



LRA's Loughton News

15 December 2023



In this issue, read about [Bright Lights on The Broadway](#), the children's event that took place at the end of November.

With the weather getting colder, [Warm Places](#) are again open locally, and we can point you to [some tips for your heating system](#). Of course energy prices remain high again this year, so [saving energy and money](#) is important, and there is [support for those struggling with energy costs](#).

Following tradition [here's LRA's Christmas Quiz for 2023](#) for everyone to enjoy.

From all of us at LRA, thank you again for your support this year. We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

You can always [contact us by email](#) to raise an issue, give your views, or offer help.



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LRA News

Bright Lights on The Broadway

Volunteers from the Broadway Town Centre Partnership and students from New City College staged a children's Christmas event on the Broadway for the second year running on Wednesday 29 November.

The students designed and built a pop-up Santa's grotto in the former District Council office and Father Christmas saw just under three hundred children.



T. Cribb and Sons helped to sponsor a free fairground ride and Sainsbury's donated lots of free fruit. Charlotte, the children's worker from Loughton Methodist Church, ran a drop in activity in St. John's on the Broadway. Children from Distinct Performing Arts and the Thomas Willingale School choir entertained crowds on stage. Lighting effects were provided by



Terry Tew Sound and Light. The Bookshop on the High Road supported the event by donating lots of books and Qualis Property Solutions arranged for several Christmas trees to decorate the central reservation.

All the volunteers on the day that made this such a successful community event.

Eyesore on Alderton Hill?

There has been a long-running series of attempts to build an enormous complex of elderly persons' flats, with care facilities and communal areas, at the foot of Alderton Hill, next to Poets Place. The site extends up Alderton Hill, well into the area currently occupied by large, single-family homes; it faces Brook Road. The proposal would be between 3 and 6 storeys high!



The latest planning application was turned down by the District Council 10 months ago – 310 local households had objected. The applicants then appealed and 234 local households objected (a remarkably high number for an appeal).

A five day Planning Inquiry was held from December 6th - 12th in Epping. For LRA, Michael Benbow, who had put considerable effort into encouraging residents to object, and David Linnell attended on all five days, and spoke strongly against the development. Michael also successfully organised residents from each of the areas surrounding the site to attend and to say how the development would adversely affect them.

This was the second time that there has been an appeal on a rejected application for the site. Unfortunately the planning system is stacked against residents, making it increasingly hard to get proposals rejected. We now await the Inspector's decision, which won't emerge until well into 2024.

[Background on our website](#)

Brooklyn Avenue

After the recent machine patching of the road, a resident reported that single yellow lines were repainted instead of double red lines at the junctions of Brooklyn Avenue with Churchfields and Priory Road.

This would have meant that parking restrictions would not be enforceable.

LRA Cllr Chris Pond raised this with the County Council who advised that the



contractor didn't have red thermoplastic lining available and so thought it would be best to temporarily use yellow lining to avoid cars parking in the location. The issue has been raised with the contractor to re-attend and a follow up date to be scheduled to put the correct lining down.

Has this email has been forwarded to you by an LRA member? Join LRA and [support us for just £5 a year](#) and get these emails sent direct to you every 3-4 weeks.

Affordable Homes and Qualis

The District Council have been developing housing sites in Epping, via their wholly owned subsidiary Qualis Commercial. A paper prepared for a District Council meeting this week has now outlined how two of these developments (St Johns Road and Civic Offices) have "*cost increases [that] have outstripped value indices resulting in unviability of the development in its current form*" and scenario assessments done "*will lead to a project deficit*". In other words, the developments as planned and approved will mean a financial loss to Qualis, and by logical extension to the District Council.

The cost increase are attributed to the "*current economic conditions, with rising inflation (affecting the cost of materials and labour) and rising interest rates*".

Both sites have affordable housing planned for 25% of the housing units (providing 57 affordable homes). The Council has now proposed reducing the affordable housing to zero for the Civic Offices site and 32 for the St. John's Road site to improve the financial viability of the developments. In other words, to avoid or lessen financial losses, the Council needs to sell homes at a presumably higher market prices rather than provide homes that are affordable.

