previously Biffa had the contract for dealing with weeds on the roadside (along with waste and recycling collections).



Since Terra Verde Services (a 100% District Council owned company) took over these responsibilities, there has been no contract in place for weed spraying, and the District Council has said that the funding from the County Council is insufficient to cover the costs. The District Council is in the process of drawing up a new contract for weed spraying to prove the costs do not meet the funding being provided. They will then ask if the County Council wishes to proceed with a new contract or take the function back into Essex Highways.

Rose has also been in touch with the land drainage team for advice about the weeds blocking the gullies and drains in Lower Queens Road. As this is a County Council responsibility, she contacted the County Cllr Marshall Vance (the Cllr for this division) to request they be cleared.

Weekly markets

The Town Council had hoped to have weekly Food Markets on the High Road by now and had applied for the necessary approvals from Essex Highways and the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) to reserve the parking spaces along Centric Parade for traders' vehicles on Saturday evenings/Sunday mornings to enable the markets to take place.

Since submitting the original application form to Essex Highways, the Council was passed from pillar to post with three different County Council departments disclaiming responsibility, before they were eventually passed to the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) and then submitting another NEPP application form.

NEPP has also now effectively blocked the way forward as they say parking suspensions are for temporary requirements and not for consistent weekly arrangements, and they subsequently quoted associated costs that made the market not cost effective.

The Town Council has tried to get both Essex Highways and NEPP to come up with a compromise and way forward, but to no avail, so the Council are no longer pursuing a weekly market. The process of Local Government reform starting and the associated uncertainty has not helped the cause, and the Council will revisit this again in 2028 when hopefully new levels of authority are in place.

This is a most disappointing outcome and has been most frustrating for the Town Council and for LRA, which was the driving force behind the previous Farmers Markets and had helped to set the new arrangements in motion.

Our thanks to all the residents who support LRA

Graffiti on the Central Line

Travellers on the tube may have noticed an increase in graffiti of late. This is particularly noticeable on the Central and Bakerloo lines where neither have CCTV in the carriages. In addition, Central line trains are currently being upgraded, and the Bakerloo line has issues with old and unreliable trains, so Transport for London is often short of carriages to enable them to be taken out of service for cleaning while maintaining the service.

To date, two trains have completed the full refurbishment and are in passenger service. The plan is to have four more trains entering service this financial year, and TfL plans to take up to 5 trains out of customer service at a time to enable the work to be completed. The first few trains have taken longer to complete as the teams work to understand the disassembling and reassembling of the train. As the programme moves forward, the turnaround of trains will move from years to months with the completion of the programme due in 2029.

NHS fall exercise programme

The NHS offers a 12-week structure programme of progressive strength and balance exercises to support people aged 65 and older who are at risk of falling. It is also for people aged 50 and older who have had any falls in the last 12 months due to a condition that affects their balance e.g. stroke or Parkinson's disease etc.

Exercise sessions are provided at community venues or, where required, in your home, depending on individual needs and availability.

For more information on The Community Falls Strength and Balance Exercise Service either call 0300 3001843 or visit <https://tinyurl.com/NHSFallsService>

Oakwood Hill Community Hub

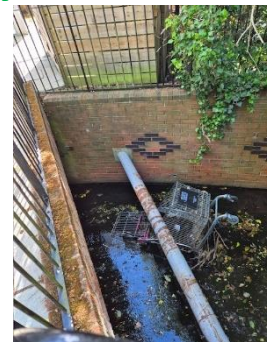
The hub is open every Thursday from 9.30am to 1pm. Services you can access are:

- Affordable Counselling Services
- Citizens Advice Epping Forest district
- Epping Forest District Council Housing Tenancy and Estates and Revenue and Benefits teams
- Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation (EPUT)
- Employ-Ability
- Open Road (West Essex)
- Peabody Outreach Support
- Phoenix Futures
- Qualis Property Solution

Also, Let's Get Together is a social drop-in session run by the District Council's community development and wellbeing team. It is held every Wednesday from 12.30pm to 2.30pm as a social and warm space to provide people with support and company.

