

LRA's Loughton Life Newsletter

Members' July Edition

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

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

New Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor

LRA Cllr Stephen Harriman is the new Town Mayor for 2026/27, with LRA Cllr Les House his deputy.

Stephen has lived in Loughton with his wife and family since 1994. He is a relatively new member of the Town Council, having joined in 2024. He currently represents St John's Ward and serves on



Source: Loughton Town Council

the Environment and Heritage Committee. As a resident of Loughton, Stephen looks forward to contributing to the town's managed development and successful future.

Members said they were pleased to see Cllr House back in action and on the road to recovery, and that it was only right that he resumed the position of Deputy Mayor.

Members also paid tribute to the work of the outgoing Mayor, LRA Cllr David Wixley, commenting that he had done "a wonderful job as Mayor, chairing our meetings appropriately and acting as the voice of the Town Council at community events". David said he had greatly enjoyed his year in office and was sad to be "hanging up his chain".

Town Council 30th Anniversary

To mark the 30th Anniversary of the conception of Loughton Town Council, long serving certificates have been presented to the following Town Council members.

LRA Cllr Chris Pond, founding member who joined in 1996, was awarded a special certificate for his continuous service of 30 years and a gold certificate for 20+ years.

Independent Cllr Stephen Murray, also a founding member, who had a break in service from 2004-2008, was awarded a gold certificate of 20+ years.

LRA Cllr Rose Brookes, who joined in 2004 and had a break in service from 2012-2016, LRA Cllr Carol Davies who joined in 2008 and LRA Cllr David Wixley who joined in 2004, were all awarded a silver certificate for services of 15+ years.

LRA Cllrs Stella Murphy and Mick Stubbings, who both joined in 2016, were awarded bronze certificates for services of 10+ years.



Local election results

A message from Cllr Chidi Nweke, Leader of Loughton Residents Association, following the recent elections.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported the Loughton Residents Association during the recent elections. Whether you delivered leaflets, knocked on doors, encouraged us, voted for us, or simply stood with us, your commitment and belief in our work for Loughton is deeply appreciated.

Thanks to the efforts of our candidates, volunteers, members and supporters, we were able to retain our District Council seats in Loughton Forest, Loughton Roding and Loughton St John's wards. This is something we should be proud of, especially in what was a very difficult and unpredictable election.

However, we must also be honest about the reality we now face. Sadly, we lost Loughton Fairmead ward at District Council level to Reform. We also did not win the two County Council seats that represent Loughton at Essex County Council.

It is deeply disappointing to see hardworking, dedicated and well-known LRA members such as Chris Pond not returned to the County Council and David Wixley not getting elected to the District Council. Both have given so much to our community over many years, and their commitment to Loughton is beyond question. Chris remains both a District and Town Cllr and David a Town Cllr and we are grateful that they will continue to serve our community in those roles. While these results are painful, they have strengthened our resolve. We must now come together, work harder, listen more closely, and rebuild support across all parts of Loughton. Our focus must be on reconnecting with residents, understanding their concerns, and showing clearly that the LRA remains the strongest local voice for our town.

I am truly grateful for all the support given so far, but we now need to double down. We must organise, campaign and communicate better than ever before if we are to regain the trust and support of residents and recover these seats at the next election in May 2027.

The rise of divisive politics and misinformation makes our role even more important. As a residents' association, we are not driven by national party politics. We are here for Loughton, for our residents, and for the issues that matter most to our community.

I would therefore encourage all members to become more active where possible. Whether through volunteering, delivering leaflets, attending meetings, speaking to neighbours, helping with communications, or encouraging others to join as paying members, every contribution matters.

Our thanks to all the residents who support LRA

Police roads operation

Recently, specialist roads policing officers and partners conducted an operation to tackle unsafe driving by focusing on identifying dangerous driving behaviours. Five arrests were made for drink or drug driving offences, and officers detected 46 seatbelt offences, 39 mobile phone offences, three careless driving offences, and 30 speeding offences detected by a mobile safety camera.

