



LRA's Loughton News

22 March 2024

In this issue, we report on [the proposed work to the roof and walkways on The Broadway](#) amid concerns of the shopkeepers and tenants over the potential cost. Also [planning permission for redevelopment of part of the former Pyrls Lane Nursery](#) has been granted.

The latest issue of the [Town Council's Think Loughton](#) and [LRA's Loughton Life](#) have been delivered to all Loughton households, but if you missed them they can be read online.

We have an update on [the ongoing disruption to the Central Line](#), and [action underway to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour on The Broadway](#).

The Town Council's [Annual Town Meeting](#) took place in early March, and dates for four local events are confirmed, so [mark them in your diary](#).

With Easter coming up, [here are some events locally](#) and [some tips to help the environment](#). When the clocks go forward [remember to check your smoke alarm](#).

Thank you for being part of LRA. You can always [contact us by email](#) to raise an issue, give your views, or offer help.

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Raising the Roof on The Broadway

The District Council owns the shopping parade at The Broadway, with shops at ground level and flats above. After about a 30-year life, the roofs and the walkways to the flats (which are also part of the roofs for the shops below) now need renewing. Indeed, for some time some of the shopkeepers have been complaining about damage to their shop interiors caused by leaks coming through the old roofs. The Council also wants to do other maintenance and repair work, such as putting in new windows to improve heat retention. The total cost will be around £6 million. The Council is currently putting out tenders for the work, which they hope to start in the Autumn and to finish in 2026.



However, 30 years ago the Council failed to set up a “sinking fund” to replace the roofs – this would have meant all the shop and flat occupants contributing an amount each year. Although the Council is responsible for carrying out the repairs to the outside of the blocks, it can legally reclaim some of the cost from the shopkeepers and residents, to the extent that the Council is merely replacing items that have deteriorated over time. Understandably, shopkeepers and tenants are concerned about the potential cost now about to fall on them, particularly as many feel that the Council has skimmed on maintenance in the past and therefore bears some responsibility for the current condition of the structure.

Many of the shopkeepers are independent traders who have been hit hard in recent years by Covid and by the drop in trade caused by the Council’s opening of the nearby retail park in Langston Road (the Council applied for planning permission for the retail park on the basis that it would mainly contain fashion shops. However, in the event the Council opened it up to a much wider range of retail shops, many of which compete directly with the traders in The Broadway, who have lost business as a result).



Image: Google

LRA Cllr Rose Brookes is the current temporary Chair of the Broadway Town Centre Partnership which brings together traders and individuals interested in The Broadway, together with local Cllrs. Recently she organised a meeting of the Partnership with representatives of the Council; the meeting was chaired by Independent Cllr Stephen Murray. A packed hall of traders, Cllrs and others heard from the Council about the planned work and gave their views. In particular, the traders wanted to know how much each was likely to be liable to pay towards the work, and how much disruption it would cause, as they feel that these may be the final blows that put them out of

business. To make things more difficult, some are currently in the process of renegotiating their leases with the Council (it is hard to see how this can be done fairly before they know the cost of the works).

The Council representatives promised to significantly improve the level of communication with those involved, and to come to future meetings of the Partnership.

Redevelopment of the former Pyrles Lane Nursery

The proposal to build 43 dwellings on land between Pyrles Lane and Hillyfields on part of the old District Council's plant nursery has been approved by the Council's District Development Committee. ([Background on our website.](#))

The land had previously been part of the erstwhile (and large) Pyrles Lane allotment site, on which at least one member spent much of her childhood, as her father was a plowholder. Because of work done by the late Ian Strugnell, it was possible fully to research the means by which this land was acquired by the former Chigwell UDC (CUDC) of which Loughton was part in the immediate post-war period, when food shortages were widespread.



Image: Google

In 1946, the CUDC resolved to acquire land for permanent allotments of about 10 acres in extent [this was partly to replace wartime emergency plots]. To cease allotment provision on such land, the consent of the [national] Secretary of State is necessary. On 5 May 1947, under the Smallholdings and Allotments Acts 1908 to

1925, the Loughton Allotments (No.1) Compulsory Purchase Order was issued, requiring the Gould family to sell the land, 11 acres, at a price of £2366. It was duly sold, and by April 1948, 78 plots had been created and tenanted.

In the more affluent 50s and 60s, allotments began to fall out of favour and demand, and the site was much reduced in size. The northern end of the allotment site was converted to use as the CUDC nursery, the greenhouses of which were sited on adjacent private land in the apex of Hillyfields and Pyrles lane, behind the houses that had been built there in the 30s. But seemingly they did not obtain ministerial consent for this diversion of purpose, so if that is the case it would mean that strictly speaking the land is still bound by the Allotment Acts.

