Proposed Langston Rd retail development

Behind the Council’s depot site in Langston Road is an area of undeveloped land, once planned as a lorry park. The owners have approached the District Council with a view to combining this land with their depot site, to create a retail outlet for clothing and fashion stores. The depot offices would be relocated to North Weald, and the MOT/service station to a vacant site next to the Oakwood Hill industrial estate.

There are a number of arguments for the development. The would-be developers claim the retail park would provide a retail "offer" that is not catered for in the Broadway; give employment for around 200 people; enable promotion of the Broadway and Langston Road; bring customers in from outside the area which could benefit the Broadway shops; provide much needed junction and traffic improvements in Chigwell Lane; improve the environment around Debden station, including footpaths; give income from rents to the District Council, thus helping to offset potential cuts in services or keep Council Tax down; provide environmental improvements to the area and reduce trips outside the area to other shopping malls for clothing purchases.

Arguments against the development include that it would compete with High Road clothes shops; offers no guarantee of public transport links from Broadway/High Road to Langston Road; existing businesses who park there would be displaced; insufficient parking; all the shops would be national chains and money spent in them would not benefit local economy; sets a precedent for other land in Langston Road to be converted to retail, such as a supermarket/hypermarket, which would kill The Broadway shops; it is too far to walk from the Broadway to Langston Road so unlikely. Broadway traders would benefit; and local traffic problems would be made worse.

LRA would like to hear what you think. Is this a good idea? Email us, or write to the Chairman – details on back page. Apologies to our members, who have seen this information before – but we feel it needs to be seen by all Loughton residents.

Christmas Lights

As usual last Christmas, Loughton Town Council gave £4,000 grants to each of the two Town Centre Partnerships to help with their Christmas lights. Peter Sheen, chairman of the High Rd TCP, and Dave Stannard, chairman of the Broadway TCP, are to be thanked for their hard work to get the displays up. We would also like to thank the traders who contributed, especially the owner of Brooklyn Parade (Craig Gottlieb) whose lights are always up early in the season. Unfortunately because of the economic situation donations were low from traders. All donations for next year gratefully received! The lights on the tree on Kings Green are supplied by the Town Council. Owing to an electrical supply cable defect, these had to be taken out of commission over Christmas. The supply is being renewed by the electricity company, and the Council will be ensuring the lights on the tree are better next year.

LRA AGM

The LRA AGM will be held on 4 April at 7.45 pm in the Church Hall, Methodist Church, High Rd, Loughton. During the AGM it will be proposed to amend the LRA Constitution to allow an LRA councillor to be elected as Chairman, Vice Chair or Press Officer (currently not allowed); to make a minor amendment on membership to deal with any LRA councillor who switches to another party midway through an electoral period, without asking for a by-election; and to allow us to send notice of General Meetings by email as well as by post. Any member who would like the full text of the changes, or has any queries, can contact us at contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk or ring 020 8508 2932.

David Linnell

Get more from LRA!

Join LRA now - £5 per household until the end of 2011! You will get extra newsletters and can opt to receive a weekly email local news bulletin. Members’ support for our work is vital as subscriptions pay our costs such as printing newsletters and election expenses. To join, see back page. (Subscriptions for existing members are due each January).
Planning & licensing matters

The LRA Plans Group looks at all planning and licensing applications in Loughton; we consult residents and/or support or object individual applications as appropriate. It works completely separately from LRA councillors on the Town and District planning and licensing committees, who decide on applications on the basis of planning law and on evidence presented to them.

Approved by District Council

Rectory Lane: a street-trading van on the corner with Borders Lane. LRA, the Town Council and local traders, opposed this as unfair competition and are looking to challenge the decision.

Hillcroft and Colebrook Gardens: the District Council put forward proposals to provide parking bays, which came directly from efforts by LRA Cllrs Ken Angold-Stephens and David Wixley to get council funds allocated for such changes.

In progress

Pyrles Lane – District Council Nursery site: The District Council is considering the possibility of housing on this site, between the houses on Hillyfields and Pyrles Lane and the green area running down to Rectory Lane, and have already received a petition opposing the proposals from residents in Pyrles Lane.

Phone masts: LRA has been told of proposals for joint Vodafone and O2 masts outside the Gunmakers Arms public house, Grosvenor Drive, on the NE corner of the Pyrles Lane/Rectory Lane junction, and at junction of Goldings Hill & Baldwins Hill.

Sports Hall, Rectory Lane: LRA has various concerns about the application to build another care home on this site. In particular, College students now have to use sports facilities in Redbridge.

Borders Lane: the District Council has had an application for a licence for 72 Borders Lane to be used as a sex shop. The LRA Plans Group has asked local residents for their views.

Loughton’s late-night venues

LRA was very disappointed that at a review of the Crystal Lounge’s licence, despite objections from the LRA Plans Group and from residents, the District Council only reduced the closing time by half-an-hour (to 1.30am). Any future Licence Reviews of this late-night venue, or any others, will need hard evidence of problems. The police monitor behaviour and the District Council deals with any noise nuisance. If you see anti-social behaviour please report it to the police at the time. If you think that the noise is unreasonable, please complain at the time to the 24-hour District Council service on 01992 564000 or at www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council_services/environmental_health/noise.asp

David Linnell

Lopping Hall update

A BBC Radio 4 programme about the future of the UK forests The Long View broadcast on 15 February, was recorded partly in the Lopping Hall. The hall is a permanent memorial of the bid to save Epping Forest from development in the 1860s, spearheaded by local hero, Thomas Willingale.