Man charged after armed arrest

A man has been charged with a series of offences after being arrested by armed officers in Loughton. It comes as part of an ongoing investigation by our serious and organised crime unit into the supply of Class A drugs in Essex.

The arrest was carried out as part of a strike co-ordinated by armed officers in Alderton Hill. Searches were then carried out in a vehicle in which the man was travelling and his home address. Among the items seized were a handgun, ammunition, four blades, significant quantities of Class A drugs, cash as well as a number of electronic devices.

The man has been charged with offences linked to firearms, weapons, drug supply and criminal property. He has appeared in court and is being kept in prison until his next hearing later this month. Three other people were also arrested as part of the operation and have since been released on bail while enquiries continue

Recycling shredded paper

Shredded paper can go into your blue-lidded recycling bin for collection, along with paper, card, newspapers and magazines.

Food waste update for flats

The District Council has announced that the next step in the new food and garden waste service will focus on residents living in flats with an existing communal, green-lidded food waste bin. Every affected flat will receive a 7-litre kitchen food waste caddy. The lid of the existing, green-lidded communal food waste bin will be changed to a brown lid, labelled 'food only'. The kitchen caddy is for indoor use and should be emptied into the communal, brown-lidded food waste bin located on site. Food waste will continue to be collected weekly on the usual collection day.

The Lopping Endowment

The Directors give notice that the 141st Annual Meeting will be held at Lopping Hall on Wednesday 8th July 2026 at 8.00 pm, when the Accounts and Report for the year ended 31st December 2025 will be presented.

Notice is also given that there will be an election of two Directors to serve for three years.

The names of any person wishing to stand must be entered on a nomination form to be obtained from the Secretary at Lopping Hall, and which must be delivered to the Secretary, duly completed, on or before Monday 29th June 2026. The names of the persons duly nominated will be announced at the above meeting, and the election of the Directors will then be proceeded with and completed.

Persons attending the Meeting are reminded that under the Scheme all those residents on the Electoral Register in the Parish of Loughton, and the Ancient Parish of Loughton, are entitled to vote, voting by proxy is not permitted.

Extensive Thames Water roadworks for next three years

Thames Water are closing various roads around town for extended periods as they replace 19km of water mains pipes across Loughton. The project will run for three years and cost £30 million with work taking place on over 60 roads. The aim is to replace old water mains and reduce the number of significant leaks that cause unpredictable disruption. The result should be fewer leaks and greater ability to control the flow of water when there are issues.

Works will generally take place Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm, and on Saturdays 8am to 6pm if required. Access will be maintained for residents, businesses and emergency services throughout the works. Thames Water provide more information on roads that will be affected and how traffic will be managed which you can find at <https://tinyurl.com/waterupgrade2026>. If you have any questions, you can call Thames Water on 0800 316 9800 (quote BB01434794). Alternatively, you can speak to the manager on site.

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 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		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 Joyce Obaseki (T) Whitehills Road 020 3004 7286 Malachi Fontenelle (T)	
Loughton Forest District Area LRA Cllrs Richard Cohen (D) Michael Owen (D) Baldwins Hill 07467 430145 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 Roding District Area LRA Cllrs 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	
		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 John Walker 07779 338868 Judith Walker 07855 265835 Mark Dalton 07719 736901 Martine Groman-Marks 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.

295-309 High Road (opposite the Methodist Church)

The application proposes a roof extension to provide an additional floor of residential accommodation comprising four flats, associated amenity space and a new extension of existing staircase and additional escape staircase. This is a resubmission of application EPF/3294/21.



LRAPG has objected to this application on parking grounds. The building currently comprises 15 residential dwellings at the upper floors and, according to the application form, has no parking. Council policy requires eight additional parking spaces, but the applicant proposes no parking. The application claims it will be car free but this cannot be guaranteed without a legal agreement to prevent the occupiers from owning cars and even this is almost impossible to monitor and enforce.

LRAPG considers the suggestion by the County Council to ask for 6 one day travel vouchers is a joke. The parking restrictions won't stop residents from owning cars and parking them further away. The applicant should provide parking spaces to make the application acceptable.

