

LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE Newsletter

Townwide Spring Edition

For all residents in IG10

*Loughton Residents Association is independent
and focuses on looking after Loughton.*

*We have Cllrs on the County & District Councils and
hold 21 out of the 22 Loughton Town Council seats.*

Central Line lack of trains

Central Line trains continue to have an abnormally high number of motor failures. Transport for London (TfL) engineers say the work to fix the motors is complex and means fewer trains are available each day while the work takes place. This is particularly noticeable at peak hours with greater demand on the service. To run a peak service, 78 trains are required, however in recent weeks typically little more than 50 have been available.

Disruption is likely to continue for some time. A temporary timetable is being introduced to increase reliability and minimise unpredictable long gaps between trains. This requires changes to signalling, rostering, power supply and other operating systems. We understand that there will be a peak train only every 6-8 minutes, and there will be no trains turned around at Loughton; they will all come through from Epping, **thus they will be very full** when they arrive at Debden and Loughton stations.

If you are going into or via Liverpool Street, TfL have introduced a shuttle bus between Loughton and Chingford stations on Mondays to Fridays during peak hours that connects to London Overground services to Liverpool Street. More at <http://tinyurl.com/lracentraline>. In addition, the 397 bus between Debden and Loughton to Chingford stations is another option.

This problem is separate to the Central Line Improvement Programme which is overhauling the existing trains over the next few years. TfL have said this should extend the life of the trains by 15-20 years, however extending the life of the existing 30-year old trains may be a false economy as they are likely to be obsolete in a decade's time.

TfL originally planned to replace all the Central Line trains (along with Piccadilly Line trains) which would have also improved capacity in the 2030s. Given the drop in passenger numbers during the Covid pandemic, and the subsequent tight financial position TfL finds itself in, funding was not provided for the Central Line replacement trains. With a less restricted government investment policy in TfL, they would be due for replacement now, not in 15 years' time.

Off peak Fridays

TfL will start a trial where all tube and rail fares are charged as off-peak rates all day on Fridays. The trial will last for three months, and we understand it will start on 8th March.



13-15A Alderton Hill appeal dismissed

The Planning Inspector has turned down the developer's appeal against the District Council's refusal of an 89-unit care home at the lower end of Alderton Hill – a very welcome decision.

Michael Benbow (representing local residents) and David Linnell (for LRA Plans Group) attended the 5-day appeal Inquiry in Epping and spoke strongly against the development. In addition, Michael had encouraged nearby residents to put in objections (234 local households objected - a remarkably high number for an appeal). Michael also successfully organised residents from each of the areas surrounding the site to attend and to say how the proposed over-development of the site development would adversely affect them. The degree of over-development was the key element in the Inspector's decision.

The result was by no means a foregone conclusion, as the Inspector had to give a verdict which was not inconsistent with a previous appeal decision on a larger proposal for the site. That decision had given far too little weight to the significant degree of over-development that was being proposed and its potential adverse effect on neighbouring residents. In their latest proposals, the developers had tried to take account of the earlier objections. Without the forceful evidence presented by residents this time, the developers might well have succeeded in getting their latest proposal approved. But the saga isn't over yet; we now await further proposals for the site.

LRA Membership

This edition has gone to every household in Loughton, however some editions we produce are members-only, therefore receiving this copy doesn't necessarily mean you're a member of LRA.

Around eight hundred Loughton households support LRA with a £5 a year membership payment. This supports our work and means that members receive additional news about Loughton in our monthly members-only Loughton News emails, as well as extra member-only issues of Loughton Life.

For details of how to join, and past issues of our news bulletins, see www.LoughtonResidents.org.uk

If you'd like to become a member but don't have access to the internet, please call 07968 174388 to speak to our membership secretary Laura Blake.

We never share our membership information.

Our thanks to all the residents who support LRA

Additional funding for road maintenance

The County Council has announced that the County is to receive £121 million of funding for road repairs and resurfacing between now and 2034, which has been reallocated from the HS2 rail scheme. This is welcomed locally, however does need to be put into context.

That additional funding over 10 years is on average £12.1 million per year which would be on top of the current year's allocation of £34.6 million. Essex Highways has, however, said it needed £77.7m each year and has stated that county roads are in managed decline. The additional funding will help but not fill the gap. It is not known if any of it will be spent on Loughton's roads.

Proposed Loughton Men's/Community Shed

We reported last November on a proposal to open a Men's or Community Shed locally.

