



LRA's Loughton News

4 August 2023

In this issue read about [the current state of the Princess of Wales pub](#) and the fires attended to recently. Also [there is a limited funding pot to fix potholes](#), and [planning permission for a Travelodge has been granted](#).

The police have [called for witnesses](#) to a collision with a cyclist in July, and additional funding has been made to [tackle for anti-social behaviour](#).

Work has now started on [a new playground on the Roding Valley Recreation Ground](#), the [Loughton Fire Station has an open day](#) on 12 August, and [Loughton Day](#) is on 16 September.

In the Forest, you can get an pack with [exciting activities and educational facts for children](#), and [the Big Walk returns](#) on 17 September.

Thank you for supporting LRA, which is 100% run by volunteers locally. You can always [contact us by email](#) to raise an issue, give your views, or offer help.

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LRA News

Potholes and Road Defects

In the current financial year, there is a (limited) funding pot enabling County Cllrs to nominate defects to be fixed (but only those in carriageways, not footways). Cllrs are able to nominate 36 defects, separated over two different submission dates during the summer. LRA Cllr Chris Pond has



nominated the first tranche and will be able to nominate a second tranche of 18 in September.

This scheme enables Essex Highways to complete additional repairs locally that may have otherwise fallen outside of the usual risk assessed, asset-led policy they use to identify urgent defects.

Chris can nominate potholes or certain other road defects within the Loughton Central Division ([map](#)). You can ask Chris to nominate a defect - just [email him](#) a photo with its exact location (e.g. outside 77 Colson Road).

If it's outside of this area, you can try contacting the County Cllrs responsible that cover the areas in [south Loughton](#) and around [The Broadway](#).



Princess of Wales, Westall Road

LRA Plans Group has been monitoring this long unoccupied site which the District Council bought back a year or so ago. There have been several incidents involving youths starting fires and breaking into the building. Following a series of complaints (led by LRA Cllr David Wixley) about

the condition of the site and the increasing number of break-ins, the Council has finally secured the site by erecting a hoarding.

Unfortunately the contractors did not continue the security fencing at the rear where the old boarding can easily be breached and another fire was started on 29 July that needed four fire engines to put it out.



A planning application is expected soon to redevelop the site for housing.

If this email has been forwarded to you, get it sent directly to your inbox by [supporting LRA for only £5 a year](#).

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.

Higgins Office and Hotel Development

As reported previously, Higgins have proposed to build new offices and a 100 bedroom Travelodge hotel on Langston Road. ([Background on our website.](#))

The planning application has now been approved by the District Council. LRA Cllr Chris Pond said Loughton did need an hotel given it has a population of 33,000 and no hotel, but doubted if the proposal was acceptable without minimisation of extra car

traffic, given the existing traffic problems on Chigwell Lane and Langston Road.

The application was ultimately approved, with a Guest Travel Plan required to be in place.



New Fruit and Veg Stall

A licensing application has been submitted for a fruit and veg stall next to the bollards outside Benefit Cosmetics and Phone Clinic. LRAPG has asked the license is granted temporarily for a year so that its impact can be assessed after this period. It is difficult at this stage to gauge how much congestion will be caused and how much litter generated.

Image: Google

More planning reforms

The government has announced there will be further relaxations to planning controls. The changes include allowing shops, cafes, takeaways, and Doctors Surgeries to be converted into homes without planning permission. The Government claims these changes will help "rejuvenate the high street". LRAPG is concerned losing shops to residential uses will create dead frontages and further erode shopping parades.

The Government also proposes to give more rights for home owners to extend houses to build "upwards and outwards". LRAPG acknowledge the benefits of occupiers extending their homes but many planning applications involve extensions that will affect neighbours and are concerned further permitted development rights may prevent the council from stopping unneighbourly development.

