



LRA's Loughton News

14 February 2025

In this issue, we report that [Essex will be included in the government's Priority Programme for devolution](#), with elections postponed and work starting on how council structures and organisations will change.

Also in this issue we report on [plans for the site of the Princess of Wales site in Westall Road](#), and an appeal against [a refusal of a planning application for 227 High Road](#).

There's an update on the [recent timetable changes for the Central Line](#), [the Loughton Wombles out and about](#), [Play in the Park events in April](#), and the introduction of [blue lidded wheeled bins for recycling from June](#).

Winter is the time to see [the Forest's 55,000 pollard trees](#) while they are bare of leaves. [Guided walks are also available](#) in March and April. [Read also about the River Roding](#) including efforts to improve it and how you could join those efforts.

Thank you for being part of LRA. Can you please help us by making sure [your membership](#) is paid up for 2025 (**and thank you if you already have paid**).

You can contact us by emailing contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk to raise an issue, give your views, or offer help.

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LRA News

Local Government Restructure and Elections

As expected, [the Government has agreed to the County Council's request](#) to include Essex in the government's Priority Programme for devolution ([background on our website](#)). The Order postponing the election has now been laid before Parliament ([SI 2025/137](#)).

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).

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 get the new structures and organisations in place.

We shall keep members updated as this unfolds.

Safety First: Securing Our Community

During LRA Cllr Chidi Nweke's routine checks in his ward he discovered that some hoarding at Ladyfields had blown down due to the strong winds experienced in December 2024. As he saw the plywood pieces lying on the footpath, he was concerned about potential safety hazards for pedestrians.

He wasted no time in reporting this to the District Council and urged them to treat it as a priority. Prompt action was taken, and the broken hoarding was quickly repaired, ensuring that the site was secured and that everyone passing by could do so safely.



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 been 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.

Remembering Those from LRA

We recently learned that Joe Hackett, one of the founding members of LRA in 1980, died in 2023. LRA was originally formed as the Central Loughton Residents Society over concerns with a supermarket development (now Morrisons) on the High Road. Joe started a petition in the local roads which eventually went to a planning inspector and then, with the help of others, organised a petition, a high road stall, a protest meeting and made resident's views known to the Council.

Your LRA Membership for 2025

The latest issue of the members edition of Loughton Life is currently being delivered, along with a letter either confirming that you've already paid for 2025 or asking you to renew your membership (only £5 a year).

If you've already paid, thank you!

If not, can you please arrange a payment either by a bank transfer or posting a cheque ([how to do this](#)).

Planning and Licensing

[Read more on our website](#) about Planning and Licensing, the role of the LRA Plans Group (LRAPG), how to get more information and how to comment to the Town Council and the District Council, and to the LRA Plans Group – please have your say.

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 document](#) (PDF) 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](#) (PDF) 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.

We had previously reported that 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 support the loss of the pub which caused all sorts of antisocial behaviour problems when it was open.

LPRPG 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 ends 6 February.

227 High Road (previously The Last Post)

[We reported previously](#) on [this application](#) 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](#)

Roads, Parking and Travel

Planned Road Closures

- High Road - the road south to Buckhurst Hill will be closed 24 February to 1 March between 8pm and 5am for signage installation and road marking works by Essex Highways. [More](#)
- Manor Road - the road will be closed 24 February to 1 March between 8pm and 5am for signage installation and road marking works by Essex Highways. [More](#)
- Avondale Drive - the road will be closed 17-21 February in the area where the road crosses the bridge over Loughton Brook to excavate trial holes to determine the location of utilities under the surface. [More](#)
- Jessel Drive, and Burney Drive north of Goldingham Avenue - the road will be closed 19 February for machine surfacing by the County Council. [More](#)



[Check here for the latest updates](#), and for other planned roadworks including ones that involve only temporary traffic lights.

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 so introduced a temporary timetable with fewer services.



Timetable changes on 27 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. [More](#). 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. [More](#) p3 (PDF).

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.

Police, Fire and Crime

The Police in December

Here is a snapshot showing some of the things your Epping Forest District Officers have dealt with in December 2024. They have:

- helped to find 33 people who were reported missing
- responded to 8 mental-health related incidents
- investigated 61 reports of antisocial behaviour
- attended 53 road traffic collisions
- investigated 196 reports of domestic violence
- solved 90 crimes
- submitted 310 pieces of intelligence.



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.

