

LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE Newsletter Members' Edition December 2025

*Loughton Residents Association is independent
and focuses on looking after Loughton
and Buckhurst Hill.*

*We have Cllrs on the County & District Councils and
hold 21 out of the 22 Loughton Town Council seats.*

District Council no longer under Conservative control

The District Council is no longer controlled by the Conservatives. A motion of no confidence has not been put down.

The Leader of the LRA Group, LRA Cllr Chris Pond, was invited for the first time to the Executive (i.e. Cabinet) briefing on 27th October. This appears to be an attempt by the administration of the District Council to involve LRA without a formal coalition and he thinks is an attempt to also make sure that things they do are not unacceptable to LRA. Chris will see how this progresses.

Planning committees

Last October the District Council made changes to local planning committees following a review of the Council's development management function conducted by PAS (Planning Advisory Service, which is part of the Local Government Association). This resulted in two new committees ('Committee A' and 'Committee B') with the previous Plans South committee no longer existing, and membership being pro rata reflecting the District Council Cllr makeup where the Conservatives had a majority. The new structure was to be reviewed after nine months. However the District Council has now stated that this review has been delayed due to the Government indicating its intent to make further changes on the National Reform of Planning Committees and the National Scheme of Delegation. LRA Cllr Chris Pond expressed his concerns at a District Council meeting on 8th August 2024, that the review should be a very wide ranging one and should include the option of going back to the old system, or something like it, and that the review takes place at the end of 2025 when everyone can be present to discuss such fundamental matters.

LRA comment: *We remain concerned that decisions on planning are now being taken remotely from elected local representatives (and indications from the Government are that this will in the future by law be exacerbated).*



Source: Loughton Town Council (Loughton Day 2025)

Green/Grey Belt review

The District Council has commissioned a Green/Grey Belt review with Arup with funding provided by the Government, which has a provisional completion date of end of March 2026.

LRA comment: *this will need careful watching in case there are any inappropriate attempts to re-zone valuable Green Belt land for developments such as housing.*

'Grey Belt' has a technical definition but could include land within the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and any other parcels and/or areas that make a limited contribution to the aim of the Green Belt but excludes areas or assets of particular importance.

A Mayor for Greater Essex

If reorganisation of local government in Essex proceeds, in May next year there will be elections for a mayor heading a new Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA). The MCCA would be responsible for such areas as transport and local infrastructure, skills and employment support, housing and strategic planning, economic development and regeneration, environment and climate change, health, wellbeing and public service reform and public safety.

The MCCA would also become the fire authority for Greater Essex, and the Mayor of Greater Essex would become the police and crime commissioner for Essex Police from April 2027.

Although there are in theory elections to the District and County Councils next year, we expect that owing to the government reorganisation plans these will be postponed.

A battle to have lights restored on Great Eastern Path

Several local residents contacted LRA Cllrs Rose Brookes and David Wixley to get the lights working on Great Eastern Path.

Rose contacted County Cllr Marshall Vance, and then the Cabinet Member for Highways, Cllr Tom Cunningham, to try to speed up the repair of five critical lamp posts from the subway at Loughton station to Roding Gardens. Rose made a formal complaint to UK Power Networks, and David enlisted the help of Dr Neil Hudson, our local MP, who also took up the cause on behalf of local residents.

UK Power Networks said that Essex Highways had not supplied the correct information to them. Rose wrote again to Cllr Cunningham to ask him to use his influence to speed up this very unsatisfactory situation.

Their persistence paid off, and work was carried out on the lights on 3rd and 4th November, at which point the lights were finally switched back on after 3 weeks in the dark.

Our thanks to all the residents who support LRA

Man arrested after failure to stop on Traps Hill

After a vehicle failed to stop on Traps Hill just before midnight on 14th October, police went in pursuit through roads in Loughton and into Abridge. Specially trained officers followed the van whilst other units were able to get ahead of it to lay stinger devices on its route.

The vehicle came to a safe stop in Abridge Road after hitting the stinger and subsequently being boxed in. A 24-year-old man from Harlow was arrested on suspicion of failing to stop, dangerous driving, failing to provide a specimen for analysis and assaulting an emergency worker.

Estate agent boards removed from public land on Oakwood Hill

During LRA Cllr Chidi Nweke's walkabout in his ward, he spoke to two concerned residents who expressed frustrations about the clutter created by numerous estate agents' advertising boards on Oakwood Hill, which were unsightly and violated regulations concerning advertising on public highways.



Recognising the negative impact on the community's environment, Chidi immediately reported the situation to the District Council, urging them to take enforcement action. The Council responded promptly, requiring the estate agents to prove they had permission to display their boards on public land. Unable to provide this evidence, the estate agents were ordered to remove all their advertising boards. Thanks to these efforts, Oakwood Hill has been returned to its former charm.