What does all this mean for the 43 dwellings now approved? It may mean there has to be an approach to the Secretary of State to obtain release of the land from allotment controls, which might involve a public inquiry, particularly as there is now renewed demand for allotments in Loughton (a waiting list is kept by the allotment authority which has been Loughton Town Council since 1996). Or someone may find a certificate of release from some long-forgotten secretary of state....Or they may just take a chance....

Broadway Town Centre Partnership - Can you help?

LRA Cllr Rose Brookes was allowed to be the Interim Chair of the Broadway Town Centre Partnership for six months from July 2022. She has had a stay of execution for longer but a new chair must be found to take over in July at the AGM.

This is an important time for the Broadway, with a redevelopment planned to start later this year. An empathy for the traders and residents and a passion to see the Broadway thrive are more important qualities than being an experienced chair.

This is a voluntary role, but an important one, to be an advocate for an area that has often been ignored. To find out more, call Rose on 07796 231356 or [email her](#).

Sport for SEND Children

LRA Cllr Rose Brookes and Independent Cllr Stephen Murray were contacted by several parents about the lack of provision in sporting activities for SEND (Special Educational Needs) children in the area.

They made enquiries with District Council officers. When investigated it emerged that when a member of staff left they had not been replaced him due to recruitment issues. A meeting was held and the Council have agreed to restart some of these activities.

LRA Cllr Rose Brookes, who represents Loughton on the Leisure Management Contract Partnership Board, has asked for this to be on the agenda at the next meeting in April. Places Leisure, who run the Loughton Leisure Centre, will be asked to expand their activities for children with special needs; particularly in the pool.

Have you just moved to Loughton? Welcome...

Perhaps an LRA member has forwarded this email to you? [Read more about LRA on our website](#) and a [brief history](#). We have Cllrs on the County and District Councils and hold 21 out of the 22 Loughton Town Council seats.

May Elections

In just under two months on Thursday 2 May there will be local elections. You will be able to vote LRA as we will continue to stand candidates in Loughton's Town and District wards.

[Read more](#) about Postal Voting, and how you will need to show one form of photo ID such as a passport when voting in person.



Blue Badges

A resident reported to LRA Cllr Chris Pond that there are long delays on Blue Badge renewals. The resident submitted an application in January for an April expiry. The advice is to renew **well** in advance. [More](#)

LRA Short General Meeting

7:30pm Tuesday 2 April
Lopping Hall (Willingale Room), High Road

We envisage the General Meeting will take five minutes followed by our Executive Committee meeting. Members can leave or are welcome to stay. Executive Committee meetings last around one hour.

Loughton Life - Latest Issue

The latest issue of *Loughton Life* has been delivered to all households in the town. Our thanks to the many people involved producing and distributing it. In case you missed it in your letterbox, [here it is](#).



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

We previously reported that the Planning Inspector dismissed appeals against an enforcement notice to demolish a steel framed extension at the rear of the property and a second notice to remove an extraction system. The inspector agreed the structures were harmful to the area and adjoining residents and should be removed.

The District Council allowed a further 13 weeks for removal. As there was no action taken by the owners, the Council is now taking the matter to the Magistrate's Court to enforce the ruling.

More Development to Escape the Need for Planning Permission

The Government is consulting on changes to planning legislation to allow more development to take place without the need for planning permission. The proposed changes include:

- whether the existing building upward rights can be amended to increase the scope of buildings that can benefit from the rights
- the ability for householders to build larger extensions and provide further freedoms to construct outbuildings
- changes to the demolition and rebuild right to increase the scope of buildings that can benefit from the right and allow for a larger rebuild footprint
- providing further flexibility to households and businesses wishing to install electric vehicle charging outlets including whether permitted development rights should allow for units necessary for the operation of electric vehicle charge points such as equipment housing or storage cabinets
- amendments to the permitted development right for air source heat pumps, including on removing the limitation that they must be at least 1 metre from the boundary of the property.

LRAPG is concerned about the increasing amount of development being allowed without the need for planning permission. In recent years changes such as the ability to change local shops and offices to restaurants without consent have deprived local residents the right to have a say or object, particularly when many of these changes affect their amenity.

[More](#). The consultation closes on 9 April.

Roads, Parking and Travel

Planned Road Closures

- Baldwins Hill - the road will be closed from the junction of The Summit for 50 metres towards Church Hill from 2 to 14 April for works 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.



Central Line Service Disruption

The service on the Central Line remains disrupted with fewer trains in service due to motor failures. With the new temporary timetable in place from late February, Transport for London (TfL) is able to better regulate gaps between trains, however wait times may be longer than before the disruption.

