



LRA's Loughton News

13 February 2021

With news of the proposed Clean Air Zone for Epping Forest stirring debate, we have [the latest update](#). Also [a Public Inquiry has been announced](#) into the proposed developments on Borders Lane, and we are asking you to make your views known to the Planning Inspector.

With the Covid pandemic continuing to affect our daily lives, the [current local data is here](#) with [information on vaccinations](#) for Essex as they become more widely available, plus [Murray Hall on Borders Lane](#) will be used as a vaccination centre.

Elections in May are still expected. **We urge all residents to [ask for a postal vote](#)** as nobody can foresee what Covid conditions will be at the time. The form to complete is just one page and easy to complete.

We note with concern the [closure of shops on the High Road](#), and there's an update on [Council Tax](#) from April 2021.

Thank you for being an LRA member. LRA operates only because of your support and [we will be very grateful for your 2021 subscriptions](#) as we have not been able to send out our usual subscription reminders.

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

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LRA depends on your subscriptions!

You receive these news bulletins because you're an LRA member.

At only £5 a year, we think it's a real bargain, especially as LRA is run 100% by volunteers in your town.

We'd be very grateful if you could pay your 2021 subscriptions now, preferably by bank transfer or standing order, or even with a cheque: [here's how](#).

Because of the Covid-19 crisis, we can't deliver our usual subscription reminders.

And if you're not sure whether you've paid for 2020, you can check by emailing membercheck@loughtonresidents.co.uk and if appropriate combine the two, please.

LRA News

Charging to drive through an Epping Forest Clean Air Zone?

Late on a Friday just before Christmas, the District Council announced a decision to introduce an Interim Air Pollution Strategy, including a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) for the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - essentially the main Forest south of Epping. It is common ground that the Forest is in a poor state from the effects of pollution from vehicles and from domestic gas boilers. [Background on our website.](#)

Groups of District Cllrs, led by LRA Cllr Chris Pond, used Council procedures to challenge the decision at a committee meeting in January, and on Monday this week at an Extraordinary Full Meeting of the Council (see the recording of the meeting [here](#)). On both occasions the Conservative administration closed ranks to defeat the challenges. It was very clear from comments on social media in the run-up to Monday's meeting that a large number of District residents were upset about the Council's approach, which will allow extra housing to be built close to the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation. LRA believes the Council should have waited for a few months until the whole subject could be properly and publicly discussed in front of the Planning Inspector as part of the debate on the draft Local Plan.

On Monday evening the Conservative administration forced through a change to the motion which retains their original decision and sets up an all-party to consider the Interim Strategy and possible additions to it to reduce the likelihood of a CAZ being needed.

This is ironic, as the Conservative administration could have approached the problem this way after a Council discussion on the topic last July; instead, they stayed silent and produced the Interim Strategy as a *fait accompli* in December. Public pressure has now forced them to agree to this being discussed in detail. They obviously hoped it would go through "on the nod".

The District Council can now start granting planning permission to applications that have been held up, (although this does not include sites allocated in the draft Local Plan such as those on Borders Lane - see next item). ***However, there will now be no way of reversing the permissions once they've been granted if the Inspector rules against the Interim Strategy.***

LRA comment: we are disappointed by the Conservative administration's response and by some of the petty party-politicking some Conservative Cllrs indulged in. We will continue to resist damage to the Forest SAC by drowning Loughton and Epping in extra housing.



Developments on Borders Lane: Lucton's Field and the College Middle Site

There is a major change for the two College Site planning applications off Borders Lane. The College sold the land to Fairview Homes and both sites are in the District Local Plan for building new homes. Fairview Homes have appealed because the District Council has not made a decision. A Public Inquiry will start on

April 13th and the decision for both planning applications will be taken by Mr Robins, a Government appointed Planning Inspector.

Lots of new homes have been built in Loughton in the last 30-40 years but our lovely town has reached saturation for road traffic, congestion, air pollution, parking spaces, Central Line capacity, school places, open spaces for exercise, recreation facilities, police enforcement and it's hard to get a doctor's appointment. The District Council has encouraged development of both sites and proposed is an increased number of flats - 25% and 30% more than is prescribed for each site in the District Local Plan.