Roads, Parking and Travel

Planned Road Closures

- Hillcroft, The Croft and Hillyfields - the roads are closed until 14 August for resurfacing by Essex Highways. Work will take place 8am to 5pm. [More](#)
- Woodridden Hill - the road will be closed overnight from 19-20 August between the Wake Arms roundabout and Woodgreen Road for resurfacing by Essex Highways. [More](#)

- Spring Grove - the road will be closed from 14 to 22 August for resurfacing by Essex Highways. [More](#)
- High Beech Road - the road will be closed from 21 August to 29 September for water connection works by Thames Water. [More](#)
- St John's Road - the road will be closed until 7 August for works by Thames Water. [More](#)
- Torrington Gardens - the road will be closed on 22 August for manhole cover replacement 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.

On-Street Parking Charges

The North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) handle **on-street residential parking** charges and permits in Loughton. It is funded by the local authorities which participate in the scheme, and operates under powers granted to it by the County Council.

Unlike the other participating authorities, the District Council has taken back control of **off-street parking**, and so charges for Council-operated car parks are outside NEPP's remit.

It can be easy to assume that on-street residential parking charges and parking permits lead to "profits" for the local authority. This may be true in other districts outside Essex, but the NEPP has to use any surplus for future parking measures (there is an "overspill" provision where moneys can be returned to local authorities, but this is unlikely to be triggered at present).

On the other hand, the participating local authorities are concerned that any inefficiency or profligacy at NEPP would lead to a need for increased contributions from them, at the expense of their Council tax payers.

This year, it has become apparent that recent economic upheavals have meant that NEPP's previous "breakeven" financial forecasts have proved too optimistic, and that parking charges will need to be increased beyond those envisaged as recently as last December. [More](#) (Item 140 from p4).

[The new charges are here](#) and take effect 21 August.

Bus Route 20 Temporary Diversion

Bus Route 20 is on diversion in Debden in both directions until 5pm on 11 August due to resurfacing works. Buses towards Debden are diverted via Rectory Lane, The Broadway, and Burton Road, missing the stops from Hillyfields to Vere Road. Buses towards Walthamstow are diverted via Chigwell Lane and Rectory Lane, missing the stops from Torrington Drive (northbound) to Hillyfields. [More](#)



Route 397 Temporary Diversion

Bus Route 397 is on diversion between Borders Lane/Oak View School and the High Road/Forest Road via Alderton Hill Lane, Alderton Hill, Brook Road and Brooklyn Avenue due to a burst water main. Buses are not serving the stops Church Lane, Loughton Library and Town Hall and Traps Hill. [More](#)

ULEZ Expansion - Discounts and Exemptions

The [Ultra Low Emission Zone](#) (ULEZ) is being expanded to cover all London boroughs from 29 August. [Here's a map](#) showing where it is being expanded to.

(The ULEZ boundary does not cover the borough/county boundary exactly. For instance in Chingford, Station Road, Bury Road and Rangers Road are exempt and so are streets to the west of Station Road. But all streets to its east, and the station itself, will be in the zone. [Here's a detailed map](#).

[Check if your vehicle complies](#) with the scheme, and [here are details of the scrappage scheme](#) for older vehicles. You will need to live within one of the 32 London boroughs or the City of London (Greater London Area) and receive certain benefits to be eligible for the ULEZ car and motorcycle scrappage scheme, so those caught by ULEZ expansion living in Loughton who are unable to afford a new vehicle won't qualify.

Some drivers and vehicles qualify for at least a temporary 100% discount from the Ultra Low Emission Zone charge (ULEZ). Others are entirely exempt. [More](#)

Tube and Rail Industrial Action

There is industrial action on the rail network from 31 July to 12 August. [The National Rail website has more details](#).

Police, Fire and Crime

Call for Witnesses

A teenaged cyclist was left with a broken collarbone following a collision with a dark-coloured car or van in Loughton, at the Oakwood Hill-Roding Road junction at about 5pm on Tuesday, July 18.

The vehicle failed to stop at the scene.