Reference EPF/0651/26. The formal deadline for comments was 6th May.

The Last Post, 227 High Road

LRAPG has been approached regarding works taking place at the Last Post without the benefit of planning permission. For the avoidance of doubt the vacant pub was granted planning permission last year by the council for a change of use from a pub with food to a shared space comprising health and wellbeing services, retail, a café on the ground floor and offices on the first floor, with partial removal of existing rear buildings and all services to be replaced with a new extension to the rear.



Old Loughton Rugby Club, Squirrels Lane, Buckhurst Hill

This application proposes construction of six padel courts, redevelopment of the old club house and associated works. LRAPG has objected to this application for multiple reasons. Padel Courts are very popular and members will travel distances to use them. We anticipate all six courts will be used most of the time and their cars will use Hornbeam Road, Chestnut Avenue and Squirrels Lane which are too narrow and cannot accommodate two-way traffic. Also the application does not include a parking layout to cater for these vehicles.

It is well documented Padel Courts greatly disturb neighbours and have caused significant problems when they have replaced traditional tennis courts; it is the unpredictable thud of balls against the walls and rackets and shouting of players that is disruptive for neighbours

The proposed opening times of 7am to 11pm will cause disruption to neighbours, along with the courts being floodlit during winter months, and opening hours should be reduced. Whilst sports facilities are appropriate in Green Belt land, the Padel Courts, by reason of their design, size, and unusual configuration at angles to the prevailing buildings, harms the openness of the Green Belt.

Reference EPF/0912/26. The formal deadline for comments was 4th June.

Helping a resident when it matters

Recently, during a ward walkabout, an elderly resident stopped to speak with LRA Cllrs. Following repair work carried out in her flat, her toilet stopped working. She reported the issue but received no response. Not wanting to complain, she simply got on with things even though this meant flushing her toilet with a bucket.

Hearing that a 76-year-old woman was having to live like this, LRA Cllr Chidi Nweke took up the case and contacted the District Council to demand urgent action.

Chidi is pleased to share that the repair was carried out the very next day, and the resident was happy to tell us that everything has now been properly resolved.

This incident is why LRA is out in the community and listening to residents. Sometimes a small intervention can make a huge difference to someone's daily life.

It is a real privilege to have people share their concerns with us, and we take that responsibility seriously. Thank you to all who take the time to speak with us; your voices guide the work we do.

What do the election results mean for our local Councils?

For the County Council, LRA no longer has representation. Also, the Conservatives have lost their majority to Reform who now control the Council and have a majority as large as the previous conservative one.

For the District Council, there were 18 seats up for election this year out of a total of 54. LRA stood for the four Loughton seats and held three. LRA now has 10 seats, the Conservatives 19 seats, Reform 12 seats, the Liberal Democrats 6 seats, and others have 7 seats. No one party has a majority. Going forward separate parties will need to work together to get anything done, and the LRA District Cllr group has already considered this point and discussions have started.

This situation, however, is likely to be short-lived as the plan for Local Government Reorganisation means that the County Council and District Council will cease to be after 1st April 2028 and replaced by five new councils covering separate areas of Essex. For our area Epping Forest District Council will be absorbed into a new West Essex council which will also include the current local government areas of Harlow and Uttlesford. Elections to these new councils will take place in May 2027.

For the Town Council, there were no elections this year, so LRA retains its 21 (out of 22) Town Cllrs with the next elections in 2028.

Find us at www.loughtonresidents.org.uk

Update on Cllrs

Cllrs Louise Mead and Roger Baldwin recently made a decision to leave Loughton Residents Association and form a new group called "Residents for Loughton".

First, it is right that we thank both Louise and Roger for the contribution they have made as LRA Cllrs over the years. Both have served Loughton in different capacities, and we recognise the time, energy and commitment that public service requires. We wish them well in continuing to serve their residents.

However, we also believe it is important to correct the record following the public statement that has been issued about their reasons for leaving LRA.

