

LRA's Loughton News

In this issue you can read the latest on progress on the <u>District Plan</u>, which although moving slowly, has the potential to impact our town greatly so is one to watch.

Also, <u>Loughton's Libraries</u> are re-opening soon. The District Council is also looking at <u>ways to help</u> the local recovery and <u>identifying locations that</u> <u>need improvement</u> to re-open safely.

A planning application is being considered for a replacement pedestrian bridge across Alderton Hill connecting the Roding Valley High School locations and a new licensing application has been made for the eSports Gaming cafe at 52 The Broadway.

With the Coronavirus lockdown easing, crime is getting back to 'normal' so Epping Forest Neighbourhood Watch provides a timely reminder on being careful. Parking enforcement is also resuming and the double red lines at High Beech and other roads in Epping Forest are now in place. Also do remember if you are out enjoying the Forest, please check the guidelines for visiting, especially given recent misbehavour of groups.

Thank you for supporting LRA. 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 News

District Council new Local Plan

You may recall that last year the Planning Inspector referred the draft Plan back to the Council for further work to be carried out. The Council is desperately trying to find a way round the air quality issue (a "mitigation strategy") in the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (EFSAC). According to reports in the press, before



the lockdown Epping Forest District had the worst Air Quality (AQ) for particulates of any district in Essex. Particulates come not only from exhausts, but tyre and brake emissions from motor vehicles too.

The Council needed to obtain new traffic and habitat data in order to analyse and

forecast the likely future effect of new buildings on Air Quality, and this data had been gathered before lockdown interrupted the fieldwork. Nonetheless, the analysis of the data has been delayed and the final assessment is not expected now until at least October.

Since 2018 the Council has been unable to process any planning applications that would involve an increase in vehicle movements on roads within 200m of the EFSAC because of the potential impact on Air Quality levels. Loughton Town Council has suggested that any new housing within a mile of the EFSAC is bound to increase car ownership and use, and thus exacerbate the Air Quality issue; they say it would therefore be unsound for the District Council to grant such planning permissions.

LRA and Loughton Town Council will be watching the next stage very closely. Although the Council has been instructed by the Inspector to drop its plans to put housing on Jessel Green, its proposals for Loughton still involve cramming a large number of homes into the town, potentially to the severe detriment of local air quality, the EFSAC and (last but not least) of the quality of life of existing residents (for example, the proposals for huge developments on Luctons Field and on the two station car parks are as yet unresolved).

More background on the Local Plan on our website.

Problems in the Forest

LRA Cllr Chris Pond has followed up the concerns expressed by many residents concerned and upset by the recent misbehaviour of groups of people who have formed "Spontaneous Social Gatherings" (SSGs) in the Forest, including Baldwins Hill and the Shaftesbury dam. They have left large amounts of litter, particularly around High Beech, and have disregarded the distancing regulations and parking restrictions.

It has been difficult for the authorities to deal with these SSGs, though they have tried to do so. See comments from the Superintendent of Epping Forest and the police.

Many public-spirited residents have been turning out to clear up the litter that's left behind. Five lockable bright orange skips for rubbish have now been placed (temporarily) at High Beech; they will be emptied weekly.



Loughton Libraries are re-opening

Loughton Library will re-open on July 13th. LRA Cllr Chris Pond has asked that both floors be re-opened. To begin with the service offered at Essex Libraries will be limited; residents will be able to return and borrow books, as well as have some limited time to browse the shelves. More.

In the meantime, joining Essex Libraries online provides you access to their Borrowbox and RBdigital services for e-books, e-audiobooks, e-magazines and e-comics to read on your computer, phone or tablet

The Head of Libraries has told LRA Cllr Chris Pond that Debden Library (in the New City College building on Borders Lane) will re-open in the week commencing August 3rd.

