



Footbridge in Roding Valley

LOUGHTON LIFE

SEPTEMBER 2005

Part-time Courses Cut Will this mean high fees and long journeys ?

The adult education programme at Epping Forest College is being reduced. due to cuts in government funding to the Learning & Skills Council. Fewer part-time non-examination courses will be offered, and fees for those remaining have been doubled or more.

We are told that this is happening across the country. The Government has directed the Learning & Skills Councils to concentrate funding on 16-19 year olds, adult literacy and adults without GCSEs or equivalent.

Essex County Council runs part-time classes under its adult community college scheme – also funded via the Learning & Skills Council. In West Essex, the small Community College in St John's Road, Epping and centres in Harlow are the nearest for Loughton. But the programme is spread out over a very wide area, and its funding is also being reduced because of the cutbacks. Would-be students from Loughton are faced with high fees and potentially long journeys.

The closure of many of these courses, and the raising of fees for others beyond the means of many people, is making a

nonsense of Government claims to support a policy of lifelong learning and active retirement.

LRA is very concerned about this reduction in educational opportunities for Loughton. County councillor Chris Pond is in discussion with the Head of Adult Community Learning for Essex, and LRA Chairman Peter House has written to the MP, Eleanor Laing, and to Bill Rammell MP, Minister for Lifelong Learning.

Road Rage?

Does Your road need repairing?
Are you worried about parking?
Is the traffic getting to you?
Come along and ask the experts!

LRA Public Meeting

Tuesday 25 October 2005 8p.m.
Wesley Hall, Methodist Church,
Loughton High Road.

The speaker will be Paul Hardy,
ECC Area Highways Manager West.

Loughton Football Club is 40

Hundreds of Loughton young people have honed their skills and found an exciting way to spend their time, and energy through what is now Loughton Football Club. Since 1965 Keith Campen has been devoted to football, especially youth football, and through his efforts and leadership local parents and helpers have enabled the club grow and develop.

It began (when Keith was only 15 himself) with an under-11s side he organised to play away against a Dr

Barnardos team (a 3-3 draw). He called them Loughton Boys, and he soon had several teams on the go, Under 10s to Under 18s. At times he has also run some adult sides, so his over-18s could continue to play, and that is again the case today.

The club grew until in 1990, it had two senior teams and eight youth teams. That was also the year when they acquired a lease from Essex County Council on a local playing field, at Avondale Close, where they are still based. (LRA County Councillor the late Ted Webb assisted in obtaining the lease.) With tremendous effort from parents and supporters, an impressive pavilion was constructed.

Former youth players sometimes returned in later years to manage teams themselves. Some brought their own sons along. Altogether the club has had a great effect on a large number of Loughton's boys.

Town Opposition to College Plans

Loughton Town Councillors objected to the proposed 4-storey Epping Forest College development on the grounds of poor and ugly building design, highways issues, and loss of trees. Councillors are also concerned over proposals to merge Debden Library with a student library. They requested

conditions, if the District Council approve the plans, to partition the library and for separate entrances to the Branch Library .

Another condition suggested would provide a specific bus stop in the vicinity of the college to lessen disruption to the surrounding area.

The Ups and Downs of the High Road

Behind the scenes, over the years members of the community have worked hard to plan an attractive user-friendly High Road. LRA has campaigned for this improvement from the beginning. Long-time LRA district councillor Ron Heath, an experienced architect and in recent years LRA representative and chairman of the Town Centre Partnership, has been keenly involved with planning. He spoke recently of the care, attention to detail and thoroughness of their efforts since the feasibility study in 1998, and also of his disappointment over some of the final decisions arrived at:

"Members of the community, through the Focus Groups and through TCP, have spent many hundreds, probably thousands, of hours between them in contributing towards the Town Centre Enhancement debate. This includes representatives from groups such as: LRA, Town Council, Local district councillors, Loughton Traders' Association, Chamber of Commerce, Churches Together, Loughton Labour Group, voluntary organisations, Police, Conservators of Epping Forest, Epping Forest College, and Loughton Cricket Club. These organisations between them represent thousands of members of the Loughton community.

"Throughout all of the Focus Group's meetings, we had sought a holistic approach to the enhancement scheme, covering highways, parking, servicing, paving, seating, lighting, design, consistency in materials, planting, barriers, bollards and all other aspects involved in creating a welcoming, pedestrian-friendly public space. Success in these aspirations would attract more people into the

town, improving its vitality and viability.

"Sadly, it is felt that this approach has, in part, been fragmented. Many of their aspirations have fallen by the wayside, arising from decisions taken by council officers and consultants."

LRA Councillors Ken Faulkner and Tony Lee have also expressed their frustration and disappointment because there has been a lack of communication from the council officers over the final plans. LRA Councillors have set up a monitoring group which will seek to ensure that the plans are adhered to as close to the original state as is possible.