LRA strongly rejects the suggestion that the Association has been "taken over" by a small group of Cllrs, or that decisions have been driven by private agendas. The recent decisions taken within LRA have been based on discussion, debate, and the majority view of LRA Cllrs and members involved in the relevant processes.

The central disagreement was not about personalities. It was about the political direction of LRA.

Following the May elections, there were discussions about whether LRA should enter into an arrangement, whether formal or informal, with the Conservative Group at Epping Forest District Council. This included the possibility of a coalition-style arrangement, support for Conservative positions, and potential roles within the administration.

The majority view within LRA was clear: LRA should not enter into formal arrangement with the Conservatives, or any other national political party as it would be contrary to the independent, residents-first principles on which LRA was founded and on which our Cllrs were elected.

Residents voted for LRA Cllrs because they wanted independent local representation, not party-political deals or arrangements that could compromise our ability to speak freely for Loughton.

This does not mean LRA refuses to work with others. Far from it. LRA Cllrs will always work constructively with Cllrs from any group where it benefits residents. But there is a clear difference between constructive cooperation on individual issues and entering into a formal political arrangement with a national party.

There has also been criticism of discussions with the Epping Forest Independent Group. Again, we believe this has been misrepresented. The purpose of those discussions was to explore how independent and residents-focused Cllrs could work together to protect effective scrutiny, maintain a strong independent voice at district level, and ensure Loughton residents continue to be properly represented.

This was not a takeover. It was not a private deal. It was a response to the political reality at Epping Forest District Council and was discussed among LRA Cllrs. A clear majority supported working with other independent Cllrs rather than entering into a formal arrangement with the Conservatives.

It is also disappointing that recent democratic decisions within LRA have been described as intimidation, threats or internal manoeuvring. Robust disagreement is not the same as intimidation. LRA is a democratic organisation, and all Cllrs must accept that no individual Cllr, however experienced, can override the majority view of the group.

Where concerns were raised about leadership, committee

positions, or voting decisions, they were raised because members and Cllrs felt that LRA's agreed position and residents-first mandate were not being properly reflected. It is never easy to have these conversations, but accountability is part of public life and any democratic organisation.

The new LRA constitution and Executive arrangements were agreed through the Association's democratic processes. They were not designed to remove LRA's values. They were designed to strengthen accountability, clarity and good governance.

LRA remains the same residents-led organisation in its purpose: to stand up for Loughton, protect our town, represent local people, and put residents before national party politics.

We will not be distracted by division. We will not enter into public personal attacks. Our focus remains on the work residents elected us to do. LRA will continue to: put Loughton residents first; remain independent of national party control; work constructively with all Cllrs where it benefits residents; oppose formal political arrangements that compromise our independence; uphold democratic decision-making within the Association; focus on local issues, local services, scrutiny, accountability and community wellbeing.

We understand that members may have questions, and we will do our best to answer them openly and respectfully. This is a difficult moment, but it is also an opportunity to reaffirm what LRA stands for. LRA was created to give Loughton a strong independent voice. That remains our purpose today. Thank you for your continued support.

Local Government Reorganisation



Further details have been released on next steps as plans are made for introducing the five new councils covering Essex.

Epping Forest District Council will be absorbed into a new West Essex council which will also include the current local government areas of Harlow and Uttlesford.

Elections for the new councils will take place in May 2027. After the elections, a shadow council will be set up. A shadow council is a temporary body made up of the newly elected Cllrs. Its role is to:

- prepare for the official launch of the new councils
- agree budgets, policies, and governance arrangements
- ensure everything is ready for the transfer of services from 1 April 2028.

Until 1 April 2028, all day-to-day services will continue to be run by Essex County Council and the 15 unitary, district, city and borough councils in Greater Essex. After that date, the new councils will begin to align services, systems and ways of working. This won't happen all at once. Instead, they will introduce changes gradually over time to make sure they are well planned, practical and easy for residents to adapt to.

The Government has already announced that the Greater Essex Mayoral election will take place in May 2028.