Proposed details: Five of the eight blocks of flats are four and five storeys high. This is a total of 402 flats and 19 houses but the District Council's Local Plan specifies 328 homes. This is a total of 769



bedrooms but only 327 car parking spaces - less than half a space per bedroom. A one bed flat will have 1-2 people and 1-2 cars but many flats are intended for families and would result in 800-1000 extra cars using our roads several times a day. They would add to the congestion we already suffer for much of most days.

The District Council must now submit evidence to the Public Inquiry including what their recommendation would have been had the applications not been appealed. This evidence will be considered by the Inspector along with any further views from local residents.

It's now vital that as many residents as possible submit their views directly to the Inspector, so please send a 5-6 bullet point email to leanne.palmer@planninginspectorate.gov.uk by **February 19th midnight**:

- Use an email subject of 'College Middle & Field Sites - Public Inquiry Ref APP/J1535/W/20/3258787 & APP/J1535/W/20/3263876'.
- The second and third paragraphs above lists most planning issues so all that's needed is to put them in your own words.
- Include your name and address.

If you raised objections to the District Council last year, you can use the same objections this time. More background is on our website on [Lucton's Field](#) and the [Middle Site](#).

Interest in our town and Common Sense

LRA is a diverse group of people looking after our town and wider area.

We need a few more, like-minded people to help our experienced teams and to influence LRA's future aims and achievements. Can you help us?

LRA works because it represents the views of many residents collectively. You may be surprised how you can help protect and shape our future.

Please call Michael 020 8508 4457 or Chris 020 8508 2361 or contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk

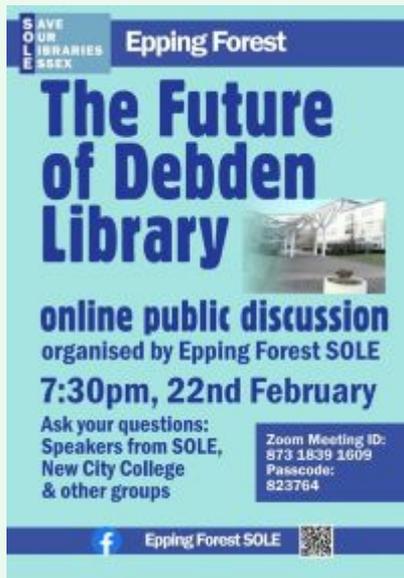
Marlescroft Way Green

Local residents and Cllrs were very concerned when the District Council announced plans to build 24+ housing units on Marlescroft Way Green ([see here](#), phase 5.2). However, prompt intervention by LRA Cllr Chris Roberts and Independent Cllr Stephen Murray has led the Council to withdraw the proposal. It seems no-one at the Council had bothered to check the history of the site - in 2019 residents, organised by local LRA Cllrs Chris & Debbie Roberts, defeated plans to destroy this green when the Council planned to build a car park for the vehicles used by the 70 to 80

council maintenance staff working at Oakwood Hill.

We understand that the green was under water after the recent heavy rains so, apart from its great value as a green space, it is obviously unsuitable for either parking or housing.

See also LRA Cllr Chris Roberts' comments on the [Facebook page "Save Marlescroft Way Green"](#).



Debden Library meeting

New City College (Borders Lane) have offered to take over the running of Debden Library, as part of the County Council's proposed cutbacks in library services. A concerned group of residents has formed SOLE, and they have organised an online public discussion at 7.30pm on Monday February 22nd. [More](#)

LRA comment: LRA Cllr Chris Pond has been pressing for the Library to move to a shop unit in The Broadway; this would increase the use of the Library, and also support The Broadway as a place to visit.

New nursery at 1 Connaught Avenue

LRA Cllr Roger Baldwin was asked about a change of use from offices to a nursery here, which in the past would have needed a planning application. We replied that last September the Government changed the Use Classes Order so that nurseries, creches etc are now in the same Use Class as offices, and so no planning application is needed.

LRA comment: in the past the planning system allowed change of use proposals to be properly and publicly examined and LRAPG and residents have been able to oppose unsuitable changes. Unfortunately, despite objections from the LRA and many other bodies and individuals, the Government has removed this local democratic control mechanism, along with many others, leaving residents with significantly less influence over the town we live in.

Wallers Hoppet

The residents of Wallers Hoppet at the top of York Hill have been getting vehicles entering their cul de sac thinking it a through road. They asked the County Council for a No Through Road sign but were refused because of conservation area issues, however did suggest replacing an existing street sign with a new one incorporating the T symbol. LRA Cllr Caroline Pond followed this up, and it is now in the process of being installed.