Scam Warning: Booking.com

If you have used booking.com to book holidays or accommodation, [Action Fraud](#) have warned you could be targeted with emails or messages requesting payments from hotels who have had their account taken over by fraudsters.


Fraudsters have been sending in-app messages, emails, and WhatsApp messages to customers, deceiving them into making payment and/or requesting credit card details. The specific account takeovers are likely to be the result of a targeted phishing attack against the hotel or accommodation provider, and not Booking.com's backend system or infrastructure. [More and how to protect yourself.](#)

Your Mobile Phone IMEI

Every phone has an IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identity) number. The IMEI can help track the phone down if it's lost or stolen. To find your phone IMEI number key in *#06# and press dial and make note of it. [More advice from the police on mobile phones.](#)

AI Deceiving

Free Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are aiding fraudsters in their crimes, making it harder to spot fakes at a quick glance. The police suggest these tips to help avoid scams:

- Look for small details: AI often struggles with replicating hands and hair accurately.
- Check for blurriness: Is part of the image blurry or looking odd?
- Check the wording: Are the phrases and wording unusual?
- Use reverse image search: If you're unsure about an image in an advert or profile, do a [reverse image search](#) to see if it's been used elsewhere (click on the  icon)



More from the Police

[Read more](#) from the police for our local area including other news and crime statistics. The data is updated to December 2024.

Some items we report on come from the Dispatch Newsletter from Essex Police. You can [subscribe here for free](#) (choose the Epping Forest edition)

Council News

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. [More](#)

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.

Play in the Park in April

Play in the park is all about playing games and having fun outdoors. No need to book, just drop in at any time. The Play in the Park team bring a range of sports equipment and arts & crafts resources for children and their parents/carers to enjoy together. The team will be there to help organise activities and games all totally free of charge. [More](#) (PDF)

- 8 April - Roding Valley Recreation Ground
- 15 April - Jessel Green Playground

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 July.

Cleaning Up Station Road Approach

The Town Council made contact with Transport for London who had provided proof that the land adjacent to Loughton Station Approach and Roding Valley High School football pitches belongs to the County Council. Officers will therefore write a strong letter to them requesting that all rubbish dropped in this area, which is attracting rat infestations, needs to be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

Local Hall Floors

The hall floor at Murray Hall was sanded, treated and polished in December 2024.

At Kingsley Hall minor repairs were made to two damaged floor sections. It is understood that all the flooring would need to be replaced during the latter part of the next financial year.

New Bench

Following the tragic death of a local Air Cadet, a memorial plaque has been installed on the bench at the corner of Borders Lane and Colson Road.

Blue Lidded Wheeled Bins for Recycling

The District Council has now decided to replace single use clear plastic recycling sacks with a blue lidded wheeled bin to reduce ongoing costs and provide more efficient service delivery. The rollout of the blue bins will start from June. [More](#) (from p27) (PDF)

Attacks on Refuse Collectors Condemned as Shameful

In an incident in Nazeing, two men following a refuse freighter got out of their car to punch and kick refuse collectors to the ground, simply because their road was blocked while the crew collected some recycling. In another incident in Chigwell Row, a resident attacked crew members over a spillage, even though they were trying to clear it up. The attacks took place on 20 December and 15 January.

The District Council condemned these attacks, especially as "the work is physically hard and it can also be dangerous, even before the selfish intervention of impatient motorists who care more about being 2 minutes late than potentially putting someone in hospital." [More](#)

The Council has since said that one of these incidents has been carried out by a District Council tenant, who now be at risk of losing their tenancy due to the attack.

Recycling Centre Bookings

If you've booked a visit to a recycling centre recently, you might have noticed some changes to the online booking system. The booking process remains similar, but it has a new look and several improvements for residents including more options for managing bookings, such as rescheduling existing ones. [Book a visit here](#).

Reading on Waste, Recycling and a More Sustainable Lifestyle

The Essex Library Service and [Love Essex](#) are working together to bring you green reading ideas, with a collection of e-audio and e-books for residents to learn more about waste, recycling and living a more sustainable lifestyle available now on BorrowBox.

Covering everything from reducing plastics, composting, cooking, repairing, or just living with less, these books will inspire, inform, inspire and challenge you to think differently about what you throw away. [More](#) and [details on BorrowBox](#).

You'll need an Essex Library Card - [here's how to get one, free!](#)



Home Habits Survey

[LoveEssex](#) has launched a new resident survey aimed at gathering valuable insights on composting, cloth nappies and reusable period products. They want to hear from you regardless of whether you already do these things, have been thinking about doing them, or haven't tried them at all. [More](#) and [take the survey](#). The survey closes 20 February.