The District Development Management Committee approved the request on 13 December, with a final decision reserved to Full Council under the procedure known a "minority reference", whereby a group of councillors to whom a decision is unacceptable can refer it to full council. This is planned for 19 December.

[More details here](#)

LRA Cllr Chris Pond has commented that this was 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 accordingly.

Chris says the LRA Plans Group will have to be very vigilant private developers do not try this in Loughton.



High Road Darkness

Members will recall we have reported before that over half the streetlights in the busiest part of the High Road are "dead". This is apparently because the design of the luminaires (the entire light fixture including the lamps) is obsolete (they were installed in 2003) and cannot easily be replaced by LEDs.

Essex Highways planned to tackle this in the first half of 2023, however that obviously did not happen. The High Road now has large stretches of road lit only by lighting in shops and the Town Council's Christmas lighting.

LRA Cllr Chris Pond reports that the issue was raised at the County Council full council meeting on 12 December. The Council's Portfolio Holder has said that the next LED upgrade phase will be completed this financial year. Given past experience, believe it if you like.

Salt Bins

LRA Cllr Chris Pond raised in no uncertain terms at the County Council full council meeting the removal of salt bins on hilly Loughton roads under "High Practice Note no 24". The cabinet member, Tom Cunningham, denied knowledge of it (despite having signed several emails to the Town Council).

He said he'd consider Chris' request to have them returned. Meanwhile let's hope freezing weather on Loughton's hills is avoided!

LRA's Christmas Quiz

Following tradition, [here's LRA's Christmas quiz for 2023](#) for everyone to enjoy. This year's quiz is based around shops both old and new.



Answers please, either by email to lesandsueharris@aol.com, or to 32 Upper Park, Loughton IG10 4EQ by 5 January 2024.

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, and to the LRA Plans Group – please have your say.

Aura Grill and Bar, 179-181 High Road

This application proposes varying planning conditions to allow three cars and three motorcycles to park at the rear of the building (exiting onto Station Road), and to extend opening hours to 10am to 12:30am Mondays to Saturdays and 12pm to midnight on Sundays.

This was the Cafe Rouge restaurant which is now occupied by Aura Bar and Grill and recently the subject of planning enforcement action for unauthorised works to the

rear.

LRAPG has objected to the application and consider the opening hours should be restricted to 11pm at the latest to protect residential amenity; there are residential flats in the properties to the south of building. With limited parking, patrons using the premises are likely to park in quiet residential streets just off the High Road.

Leaving at 12.30am to access and rev up vehicles when they are cold in the winter/slam car doors etc on quiet residential streets is unacceptable.

Reference [EPF/1241/23](#). The formal consultation period ended 12 December but you can still comment to the Council.

236-238 High Road (above Vivaldi's and 8 Rocks)

This application requests prior approval for change of use from office space (Class E) to six dwellings (Class C3) on the first and second floors.

LRAPG are concerned the District Council accepted this planning application as a valid application. The applicant's site plan shows the Loughton Music Academy building, but the elevations show Vivaldi café and Rocks Café. The application form says the works are in connection with the first and second floors, yet the plans include new accommodation on the third floor.

LRAPG have objected to the flats because they are substandard in floorspace terms, deficient in a reasonable standard of amenity and some are below national prescribed standards. Squeezing in six flats will lead to more parking pressure, not to mention the impact on the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation.

Reference [EPF/2473/23](#). The formal consultation period ended 12 December but you can still comment to the Council.

251A High Road (above Totally Wicked)

This application proposes change of use of the first floor from D1 cookery school to C3 residential flat and creation of two additional floors and a block of two flats to the rear with associated works.

The current building, occupied on the ground floor by Totally Wicked is two storeys high. LRAPG have objected to the large extensions proposed at the front and back, which will harm the character of the High Road. The building forms part of a consistent roof form and this should be retained. Overall, this is an over development of the site that will provide low standard residential accommodation and permission should therefore be refused.