Excel Competent Users - LRA Needs You

LRA is successful because, as a diverse group of people, we combine our skills and experience to help our town.

Two residents gave their Excel expertise to help LRA for years and are keen to handover to new volunteers. Can you help us?

Please call Michael 020 8508 4457 or Chris 020 8508 2361
or contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk

Coronavirus/Covid-19

National lockdown: stay at home

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is spreading fast.

Do not leave your home unless necessary.

1 in 3 people who have the virus have no symptoms, so you could be spreading it without knowing it.



[Find out what the rules are](#)

More from the [government](#) and [advice from the NHS](#)

How the virus is spreading locally

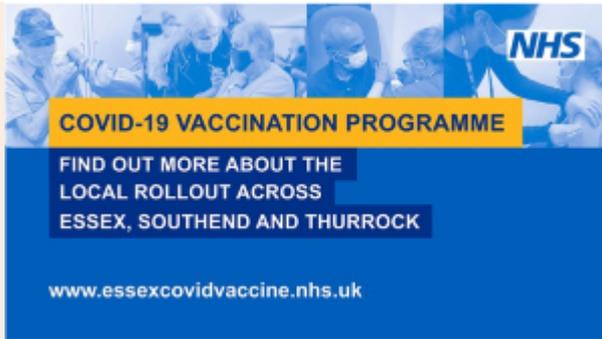
Since early January, the infection rates in Epping Forest district have fallen locally. However there is a delay between infection rates rising/falling, subsequent hospital admissions and, sadly, deaths. Since our last Loughton News email on January 23rd, another 26 people in Epping Forest District have died. [More local data](#). While the drop of infection rates is positive news, following the guidelines to keep infection rates down will remain important for some time to come to help control the spread of the virus.

For statistical purposes, Loughton is divided into four areas - you can see data for Loughton [North](#), [East](#), [West](#) and [South](#).

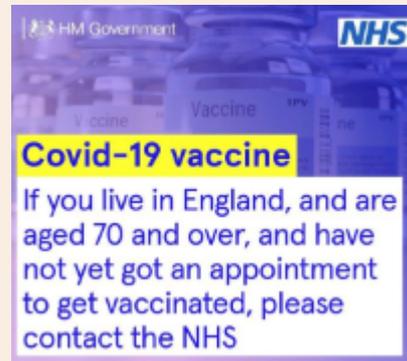
More details can be found on [this interactive map](#), [data for Essex is here](#) and the Office for National Statistics also publish [full national data](#).

Vaccine Information for Essex

[A new website](#) is now live to offer information and support on the Covid-19 vaccine including FAQs, Mythbusters, and details on the vaccination process. Remember, the



NHS will let you know when it's your turn to have the vaccine.



People aged 70 and over who have not yet been vaccinated - but want one - can contact the NHS to arrange a jab. An appointment can be made [online](#) or by calling 119 free of charge.

Dr Mike Gogarty (Essex County Council's Director of Public Health) has said that "at last we can start to see the light at the end of the tunnel. We can start to see a way that these deaths, this illness, these restrictions can stop and that is the availability of the vaccines. It's really important you understand the facts about the vaccines, you seek out the facts from legitimate good sites and any questions you have, you get a sensible clear answer to them." Watch the [full video](#).

There have been multiple reports of residents in Essex and Kent receiving fraudulent texts or emails offering the COVID-19 vaccine. *The vaccine is free and the NHS will never ask for your payment details.*

NHS use of Murray Hall, Borders Lane

The Town Council has agreed to let the National Health Service (NHS) use the Murray Hall as a Covid-19 vaccination centre to combat the current pandemic, 8am to 8pm each day, 7 days a week and initially for 6 months from March 3rd. The Council was mindful of the potential inconvenience to the regular hirers and the loss of income to the Town Council but agreed in order to support the NHS, which is under intense pressure.



Can you catch the virus outside?

The chances are greatly reduced, compared with meeting people indoors, but it still can happen – see [here](#).

Business Support Grants

Having already paid out over £31m in grants to small businesses within the district and those in the retail, hospitality and leisure industries, the Government introduced further grants for these sectors at the end of October last year as the District entered Tier 2 of the Covid-19 restrictions.