Let's SCRAP fly-tipping!

Fly-tipping is the illegal dumping of waste on land which doesn't have a waste licence. This could include leaving items by a bin, closed charity shop or recycling centre. Household waste was found in over 60% of fly tips across Essex in the past 3 years and cost taxpayers around £1 million to clean up in 2022/23.



In our district there were a total of 2,476 fly-tips reported in 2023/24, marking an increase of 9% from previous years.

We all have a legal duty to ensure our waste is disposed of properly. You can be fined or prosecuted if your waste is fly tipped, even by someone else. When using a waste collector, remember SCRAP:

- SUSPECT all waste collectors. Only let them take your rubbish if they show their waste carrier licence. Write down their vehicle's registration number for your records.
- CHECK the waste collector's license. If in doubt, [check on the Environment Agency's website](#) or call them on 03708 506506.
- REFUSE unexpected offers to take your rubbish. You could be at risk if they fly tip it.
- ASK how your rubbish will be disposed of and ask for evidence.
- PAPERWORK is your proof. Get an invoice, waste transfer note or receipt. Make sure it includes a description of the waste taken and the waste carrier's contact details.

[More](#). [Report fly-tipping here](#). If you see a flytip in action, please call 999. If you have information about a fly-tip in the Forest, call 020 8532 1010.

Free Training Courses

New City College, in partnership with the District Council, provides free training courses and qualifications to residents of the district.

All residents in the district can access a variety of funded courses including Level 1,2 & 3 courses, essential skills, AAT courses and more. [The New City College website](#) shows the courses available. Enrol by the end of March 2025 to take advantage of the free training. [More](#)

Residents can select any paid course on the New City College website. Once the applicant has provided evidence that they live within the district the course fee will be waived.



Tenant Satisfaction Survey

The District Council is running a Tenant Satisfaction Survey, with calls to selected tenants from 17 February. Acuity Research & Practice Ltd will be making calls on the Council's behalf and will only call between 9am-8pm on weekdays and 10am-6pm on Saturdays, the number will display as 01992 905307. Your response will help the District Council gauge your satisfaction with your home and its services.

[More](#)

[Results of the previous survey are here.](#)

Shaping the District Council's Housing Service

The District Council is looking for residents in the district to have their say on housing policies, estates, repairs and more. They are looking for tenants eager to contribute positively to the community and help implement meaningful changes. Participation is free and tenants with a positive attitude who can dedicate some of their time on a voluntary basis are encouraged to sign up. [More](#)

Essex Air Quality Strategy - Have your say

The County Council is running a public consultation on a new Essex Air Quality Strategy. More than one in 20 deaths in Essex are estimated to be linked in some part to air pollution and it is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK.

The new strategy has been jointly developed by councils across Essex, Southend and Thurrock through the Essex Air Quality Consortium. It sets out actions to improve air quality and help reduce the impacts of air pollution on people's health.

[More](#) and [have your say](#). The consultation closes 2 March.

Local News

Local Library Events

[You can see upcoming events at Loughton and Debden libraries here](#). More about the libraries at [Loughton](#) and [Debden](#).

- 19 February - Dementia Support Drop In. [More](#)
- 21 February - Winter Reading Challenge Craft and Storytime. [More](#).



Loughton Library

Essex Libraries are setting aside space upstairs in Loughton Library for use by [Workary](#) (a Community Interest Company) to provide flexible work space for a range of startups, entrepreneurs and remote workers. This could be an alternative space for working from home. Users are charged for using the space.

This does raise concerns over privatisation of what was previously free space for the community. An online public meeting has been called by Save Our Libraries Essex (SOLE) for 24 February for anyone concerned over this development. [More](#)

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.

[More](#) and [fill out the survey](#).

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 Moull 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

Lloyds Bank on The Broadway to Close

The bank have announced the branch is to close on 12 November. [More](#) (PDF)



Can You Help St Clare Hospice?

St Clare Hospice is urgently recruiting more volunteers to meet the demand for its Dementia Support Service, a free, personalised, one-to-one programme that supports the wellbeing of people living with advanced dementia in their own homes.

The service is delivered by specially trained volunteers who engage people with the condition in meaningful, sensory activities designed to enhance their quality of life. But due to an increase in referrals, the charity needs extra volunteers so it can reach more people, and their relatives and carers. [More](#)

Health and Wellbeing

What Can Pharmacists Prescribe Treatments For?