The County Council has made it clear that it hopes to change Debden Libraries (and some others) to a "Community Library". New City College is proposing to take over

and run the library as a statutory, community-run library. This means that it would continue to be part of the public library network, with access to Essex County Council's book stock and library systems. The library would be managed by New City College staff. Additional services would be provided, and the library would be open for longer each week than at present. LRA would rather see Debden Library moved to a site in The Broadway, and for it to continue to be run by the County Council, and has lobbied for this in the past. However, we don't now think that this is a realistic proposition.

For more information on the proposals, and to give your views, see the College's consultation. If possible, please copy your comments to us at contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk

All library books out on loan from Essex Libraries have been renewed until 1 September.

The Broadway

Even since the "enhancement" scheme for The Broadway was completed, the Broadway Town Centre Partnership and LRA Cllrs have been trying to get the central reservation sorted out. This is not simple because "services" pipework runs underneath.

The Local Highways Panel organised a feasibility study to see what could be done, and the report was delivered about a month ago. LRA Cllr Chris Pond has had to point out to those involved that it contains factual inaccuracies AND does not identify the major cause of overrunning the central strip, which is that buses and HGVs cannot otherwise pass long vehicles jutting out from the echelon parking.

So it's been referred back to the engineer. We won't give up.



Persistence finally pays off

LRA Cllr David Wixley says that the pavement and kerb in the service road at the rear of the Pyrles Lane shops and at the junction with Burney Drive has been damaged for as long as he can remember (possibly even before he was first elected as a Fairmead Ward councillor in 2008). The damage was originally caused by a heavy

vehicle driving over it; more recently around 15-20 of the kerb stones were dislodged and actually scattered about the service road.

County Council Highways have refused to repair the damage because of the low footfall, despite the ugly and rundown appearance projected by this damaged pavement. David was approached a year or so ago by a local resident and so tried again; Essex Highways promised to carry out repairs but then changed their minds. However, at last they have repaired it.

Please do <u>report Highways problems</u>; if nothing happens and the situation is dangerous, please contact your local LRA Cllr.

Road safety near schools

A resident asked LRA Cllr Chris Roberts about measures to increase the safety of children (and others) near Debden schools, such as "School Streets". Chris is following this up but, as usual, any progress will depend upon the availability of government funding and the need to balance the interests of different groups of residents.

Helping shops and businesses recover

The Council is looking at <u>ways to help the local recovery</u>. In particular, it's considering how to create space on pavements to enable people to maintain social distancing as numbers increase (this is more difficult in some high streets than others). A start has been made in Epping, but we await proposals for Loughton High Road and The Broadway; LRA Cllr Bob Jennings is involved in the discussions.

To help encourage trade, and because this may lead to restrictions on parking in high streets close to shops, the Council has <u>reduced its car-park charges</u> and has extended the minimum 20p period to $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

Please help the Council by <u>identifying locations</u> that may need be improved to support social distancing, protect public health and allow services and businesses to re-open safely. You can <u>learn more about the project</u> and <u>view the map and comment.</u>

There are <u>grants for small businesses</u> which may have missed out in earlier rounds, such as bed and breakfasts, small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces, regular market traders and charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief

The District Council have put together a set of <u>rebuild and recovery FAQs</u> which include advice on support bubbles, NHS track and trace, travel advice and new support for our high streets.

Business grant secured

Two LRA Cllrs were approached (separately) by the owners of local businesses which had had to close because of coronavirus. The businesses were struggling to obtain Government grants for businesses because the District Council and the Valuation Office Agency were failing to get their act together. Enquiries from our Cllrs to the Council triggered off some prompt work by Council Officers to get the bureaucratic issues resolved and the grants paid. Another case is ongoing.



Latest Advice from the Government and NHS

Essex County
Council
How to help and
Facebook support
group

Loughton
COVID-19 Mutual
Aid UK Group



Coronavirus

Got symptoms? Get tested - it's that simple. Call 119 for information on how to book your test or visit here for further information.

Test and Trace

How it works at a national level and how the County County is establishing a local system.