For 125 years, the Hall has been the focus for local meetings and dramatic societies, and the base for numerous societies. The building that fronts the High Rd was added in 1901 as Loughton’s Town Hall, and served as such till 1935. In recent years, the Hall, which is run by trustees elected by the people of Loughton, has become rather run down, because the funds generated by the lettings and rents do not cover anything but basic maintenance. The whole place is now in need of sprucing up, the installation of a lift and disabled toilets, redecoration, new plumbing and re-roofing. This will cost in the region of £500,000.

The Trustees have exciting plans for the Hall. Three grant applications have been made, and the Trustees are hoping to borrow the rest. They also want to see the gradual development of an arts facility to go along with the traditional uses of meetings and performances.

Photo courtesy of the Loughton and District Historical Society (the LDHS can supply electronic copies of many scenes of Loughton in the past at £5.50 each - call 020 8508 236)

Can we do better?

Last year the District’s residents recycled 14,515 tonnes of domestic rubbish and 7,529 tonnes of green waste which would otherwise have been destined for land-fill – an overall rate for recycling and green waste of nearly 45%! Don’t forget to wrap your food waste (including bones) in newspaper to put out in your green bin (even if there’s no green waste to go in). For what you can recycle ring 01992 546000 or go to www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk and search for “recycling”.

David Linnell

For more information about LRA or Loughton please visit

www.loughtonresidents.co.uk
Bank holiday parking

Yellow lines which restrict parking on a given day of the week are enforceable on that day even when it is a public holiday. Many Loughton roads benefit from these parking restrictions, for example: No Parking between 2 and 3pm helps to prevent all day commuter parking. On Bank Holidays it’s easy to forget that these parking restrictions still apply to us and our visitors. Don’t assume Parking Wardens are also on holiday. Read the signs carefully before you park. A ticket would spoil your break.

Church Hill car park

Six years ago, Cllr Caroline Pond and I backed the closure of the Church Hill car park, adjacent to the Esso garage, because of low usage and anti-social behaviour. With the current shortage of parking spaces in Loughton, however, its reopening is being considered. While the District Council would go along with this, it has no money to fund it; therefore the removal of weeds would need to be undertaken by volunteers. We have started consultation with nearby residents. The car park will be temporary and could be closed if anti-social behaviour restarts, or the Council sells the land for development. If residents agree, a free car park could be opening in the near future.

Cllr John Markham

Library opening times

One of the effects of Government funding cuts has been to make Essex County Council reconsider the level of their library service. Unlike some authorities, Essex took a decision to keep all 73 libraries, and all mobile library stops, open. Indeed, Essex’s library service is reckoned one of the best in the country. Slough has even arranged for Essex to take over all its libraries, and services are also being provided to Cambridgeshire and Norfolk.

But a need for savings has resulted in proposals to trim back all library opening hours. At present, Loughton Library is open 9-7 on weekdays, 9.30-5.30 Saturday, and 11-3 on Sundays. Two new proposals have been made to users, both ending Sunday opening, and with no reduction on Saturdays, but offering either 9-5 weekdays, or 9-7 with a total closure on Thursdays. At the time of writing, it is not clear which option is the more popular (the consultation ends on 27 March), but LRA County Cllr Chris Pond has suggested that if the 9-5 option is chosen, it should be revised to 9.30-5.30, to allow at least some people to visit after work or school/college. For Debden Library the proposals are for four half-days a week, either mornings or afternoons, or a combination.

All of these proposals are unpalatable, but are much better than might have been the case, and many places outside Essex are in a much worse position.

Loughton Festival

The Loughton Festival was conceived in 2006 and has grown from a weekend in March to a festival that starts in mid-March and ends in May. The 2011 Festival celebrates Loughton’s cultural and literary heritage and also Loughton’s current talent. Ring 020 8508 2512 or visit www.loughtonfestival.org.uk/ for more information.

For more information about LRA & Loughton please visit www.loughtonresidents.co.uk
JOIN LRA NOW!

LRA depends upon members - please support us by joining now.
I enclose £5 till end-2011 .......................... £5…………
I enclose a donation for LRA’s work...............£…………
Name……………………………………..…………….
Address………………………………………………………..
Postcode IG10......... Phone………………………………
email (if any)……………………………………………….

I would like LRAs weekly email local news bulletin[ ]

Please complete & send to LRA Membership Secretary,
14 The Hawthorns, Loughton, IG10 3QT. All membership
information is held by LRA for its own purposes and is not
made available to any other body.

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Want to help?

If you would like to help LRA by becoming a local
councillor, by just getting involved in what we do, or
by spending an hour occasionally delivering our
newspapers near where you live, please contact David
Linnell or Chris Pond (phone numbers below, or email
contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk).

Farmers’ markets

LRA’s Farmers’ Markets have run for eight years. Please
come along on the first Sunday of each month, 9am-2pm
in the High Road. See our display, talk to LRA councillors
about problems and visit our second hand bookstall
(March – December).

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LRA’s Farmers’ Markets, High Rd, first Sunday each month