Chidi says *"A proliferation of estate agent boards can clutter the landscape, detracting from the natural beauty of public spaces. This can affect the overall experience for visitors and residents who enjoy these areas for their scenic views."*

The estate agents have been warned not to display their boards in this location again, and Chidi has requested regular monitoring to ensure the community remains clutter-free.

Loughton Day

Loughton once again shone brightly as residents, visitors, and local organisations came together for the third Loughton Community Day. There was something for everyone, from a wide range of community and charity stalls to delicious food options that kept everyone well-fed and happy. The Scouts served up a delicious BBQ, the Loughton Methodist church offered a delightful tea tent, and Nonna Pizza and Punch & Judy were major crowd-pleasers.

The Town Council thanks Loughton Wombles who kept the cricket ground clean and litter-free throughout the day, and Daniel Robinson & Sons and Madison Fox Estate Agents for their generous donations and sponsorship, which helped make the event possible. Our Town Cllrs added a sweet touch to the day with a strawberries and cream stall, raising funds for the Town Mayor's chosen charity, St Clare Hospice. The true aim of the event, to bring our community together, to raise awareness of the incredible work done by local groups, and to inspire greater engagement and membership, was clearly achieved. The atmosphere was warm, welcoming, and full of the community spirit that defines Loughton.

Financial assistance from the Town Council

Local groups, organisations and charities are invited to apply to the Town Council for financial assistance for the next financial year. Application forms are available from the Town Council office, by emailing contact@loughton-tc.gov.uk or downloading the form which can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/LTCFinancialAssistance>. The closing date is 31st December. In this current financial year, the Council has helped 25 applicants, totalling over £35,600, to improve or maintain their services to the local community. This sum includes the continued support for the Loughton Branch of the Epping Forest District Citizens Advice, which gives valuable free help and advice to all that request it.

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 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	
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.

2A Pump Hill

This application proposes demolition of the existing dwelling, to be replaced with three 3-bedroom dwellings with attached garages and off-road parking. The location is on the corner of Pump Hill and Church Hill.



LRAPG has objected to this speculative development. Pump Hill is one of the oldest roads in Loughton characterised by a mixture of simple two-storey weatherboarded and/or rendered dwellings.

The proposed houses by reason of their detailed design - materials, fenestration pattern and three storeys - are wholly out of character with Pump Hill and will harm the charm and character of the area. This is an overdevelopment of a site on one of the most historic and important streets in Loughton. The parking is compromised; with one space in front of each garage, it is impractical and dangerous to move cars from the drive to allow a car to leave from the garage on a single-track road.

Not only is this garden grabbing but Church Hill is part of the main north-south highway through



Loughton. At present the house is partly screened from the road by the trees along the road boundary but is visible from Church Hill from the north of the junction with Pump Hill. Even if the existing trees are retained, the houses – particularly the most eastern house – would be clearly visible from Church Hill above its junction with Pump Hill, even in the summer and particularly so in winter when leaves have fallen. From here, and from Pump Hill itself, the houses would have a wholly alien appearance. They would fail to satisfy paragraph 35 (c) of the NPPF which says planning decisions should ensure developments “*are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)*”.

Reference EPF/0763/25 The formal consultation period ended 18th September, but you can still comment to the Council.

Land to the rear of 71 Stonards Hill

This application proposes a new self-build house at the rear of 71 Stonards Hill, with driveway access from Alderton Way.



LRAPG has objected to this application on the grounds that this is unacceptable backland development and garden grabbing to the detriment to the character of Stonards Hill and Alderton Way. It will involve a significant reduction in the garden area of 71 Stonards Hill. Stonards Hill is marked by long gardens and this should be preserved.

The fact that this application is being made under self-build is not a justification to grant this application.

Reference EPF/1593/25 The formal consultation period ended 29th October, but you can still comment to the Council.

Opening up the Roding path

Loughton is linked by the River Roding to Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell and beyond. Most sections of the bank in Loughton fall within the recreation ground so are easy to walk along. The section between Luxborough Lane and Snakes Lane East can be rather less easy to walk or ride through due to mud in the winter and plant growth in the summer.

Over a number of summer weekends a group of volunteers linked to the River Roding Trust, and organised by Buckhurst Hill Parish Cllr Dewole Aradeon, has been working to push back the nettles and brambles that prevent this otherwise great car-free route down into Redbridge. At the time of writing they have not quite broken through to the better tended path further down river.

If you are interested in hearing more, and maybe getting involved in this or other projects linked to our river, please email LRA Cllr Alan Fricker at cllralanfricker@loughton-tc.gov.uk

Awards for the Town Council

The Town Council has scooped three awards from the 2025 Essex Playing Fields Association Awards, which is the most they have ever received.