This was almost immediately followed by further restrictions leading to the current Tier 5 national lockdown, which resulted, at one point, in the District Council having 10 open and closed grant schemes that local businesses could apply for. In 3 months (November 2020 – January 2021) the District Council has issued approximately £1.5m in Government grants to support businesses across the District; this work and support is ongoing.

Test & Trace Support Payments

Last autumn the Government launched the Test & Trace Support Payment Scheme designed to help stop the spread of Covid-19 by encouraging those required by law to self-isolate if testing positive for the virus or if identified as a contact of someone who has tested positive by the NHS Test & Trace scheme.

To support District residents whose earnings were/are affected by staying at home and isolating for 14 days, the District Council was asked by the Government to set up a local Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme: eligible residents can apply to the council for a one-off payment of £500. To end-January the Council had processed over 400 claims and made over 200 payments; this work and support is ongoing.

District Council Support

The District Council has [further information and guidance here](#), plus support for [residents](#) and [businesses](#), and [help for getting you back on your feet](#).

Loughton Covid-19 Mutual Aid Group

This Loughton group connects neighbours to offer practical help during the pandemic, through Facebook and WhatsApp groups. [More](#)

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.

The District Council takes the decisions on planning applications. The application will be decided upon by a Council Officer or by Cllrs in a District Council Planning Committee, and residents' comments on the proposals will be taken into account but not necessarily agreed with. This is a quasi-legal process, and decisions have to be taken **on planning grounds only**, based on the national planning legislation and the District Local Plan, whatever the views and feelings of the individual Cllrs involved.

If you wish to comment, don't delay. The process is time critical with several stages along the way. If you wish to make comments please try to submit them before the deadline set by the Council. Although submissions can be made and have to be considered up to the time a decision is made, once the statutory deadline has passed, the application might be determined before your comments are received.

The process for alcohol licensing applications is similar to the process for planning applications, except that objections must relate to one or more of [the four Licensing Objectives](#), and any comments received after the end of the formal consultation period won't be taken into account by the District Council.

Slots of Luck, 65 The Broadway

Essex Leisure, who already have an operating Gambling Licence, have been granted a premises licence to open an adult gaming centre in Debden Broadway.

Slots of Luck will occupy the former Come "n" Play Café which was a children's soft play venue. It will be open 7 days a week, from 10am-10pm during weekdays,

10am-8pm on Saturday and 10am-6pm on Sundays. A buzzer system will be used to admit people to the premises and they will also ask for proof of age for anyone who appears to be under 25.

LRAPG and the Town Council objected to the application. This is a residential area with young families living above and around the Broadway, with schools and colleges close by. However the District Council granted the licence after receiving assurances over the way it will be managed. ([Details here](#) - reference WK/202044968)

The Chestnuts, Ollards Grove

This is an application for prior approval for an additional storey with two flats.

LRAPG has objected to this application given the impact on parking and as the extra storey will be detrimental to the external appearance and out of character to this part of Ollards Grove.

Application [EPF/2783/20](#). The formal consultation period has ended.

Cafe Mosaic, 4 Goldings Hill

This is an application to install an aluminium conservatory to the front.

LRAPG has objected to this application given its design, materials and projection is harmful to the streetscape and this part of Goldings Hill. It may also be distracting for motorists because of glare from winter sunshine and when it is illuminated during hours of darkness. However if the District Council is minded to approve this, the conservatory should be finished in glass and timber to make sure that the appearance of the building is suitable.

Application [EPF/2971/20](#). The formal consultation period has ended.

New Next distribution depot to the north of Dowding Way, Waltham Abbey

Local residents are very concerned about the extra traffic and pollution that this proposal would bring to Waltham Abbey and the surrounding area. When it was turned down recently at a District Council planning meeting*, 4 Conservative Cllrs used a procedural option to over-rule the decision by referring the application to a Full Council meeting.

*The reasons for refusal were: (i) the adverse impact of the development on Waltham Abbey; (ii) by reason of its obtrusive height, length and bulk, the proposed development would cause significant harm to the Green Belt and to the environs of Waltham Abbey; (iii) the effects of the proposal on the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as the air pollution mitigation strategy had not yet been adopted and was likely to be insufficient.

Application [EPF/2503/19](#). The formal consultation period has ended.