Reference [EPF/1351/23](#). The formal consultation period ended 12 December but you can still comment to the Council.



Roads, Parking and Travel

Planned Road Closures

- Brooklyn Avenue - the road will be closed 19 and 20 December between 8pm and 5am for machine patching by Essex Highways. [More](#)
- Lower Road - the road will be closed on 9 January from 9:30am to 3:30pm 8pm and 5am while overhead cabling works are undertaken by Openreach. [More](#)
- Clays Lane - the road will be closed 15 January to 24 February while meter installation works are undertaken by Thames Water. [More](#)



Dates can change so [check here for the latest updates](#), and for other planned roadworks including ones that involve only temporary traffic lights.

Free off-street parking

Weekend parking is free in District Council-run [off-street car parks](#) at the weekends throughout December. [More](#)

When using **on-street** parking bays on Bank Holidays, remember that NEPP



wardens now work on Bank Holidays. Unless the sign says that charges don't apply, they do!

Arrests After Drink Drive Campaign Launched

As part of the police campaign, on Monday 4 December, 3 arrests were made for drug driving following static patrol checks in Loughton. During the three-hour operation, officers stopped every vehicle travelling along Chigwell Lane and drivers suspected of drink or drug usage, were subsequently tested. To ensure road safety, three drivers were arrested for drug driving, two vehicles were seized for no insurance and three traffic offence reports were issued for no seatbelts and MOT offences. [More](#)



Winter on the Roads

Essex Highways gritters have started [gritting the roads to keep them safe](#). Motorists also need to be prepared for driving in colder and icy conditions so here is some [winter driving advice](#).

Public Transport over Christmas and New Year

There will be changes to public transport services over the Christmas and New Year period.

Transport for London
[Services by each day](#)

Vectare
[Bus Routes 418 and 542](#)

Arriva
[Bus Route 66](#)

Mainline Rail Services
[National Rail](#) and [TravelWatch](#) information

Police, Fire and Crime

Suspect Charged with Shoplifting in Debden

A man has been remanded in custody after being charged with 22 shoplifting offences as part of an ongoing investigation in Debden. Officers were called to the BP Garage on The Broadway in Debden at the weekend to report multiple thefts over the course of a month, where over £5000 worth of produce had been stolen. [More](#)



Joint Operation Targets Fly-tippers

A joint operation targeting fly-tippers has led to 15 potential prosecutions.

The District Council joined forces with Essex Police and the Corporation of London to combat fly-tipping within the district on 14 November at the Hastingwood roundabout on the M11, Chigwell Lane, and the Wake Valley car park on the Epping New Road.

Vehicles who were commercially carrying waste were checked to ensure they complied with the legal requirement to hold a waste carriers' licence. Over 100 vehicles were stopped and checked for traffic and waste offences. 15 vehicles were found to be carrying waste without providing evidence of a licence. The District Council has launched a formal investigation on the 15 persons. Failure to provide details of the licence may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution. [More](#)

Potential Telephone Digital Switchover Scams

Telecommunications companies such as BT and Virgin Media are changing the way their customer's landline phones connect to their network. Landline phones currently connect to the PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network), which will be switched off in 2025. Going forward, landline phones will connect to a broadband Internet connection. We are aware that this process has already started locally.

Essex Trading Standards is concerned that some elderly and vulnerable people may be tricked into revealing personal or financial information by fraudsters claiming they are contacting them to carry out the digital switchover or help them with phone line linked telecare systems. These fraudsters may claim they are calling from the resident's telephone or telecare service provider. These scam attempts could happen over the phone, via email, or in person on your doorstep. Other unscrupulous people may also try to sell you equipment or get you to sign up to expensive contracts that you don't need.

If in doubt, contact your provider directly. [More on the changeover here](#) and [more from AgeUK here](#).