Unfortunately the identified site (Oakwood Hill Community Centre) is no longer able to support the use of their facilities for the proposed Shed. Therefore a new location is being sought that can support an area to be used with carpentry type machinery and workbenches, or a donation of a suitable cargo container, that can be converted into a workshop by volunteers. Likewise if there is no suitable accommodation, it may need to be a container and therefore suitable accessible land may be needed. Can you, or anyone you know, help? If so, please contact Chidi at cldr.cnweke@ppingforestdc.gov.uk

Greensted Rd car obstructions

LRA Cllr Ian Allgood noticed that a car mechanic was fixing vehicles on Greensted Road and had eight vehicles in various states of repair, all parked up and causing obstruction on entering Greensted Road, especially during school pick up and drop down times.

Ian raised this with the District Council, and the Council's Environmental Enforcement team visited the owner. All vehicles have now been removed.

On the buses

Bus routes 20 and 167: There will be minor timetable changes from 9th March. The same routes, hours and general pattern of service will continue.

New Bus Shelter Contract

A new bus shelter contract has signed by the County Council with Clear Channel, who have been same supplier to the Council since around 1999.

It is reported that Clear Channel will maintain all bus shelters on the County Council's behalf and install and sell advertising at the bus stop locations, with the Council receiving a minimum guaranteed income and a profit-share from the advertising that will be ring-fenced for spending on the bus network.

Dog control public spaces protection order in place

Following a public consultation, the Dog Control Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) is now in place across the District for the next three years and makes it an offence for a person in charge of a dog to:

- Fail to remove dog faeces deposited on any publicly accessible land within the district.
- Fail to put a dog on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised officer on any publicly accessible land within the district.
- Fail to limit the number of dogs they are taking onto publicly accessible land within the district, to four dogs.
- Fail to produce a receptacle for picking up dog faeces when requested to do so by an authorised officer while walking a dog on any publicly accessible land within the district.
- Fail to exclude a dog from specified fenced areas within the district.

EV charging stations at Traps Hill car park

Two new charging stations have been installed at the Traps Hill car park.

Contacting LRA

Councillors key: D = District T = Town	Membership: membership@loughtonresidents.co.uk Laura Blake, 9 Woodbury Hill, Loughton IG10 1JB 07968 174388	Enquiries: contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk 020 8508 2361
Alderton Ward Chidi Nweke (D) Hillcroft 07403 489455 Ian Allgood (D) Greensted Road 020 8502 2393 Katie Valentine (T) Habgood Road 07477 012213 Mick Stubbings (T) Greenfields 07766 480522 Philip Abraham (T) Lancaster Drive 020 8502 2925	Fairmead Ward Carol Davies (T) Colebrook Gardens 07817 230372 David Wixley (D) Goldings Road 020 8418 9284 Louise Mead (D) 07746 875952 Sebastian Fontenelle (T) Etheridge Rd 07898 906371 Will Kauffman (T) The Greens Close 07799 148740	St Mary's Ward Barbara Cohen (T) Church Lane 07957 141197 Graham Wiskin (T) Traps Hill 020 8925 2003 Howard Kauffman (D) Church Lane 020 8508 1098 Judy Jennings (D&T) County: Loughton (Central) Chris Pond Staples Road 020 8508 2361
Broadway Ward Chris Pond (D) Staples Road 020 8508 2361 Kevin Rainbow (T) Audley Gardens 07921 662715 Les House (T) Avondale Drive 020 8508 3369 Michael Owen (D) Baldwins Hill 07467 430145 Philip Beales (T) Harwater Drive 020 8418 0459	Forest Ward Jayna Jogia (D) The Drive 07983 713389 Jon Riley (T) Albion Park 020 8508 6604 Roger Baldwin (D) Burney Drive 020 8281 5488 Stella Murphy (T) High View Close 020 8508 2794 Trevor Downing (T) Smarts Lane 020 8508 8877	Committee Anne Harriman 020 8502 1779 John Walker 07779 338868 Judith Walker 07855 265835 Juliet Pollard 020 8502 0552 Lance Leonard 020 8502 0771 Mark Dalton 07719 736901 Michael Benbow 020 8508 4457 Steve Eaton 020 8923 0065 Tessa Cochrane 020 3643 7492
St John's Ward Bob Jennings (D) Caroline Pond (D&T) Staples Road 020 8508 2361 Chris Pond (T) Staples Road 020 8508 2361 Michael Owen (T) Baldwins Hill 07467 430145	Roding Ward David Wixley (T) Goldings Road 020 8418 9284 Neil MacKinnon (T) Barncroft Close 07872 324028 Rose Brookes (D&T) Lower Park Rd 07391 879412	
Secretary: Jill Angold-Stephens 020 8281 0674 Treasurer: Miriam Murphy 07966 177961	Loughton Life Editor: Eva Blasco 020 8923 0065 Minutes Secretary: Susan Creevy	