Gods Own Pizza, 151 High Road

The District Council has granted a new premises licence for alcohol sales for a new pizza restaurant, opening hours Monday to Saturday 11:00-01:00 Sunday 11:00-00:00. ([Details here](#) - reference WK/202042716)

179-181 High Road (was Café Rouge)

The District Council has granted a new premises licence for alcohol sales for a new restaurant, lounge and bar, opening hours Monday to Thursday 10:00 to 00:30, Friday and Saturday, 10:00 to 01:00 and Sunday 10:00 to 00:30. ([Details here](#) - reference WK/202047392)

Government proposes that all new developments should meet local standards of beauty, quality and design

The Government has published [proposals](#) which will require all new developments must meet local standards of beauty, quality and design, under new rules to be drafted by local Councils.

LRA comment: it is difficult not to feel cynical about these proposals, coming as they do from a Government that has been removing local democratic controls from many aspects of the planning process, so as for example to allow extra storeys to be built on top of existing buildings, to allow changes of building use (including conversions of shops to residential) which will wreck the few remaining viable high streets, and which is forcing local councils to cram ever more buildings onto valued green spaces.

However, on the basis of the pace of our District Council's progress with the draft Local Plan, it will be many years, if ever, before it gets round to producing suitable local rules, which because of the Government's removal of local planning controls won't apply to many of the planned developments anyway.

Roads, Parking and Travel

Travelling on public transport

Transport for London (TfL) say you must wear a face covering over your nose and mouth at all times when on the transport network, unless exempt. The overwhelming majority of people are complying with this requirement and the British Transport police and TfL's own officers are on the network to check compliance.



At end-January over 134,000 customers had been stopped by TfL enforcement officers & asked to put on masks before boarding trains. Over 9,000 people were prevented from boarding, while more than 2,000 were ejected from the service. TfL have issued 1,991 Fixed Penalty Notices (there are fines of up to £6,400 for anyone who does not comply).



Circular bus route Loughton – Debden (542)

We think this bus route should be better known – see timetables [here](#) for the 542 and [here](#) for the 542A.

Does your business or organisation involve journeys on local roads

Free support, guidance and advice is available to all Essex businesses and organisations who use the roads as part of their activity (such as someone driving to a meeting or a care worker travelling between clients, as well any vans, trucks or buses you run). One in three road crashes involve someone who is 'at work,' at worst this can lead to death and injury, at best there will be paperwork, hassle and expense to resolve the situation. Using the road network is likely to be the most dangerous part of your working day, but there are steps that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of incidents happening.

Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) are offering the services of a Road Safety Specialist to assist with your policy and practice, all it will take is a small amount of your time to reduce the chances of your organisation suffering unexpected costs, staff downtime and potential legal issues. [More](#).

Police and Crime

Harley Watson's death outside Debden Park High School

This was discussed at a recent meeting with the police, at which LRA was represented. The defendant in this tragic incident had recently been convicted for a number of cases of attempted murder, and manslaughter by diminished responsibility and sentenced to an indefinite hospital order and 15 years [More](#).



Does your road have a Neighbourhood Watch Group?

Neighbourhood Watch aims to reduce the level of crime within the areas that we live and encourage a "neighbourly spirit" and this is only possible with your help and support.

You do not need to spend very much time on running your Neighbourhood Watch Group. Most coordinators work during the day and have busy lives, but if you have the time to forward an email or send out a warning about something happening in your road, then you have the time to set up a Watch Group!

The Group can ensure that elderly and vulnerable people are looked out for, they can encourage neighbours to be aware when a neighbour's home is empty and look out for unusual activity such as mail building up on a neighbour's doorstep and take appropriate action. Neighbourhood Watch is all about knowing and looking out for your neighbours and in turn helping to make the community that you live it much safer. To volunteer to become a Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator, please contact membershipfdnw@outlook.com; for further information see [here](#).

Protect yourself online

The national Neighbourhood Watch team also support Cyberhood Watch, which provides [advice guides](#) on how you can protect yourself. Examples of topics covered include: What are password managers? Popular threats on iOS and Android and how to avoid them What is the Internet of Things? What is Two-Factor Authentication? How to Fight Phishing Cyber Security Terms & Metaphors.



And if you use an online dating website or app, see [here](#) for how to stay safe from "Romance Fraud", where the other person uses a fake profile to form a relationship

to gain the victim's trust and ask them for money or enough personal information to steal their identity.

