

LRA's Loughton Life Newsletter Members' Edition February 2026

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

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

Local government reorganisation

The Government has announced that the Greater Essex Mayoral election, originally planned for May 2026, will now take place in May 2028.

The delay is intended to allow more time for councils to establish new Mayoral Strategic Authorities and work together before the first mayoral elections. This announcement does not impact local elections, and further clarification is expected in due course.

A preferred option is likely to be announced by Government in the spring of 2026.

Urgent Call for Candidates: May Council Elections

We urgently invite committed local residents to put themselves forward to stand as candidates in the County and District Council elections in May under the LRA banner.

Strong local representation is vital. These elections will shape key decisions affecting our communities, services, and future. We are seeking people who care deeply about their area and are prepared to stand up for local interests.

If you have the commitment and integrity to serve your community, we encourage you to come forward without delay.

For further information or an initial discussion, please contact us as soon as possible by email to Sheree Rackham at sheree.rackham@sky.com



May local elections

Following the Government's recent decision to defer the Mayor of Greater Essex election from 2026 to 2028, the Government offered to affected local councils a postponement of May's local elections.

District Council group leaders subsequently met to discuss the offer. Despite hearing about the cost of holding elections and that they risked delaying local government reorganisation, group leaders agreed that elections should still take place and no extraordinary meeting of the full Council will be required to formalise the council's response. The Government subsequently confirmed that District Council elections would go ahead, with a formal decision on County Council elections expected after this newsletter had gone to press.

18 District Council seats held by Cllrs who came third in the all-out, three-member ward elections in May 2024 will be up for election. These include four LRA Cllrs in the District Council's Loughton wards. The elections for the County Council would include two seats that were created to cover Loughton after boundary changes were made by the Electoral Commission.

Annual subscription

Your copy of Loughton Life should come with a letter regarding your annual subscription. If you have already renewed your subscription, or pay by standing order, you need not do anything.

Otherwise, we hope you will renew your subscription. Membership remains at £5, but donations are always welcome. The details on how to pay are within the letter.

Your support ensures we can continue our work to make Loughton an even better place to live and work.

If you have any queries, please contact us either at membership@loughtonresidents.co.uk or 07968 174388.

Our thanks to all the residents who support LRA

Loughton Brook culvert refurbished

The Loughton Brook, which runs from the Forest to the River Roding, goes under the High Road near the corner of The Drive. The 212-metre-long culvert is 90 years old and had become damaged over time, with cracks, missing bricks and a utility intrusion running through, which meant repairs were essential. Traditional repair methods that involved excavating the road weren't possible, so Essex Highways worked closely with specialist contractor iLine to develop a glass-reinforced plastic (GRP) liner to carry out the works without the need for excavation. Hopefully this is a long-lasting solution that will serve the town for generations to come.



Source: Essex County Council

Loughton Wombles wombling

Thirteen Loughton Wombles were out in early December helping to make our town a little tidier, and to mark their fourth anniversary. One group focused on the Mannock Drive and Burney Drive area. The other group litter-picked the length of Chigwell Lane between Borders Lane and the railway bridge, Borders Lane running up to Lucton's Path, the surrounding area of the New City College Wellness Centre, and Ladyfields Close. Anyone wishing to volunteer can contact the Town Council by email at contact@loughton-tc.gov.uk or call 020 8508 4200. If you know of a road that needs a good litter-pick, let the Town Council know so they can programme it for the Wombles to clear.

Christmas Window Competition

The Town Council has thanked all the town's businesses that decorated their windows, bringing some festive cheer to the town.

All Christmas-themed shop windows were automatically eligible which was split into four classes of entry: local/independent businesses, multiples/chain stores, charity shops and eateries (cafes, pubs and restaurants).

The judges this year were Town Mayor LRA Cllr David Wixley, along with LRA Cllrs Stephen Harriman and Wendy Dodd. The winners were:

- Forest Casual and Schoolwear (local/independent businesses)
- David Clulow Opticians (multiples/chain store)
- Haven House Children's Hospice (charity shops)
- The Aviary Bar & Brasserie (cafes, pubs and restaurants).

The charities chosen by the category winners will each receive a £75 donation from the Town Council, and this year, they are Chigwell Riding Trust, St Clare Hospice and Haven House Children's Hospice.