There's Always a New Scam

It seems we're always hearing about a new scam, as fraudsters methods continue to evolve. [Which? reports the latest ones here](#).

Seven ways to stay safe online

Maybe you're confidently shopping online already and have been for many years, or perhaps you are nervous about the prospect of scam sites and prefer to shop in person. Either way, [here are seven ways to help you stay safe online](#).

More from the Police

[Read more](#) from the police for our local area including other news and crime statistics. The data is updated to October 2023.



Essex Police Weekly Dispatch News Email

Some items we report on come from the Dispatch Newsletter from Essex Police. You can [subscribe here for free](#) (choose the Epping Forest edition)

Council News



Loughton Wombles Wombling Again

The Loughton Wombles were out again litter picking on Saturday 25 November 2023. The group met on the corner of Brook Road and continued litter picking along Roding Road. [More](#) (PDF)

The Wombles share an interesting fact that research shows that almost half of smokers are unaware that any cigarette they toss in the street could actually end up in the ocean through drains. As cigarette butts contain micro-plastics and chemicals, they can poison marine life.

Loughton Library Christmas Opening Hours

This holiday season Loughton Library will have bank holiday closures and revised operating hours.

The Library is closed 24-26 December, 31 December and 1 January. On 23 December the library closes at 5pm and on other days that it is open, it closes early at 5pm. [More](#)

Loughton Citizenship Awards

Do you know someone worthy of recognition for their community work or bravery?

The Town Council is looking to celebrate those special individuals in our town who go the extra mile for their fellow citizens. This may be through long service for a voluntary organisation or local charity, good neighbourliness, running a campaign to improve community facilities or cohesion, or by an act of courage or bravery.

Any Loughton resident or a Loughton employer, educational institution, group or society may submit a nomination but please do not let the nominee know at this stage. The closing date for nominations is 31 January 2024. [More](#) and [Nomination Forms](#).

Light Up a Life

The Town Council thanks all Loughton residents who supported this worthwhile cause on 25 November, the beautiful voices of Epping Forest Singers, Loughton Methodist Church for the use of their foyer and Morrisons supermarket for donating the mince pies and hot drinks which were all greatly appreciated.

Sushma Dhama, Patient and Family Support Services, St Clare Hospice, Cllr Mick Stubbings, Loughton Town Mayor and Reverend Sue Creighton, Loughton Methodist Church.

Light up a Life is always a lovely occasion, giving residents of Loughton time to reflect, remember loved ones and raise much needed funds for St Clare Hospice.

Image: Town Council



New Electric Vehicle Charging Points

Two rapid Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points are now live at Traps Hill car park. One charging point is an accessible EV bay designed to accommodate Blue Badge holders, larger vehicles and smaller commercial vehicles. The EV charging points will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Existing car park restrictions during operational hours will apply so check the car park tariff boards.

Willingale Road Allotments

Several thefts of produce have been reported and the Town Council has urged plot holders to report all incidents to the police and obtain a crime reference number.

Think Loughton - Latest Edition

[The latest edition from the Town Council is online](#), in case you missed it arriving in your letterbox.

You can click the download link in the top right to download a PDF version.



Loughton Day 2024

After this year's successful event, the Town Council have confirmed that the next Loughton Day will be on Saturday 21 September 2024.

Have Your Say - Taxi Fares

The District Council is undertaking a consultation which proposes new prices for taxi journeys.

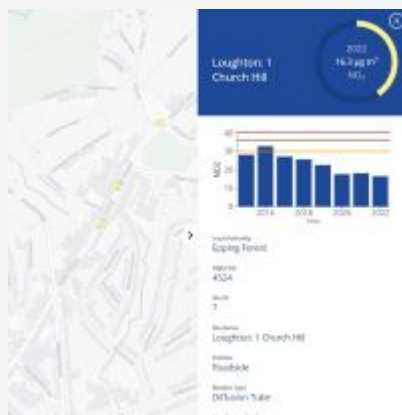
The current fares have not been updated in nearly 10 years. They were last reviewed in 2018 but no increases were made. Since the current fare tariff was agreed in 2014, fuel prices have increased, and the cost of living continues to rise.