LRA councillors are Independent and non-political

Planning & licensing

The LRA Plans Group (LRAPG) looks at all planning and licensing applications in the town and takes action where appropriate. It consults residents and supports, or objects to, individual applications as appropriate. It works entirely separately from LRA's CILrs on Council planning committees. Read more about Planning and Licensing, the role of the LRAPG, how to get more information using the application and reference numbers provided, and how you can comment at <https://tinyurl.com/LRAPPlanning>

Where there are residents in flats above licensed premises, for example on the High Road, The Broadway or nearby, the LRAPG objects to late-night licensing applications.

Higgins Site, 1 Langston Road

The District Council approved a planning application in 2023 for an office and hotel development. This new application proposes a new self-storage facility, new light Industrial workspace / incubator units and a new hotel with associated car and cycle parking, landscaping and other works ancillary to the development.



LRAPG is very concerned about the increasing congestion along Langston Road and Chigwell Lane. Notwithstanding earlier approvals and the claims from the applicant this scheme will generate less traffic than these previous schemes which they clearly have no intention of implementing, the congestion on the junction of Langston Road and Chigwell Lane has got worse. Cars waiting to turn left into Langston Road queue past the railway bridge, where the road is a single carriageway, which causes massive delays. The traffic can back up all the way to the roundabout on Church Hill/Golding's Hill yet the Council keeps on granting more traffic generating uses in this location without asking for money to improve the junction. Whilst the traffic engineers at County Council claim they have visited the site, it must have been a fleeting visit.

LRAPG considers County Council officers need to carry out a proper assessment throughout a typical week. The problem is getting worse and something needs to be done to address it. The self-storage "Storex" building is also very ugly. Notwithstanding this is Langston Road, the building is highly visible and the bland design including materials and integration of signage is contrary to the Government's build beautiful agenda. Officers should negotiate something better than this or refuse it.

Reference EPF/0035/24. The formal consultation period ended 5th February.

96 Whitehills Road

This application proposed a change of use to let as a 7 bedroom property as opposed to a 6 bedroom property. The property is presently let to 6 tenants and the applicant wishes to let to 7 tenants. The property already consists of 7 bedrooms so no development work is required.

LRAPG is concerned about the number of family houses changing to Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) and considers the District Council needs to have a policy to protect family housing. This house is another example of where the bedrooms are too small and the communal areas are too small to support seven people. There is insufficient information to understand whether the existing use is C3 or C4 and LRA has asked for this to be clarified. Are there locks on the bedroom doors for example? Bedroom seven would be over the front door and stairs, meaning the occupant would be subject to disturbance from other occupants entering or

leaving the property, or talking in the downstairs hallway. Similar problems would arise for the occupant of bedroom five, which is over the sitting room.

Reference EPF/001710/23. The formal consultation period ends 9th February.

Oakwood Hill

Industrial Estate ground rents

LRA Cllr Ian Allgood, along with LRA Cllr Chidi Nweke and Independent Cllr Stephen Murray, were approached by users of the Estate as they had been contacted by Qualis for reviews of their ground rent. For no obvious reason the reviews are every five years, but no reviews had been done for at least eight years.

Depending on the company, most current rates were £1.15 per square foot (psf). The proposed increase by Qualis would have raised the rates to £2.75-£3.00. This represented an increase of over 140%

After much discussion and involvement by Ian and the FSB (Federation of Small Businesses), along with the threat of arbitration, a new rate has been agreed of £1.99 psf and no back rate claim.

An added benefit is that all the units have now become a collective and formed the Oakwood Hill Industrial Estate Co-op, so the increase will now be across the board.

Epping Forest worth

£1.9 billion but priceless to us!

Epping Forest has been valued at £1.9bn to society over the next 50 years by a consultancy firm who assessed the health, air and water quality benefits of the woodland. The report said health and recreation benefits were worth £50.7m annually, and its ability to capture carbon in the atmosphere was worth £4.1m each year.

The report also shows that the site delivers the highest benefit-to-cost ratio of all City Corporation-managed open spaces at 20.2, which means that for every £1 spent on service provision, the Forest delivers £20.20 in public benefits.

Such reports, which attempt to put a financial value on what is truly priceless and irreplaceable, do however help to justify the funding and resources needed to protect the Forest.