Pharmacists can provide medicine for a range of health condition including over-the-counter treatments for a range of common health issues such as aches and pains, coughs and colds, ear infections, sore throats and other problems.

Pharmacists can now supply several prescription medicine treatments. This includes antibiotics for certain conditions under the Pharmacy First scheme. This service is funded by the NHS, and medicines are provided free to [people exempt from prescription charges](#). If you are not exempt, the usual prescription charge will be applied for each item. [More](#). Check with your local pharmacy for details on what they can do.

Epping Forest

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 £2400.



Pollards in Winter

The Forest contains approximately 55,000 veteran oak, beech and hornbeam pollards. Gloriously knobbly and full of nooks and crannies, winter offers a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the full beauty of these ancient trees while they are bare of leaves. These trees provide homes to a vast array of wildlife; because pollards tend to be long-lived, they offer a haven for organisms that are slow to move and colonize, allowing them time to

establish. [More about pollards, coppices and coppards here.](#)

Local Volunteer Recognised with Freedom of the City of London

Judy Adams of Loughton has been awarded the Freedom of the City of London following more than 50 years' service as a volunteer for Epping Forest.

Since 1975, Mrs Adams has been an active as chairing the Essex Wildlife Trust's Roding Valley Meadows Natural Reserve Management Committee, being the Epping Forest District organiser of the Essex Wildlife Trust, chairing the Friends of Epping Forest, Chairing the Epping Forest Centenary Trust, becoming the Volunteer Manager at the Epping Forest Visitor Centre (2014 to date) and being a Director, Committee Member and Chair of the Epping Forest Heritage Trust (2007 to date). Also she has led free monthly guided walks in Epping Forest for many years, engaging those hard-to-reach residents, often from disadvantaged backgrounds where religion or language barriers exist, to present to them the health and well-being benefits of the great outdoors. [More](#)



Guided Walks

[Epping Forest Heritage Trust](#) (EFHT) have these walks planned:

- 7 March - A Forest Walk After Dark is a linear walk from Loughton to Theydon Bois through the Forest. The walk will take you into the Forest where you will have the unique opportunity to experience the Forest through a different, nighttime, lens, and see it from a different perspective. [Register here](#)
- 15 March - Discover the water features and landscape of the drainage basin of Loughton Brook. Join Gill Hopkins for an opportunity to visit the ponds and streams in Loughton Woods and discover the origins of this landscape and the issues it faces today. [Register here](#)
- 27 April - The inspiration of nature: Clare and Keats. Join local historian Georgina Green for a walk looking for signs of spring and learning about poets and nature in the local area. [Register here](#)

Walks are free for EFHT Members and 'donate what you can' for non-members.

Epping Forest Heritage Trust Strategy - Have Your Say

[Epping Forest Heritage Trust](#) (EFHT), steered by their [Strategy 2022-2025](#) have achieved a lot for the benefit of the Forest. The challenges the Forest faces, from climate change to high levels of pollution, from adjacent development to the biodiversity crisis, mean EFHT need to achieve even more moving forward.

To help focus their activity moving forward, the Trustees have developed a new [draft strategy for 2025-2030](#), and would now like your feedback on that draft. [Have your say here](#).

Forest Focus - January 2025

Some items here come from Forest Focus. The edition for [January](#) has lots more interesting articles. You can [subscribe here for free](#).



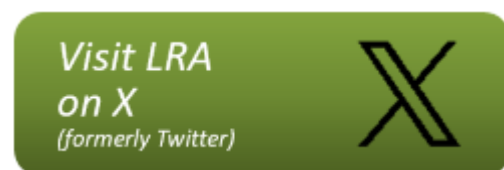
Thank you for supporting LRA.

These regular news emails are issued every 3-4 weeks, with some news special emails issued from time to time. The next news email is planned to be issued on Friday 7 March.

Get more from LRA and keep up with what's happening between issues of Loughton News



All our past issues of Loughton News emails, Loughton Life, and more



The latest news and items of interest. You don't need to be registered for either

1. If you find any links not working or anything else is wrong let us know at loughtonnews@LoughtonResidents.co.uk. Links to other websites are beyond our control and may not work over time.
2. LRA gives no warranty about, and will take no responsibility for, items or services offered – purchasers/users should make their own enquiries, and will be acting at their own risk.

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