Crimestoppers

- Fearless Project – Crimestoppers are running a project to give young people in Essex better information regarding crime, to help them make better and informed choices. This will be supported through social media messaging and information packs to go to secondary schools and youth organisations. A pilot is being run in Southend.
- From April to November 2020, 3090 people contacted Crimestoppers, 721 over the phone and 1656 online.
- COVID-19 fraud hotline – this remains an ongoing service, still guaranteeing anonymity.

Hate Crime

This is a year on year comparison of reported incidents last 3 months for the District:

	2019	2020
October	18	25
November	25	18
December	18	20

Three-quarters of incidents are race-related. Among the top wards in the District are:

	2019	2020
Loughton St. Mary's	21	15
Loughton Broadway	10	20

Police complaints

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex (PFCC) is responsible for handling complaints against the Chief Constable and holding the Chief Constable to account for the discharging of his responsibilities in relation to handling complaints against the force. [This report](#) provides an overview of the PFCC's activities during 2020 in relation to these responsibilities. (Complaints against the police are dealt with by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)).

Essex Police & Fire Commissioner Epping Forest Online Public Meeting

Hear what's going on, and put your questions. March 10, 19:00 - 20:00. [Venue](#).

Property, lost and found

Did you know that you can report lost or found property through on Essex police's online service? Simply click on report and then select the lost or found property option. [More here](#).

Selling in the street or at the door

We know residents can be concerned about doorstep selling (see [Nottingham Knockers](#)), and whether street collectors are legitimate. You need [a pedlar's licence](#) to sell door-to-door. You need a District Council licence for [house to house charity collections](#) and [charity collections in the street](#) (but see [here](#) for a loophole about direct debit collectors).

“Epping” for “Epping Forest”

Several official websites refer to Epping Forest District as “Epping”. Credit goes to the Essex Police and Fire Commissioners’ office who, after we pointed out the difference to them, have corrected their website.

Council News

Easy Voting @Home

2020 Elections were postponed by Government because of Covid-19 so elections in 2021 are planned for May.

Some people enjoy voting in person but many busy residents choose the convenience of a postal vote. At the 2018 local elections, 2,009 Loughton residents received their ballot papers by post 13 days before Polling Day. In 2018, Postal Votes were 1630 (21%) of the 7803 votes counted.

Sometimes there are several ballot papers but only vague national political party information is received. Having the ballot paper early allows voters to research candidates, their policies and where they live. So often candidates only disclose a political party address in order to hide that they live miles away from the people they aspire to represent.

Voting by post is Covid-19 safe, secure, Freepost and very easy. You simply post a one page application form to the District Council. The only information needed is name, date of birth, address and signature. Most people tick the box 'until further notice'.

[The form and instructions are here](#). LRA has a stock of District Council forms so we can email or deliver to you. Please email contact@LoughtonResidents.co.uk so you can print or say how many forms your household will post to District Council. You can also leave a message on 020 8508 4457 or contact the District Council on 01992 564411.

Annual Town Meeting

Because of the continuing Covid-19 crisis, the Town Council has reluctantly decided to cancel the Annual Town meeting which would have been held on March 10th. We'll let you know as and when a new date is agreed.

Donations to charities

The Town Mayor (LRA Cllr Stella Murphy) received £10,000 from the Joseph and Lilian Sully Foundation and has passed £5,000 to each of 3Food4U and Epping Forest Foodbank.

Hillyfields Open Space Flood Alleviation Scheme

The contractors employed by the County Council have failed to carry out some of the remedial work properly and have omitted to make certain ground repairs, and the Town Council is following this up with the County Council.

Hillyfields Open Space Litter Bins

The Town Council is investigating providing new bins.

Roding Valley Recreation Ground

The Town Council is arranging to replace two damaged benches. They are grateful to County Cllr Valerie Metcalfe (Cons.) for her donation from her allocated Essex County Council Locality Fund towards the benches.

The Roding Valley Recreation Ground football changing rooms

The Town Council has reluctantly decided that its project to revamp the changing rooms on a larger scale is not sustainable in the current financial climate, and a more modest scheme of essential repairs is being developed.

Roding Valley Recreation Ground quagmire

The Town Council will raise the problem of the land strip behind the lake and adjacent to the River Roding with Chigwell Parish Council as they may be responsible for the area, which has become difficult to navigate.