Anyone with any information, CCTV, dash cam or other footage in relation to the incident is asked to contact police via [the Essex Police website](#), by calling 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 (quote incident 1053 of Tuesday, July 18). [More](#)

Funding for ASB Hotspot Patrols

The Police are investing an extra £1.1 million in high-visibility patrols and targeted intervention to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) in eleven hotspots across the county over nine months across the areas, including coordinated focused nights of action to target persistent behaviour. Debden is one of these areas.

The funding is provided from central government as part of their Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy and is designed to deliver high visibility patrols, public engagement, targeted youth outreach and early intervention.

ASB has fallen in Essex by over 60% since 2016 but there were still 18,771 ASB offences recorded in the year to the end of May 2023. [More](#)

Open Day at Loughton Fire Station

On 12 August, meet the team as well as the fire dogs, look around the station and fire engines, plus face painting, a bouncy castle, various food vans and stalls as well as a chip pan demonstration. [More](#)



Electric Vehicle Fires

Although still relatively rare, electric vehicles fires present a new technical and safety challenge for fire services and the Essex Fire and Rescue Service has been learning about electric vehicles in order to understand how they respond to incidents.

While worldwide research is continuing into finding new ways to tackle electric vehicle fires, currently there isn't an established consensus on the best firefighting strategy. [More](#)

Fire Safety for E-bikes and E-scooters

Electric bikes and scooters are becoming a more popular mode of transport, but can pose a fire risk when not charged or stored correctly.

Most e-bikes or e-scooters are powered by lithium-ion batteries, which can be charged at home. When an e-bike/scooter is involved in a fire, it can release large volumes of smoke, get very hot, and sometimes have a violent reaction leading to a rapidly developing fire. It is important to charge them safely to avoid a risk of a fire starting. [More](#)

More from the Police

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

Council News

New Childrens Playground Roding Valley Recreation Ground

A new playground is currently being constructed which will replace the existing one.

The Town Council has been through many months of plan and design work, along with a public consultation and involvement of Whitebridge and Alderton schools on a number of different design options. There was a formal tender exercise to select a company to do the work, with LRA Cllrs Katie Valentine, Neil Mackinnon and David Wixley involved in the selection.

The construction is planned to finish in late summer, and an official opening day will be announced in due course. [More](#), including alternative playgrounds that will be available during construction.

The Town Council is responsible for eight playgrounds and two outdoor gyms. The Council monitor these and report on their condition as there is a rolling programme of refurbishment. The Roding Valley Recreation Ground one was the next to be renewed. As playgrounds are exposed to the weather and get well used, they do require regular refurbishment, so this is the second time it has been refurbished in the past 20 years. Most of the remaining playgrounds have been refurbished in that time as well.



Loughton Day

Loughton Day, an event for local community groups and residents alike, will be on 16 September at the Loughton Cricket Ground.

The Town Council is asking that if any local Loughton charities, home made crafts, groups or small businesses wish to showcase their organisation, contact the Town Council for further details or to book your space; telephone 0208 508 4200 or [email them](#).

Whether you are seeking new members or wish to raise funds, this is a free admission event and will be open to all residents and visitors so they can see what Loughton has to offer!

Think Loughton - Latest Edition

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



Willingale Road Allotments

Volunteers at the site have said that the existing rotovator is deemed too large and powerful for non-professional use, so it will be sold and the proceeds used towards the purchase of a strimmer for communal use.

At the Willingale Road allotments, important notices will be provided in a variety of different languages to reflect the diversity of the plot holders.

Grow Community Garden, Hillyfields

Due to a number of recent break ins, and at the request of Grow, the Town Council will approach the District Council for a more robust fencing at the perimeter's most vulnerable parts when the adjacent site is re-developed for housing. The Town Council will also request the provision of a free water supply to the site and the addition of CCTV during the redevelopment.

Town Council Van – Charging

We reported previously that the Town Council were looking into the possibility of installing a public charging point at Murray Hall which would generate additional income, as well as enabling the Town Council van to be charged.