In addition temporary speed restrictions remain in place in certain sections due to the breakdown of the Track Recording Train (which inspects the track for faults). TfL has said that the restrictions on the eastern sections of the line should be lifted around now.



If you are going into or via Liverpool Street, there is a TfL shuttle bus between Loughton and Chingford stations on Mondays to Fridays during peak hours that connects with London Overground services to Liverpool Street ([more details from TfL](#)).

Central Line Part Closure This Weekend

On Saturday and Sunday (23-24 March) there is no service between Woodford and Epping, including Friday and Saturday Night Tube. Rail replacement buses will run direct between Loughton and Theydon Bois, and between Woodford and Epping. During the Friday and Saturday Night Tube, rail replacement buses will run between Woodford and Loughton only.

Loughton Station - New Parking Restriction

'No Waiting at Any Time' has been introduced to the area at the front of the station, just before the taxi rank. If you need to pick up or drop off someone travelling, you can use the Pick-up/Drop-off area next to the main station car park. This area allows you to stop for 20 minutes free.

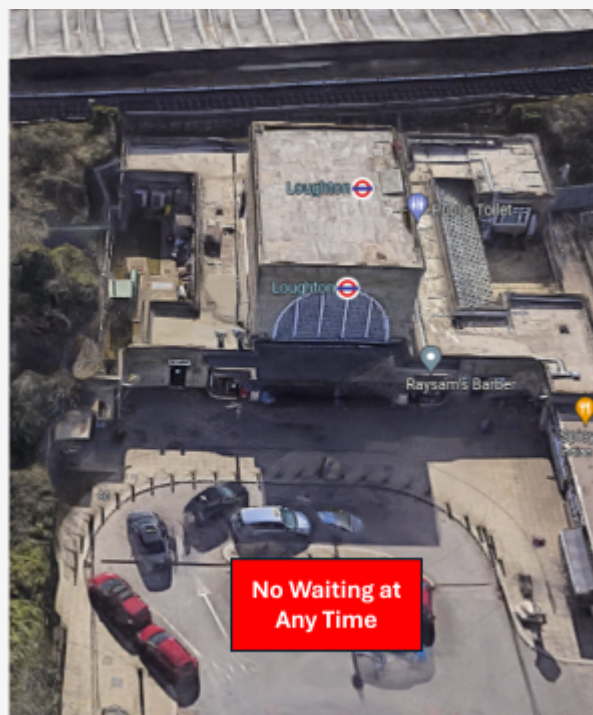


Image: Google

On Street Parking on Bank Holidays

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



Police, Fire and Crime

ASB on the Broadway

The Broadway has been one of 13 hotspot areas across Essex that received a share of a £1.1m investment to combat Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) under Operation Dial.

With concerns about activity related to drug dealing and feeling intimidated by groups of youths reported by residents, police officers and community safety colleagues from the District Council are on target to complete 2,000 hours of patrols over the course of nine months to the end of March.

So far, there have been four arrests, 19 stop searches and 11 informal warnings issued in the hotspot area.

There has also been regular youth outreach and community engagement work, as well as events at New City College where the police have spoken to hundreds of students with the aim of making them feel confident they can report incidents and recognise inappropriate behaviour.



[Watch this short video](#) showing officers on patrol, with comments from residents on the success of Operation Dial in The Broadway.



The police report that ASB across the district has reduced by 30.1% in the year to the end of January 2024. Across Essex, there has been a 38.5% drop in ASB with 9,416 fewer offences committed. [More](#)

The Police Locally

The structure of the police covering Epping Forest is:

- Two Community Policing Teams (CPT) based at Loughton Police Station comprising of 2 sergeants, 5 constables, and 8 police community support officers (PCSO).
- Town Centre Team comprising of 7 constables.
- District Council funded Community Safety Team (CST) comprising of 1 sergeant and 2 police constables.
- A dedicated rural officer who is shared between Epping Forest and Brentwood (based in Brentwood)
- Two Children and Young Persons officers (CYP)
- Community Safety Engagement officer (CSEO)

- Criminal Investigation Department (CID)
- Local Policing Team (LPT) based at Loughton police station with 24/7 cover comprising of 5 inspectors, 5 sergeants, and 50 police constables.



Time to Check Your Smoke Alarm

With the clocks moving forward this weekend, it's time to test your smoke alarm - just press the button on the front. If it doesn't sound the alarm and/or battery needs replacing.