Dog fouling

Many dog-walkers pick up dog waste and dispose of it appropriately. However, there are still some who don't do so. The District Council has Public Spaces Protection Orders in place (which are due for review) which require dog-walkers to pick up any dog fouling. There is also a limit of no more than 4 dogs to be exercised by anyone at any one time, and dogs must be put on a lead when the dog-walker is requested to do so by an authorised officer.

Failure to comply can result in a £75 Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). Council Environmental Enforcement Officers in the Community Resilience Team can carry out pro-active patrols if they are made aware of any particular time and place dogs are exercised and not cleared up afterwards (at present they don't have the resources to carry out ad-hoc visits without any prior information from residents).

Let them know [here](#) (choose 'General enquiry' form', then 'Street cleansing – general issue') or telephone 01992 564000 in office hours (this can also be used to report dog fouling which needs to be cleared, which will be dealt with by the Waste Team). Please note that the Council is only responsible for clearing dog fouling on the highway and Council-owned land.

Local News

The High Road

The HSBC bank branch in the High Road is to close in August - one of 82 branches in the UK to shut between April and September.

We have also observed with regret that in the block of 12 units between 202-224 High Road, five are now vacant. This includes what was Pak Choi, Clintons, Rush Hair, New Look, and Thomas Cook/Hays Travel. The District Council have placed posters on the windows saying 'Support Local Businesses' or 'Love Loughton High Road'.

The District Council has [advertised](#) the Pak Choi and Clintons premises to let. This would imply that McDonalds will no longer take the Pak Choi unit, although we do not have any confirmation of this. The District Council have also said [this](#) - note the shops they refer to (and the ones we mention above) are not actually in Centric Parade but are those next door, to the north).



LRA comment: The Council's decision to buy this block on the west side of the High Road was made by three Conservative cabinet members on the assumption of a net 3% p.a. yield. LRA did not oppose the purchase outright, but even before Covid-19 struck we warned publicly that retail High Road units were likely to be a depreciating asset - the promised yield seemed to us wholly inadequate for the risk that the Council was taking on.

Royal Mail postal delays in Loughton

Last month Epping Forest MP Dame Eleanor Laing reported that she had been in touch with Royal Mail on several occasions and had had a meeting with the National Service Delivery Director who has given her his assurance that he and his team are doing all they can to improve the service.

Letters from the NHS were being given priority and were being delivered promptly. Royal Mail had also been prioritising the delivery of PPE equipment and Covid test kits which people have to send straight back to the NHS via priority post boxes. The Debden Delivery Office has been hit four times by outbreaks of the virus. Many of the staff have been very seriously ill. They had started to make extra deliveries on Sundays and were dealing with the backlog. They had also kept on many of the additional staff who had been employed to deal with the Christmas rush.

Council tax and other charges for 2021-22

County Council

The County Council's Cabinet are recommending that the County element of the council tax will be increased by 1.5% to £1340.91 (from £1321.11) for the adult social care precept. [More](#)

District Council

It is assumed that there will not be an increase from the District Council this coming year.

The District Council is increasing council housing rents by 1.5% (around 2/5ths of tenants will have the increase paid as part of their benefits). Various other charges are being increased ([see here](#)), but there are no increases to parking charges for Council-managed car parks.

Town Council

The Town Council say that the covid pandemic has affected their budgets, especially in income generating areas, and they have worked hard to identify potential cost savings and expenditure which can be deferred. They are considering an increase in

the Band D rate from £59.46 to £62.44 (5% or 6p a week).

Essex Country Fire and Rescue Service.

The proposed precept on a Band D property is to remain as last year, at £73.89. See [here](#).

Essex Police Service

The proposed precept increase is 4.98%, equivalent to an increase of £9.90 a year, from £198.63 to £208.53 for a Band D property, raising an additional £6.014m of council tax receipts. The proposal will fund 184 more police officers. See [here](#).



Renewing your Library books

There's no need to worry about getting any items you've borrowed back to the library. Essex Libraries have extended all library loans until Wednesday 31 March, and will review the situation near the end of March and extend the loan period again, if necessary.

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Performance Report – Quarter 2 2020/21

How is the service living up to its targets? See an [overview of the report](#), and [the report itself](#).