Planning and Licensing

<u>Read more</u> about Planning and Licensing, the role of the LRA Plans Group (LRAPG), how to get more information with the Application and Reference Numbers below, and how to comment.

If you wish to comment, don't delay even during the lockdown. 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.

Here we report on selected applications which are of notable interest or concern. This by definition means that you will mostly read about applications that LRAPG objects to or raises concerns about. LRAPG reviews many applications, most of which are acceptable or require minor changes or conditions that applicants accept.

Alderton Hill Footbridge

Roding Valley High School have applied to replace the top section of the pedestrian footbridge that crosses over Alderton Hill, and links the main school buildings with the sports facilities.

Whilst we have no objection to the replacement bridge, the proposal, which is to have it finished in powder coated Oxford blue, will make the bridge stand out. The bridge colour should be as subdued as possible. LRAPG has therefore suggest it is painted black.

Application Number EPF/2162/19. The date for comments has passed.

Sterling House Langston Road

This application proposes to change the use of existing ground floor unit used for warehousing to include a trade counter, together with new covered staircase, disabled lift and customer entrance, reinstatement of vehicular entrance and reconfiguration of existing car parking spaces. Since the retail park opened on Langston Road the traffic on Chigwell Lane has been heavily compromised during busy times with cars backing up past the junction with Borders Lane and Rectory Lane. Vehicles queuing to turn into and out of Langston Road frequently block

the junction.

This proposal generates a further 30 vehicle movements a day. In the absence of improvements to the junction any increase in traffic movement is unacceptable and will lead to further congestion. LRAPG has therefore objected to this application.

Application Number EPF/1130/20. The date for comments has passed.

Junction of Potters Close and York Hill

This application proposed to build a two bedroom cottage on a currently undeveloped section of land. The application was refused permission by the District Council, and a Planning Inspector has now dismissed an appeal against the decision.

Application Number EPF/1635/19.

52 The Broadway

An application has been made for a new premises licence for an eSports gaming café to include the Sale of Alcohol on the premises from Monday - Friday 18:00 to 22:00, Saturday 18:00 to 23:30 and Sunday 18:00 to 20:00.

LRAPG believes that late-evening alcohol licences are not appropriate in residential areas after 11pm, particularly where, as here, there are residential flats above the property. LRAPG also questions serving alcohol in a premises that is open to and will attract children. It has put in an objection.

Visit our website to see how to comment.

Your comments must clearly state the grounds upon which your representation is made, which must relate to one or more of the four licensing objectives:

- the prevention of crime and disorder
- · public safety
- · the prevention of public nuisance
- the protection of children from harm.

Reference Number WK/202020583. Comments must be received by Sunday July 19th.

The licensing process for use of outside areas and off-sales

As part of Government plans to support outdoor dining as part of efforts to help the economy recover from coronavirus, simpler licensing processes have been proposed for outdoor seating for pubs, restaurants and cafes. This includes reducing the consultation period for applications for pavement licences from 28 calendar days to 5 working days, and grants consent after 10 working days if the council does not issue a decision. More

Currently this does not bypass the need for planning permission for the change of use of the public highway for use of tables and chairs in connection with the restaurant/bar use (private forecourts owned by the premises do not apply). However the Government draft advice suggests the granting of a licence will negate the need for planning permission and we wait to see if new permitted development rights will be put in place to allow for this.



LRA's Farmers' Market Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the market on 12 July is cancelled, although some traders may turn up.

Further markets will be considered in the light of government advice nearer the time. We'll keep you updated via our <u>news emails</u>, <u>Twitter</u> and <u>Facebook</u>

Police and Crime

Crime is getting back to normal!

Epping Forest Neighbourhood Watch is reminding you:

- to lock your doors, including your rear doors, even when you're at home
- not to leave anything of value in vehicles, especially wallets, phones, cash, computers, credit and fuel cards
- if your car is keyless, use a faraday pouch, and keep on testing it to make sure it is working. Using a crook lock and a tracker can help protect vehicles too. Land/Range Rovers continue to be top of the thieves' 'shopping' list
- tools are regularly stolen from vans, lock ups and sheds. Safeguard them, and mark them so that if they are found (they often are) they can be returned to the owner rather than being auctioned off
- not to walk in the street with your phone in your hands where it can be snatched (<u>it has happened recently</u>), or to put valuables on shop counters, walls or park benches, or keep wallets, credit cards or phones in your back pocket.