All smoke alarms must be replaced every 10 years as all alarms, including ones that are mains powered, have sensors that deteriorate over time, rendering them less effective in detecting fires. Home owners of properties built between

1992 and 2014 are particularly being urged to check their smoke alarms, as all newly built houses from 1992 legally had to have mains-wired smoke alarms installed. [More](#)

Checking Your Online Safety

The police suggests that you check your social media accounts to make sure your personal details aren't available to the public. The way that privacy settings are organised do get changed, so it's good practice to check from time to time.

It's also useful to:

- make sure only your friends can see your social media posts, not the public
- check privacy settings on social networking sites and only give basic information
- Google yourself to check none of your details are available online
- don't use the same password for everything
- turn off the location setting on your phone
- check your tagging settings on social media
- keep your antivirus software up to date
- report harassment to website administrators
- if you think your smartphone or computer has been hacked (someone else has broken into it), stop using it and take it to your mobile phone provider or computer expert for advice.

Domestic Abuse – Breaking the Cycle

The police are working with The Change Project to break the cycle of domestic abuse by making perpetrators realise their abusive behaviour and to prevent it in the future. Not only will this make victims safer – and will mean that some people never become victims – but it will also make real, lasting change and hopefully drive down domestic abuse offences.

The Change Project is open to referrals for those aged 16 and over. Sufferers can visit [The Change Project](#) for advice on how to make a difference to themselves, their families, and their partners in the future. Survivors of abuse looking for community support in their area can visit the [Essex Compass website](#).

If you want to learn more about how to report abuse offences, you can find more information, including how to delete recent web browser histories, on their [advice and information pages](#).

Report Animals Being Targeted for Fun

A disturbing crime trend sees wild animals cruelly targeted for fun, with a rise in reports of animals being shot with catapults, air weapons and crossbows in urban areas and country parks. Foxes, otters and other mammals, pigeons, swans and other waterfowl can be targets. The police are asking that incidents are reported online or by calling 101 or, if it's a crime in progress or there's a danger to public safety, call 999.

Latest Fire Service Inspection Report Published

The latest inspection report has found Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) is improving the way it keeps people safe, with ECFRS good at understanding and preventing fires and other risks in Essex and has been rated as good at future affordability. There is no longer a cause for concern for protection work, with inspectors recognising the hard work that has taken place with businesses, high rise buildings and the rural community to reduce risk. Inspectors said progress was continuing and highlighted that the Service's prevention work focussed on those that needed it the most, as well as partnership and collaborative working. The cultural journey and progress ECFRS has been on over the last eight years was recognised but must continue. [More](#)



Essex County
Fire & Rescue Service



More from the Police

[Read more](#) from the police for our local area including other news and crime statistics. The data is updated to January 2024.

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

Annual Town Meeting

Residents attended the Annual Town Meeting 5 March 2024, where displays were set up by local groups, organisations and charities.

The meeting included reports from the Town Mayor and Town Council Committees

about the Council's activities and achievements during the past year and its on-going plans for the future. (For those that were unable to attend, [the minutes and reports from Cllrs are here.](#))

During the meeting Town Mayor LRA Cllr Mick Stubbings presented a Certificate of Recognition to Paul Mellis, for his outstanding work as a community pharmacist for many years serving local families in the Valley Hill area. In his speech Cllr Stubbings said that nothing is too much trouble for Paul and his team.

The Town Council granted over £35,000 to local organisations. Grants include £3000 to Epping Forest Foodbank, £1000 for Voluntary Action Epping Forest and £8500 for Citizens Advice. [Details of other grants are here \(PDF, p3-4\).](#) Representatives from local groups, organisations and charities that were successful in their grant applications received certificates to mark their achievement, with [photos of the presentations here.](#)



There was also a question-and-answer session for residents to express their views and ask questions, followed by time for residents to have an informal chat with the voluntary groups and their Town Cllrs.

Dates for the Diary

The Town Council has confirmed these events:

80th Anniversary of the Normandy Landings

Lighting of the Beacon on Hillyfields

Thursday 6 June at 9:30pm

Jessel Green Community Fun Day

Sunday 23 June from 12pm midday to 4pm

Loughton Horticultural Show

Murray Hall

Saturday 7 September at 2pm

Loughton Day

Loughton Cricket Club

Saturday 21 September from 11am to 4pm

Think Loughton - Latest Edition

Think Loughton
News from Loughton Town Council Spring 2024 No 104

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



Play in the Park

Play in the Park brings a range of sports equipment and arts and crafts resources for children and their parents/carers to enjoy together. Activities will be organised free of charge. There is no need to book and just drop in at any time.

- 5 April 10am to 12pm - Roding Valley Recreation Ground (near the Tennis Courts)
- 12 April 10am to 12pm - Jessel Green.