The next few months will be very difficult for shoppers and traders, and LRA is looking for ways of reducing the turmoil to a minimum. Residents who wish to report problems can do so by telephoning EFDC/Sainsbury's information line on 0800 028 2637 or by contacting their Ward Councillor (for contact details see back page). Alternatively send a message to contact@loughtonresidents.com.

Parking in the High Road this autumn.

For details of changes during building works go to:
www.loughtonresidents.com

Grouse or Gossip ?

Local problems on your mind ? Come and discuss them with your LRA members and local councillors. They will be out and about and hoping to meet you at -

Pyrles Lane from 10 -12 on Saturday mornings:
September 10th, October 8th and November 12th.

Oakwood Hill estate from 11 - 12 Thursday mornings:
September 15th, October 13th, November 17th

Wanted

Store it Storage needed urgently Have you a space in your garage for about 10 boxes of books ? No effort required, just space. They will be delivered to you and collected once a month for the LRA book stall at the Farmers Market. Monies raised from the stall are put to local use such as donations to the High Road Christmas lights and Debden Day.

Suzanne 8508 4770

Walk it Short walks in a road near you. Please help us to deliver this magazine.

David 8508 2932 or email davidlinnell@tiscali.co.uk

Draw it Sketches needed for this magazine, artists acknowledged.

Sheila 8508 2900

Pen it Write for Loughton Life - articles/topics. *Cathy 8508 8945*

Web it Computer and website skills.

contact@loughtonresidents.com

Stuff it Help our Membership Secretary with correspondence.

Juliet 8502 0552

Not Wanted

Free exercise bike! Kettler exercise bike. Free to a good home.

Carol Murray, 020 8508 4892

Numbers Up at Loughton Leisure Centre

What a pity that Loughton Leisure Centre, which is being run so successfully, is going to have its management handed over to a private company. LRA councillors on the District Council have fought to try and prevent this, but the Conservative majority on the Council has been determined to privatise the Centre, come what may. This seems to be a glaring example of party political ideology overriding the interests of the local community.

Since its opening in January 2003 Loughton Leisure Centre has gone from strength to strength. Latest figures indicate that the number of Gold Card Members (those who pay a monthly subscription in order to have unlimited use of the facilities) is greater than those of Epping and Waltham Abbey sports centres combined.

The monthly attendances at fitness classes continue to rise and now outstrip those in 2003 and 2004. The number of people visiting the gym is also greater than ever and the pool of course is very well used.

The Centre offers an enormous range of classes, some of which are privately organised and some internally run. These include aerobics (high and low impact), body toning, karate, Pilates, yoga and boxercise, as well as many others. There are also classes especially for children and for the over-50s. At certain times the gym is reserved for the over-50s.

If you are nervous about starting an exercise programme, please don't be. The staff are helpful and friendly and most of the people using the facilities have a far from perfect body shape!

Carol Murray

Who Looks after Loughton?

(Quiz Answers p.4)

1. Who collects my rubbish?
2. Who runs the local school?
3. Who is responsible for the police force?
4. Who do I ask for planning permission?
5. Who runs Loughton Pool/the Leisure Centre?
6. Who runs our NHS services?
7. Who runs the children's playground?
8. Who makes decisions on High Road parking?
9. Who does road repairs?
10. Who looks after Epping Forest?

Loughton - a great place to live



The LRA stall at the Farmers Market in August displayed views of what residents think is good about Loughton. CDs of colour photographs showing views of Loughton are on sale for £2.

LRA sponsors the market held on the first Sunday morning of every month. Come see the display and visit the various food and plant stalls on October 2nd.

Want info about the market?
Call Suzanne 8508 4770

Eatery Capital of Essex ?

Do you "eat in", take away or just prefer a toasted sandwich ? Does it matter ? Loughton is becoming the restaurant/café capital of the area, with a large number of eating premises along and around the High Road. Often there are comments about the lack of "real" shops in the town. The Local

Plan can't bring them in, but it is designed to stop an imbalance i.e. too many of one sort. There are various categories of retail premises. Recent government directives have added another layer so in addition to A1 (shops), A2 (banks) A3 (restaurants) there are A4 and A5.

LRA Councillor Ken Angold-Stephens explains: "Class A3 used to be an all-embracing group including bars, restaurants, take-aways etc. Now it has been divided into three classes, A3 for restaurants, snack bars and cafes, A4 for pubs and bars, and A5 for hot food take-aways. It appears to be an attempt to draw a distinction between them although I see confusion occurring. How about a restaurant (A3) that also does hot food take-aways (A5), a common practice with Chinese and Indian restaurants ? A4 and A5 groups are permitted also to include A3, a restaurant, café etc. and all three are allowed to change into A1, shops, A2, banks etc. (but the reverse is not true, shops etc cannot become pubs etc. without planning permission). To complicate matters a sandwich bar is A1, not A3 or A5 (presumably because sandwiches are not hot, unless they are toasted!)"