The proposals are to increase fares; for example the minimum daytime fare for up to one mile would rise from £3.50 to £4.50, and for night time fares after 10pm from £3.70 to £4.70. [More details are here](#) (p93-96) (PDF)

[More and how to have your say.](#) The consultation is open until 31 December.

Discounted FSB Memberships for Small Businesses

The District Council is offering discounted memberships to the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB). The substantial reduction on FSB membership fees means that sole traders will only be required to contribute £50. Businesses that join the FSB will be eligible for a wide range of benefits, including a funding platform, medical care helpline, employment advice and protection, debt recovery, as well as an award-winning legal hub for advice and a range of support events and networking opportunities. [More](#)



Air Pollution Locally

A new website has been launched to raise awareness of the impacts of air pollution. The [EssexAir website](#) includes [a dedicated school zone](#), [interactive air pollution map](#) and [useful tips](#) to help reduce emissions and exposure to air pollution

The Essex Air Quality Consortium is formed of the 12 district, borough, and city councils in Essex, as well as the County Council as the highway

authority and the two unitary authorities in Greater Essex, Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council.

Local News



Warm Places over Winter

Warm places are again opening up across the district, with some venues offering refreshments, activities such as board games and free WiFi.

[More](#)

Venues locally are (opening days and times vary):

- Debden Library
- Loughton Library
- Epping Forest Campus, New City College
- St Mary's Church.

Preparing for the Cold Weather

With the cold weather well on it's way, [here are some tips](#) to get your heating system ready, from adjusting your boiler temperature, bleeding radiators and getting your boiler serviced, and more.

Conserving Energy and Money

High energy prices remain with us for another winter. [Here are some tips](#) to save energy and money.

Energy Costs Help and Support

If you're struggling with cost of energy or looking for support on the energy transition, UK Power Networks offer free expert energy advice and can help give you tailored, practical support when it comes to energy.

Partners and services are set up to offer personalised help whatever your circumstances, whether you're living with a disability, don't own your property or are struggling to pay your bills. They can help reduce your energy bills, make sure you're on the best tariff, put you in touch with local services in your area and help you apply for the Warm Home Discount or other available grants. [More](#)

- Home Action Plan - free advice for anyone looking for support to take steps to make their home more sustainable. Call 020 3660 3030.
- Energy Advice Line - free energy advice line for those who may be struggling to pay fuel bills or to keep their home warm. [More](#) or call 0800 073 9213.
- Disability Energy Support (Scope) - free energy and water advice to disabled people, including advice on energy and water debt and support accessing benefits and grants. [More](#) or call 0808 801 0828.
- Better Housing Better Health (National Energy Foundation) - to help anyone keep your home warm and improve your energy efficiency. [More](#) or call 0800 107 0044.

Vulnerable and Worried about Power Cuts?

Power cuts can happen occasionally for a variety of reasons, including severe weather. UK Power Networks' job is to maintain a safe and reliable supply of electricity in London, the South-East and East of England. This means they keep the lights on in your area, regardless of who you pay your electricity bills to.

During power cuts, extra support is provided by being on the Priority Services Register, which is available to those in vulnerable circumstances including for medical reasons, those of pensionable age, or if you have children aged under five in the household. This extra support includes a priority phone number to call, and tailored support if needed such as home visits, hot meals, advice and keeping your friends and relatives updated. [More](#)

If you are already on the Priority Services Register but your details have changed, [update your details here](#).

Boots Closing

Boots on the High Road is closing on 5 January, and we understand that Boots on The Broadway is closing as well.

The nearest Boots will be at the [Epping Forest Shopping Park on Langston Road](#). However that store does not provide pharmacy and prescription services - the nearest Boots store for these services is in [Chingford](#).