LRA Annual General Meeting

We will be holding an Annual General Meeting at Loughton Cricket Club on Monday 23rd March 2026 from 7pm.

Cemetery tree of grief

The dead tree at the entrance to the Town Council cemetery has now been pollarded, and an interpretation board will be installed soon.

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 & Buckhurst Hil 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.

Planning permission refused for Avondale Close land and garages

Planning applications are reviewed and decided on by District Council officers, unless they are unusually large or controversial or they are for a member of the District Council, in which case they are brought to one of two planning committees of the District Council for review and a decision. Each committee has nine members, with five Conservative, two LRA and two independent members on each one. LRA and its District Cllrs get notification of the applications that are being agreed, refused or that are going to be heard at a committee.

LRA Cllr Rose Brooks saw that a planning application for semi-detached houses directly at the bottom of the garden of one of the residents in Avondale Close had been proposed, and 'called it in', which enabled a discussion on the application.

A site visit was organised, with the District Council's Planning Officer in attendance, and District Cllrs were invited to attend.

LRA Cllr David Wixley, who has a long-standing attachment to this area as well as the site being in his ward, spoke at the committee meeting on behalf of the Town Council to object to the application. LRA Cllr Barbara Cohen spoke passionately as the District Cllr for the ward on behalf of residents against the application with the help of LRAPG's John Walker. LRA Cllr Arash Ardakani spoke up and agreed with the points made. LRA Cllr Will Kauffman came up with some more points. All LRA representatives brought a catalogue of reasons why the proposed development was unsuitable for this area, and how it was unfair for existing residents. The site is also in Flood Zone 2, which is rarely built on. The overdevelopment, the outlook of the existing residents and the flood risk were the main objections.

However, the collective letters of the 27 residents from Avondale Drive, Avondale Close and Elmhurst Way that opposed the application, and the way that Sarah Mackie, a local resident, organised the campaign, along with the actual idea that semi-detached houses were unsuitable for that location, won the day. The application was refused by 8 votes to 1.

Barbara got a heartfelt letter of thanks from the representative of the residents as they really did appreciate our efforts. The residents and LRA succeeded in getting the application refused to help keep Loughton as pleasant a place to live in as we possibly can.

Find us at www.loughtonresidents.org.uk

Princess of Wales, Westall Road

The District Council has granted planning permission for 15 homes on the site of the Princess of Wales pub on Westall Road.

LRAPG, the Town Council and LRA Cllrs had raised objections to the proposal, which included concerns over inadequate parking, quality of the design, and height and bulk of the building. LRA Cllrs Carol Davies, Will Kauffman, and Graham Wiskin all raised their concerns during the Planning Committee's meeting. However the application was approved by the Committee, which has a Conservative majority.

Garage Site, Ladyfields

The application proposes the demolition of the existing garages and the construction of sixteen affordable homes targeting Passivhaus standards, with associated landscaping and works.

LRAPG has objected to this long-running application. Whilst the latest plans are an improvement on the original submission, the townscape of this part of Loughton is characterised by two storey homes. The proposed building remains at three storeys with a sawtooth roof capable of hosting another 4th storey room later on. This means that this should be treated as a four-storey development in an area of two-storey homes.

LRAPG has asked that the sawtooth roof is omitted to lower the bulk, and the applicant to consider respecting the design for the estate, which is modest two-storey dwellings with brick or render.

Reference EPF/2020/20. The consultation ended 11 December. This is a revision to previous application EPF/1758/16.



Wo Fat Restaurant, 270-272 High Road

This licensing application is for opening hours to be extended to 1am every day, with recorded music, indoor and outdoor refreshment, and sale of alcohol also until 1am.

LRAPG has objected to this application, given the disturbance this would inevitably cause to residents who live above and nearby, and from customers leaving the premises, many of whom will have parked in nearby quiet residential streets.

LRAPG thinks 11pm is the latest the Wo Fat should be open every evening. Even if the premises are well-sound-proofed, the noise of such customers (and their vehicles) leaving late at night, at a time when other daytime noises are much reduced, would obviously disturb residents.