Qualis update

The first year's trading for Qualis was almost entirely taken up with set-up, governance and the appointment of a permanent staffing structures. The Coronavirus pandemic had a significant impact in terms of delaying this whilst the District Council focused on the immediate response effort. As a result, very little income was received during the first year, whilst costs were still incurred in the form of professional fees, equipment, salaries and recharges to the Council. Consequentially, the combined loss across the Qualis Group totalled £1.49 million and this will be added to the Qualis Balance Sheet and carried forward and set against future expected profits. See [here](#) (item 13).

Need help online?

Try [easy to understand guides](#) from the District Council on getting to grips with the digital world are available to Epping Forest District residents



Health and Wellbeing

When to call 999

Although the NHS is under stress due to the pandemic, A&E and the 999 service still operate. Remember:

- Call 999 in a medical emergency. This is when someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk. [More](#)
- Call 999 immediately if you or someone else is having a [heart attack](#) or [stroke](#). Every second counts with these conditions.
- Also call 999 if you think someone has had a major trauma, such as after a serious road traffic accident, a stabbing, a shooting, a fall from height, or a serious [head injury](#).

If you're not sure what to do

NHS 111 can help if you need urgent medical help or you're not sure what to do. They will ask questions about your symptoms so you get the help you need. If you need to go to A&E, NHS 111 will book an arrival time. This might mean you spend less time in A&E. This also helps with social distancing.

You can get help from 111.nhs.uk or call 111. It's available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Background to Epping Forest Primary Care Networks (PCNs)

Primary Care Networks (PCNs) went live in 2019 as part of the NHS Long Term Plan. Epping Forest District has two Primary Care networks: Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Chigwell (LBC) PCN, and Epping North PCN. Our PCN covers a population of just under 60,000, and its member practices are Loughton Health Centre, Loughton Surgery, Forest Surgery, Kings Medical, Palmerston Road, Rivers and Chigwell.

The PCN's key function is to sustain General Practice, and to integrate the prevention and delivery of health and care. The aim is for PCNs to increase in scope over a five year period:

- to provide a stabilized general practice, including the GP partnership model
- to help solve the capacity gap and improve the skill-mix by growing the wider workforce by over 20,000 wholly-additional staff as well as helping to increase GP and nurse numbers
- to become a proven platform for further local NHS investment
- to dissolve the divide between primary and community care, with PCNs looking out to community partners not just in to fellow practices
- to systematically deliver new services to implement the Long Term Plan.

How to find reliable health advice online

Use the [NHS online information services](#), and see [here](#) for other sources.

Whipps Cross Hospital redevelopment

Some residents are concerned that unless the Government provides more funding for the [new hospital at Whipps Cross](#), it will be built with 51 fewer beds and the palliative & end of life care service at the Margaret Centre will be lost. Action4Whipps are writing to all North East London MPs & are asking for support – see [here](#) and their Facebook or Twitter page.

New app to help parents

Essex healthcare professionals have launched [a new app](#) to help parents with their children's healthcare. NHS Essex Child Health provides practical health advice and support and is suitable for anyone caring for children up to the age of 11. Download via [Apple](#) or [Google Play](#).

Epping Forest

Visiting Epping Forest

Current guidelines for visiting Epping Forest are [here](#). Many locations are closed including the Visitor Centres at Chingford and High Beach and Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge so [check before you go](#).

Charges for parking in Forest car parks

The Corporation of London is faced with an increasing problem of allowing free access to the Forest, while protecting the Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest.

As we reported in December, the Corporation has now decided to charge for parking, starting with 14 of their 55 car parks (the ones that experience the worst parking problems), including 3 at High Beach and 5 in Chingford. There is considerable public concern about the decision. Find out more, and have your say [here](#) (although the survey is not particularly well designed, there's a box where you can leave comments).

And More



Census 2021

Census Day is March 21st, but households across the country will receive letters with online codes allowing them to take part from early March. The

census will include the usual questions about your sex, age, work, health, education, household size, and ethnicity, plus a question about whether you have served in the armed forces and voluntary questions for those aged 16 and over on sexual orientation and gender identity. Results will be available in 12 months, but personal records will be locked away for 100 years. The Census team is [hiring people in temporary roles](#).

The census results help to determine how the Government allocates funding between communities, so it's important that our local results are complete and accurate.

Thank you for being an LRA member. Our next Loughton News email is due to be issued Saturday March 13th although that date could change.

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



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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.

We can be contacted at contact@LoughtonResidents.co.uk

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