This is part of a programme to close 300 stores nationally ([news article](#))

Data on Household Income

The Office for National Statistics have published data for household income for local areas. [Search for your local area here](#) by entering your postcode or zooming into your local area. [More](#)

Epping Forest



Carols in the Courtyard

Join the Epping Forest Singers for Carols in the Courtyard at the Epping Forest Visitor Centre in Chingford on 16 December at 2pm. [More](#)

Litter in the Forest

When visiting the Forest, please take your litter, no matter how seemingly small, home to dispose of it responsibly there.

Every day a very hard-working team of litter pickers empty 49 litter bins (some bins with two to four units) over the 12-mile length of Epping Forest, and travel over 18,660 miles a year. Over 267 tonnes of waste was disposed of in the past year. Christmas Day is the only day of the year that the litter truck doesn't go out.

In addition to emptying the bins, litter pickers patiently and repeatedly walk miles a day collecting rubbish. This is hard work and the relentless speed with which the litter reappears each day is dismaying. Many animals fall foul of litter through ingestion, entanglement and other injuries.



Fly-Tipping in the Forest

In addition to the daily round of litter picking and bin emptying, the Forest is also targeted by fly-tippers. In the last year alone, 547 fly-tips have had to be dealt with, consisting of asbestos, builders' waste, cannabis waste, car parts, food, household, white goods, garden waste and various other unpleasant items.

Anybody you hire to remove your waste must have the appropriate licenses in place as if your rubbish is found dumped in the Forest, you are at risk of prosecution.

For your own legal protection, you must take 'reasonable' steps to ensure that the person is a legitimate operator. You should ask to see their waste carrier licence (which is issued by the Environment Department) and ask for a formal business receipt showing company and VAT numbers. As a further safeguard, ask if you may take a photo of their vehicle.

Climate Change and Ancient Trees

The ancient trees within Epping Forest have experienced many decades of changes in weather patterns, storms, snowy winters, wet or dry summers and periods of toxic sulphurous fumes which decimated the epiphytic lichens on their branches.

The current rapid warming of the atmosphere has increased the length of the growing season by a month with buds unfurling earlier in spring and a delay in the appearance of autumnal colours until mid-autumn. [More from Epping Forest Heritage Trust](#)



History Collection

Historical objects are displayed on a permanent basis at the Visitor Centre at Chingford, with other items on display at The Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge and The Temple in Wanstead Park. [You can also view objects online](#) including photos, articles and archaeological objects. [More](#)

Forest Focus - November and December 2023

Some items here come from Forest Focus. The editions for [November](#) and [December](#) have lots more interesting articles. You can [subscribe here for free](#).



And More

Safety with Christmas Lights

[Essex Trading Standards](#) have warned about safety concerns when putting up Christmas lights and using other electrical products over the festive period, and suggested these precautions:

- Always read and follow the instructions supplied with the item and only use CE/UKCA marked appliances.
- Check for damage, loose wires and breakages on items which have been in storage. If you need to replace items such as bulbs use only replacements of the same type and rating as those originally supplied. Don't attempt to repair faulty or damaged items.
- Always turn off and unplug lights when you go to bed or if you go out and leave your home unattended.
- If using outdoor lights, connect using a 30mA RCD protected socket, avoid the use of extension leads and adaptors and never overload plug sockets. Don't connect lighting sets together.

Electrical safety experts recommend the use of LED lights as they operate at extra-low voltage which significantly reduces the risk of electric shock and overheating. There is also the benefit that they are cheaper to run using 80-90% less electricity than conventional bulbs.

Thank you for supporting LRA. Our next Loughton News email is due to be issued Friday 19 January, although that date could change.

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

For all our Tweets, past issues of Loughton News and Loughton Life, and more

For the latest news and items of interest:



You don't need to be registered for either

1. If you find any links not working or anything else is wrong let us know at loughtonnews@LoughtonResidents.co.uk. Links to on other websites are beyond our control and may not work over time.
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
To update your membership details, email membership@LoughtonResidents.co.uk

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