- Category 1: Best playing field serving communities of more than 2,500 residents - gold certificate awarded to Roding Valley Recreation Ground.
- Category 3: Best children's playground - gold certificates awarded to Roding Valley Recreation Ground Playground and Traps Hill Playground. The outright category winner was awarded to Newmans Lane Playground.
- Category 7: Best project carried out during the year - the outright category winner was awarded to Newmans Lane Playground.

The judges were extremely impressed with Newmans Lane and the inclusivity of the playground.

Heritage lamp column

LRA Cllr Chris Pond noticed that a lamp column in the Staples Road Conservation Area had been replaced by the County Council but it was the wrong height and out of keeping with the other columns. Chris contacted the Council who subsequently cut the column down to the correct height. This is a small success that helps ensure our valued Conservation Areas are maintained properly.

Find us at www.loughtonresidents.org.uk

LRA's focus as a local residents' association

Members sometimes ask us what LRA's position is on matters of national importance, however our response in most cases is "we don't have one".

That may be frustrating for some to hear. LRA, however, from the start in 1981 has tried to focus on the interests of the town and community of Loughton and to work hard on problems raised by individual residents including, for example, planning and garden waste charging.

We are not "the Opposition" to the Conservative party at the District Council. We are independent and non-political and if the majority grouping is getting things right, we are very happy to support them. Equally, we will fight long and hard to challenge proposals with which we disagree.

LRA Cllrs (and members) are spread across the political spectrum, and they may hold individual views on matters of national importance. However, LRA doesn't mandate its Cllrs to vote one way or the other as LRA Cllrs have a tradition of voting according to their consciences and what they consider to be in the best interests of Loughton only.

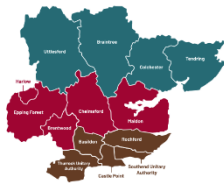
Crossing along Rectory Lane requested

A group of residents have been asking for a safe crossing on Rectory Lane by Newmans Lane, given the proximity to nearby schools, the Newmans Lane Children's Playground, and that there is no crossing between Church Hill and The Broadway on this busy road.

The Town Council agrees that a safe crossing is needed at this location. The request was lodged many years ago with the Local Highways Panel (of County Cllrs) however the estimated cost of £127,700 has not been budgeted for. The Council will now write to the County Council Highways Portfolio holder, Tom Cunningham, and request the scheme to be implemented.

Local Government Reorganisation

Four different proposals have now gone forward to the Government for consideration. Provided they meet the criteria set out earlier in the year, these proposals will go forward for public consultation later this autumn, with a preferred option likely to be announced by Government in the spring of 2026.



- Southend-on-Sea City Council, along with nine district, borough and city councils, has put forward a plan for five unitary councils.
- Thurrock Council's proposals focus on dividing Greater Essex into four new unitary councils.
- Rochford Council has put forward a different proposal for a four unitary councils model.
- Essex County Council, along with two district councils, is proposing a configuration of three new unitary councils.

LRA Christmas Quiz 2025

The theme this year is Christmas itself. The answers are all sorts of things you might associate with the festive season, to do, see, eat, drink, etc. Answers by January 6th please to lesandsueharris@aol.com, or to 32 Upper Park, Loughton IG10 4EQ. A £20 book token or bottle of champagne to the first correct entry out of the hat. Have a very Happy Christmas.

1. Trio of clever gents (5, 4, 3)
2. Silly bird! (5)
3. A stag in bad weather (8)
4. Thought about alcohol (6, 4)
5. Complaint about a Christmas dinner alternative (4)
6. A shade of orange (9)
7. Question some tennis calls (7)
8. Fed up with things to play (5, 5)
9. 'Appealing' Scotch (5)
10. That's not male! (7)
11. A crowd at the witching hour (8, 4)
12. Spirited goat (6, 6)
13. A pretend ache (9)
14. Play them or send them (5)
15. Prickly, as sacred gather round learner (5)
16. Quite mad! (8)
17. High Street newsagents (5, 6)
18. Pick of the desserts (4, 7)
19. Mink plant (3, 4)
20. Sounds as if it's shipped in advance (7)
21. Creepy – and sounds like two letters, not three (3)
22. Left for the sailor (4)
23. A seasonal partner for Adam (9, 3)
24. Trade in cans (6)
25. Their animals flocked around them (9)
26. Is this the country it comes from? (6)
27. A neat and tidy part of Scandinavia (6, 6)
28. Attacks on a cuppa (8)
29. That brickwork is crazy! (7)
30. 2026 – we sincerely hope (5, 3, 4).

Loughton Station Approach litter

We've reported previously on the Town Council's efforts to remove the rubbish dropped in the land adjacent to Loughton Station Approach and next to the Roding Valley High School football pitches, which was attracting rat infestations. The Council has pursued the problem for some time and has now got the District Council to clear litter along Station Approach on a weekly basis. The Town Council will continue to monitor this.

New bench

A new bench in memory of Mr Alan Askew was installed in July on the Roding Valley Recreation Ground near to Charlie Moull's bridge.