Dr Bike will be providing free bike maintenance during these sessions. [More](#) (PDF)

Minerals Development in Essex - Have Your Say

The County Council is asking residents for their views on an updated Minerals Local Plan. This provides planning policies for minerals development and identifies future sites for mineral extraction or quarrying.

There are two sections - the first is [the revised Plan policies](#), their supporting text and the wider plan evidence base. The second is the [site assessment report](#) which contains the 52 candidate sites (the only proposed site near Loughton is [north of Abridge](#) (PDF) which is proposed for sand and gravel extraction).

[More](#) and [Have Your Say](#). The consultation closes 9 April.

Fraudster Caught

In May 2020 the County Council set up a Covid-19 Response Fund, enabling providers of adult social care to claim for additional expenditure incurred as a result of the covid pandemic. The Council paid one provider £151,792.28 but this was against fraudulent invoices.

As a result of investigations by the Council's Internal Audit dept the person responsible was charged with 8 offences of fraud by false representation; she eventually pleaded guilty and has now repaid the amount obtained fraudulently back to the Council. [More](#) (p9)

Local News

Easter Weekend

There are Easter egg hunts at [Copped Hall](#) (tickets only available on the day) and on [the Epping Ongar Railway](#) along with an Easter Eggstravaganza at [Lee Valley Park Farms](#). Tickets are required - see the websites for details.

Halifax Closing

The Halifax branch in the High Road will close on 19 August. Some services such as cash deposits and withdrawals will be available at Post Office branches and Halifax

have said that after the closure a Community Banker will be available in the area to help customers one day a week. [Details will be here](#) closer to the time.

In the meantime, Epping Forest Neighbourhood Watch say that scammers are calling residents telling them that as a result of the closure a new card needs to be collected, and in order for this to happen the caller asks for bank account details. If you get a call like this, hang up immediately.

Health and Wellbeing

Help Prevent the Spread of Measles

Measles cases are rising in England, with cases now being identified in Essex. To stop measles spreading further, the NHS is encouraging all adults and parents to make sure that you and your children have been vaccinated. [More](#)

Children are scheduled to have two doses (at age of one year and again at 3 years 4 months). You can ask your GP surgery if you're not sure if you or your child has had the vaccine.



Forest Medical Centre - Blood Tests

After 27 March, the Forest Medical Centre on Station Road will no longer provide blood tests. Patients are being referred to the Loughton Health Centre on The Drive for blood tests from 2 April.

Epping Forest



The Importance of Deadwood

Fallen branches, dead trees and rotting stumps may not look like much but form the lifeblood of the Forest's woodlands.

Deadwood provides food and nurseries for rare animals such as stag beetles, whose larvae may take up to anything from three to seven years to reach maturity. Breaking down of deadwood recycles nutrients back into the soil and supports an extraordinary collection of fungi. Standing deadwood, sometimes known as snag, are trees that die but remain upright and afford valuable habitats for wildlife. Living trees, especially the Forest's ancient pollards, can also include dead branches, hollows and boles created by internal rot.

So next time you take a stroll in the woods and wonder whether it needs a 'tidy up', pause and wonder at the woodland life cycle in action.

Epping Forest Lend a Hand Day

Various events will take place on Saturday 23 March. This includes [a 'big clean up' litter pick](#), starting from the Epping Forest Visitor Centre at Chingford, guided tours of Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge at [1:30pm](#) and [2pm](#) for those who are interested in volunteering to help with tours, or [join the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers](#) with a practical conservation task at Barn Hoppitt, Chingford. Booking required for all events.

Forest Focus - March 2024

Some items here come from Forest Focus. The edition for [March](#) has lots more interesting articles. You can [subscribe here for free](#).



And More

Protecting Wild Birds' Nests

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is an offence to:

- intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built.
- intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird, or trade any wild bird egg.

Now the nesting season is well under way, please be careful when trimming hedges, shrubs and trees.

If you think someone has committed an offence, you can contact RSPB Wildlife Enquiries on 01767 693690. They will always try to help but have no enforcement powers and will refer the matter to the police for investigation if they think a prosecution is warranted.

The Act applies all year. Although the "nesting season" is often taken to be 1 February or 1 March to 31 August, some birds (for example, those pesky pigeons) nest all year round. More on the law and [birds](#), [nesting birds and nests](#) and [wild bird eggs](#).

Help the Environment at Easter

[Love Essex](#) has a number of tips to help the environment at Easter, including avoiding Easter egg cardboard boxes with plastic windows, scrunching foil into a ball and choosing glitter free cards. [More](#)

Thank you for supporting LRA. Our next Loughton News email is due to be issued Friday 12 April, 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:



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