This is part of the government's initiative to combat binge drinking and antisocial behaviour in towns, since in some cases premises may be used as a café during the day and become a bar during the evening. In the future this dual use will have to be justified in the planning application. It would be useful to have a register which shows current use of all units in the area, so that changes could be monitored. Quite a task to set up. Any volunteers ?

LRA monitors and has input into the local plan for more information e-mail david.linnell@tiscali.co.uk

Community Faces Loss of Britannia Sports/Social Club

People had to stand in the corridors at the recent meeting of the Broadway Town Centre Partnership (the traders organisation) to discuss the Bank of England's plan to close the Britannia sports and social club.

The Bank no longer considers the club financially viable, as due to the reductions in activity at the plant the current employee membership of the club has reduced to 150. However, when you add the retired membership and new members from newly arrived firms in Langston Road it totals around 1200 and that does not include the families of the members. The premises and sports fields are used by many clubs for football, cricket, bowls, boxing, darts, pool, freemasons, jazz club and pensioners, clubs. The stem may be a bit withered, but the root system has spread deep into the local community.

The Bank has not yet made clear its future plans for the site. The land is potentially very valuable, if it could get the District Council to exempt it from Metropolitan Green Belt restrictions. Although it would be difficult to get permission for development as housing land, the same might be less true for industrial development. If development

proposals are firmly resisted and not over-ruled by an inspector, it might be feasible for the bank to sell off part of the land and put the remainder into a locally managed trust.

A petition has been organised locally, so far with over 700 signatures and a committee has been formed to come up with an urgent action plan, not only to raise awareness of the problem in the District but to also to examine proposals that might stand a chance of saving the club.

LRA is firmly behind the efforts to find a way to keep the facilities for leisure use. LRA Chairman Peter House has written to the Bank of England requesting an urgent meeting of all parties. At a time when we are trying to improve facilities for the youth of the area this is a step backward for current and prospective users of such a facility. We regret that the Bank did not enter into discussions with members or the local community on the future of the site.

M & S opens

For full story go to
www.loughtonresidents.com

Around the Town

Find a venue

To help organisers plan events, Dorothy Paddon has gathered information on local venues and facilities. The list is now available in libraries at Debden (Borders Lane) and Loughton (Traps Hill), at the Loughton Town Council offices and the EFDC Information Office at Traps Hill. To find out more about this, phone 020 8508 2238 or email: dpaddon@swessex.u-net.com

Don't buy wheelie bins

Wheelie bins are on sale at roadsides, and people think they are getting ahead of the game by investing in them. But when the bins are introduced (from the Autumn and into 2006), all residents will be provided with one free of charge – and the council will only empty the bins that they provide, so your purchase may not be usable. Don't be duped by rogue traders.

Roding trees

In April we reported efforts to improve the pavement trees in the Avondale Drive, Southern Drive and adjacent roads. After surveys and discussions with EFDC officers, Sheila Shillitto reports that a budget of approximately £13,000 has been allocated to do the improvements over two to three years, including pruning, pollarding and replacement of many of the old trees with more suitable young specimens. A delighted resident telephoned to say that work has already begun.

Debden Station lighting

Following a heartfelt complaint at the LRA Farmers Market stand, Ken Angold-Stephens took action. He reports after negotiations with Metronet that London Underground have agreed to replace the fittings with brighter lights and to install new lighting at the front of the building. We await dates for the work to be done, hopefully before autumn.

Who Looks after Loughton? Quiz Answers

1. Rubbish: District Council (County disposes of it)
2. Schools: Head + governing body (with County finances and support services)
3. Police: Essex Police Authority (financed by part of County tax)
4. Planning: District Council (Town Council may comment)
5. Leisure centres: currently District/transferring management to a private company
6. NHS: Epping Forest Primary Care Trust (GPs) with bought-in hospital trust services
7. Playground: Town Council
8. Parking: formerly District/now County
9. Roads: County
10. Epping Forest: Corporation of London

Why become a member of LRA ?

The answer is what LRA can do for you and what you can do for LRA. As a member you get your views listened too and acted upon. You hear the latest ideas and information about Loughton and the area. You get support and help with any problems from a group of dedicated experienced residents.

There's strength in numbers. LRA as a group can be more effective than an individual. To be successful LRA needs you. We hope you have enjoyed Loughton Life – we value your views and your support.

To LRA Membership Secretary, 14 The Hawthorns, Loughton, IG10 3QT

- I enclose £4 for 2005
- I enclose a donation in support of LRA's work
- Please send a receipt. I enclose a stamped, addressed envelope

Name

Address

Telephone.....

Email

All membership information is held by LRA for its own records and is not made available to any other body

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