The Council have looked into this option, however there are issues including how the car park is used, and how the site is isolated with a risk of vandalism, so would not be appropriate for a public charger at this time. [More](#), page 6.

The Town Council is currently looking at installing charging points at the council offices at Buckingham Court, with costs to be shared between the owners and the Town Council. This would also be a better option to charge the Town Council van and would be pursued in the first instance, before investigating the potential opportunities to offer a charging service to local residents.

Murray Hall – Solar Panels

Solar Together (sponsored by the County Council) has have provided an initial costing of £11,000 to install solar panels. The committee noted there is no current budget for this project but it may be appropriate to have an independent survey conducted to check that the existing roof air conditioning is effective as it could be as, in the long term, it may be beneficial to budget for and install a solar panel system.

New EV Charging Points at Debden

Two rapid Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points are now live at the Burton Road car park in Debden.

One charging point is an accessible EV bay. It is designed to accommodate Blue Badge holders, larger vehicles and smaller commercial vehicles. This complies with the British Standard Institution (BSI) accessibility standard for EV charge points. [More](#) and [where other EV Charging points are](#).

British Sign Language Signs in our Playgrounds

Following a request from a local resident, the Town Council have agreed to install British Sign Language communication boards within the Council's playgrounds. These signs ([example here](#)) will encourage hearing children to interact with deaf children or those who have hearing impairments.

Heritage Plaque

Following agreement with the homeowner of 8 Connaught Avenue, a plaque for Charles Frederick Clark (1876-1945), Industrialist and Philanthropist will be installed.

Leisure Centre Energy Saving

The Leisure Centres at Loughton, Ongar and Waltham Abbey have lowered their carbon footprint with new energy saving investments made by the District Council. At the Loughton centre, this includes:

- LED lighting conversions
- Variable speed drives
- New building management system.



The improvements already have and will continue to significantly reduce the centres' operating costs and make better the environment. Since their installation in May this year, the improvements have already reduced gas usage by almost 25%. [More](#)

Community Safety - Have Your Say

The community safety survey helps identify priorities to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in Essex for councils and Essex Police. The survey covers all types of crime including burglary, theft, fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour.

[Have Your Say Here](#). The survey closes 20 August.



Summer Activity Programme

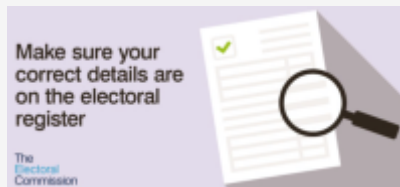
The District Council have published their [summer activity programme for July to September](#) (PDF). This includes details of all activities, workshops, events and exhibitions for children and adults happening across the district.

[More](#), including links to book events.

Annual Canvass of Electors

Please don't ignore the letter dropping through your letterbox soon.

If there are no changes to report, no response is needed. However if you need to make changes, follow the instructions given. It is essential you are registered to vote as it can affect your ability to get a mortgage, loan or even a mobile phone contract. It will also affect your ability to vote in future elections.



Tackling Fraud

The Corporate Fraud Team (CFT) of the District Council has recently reported results from recent investigations:

- Two Right to Buy (RTB) applications have been stopped by the CFT or withdrawn following CFT contact. One applicant was visited by officers making further investigations into suspected false information and, following the meeting, the application was withdrawn. Further enquiries revealed that the tenant was not using the property as their main and principal home and living elsewhere. The tenant terminated their tenancy, and the property is in the process of being recovered.
- A subletting investigation has resulted in a tenant terminating their tenancy when they were discovered living elsewhere. The property has been recovered and is in the process of being re-let.
- Following investigations, one tenancy succession was prevented, and two Council Tax Single Person Discounts have been removed.

Local News

High Road Shops

Residents would have noticed that Organico, Love Brownies and T&G's Tapas Bar appear to have closed for good. In addition, The Last Post remains vacant and Fable Stores (202-204 High Road) has not opened.