Safer Streets at Oakwood Hill

A year-long initiative to improve safety, wellbeing, and the environment on the Oakwood Hill estate has officially concluded. The project was launched in July 2024 and was shaped by consultation with residents, Cllrs, third-sector organisations, and statutory bodies. Residents were engaged to identify key concerns, including drug dealing, aggressive dogs, poor lighting, lack of CCTV, and dog fouling.

The key achievements were enhanced security, improved lighting, environmental enhancements, improved waste management and youth engagement and education.

Food and garden waste collections changes

Food and garden waste will be collected separately from 31st March. Households will receive new brown kerbside and kitchen caddies for food waste, which will be collected weekly. This service will be free.

The existing, green-lidded wheelie bin will be used for garden waste only and will be collected fortnightly. The District Council is planning to charge £60 per year from 31st March, although the cost is to be confirmed.

Help keep our streets beautiful: Act against littering

LRA Cllr Chidi Nweke recently stumbled upon a disheartening sight on his way to work; a significant amount of loose waste scattered across the pavement next to the bus stop in Hillyfields. This not only tarnished the beauty of our neighbourhoods but also raised important concerns about community pride and cleanliness.

It's troubling to think that this mess may have resulted from rubbish being left out too early for collection or, worse, someone carelessly dumping their waste. Whatever the cause, the aftermath is the same; a messy and unwelcoming environment for all of us.

Chidi immediately reported the issue to the District Council. Within hours the area was cleared, and our public space was restored to its lovely condition. This prompt action shows us the power of community involvement.

Chidi urges everyone to join him in keeping Hillyfields and our other neighbourhoods clean. Let's be vigilant, so if you see abandoned waste or fly-tipping, don't hesitate to report it to the District Council. Every report makes a difference.

Let's work as a community to ensure our streets remain tidy and welcoming, and that we can all take pride in them.

LRA Christmas Quiz 2025

Thank you to all those who sent in their quiz, and to the very many who told us they hadn't because they were stuck on one clue or another. First out of the hat, and all correct, was Peter Kempe, who wins a £20 book token. The answers can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/LRAQuiz2025>

Congratulations to everyone who took part in this annual event. Happy New Year to you all.

Essex waste no longer sent to landfills

General rubbish collected from Essex households is now being treated at Rivenhall, an Energy from Waste (EfW) plant near Braintree. This is a major milestone in delivering the Waste Strategy for Essex. One of the key targets was to stop using landfills by 2030, so the target has been met five years early.

Sending rubbish to landfill is the worst thing for waste, as it breaks down slowly and emits gases which are harmful to the environment.

Community care: accumulated waste in Roding ward

As LRA Cllr Chidi Nweke was going about his round in Roding ward, he came across a very concerning situation where waste has been accumulating outside the front gardens of three council properties for over three months. This buildup of refuse not only detracts from the visual appeal of our neighbourhoods but can also have detrimental effects, attract pests, and diminish the quality of our living environment.

Recognising the importance of addressing this issue, Chidi felt it was essential to get to the bottom of why this waste had been left unattended for so long he promptly reached out to our District Council officers to investigate the situation further, ensuring that the cause was fully understood.

After a thorough investigation, it became clear that the residents of these properties, due to their age, were struggling to manage the waste on their own. This revelation highlighted a crucial aspect of our community; the need for support and understanding for our neighbours who may be facing challenges.

In light of this, Chidi encouraged District Council officers to step in and lend a helping hand. After engaging in conversations with the residents, arrangements were successfully made for the removal of the accumulated waste, ensuring our community remains clean and welcoming.

Burglars caught red-handed

Two burglars were apprehended in Loughton after attempting to break into a home, after police were called when the homeowner, alerted by his security cameras while away, noticed suspicious activity.

Within 15 minutes, officers from the Loughton Local Policing Team arrived and arrested the suspects, who had entered the property through an upstairs window and caused damage to doors, windows, and wiring in an effort to disable security systems.

They admitted the charges and were sentenced at Chelmsford Crown Court to 14 months in prison.

Arrests after High Road robbery

Two males were arrested following reports of a robbery on the High Road on 10th December.

The victim was threatened with a knife and had their phone taken. The suspects made off on a stolen moped and were detained by police within 10 minutes of the offence.