Please report everything so that the police can target the criminals in the most appropriate way.

Police reports

This is just some of what's been going on locally.

For one recent week our local PC, Marc Arnold, responded to various emergency incidents in Debden and also reported the following activity:

- arrest for possession of a hammer
- Arrest for theft (charged)
- 2 firearms warrants
- · Arrest for possession with intent to supply drugs
- 1 drugs warrant
- High visibility patrol of Debden

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Patrols have also been out at night looking for and catching criminals going equipped for vehicle crime, or actually in a stolen vehicle. Thanks to a resident making a 999

call, three males acting suspiciously near an address in Doubleday Road were arrested within minutes on suspicion of attempted burglary. Local officers have also dealt with assaults, immigration offences, fraud, breach of bail conditions and tracking down an individual wanted on warrant, among other things.



Speed checks in Goldings Hill, Oakwood Hill and elsewhere in the District resulted in numerous offenders being caught, including this motorbike overtaking a vehicle travelling within the speed limit.

Elsewhere, a driver made off from a Loughton petrol station without paying. Unfortunately for the suspect, his vehicle was highly distinctive and the District Community Safety team arrested him a few hours later.

A driver stopped during the early days of Coronavirus restrictions (April 1st) for driving at 100mph for 4 miles on

the M11 in Loughton recently pleaded guilty at Basildon Magistrates court and was given a £568 fine, with £90 costs and a £56 victim surcharge, and 6 points.

Special Constables can make a real difference

Last month Special Constables conducted regular patrols across the District, dealing with crimes such as speeding and drugs; in Epping Forest and High Beech they used new legislation to seize over 250 gas canisters. Find out more about becoming a Special Constable and making a difference to your community.



Essex Police new online services for non-emergency reports

Instead of calling 101, report nonemergency crimes online, as well as doing things like providing feedback and reporting road traffic incidents. That now includes reporting anti-social behaviour, requesting information about yourself or others, telling them about something you have seen or heard, or asking to talk to



someone about an existing case you are involved in or report you have made.

They've also launched 'Live Chat', a new online text facility where you can message one of their operators online, in real time, between the hours of 7am and 11pm.

Find out more on their website or on their Facebook page.

Got a question or concern for the Essex Police & Fire Commissioner's office (PFCC)?

The $\underline{\mathsf{PFCC}}$ sets the priorities for Essex Police and the Fire & Rescue Service. Take part in one of their $\underline{\mathsf{online}}$ Facebook $\underline{\mathsf{meetings}}$ on July 16th, 7 – 8pm.

Has some-one tried to "scam" you?

Epping Forest Neighbourhood Watch always recommend reporting attempted or actual fraud to Action Fraud. However, if you'd like to get feedback, register with their

website. It is still worth doing because Action Fraud collates national data and can spot patterns and trends. They can also contact local police, if necessary. You can also phone them directly on <u>0300 123 2040</u>.

You can check suspicious emails at Hoaxslayer.

Roads, Parking and Travel

Parking Enforcement

In our May Loughton News email, we mentioned that NEPP restarted some enforcement of yellow lines with those causing obstruction, driveway blocking, and parking on double yellows, no loading, zigzags or disabled bays being dealt with as a priority.

From July 6th, this will also include residents parking restrictions. Dropped kerb obstructions will also be looked at where necessary.

Penalty Charge Notices will be issued as normal where a vehicle is deemed to be parked in contravention. Patrols will be carried out 7 days a week.

Parking restrictions in Epping Forest

In the last Loughton News, we reported that double red lines had been installed by the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) in High Beech and other roads in Epping Forest to address on-street parking issues, deter non-essential travel to the Forest and support the Government's current guidelines to stop the spread of coronavirus. More.