Wayward trolley removed

A resident on Roding Road contacted LRA Cllr Rose Brookes about a Sainsbury's trolley that had been thrown into Loughton Brook near Bridge House last week. Rose managed to organise the District Council to clear it two days later.



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	
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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 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	

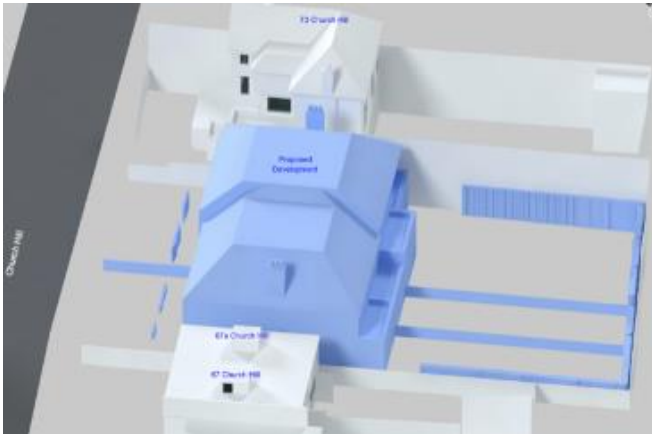
LRA councillors are Independent and non-political

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.

9 Church Hill



This application proposes demolition of the existing dwelling house and construction of four 4-bedroom houses, in a terrace configuration.

LRAPG has objected to this 12th submission for planning permission on this one site. (This is an amended application to EPF/1014/24). The rear of all the new dwellings project too far into the garden. The rear bulk dominates the other adjacent homes and, if they were to consider proposing similar extensions, they would be refused. The monolithic side walls will dominate the neighbouring properties to the detriment of their amenity. There is absolutely no reason why the enormous master bedrooms to these dwellings cannot be reduced. The Daylight and Sunlight report is not based on the outline of the building that has been applied for. It should be redone or discarded.

LRAPG also noted the applicant has slipped this one into the District Council at a time of the year when people are away. *Reference EPF/1646/25. The formal consultation period ended 5 September.*

Gardeners Arms pub, York Hill

Notwithstanding regular complaints about anti-social behaviour outside the Gardeners Arms, District Council officers have allowed a variation to the licence which will make it harder to monitor and protect the amenity of nearby residents. Customers drinking outside previously had to be seated at the tables within the front terrace. The Council has now allowed standing as well.

LRAPG objected, citing it is crucial patrons are sat on the allocated seats and not be allowed to roam around the premises because it will be:

- More difficult to monitor and control people who are stood up.

- Count and assess whether the limit of 60 people has been breached.
- Result in patrons being able to stand closer to noise sensitive windows and impact the amenity of neighbours.

LRAPG considers standing drinkers tend to be noisier and more anti-social. The pub is surrounded by family homes. The swearing and anti-social behaviour is detrimental to children. LRAPG argued this application should not be treated as a minor variation of the licence, which under the rules, prevents neighbours from attending a hearing and making their case to elected members.

The District Council has been asked on multiple occasions to review the licence to no avail.

Beech Farm, High Road

This application proposes demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of two new dwellings, together with access from the High Road and associated development.

LRAPG has objected to this planning application. This is unacceptable backland development, which impacts on the openness of the Green Belt. The dwellings will overlook Beech Farm and 17 High Road to the detriment of their amenity.

LRAPG disagree with the conclusion in the submitted Planning Statement which states "Following recent pre-application discussions, the proposal has been significantly reduced in size and scale following officer feedback moving from a 2-storey proposal to smaller chalet-style dwellings which officers have confirmed would be acceptable in this location." The designs shown are not "smaller chalet-style dwellings" but are substantial, bulky four-bedroom dwellings.

There may be scope for two single storey dwellings but no more.