In these difficult times, perhaps landlords are trying to charge excessive rents.

Essex Library of Things

You can borrow sports and games equipment from the Essex Library Service to use at home. You can reserve then collect items from your local library and borrow them for up to a week at a time. You can also renew them if no-one else has reserved them. [More](#)

Chigwell Nursery Site Redevelopment

The District Council have recently refused permission to redevelop this site into 65 homes with a mixture of houses and flats. The site had been removed from the green belt and had been allocated a development site as part of the District Council's Local Plan that was adopted earlier this year.

The Council refused permission with reasons given including it would be out of character with the immediate surroundings, impact the outlook of nearby properties, the absence of measures to secure improved public transport, and failed to mitigate against the adverse impact that it will have on the local infrastructure and service, including provision of affordable housing, education capacity, health capacity, the Epping Forest Special Area for Conservation in terms of recreational pressure and air pollution, and local community facilities. [More](#) and [the full refusal reasons](#).

Health and Wellbeing

Stay Safe and Well this Summer

[The NHS has this advice](#) for your summer holidays, from sunscreen advice, hydration, managing hay fever and bugs and bites.

Epping Forest

Forest Fire Warning

Please do not start fires in the Forest. If you see smoke or fire out of control call 999. If you see people using a barbecue or have any concerns about fire in the Forest call 020 8532 1010, but please always call 999 if an emergency response is required.

Summer of Discovery

[Epping Forest Heritage Trust](#) (EFHT) have prepared an activity pack that the whole family can enjoy together in and around Epping Forest which is bursting with exciting activities and educational facts to ignite children's curiosity. [More](#)

Children's Book Reading

EFHT will host a book reading session on 6 August with local author and artist Linda Cooney, who wrote *Mr. Pugh's Garden*, an enchanting story inspired by the magical creatures in Epping Forest, beautifully illustrated by Teresa Witz. Free to attend but booking required. [More](#)

Walks in the Forest

The Epping Forest Big Walk will return on 17 September. Last year, over 200 walkers attended. Previously known as the 'Centenary Walk', the route offers a chance to walk the whole length of Epping Forest (14.1 miles, 22.7km) in one day. The Walk starts at Manor Park in East London and finish at Bell Common in Epping. [More](#)

Walk marshalls and refreshment volunteers are also being sought. [Can you help?](#)

For shorter walks near Loughton at your own time and pace, why not try the [Beech Trail](#) (accessed from near Earl's Path or Staples Road) or the [Golden Hill Trail](#) (accessed from Golding's Hill)?



EFHT View on the Adopted Local Plan

EFHT have prepared [this brief on the now adopted District Council's Local Plan](#), and what it might mean for Epping Forest moving forward.

Among other things, the brief sets out the scale and location of planned new housing and commercial development, as well as the continued concerns about the impact of the plans on levels of pollution in the Forest, which are already too high.

And More

Composting in the Summer

The warmer temperatures speed up the composting process, to give rich, organic compost to use in your garden. [More from LoveEssex.](#)

Bogus Textile Charity Collections

The Textile Recycling Association (TRA) has provided this advice on what you can do to check whether the collection leaflet or bag that you have received is for a

genuine charitable collection. You can:

- Check to see if the collection purports to support a genuine UK registered charity (with the registration number given). This should not be confused with other numbers like “Company Numbers” or “Export Numbers” which have no relevance in this case.
- Check to see if the collection organiser is signed up to the Institute of Fundraising’s Code of conduct or bears accepted kitemarks, such as the FRSB tick or the ACS/IOF membership logo. Any of these could indicate that the collection is a genuine charitable collection.
- Check to see whether the named collector is a member of the Textile Recycling Association. [A full list of members is here](#). This list is kept up to date, so if they claim to be members but their details are not on this page then please [contact the TRA](#).

[More](#)

Thank you for supporting LRA. Our next Loughton News email is due to be issued Saturday August 26 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



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