Please email any comments on the red lines and the resulting displacement into Loughton residential streets to contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk and we'll pass them on to the other individuals and organisations involved.

New Parking Schemes and Restrictions

The North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) have begun the task of implementing agreed schemes after resident petitions in:

- Hanbury Park Estate (off Roding Road): waiting restriction(s)
- Traps Hill: waiting restriction(s)
- Shaftesbury and Staples Road (part): resident permit area(s).

Poles and signs, as well as line marking, will be tackled over July-August. Residents in the zones will be invited to buy permits where appropriate. <u>Here are the original Traffic Regulation Orders</u> (TROs).



Potholes repaired

The figures for County Highway repairs in the District in April are:

County routes: 118 Local roads: 51

Local road pavement defects: 90

We know that there's a lot more for them to

do, so please keep <u>reporting Highway problems</u> and, if you think there's a seriously dangerous problem, please let your <u>County Cllr</u> know as well.

Whitehills Road

The road will be closed from July 13th for gas mains replacement work. Work is expected to be completed by July 27th, however you check for the latest updates here.

Disabled Badges

Disabled badges with an expiry date between 1 Jan and September 2020 can continue to be used until 30 September in all local authority car parks or parking areas without incurring fines. This doesn't apply in private parking areas.

Getting back on your bike?

Safer Essex Roads Partnership are offering 1-2-1 <u>cycle</u> <u>confidence courses or training sessions</u> for people who feel that they need a little support. These sessions can be arranged by individuals or via a business organisation for staff. As an added incentive, these sessions are free until 18th July.



Travelling in London Advice for everybody

TfL say that if you must travel, consider walking or cycling as part of your journey, or getting off a stop or two early to reduce crowding. More on cycling, walking, walking times between Tube stations, making face covering see here.

Help for customers with visual impairments and mobility impairment Most stations operated by TfL Rail offer <u>Turn-up-and-go</u>.

Council News

District and Town Council help for residents and staff

During the lockdown period the Councils has had to radically change its working methods, and has had to deal with new forms of requests from residents, and higher volumes of requests for existing services. It has also had to make sure its staff are looked after. <u>More</u>.

District Council fraud cases in 2019-20

The District Council rightly keeps a very close watch on Right to Buy applications for Council properties, and on tenancy applications for Council properties.

Right to Buy

As a result of 24 of these applications being stopped or withdrawn, the Council saved approximately £2 million of potential Right to Buy discounts (based on the revised

maximum discount amount of £84,200). As purchases did not go ahead, these properties continue to remain as valuable public assets allowing the Council to potentially utilise them at a later date to house applicants from the waiting list. Furthermore, keeping them within the housing stock means that they continue to provide significant revenue streams in the form of on-going rent payments, which have been calculated to be worth approximately £1.5 million to the Council going forward.

Tenancy Successions

The Council undertakes enquiries on each application to succeed a tenancy (succession normally applies when a tenant dies). As a result, 13 investigations into tenancy successions were opened during the year, with four being found as fraudulent. These applications were then terminated and the properties duly recovered. By recovering these properties, they can (and in most cases, have been) be re-let to priority cases on the waiting list and have saved the Council approximately £3 million (based on current National Fraud Initiative figures of £93,000 per recovered property)

Housing Applications

The Council made five investigations into applications made to the Council for housing. As a result, two applications were found to be fraudulent and removed from the waiting list with one investigation still ongoing. Predominantly, investigations found that applicants were not being truthful about owning other property and / or retaining capital in excess of the established limit for consideration.

Recovered Properties

The Council recovered four Council properties from tenants who were investigated for suspected housing fraud. These properties were recovered from tenants who were suspected of being involved in issues such as illegal subletting, not using the property as their main or principal home or, in some cases, having abandoned the property all together and living elsewhere. Using a council property as an Airbnb could result in criminal prosecution.