Shoplifter banned

Jordan Carter from Epping has been jailed and banned from entering all BP and Shell garages in Essex for five years after a string of thefts across Debden, Epping, and Brentwood.

He was arrested in Brentwood shortly after stealing £1,500 worth of skincare products from Boots and later admitted to 11 shop thefts, totalling nearly £2,900. These included repeated thefts from a BP station and alcohol from a Shell garage.

He was sentenced to 12 months in prison at Southend Magistrates' Court and handed a Criminal Behaviour Order. If he enters any BP or Shell garage in Essex during the next five years, he could face further jail time.

Charging for garden waste collections

The District Council has decided to charge for fortnightly collection of garden waste. This would be in conjunction with separating food and garden waste into different bins for collection. Food waste would be collected weekly at no additional costs to residents.

The current cost of the District Council's waste collection service is £2.1m a year. The proposal would save £201,000 a year. When they have had the opportunity, most of the LRA, Independent and Lib Dem Cllrs voted against the green waste changes, but the Conservative majority has now approved them.

The District Council cabinet considered the proposal and agreed to proceed with developing a waste collection service that separates food and garden waste from April 2026, subject to the availability of food waste vehicles. Six LRA Cllrs called in the decision because it is a halving of the garden waste collection service (weekly to fortnightly) and a charge on most residents in Loughton, plus it would be a new receptacle for food waste.

The exact details and actual charge for annual garden waste collection would be determined as part of 2026-27 budget setting process that would ensure the service was at least cost neutral.

However, the costs and benefits are not spread evenly. People with gardens who opt for the new garden waste collection service will have to pay what we assume will be £60 a year. This amount was arrived at by looking at what other councils charge for similar services. The Council argues that this is fairer to people without gardens, or who don't pay for a garden waste bin. However, for everyone else the collection service will be reduced or will be at an extra cost. There are concerns that it will encourage fly-tipping or result in concealing green waste in residual black bins, both of which would increase the Council's costs.

In the next few years, the Council will be merged with other local councils (we don't yet know how this will work) – the change would bring the Council roughly into line with neighbouring councils, in preparation for the merger.

Charges following dog attack

Officers investigating an incident where a woman was bitten by a dog have secured charges against two people. A woman in her 30s reported being bitten in Highwood Lane 13th May and sustained an injury to her arm.

Carolyn Allan, aged 59, and Paul Wafford, aged 61, both of Highwood Lane have been charged with being in charge of a dog dangerously out of control causing injury. They appeared at Southend Magistrates' Court on 11th August and are next due to appear at Chelmsford Crown Court on 8 September.

Tree branches pruned

A local resident contacted LRA Cllr Rose Brookes about overhanging branches on Whitebridge Primary School land. She contacted the school and subsequently the headteacher arranged for the trees to be pruned.

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

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.

Parking around schools

The North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) launched a Park Safe project in 2022 focused on changing poor parking behaviour around schools, using four fixed cameras and two Park Safe cars at specific schools where needed.

While the expectations were that it would take around 1.5 school terms for the cameras to improve parking behaviour, it was found that on average problems were reduced by 82% within five weeks of cameras being installed. This meant that the project had been too successful at changing people's behaviour, which meant that it had not been self-funding. The overall costs became significantly more expensive during 2023/24 to the point where the service could not be sustained and the cameras were halted. A fresh way of operationalising the cameras will be investigated in 2025/26.

Charges following vehicle break-ins

Police were called to reports of two males trying to break into vehicles in Smart's Lane on 4th August. Officers arrived within seven minutes of the initial call and found and arrested two suspects hiding in the street.

A 50-year-old man from Loughton was charged with three counts of vehicle interference, and a 43-year-old man from Loughton was charged with one count of theft from a motor vehicle and three counts of vehicle interference. They were both initially remanded to Chelmsford Magistrates Court and later released on conditional bail by the Courts to re-attend Chelmsford Magistrates Court on 15th September.