Affordable homes and Qualis

The District Council proposed reducing affordable housing at two Qualis Commercial housing sites in Epping, given they were deemed financially unviable in their current form, with cost increases attributed to the "current economic conditions, with rising inflation (affecting the cost of materials and labour) and rising interest rates". In other words, the developments as planned and approved would mean a financial loss to Qualis, and by logical extension to the District Council.

To avoid or lessen financial losses, the homes now need to be sold at presumably higher market prices rather than provide homes that are affordable.

The request to reduce affordable housing was subsequently considered and approved at a District Council meeting.

LRA Cllr Chris Pond has commented that the original planning applications were seen through the District Development Management Committee at the time as vital for Epping and axiomatic to its future swimming facility, just as the multi-storey car park was to be good for the Epping environment, and it was pushed through by the council.

Find us at www.loughtonresidents.org.uk

May local council elections

In under three months there will be local elections for the Town and District Councils, along with the Police and Fire Commissioner (PFCC) for Essex.

This year there are some changes to the names and boundaries of wards locally. You will be able to vote LRA as we will continue to stand candidates in Loughton's Town and District wards.

Please ensure you are registered to vote and if you know of anyone who isn't, please encourage them to register to vote.

Please help yourself and LRA by registering for a Postal Vote. Postal Voting is a safe, secure and convenient way to vote and you receive ballot papers 10 days before polling day. All ballot papers with your choices are simply posted back to the District Council in a prepaid envelope. If something unexpected occurs near polling day, your choices will be safely counted by the District Council - this means your vote is never missed.

You can get a Postal Voting form from the LRA website to print and post. It needs as few as 7 details and lasts for 3 years.

Council to lease waste collection vehicles

As part of the District Council's plan to transfer responsibility of waste collection from Biffa to a council-owned waste collection company, the Council has agreed a contract with Specialist Fleet Services for the hire and maintenance of waste collection vehicles.

The contract will run for 8 years, with the new collection service to start in November 2024.

The Council says leasing the vehicles gives more flexibility, is more cost effective and will allow for the changing of vehicles as and when needed to fit the service. If the Council were to purchase vehicles, there is a risk of them not being ready for operation in November due to delays in manufacturing. All environmentally friendly options for vehicles have been considered with some electric vehicles as part of this contract, although, unfortunately, some large refuse collection vehicles or specialist machines are not yet compatible with electric vehicle technology.

Land at North Weald sold to Google

The District Council has sold 52 acres of land at North Weald Airfield to Google for £88.215 million for the potential development of a new data centre campus. North Weald Airfield will continue to function as an operational aerodrome as part of the plans, which also include the delivery of a new combined control tower and fire station. This is in addition to the data centre planned by Google for Waltham Cross.

Jessel Drive rough road patch

A resident reported that a patch of Jessel Drive was very rough to the point of double decker buses or HGVs passing by causing nearby houses to shake.

This had been reported to Essex Highways but, had not been treated with any urgency.

LRA Cllr Chris Pond chased it up, and a temporary repair was soon made. We hope, along with residents, that a more permanent repair will happen before too long.

Jessel Green Fun Day

After last year's successful event, the Town Council has confirmed that the next Jessel Green Fun Day will be on Sunday 23rd June from 12 noon until 4pm.

Reporting potholes and broken pavements

Please do not report these to the Town Council, as they do not deal with them. Instead, report these to the County Council at <https://tinyurl.com/ecchighwayissues>

If you have hurt yourself, or damaged your bike or car, you may be able to claim at <https://tinyurl.com/eccmakeclaim>

If the road defect has been reported and not fixed before you suffered damage, your claim has a greater chance of success. Essex Highways will refute claims where they have had no opportunity to make it safe, or where with careful driving it should be safe. Their lawyers are very skilled at rejecting claims. So always report it!

Council Tax

County Council: The Council has agreed a 4.99% increase (an extra £72.36 per year for a band D property), which includes the adult social care precept as set out by the Government. Under Treasury rules the maximum the increase could be without a referendum is 5%.

Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service: Increases have been agreed that will result in band D Council Taxpayers paying an extra £12.96 per year for policing and an extra £2.34 a year for fire and rescue services (a 5.55% and 2.91% increase respectively). There's no maximum which requires a referendum.

District Council: The Council has agreed a 2.99% increase (an extra £4.85 per year for a band D property). This is the maximum that could be imposed without a referendum.

Town Council: The Council has agreed a 6.95% increase (an extra £4.96 for a band D property). The Town Council does not receive funding from central Government, so the tax increase must reflect inflation that the Council must bear. There's no maximum which requires a referendum.

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 at 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