District Council council house-building

The last of the new properties in Burton Road were handed over to the Council in March. In the pipeline for Loughton are 3 units in Chequers Road, 2 in Bushfields, 3 in Chester Road and 4 in Kirby Close, all due for completion in the middle of next year. Another 27 units in Chequers Road, Ladyfields, Lower Alderton Hall Lane and Thatchers Close are just starting the process of getting building tenders and, where necessary, new planning permissions.

Recycling Centres

The <u>Chigwell Recycling Centre</u> is now open. Please only make essential visits and expect long queues and delays. Please <u>check the temporary recycling centre restrictions</u> before visiting. Normal site restrictions apply.

The Waltham Abbey Recycling Centre remains closed, and will reopen July 10th.

Epping Forest



Visiting Epping Forest

The Forest is a wonderful part of nature to enjoy this summer. Please remember to respect what we have and the <u>guidelines for visiting</u> before you go.

As there is now limited parking, car parks can be very busy so, if you can, leave your car at home and walk or cycle to where you want to go..

Epping Forest

Deer Vehicle Collisions

From February to April there were 17 Deer-Vehicle Collisions. Please remember to drive carefully in the Forest, and respect the speed limits – you may save a deer's life...and your own.

Herons

Herons have returned for a second year to Connaught Water to nest and more birds were involved in nest-building this year. The success of the nest is not yet clear but it is possible that this might make for the beginnings of a new Heronry in the Forest after many decades of absence as a breeding bird. However, it may depend on the success of the large heronry at Walthamstow Wetlands and whether this continues to "export" young birds looking for new nesting opportunities.

Nightingales and cuckoos

Although a single Nightingale and a small number of Cuckoos have been recorded this year, at present there is no likelihood of the re-establishment of either species in the Forest. However, the Cuckoo remains a breeding bird in the diverse wider countryside provided by the Buffer Lands and Cobbins Brook Valley.

Epping Forest on TV

Anita Rani from Countryfile was in Epping Forest to find out about its past, its wildlife and the people who look after it. Watch the programme here.

Also BBC4's 'The Hidden Wilds of the Motorway' was broadcast on June 30 and featured an interview with Epping Forest Superintendent Paul Thomson. Watch the programme here.

And More

Local Citizens Advice - Recruitment of Trustees

Citizens Advice are looking for people who want to make a difference in their local community to join the Trustee Board to help oversee and develop this much-needed service. Trustees with a wide range of skills and experience are needed to ensure they retain a diverse Board. If you have financial or accounting, marketing or PR skills they would be particularly interested. The minimum time commitment is attendance at four Board meetings each year. Although the post of Trustee is unpaid it will provide you with a wealth of new experiences and great satisfaction.

More on Citizens Advice. For further information email Alison McBrayne at alison@mcbrayne.idps.co.uk

Oak Processionary Moth

Caterpillars have been reported on the <u>Essex Wildlife Trust Roding Valley Meadows Nature Reserve</u>. They are pests of oak trees, and a hazard to human and animal health. Information posters have been put in the noticeboards to alert visitors. Staff may need to close off affected areas to prevent contact. Essex Wildlife Trust will have a



professional contractor deal with the issue as soon as possible.

If you see signs of oak processionary moth on the reserve please avoid the area and report sightings <u>online</u> or email <u>roding@essexwt.org.uk</u>

Photo Attribution

Hedgehog sightings

A resident recently reported seeing a hedgehog in her garden, and asked whether they were harmful? In fact, hedgehogs are a gardener's best friend. More.



Incidentally, please don't put out milk. Hedgehogs are lactose intolerant and must never be given cows' milk or milk products. It can cause severe digestive upset and kill them. If you want to give them a drink, make it water. Always keep a supply of clean, fresh water available in a shallow, heavy based bowl.

Photo Attribution

Thank you for being an LRA member, Our next Loughton News email is due to be issued Saturday 1 August 2020, 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.
- 3. Photo Attributions:

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

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