



# LRA's Loughton News

9 February 2024

In this issue, the [District Council is finalising its 2024/25 budget](#) and, although funding for the dedicated policing team will not be cut, other budget cuts are still being considered.

LRA Cllrs continue to respond to [residents' concerns with roads and pavements](#) and [the Central Line continues to provide a disrupted service](#).

Public Spaces Protection Orders are now in place for [The Broadway](#), and for [dog control across the district](#).

[With elections in May](#), it's time to think about applying for postal voting and make sure you (and anyone you know) are registered to vote. This year there are [some changes to the names and boundaries of wards locally](#). No matter where you live in Loughton, you will be able to vote LRA as we will continue to stand candidates in Loughton wards, and [would you consider being an LRA Cllr?](#)

Thank you for being part of LRA. Can you please help us by making sure [your membership](#) is paid up for 2024 (**and thank you if you already have paid**).

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

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## Your LRA



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## If you are reading this...

You will have an interest in our town and already support LRA by being a member.

### **How about taking that one step further and becoming an LRA Councillor?**

Elections for both Town and District Councils take place in May, so we look for some LRA members to join our team of Cllrs. Our Cllrs come from a wide cross-section of occupations and ages, with many new Cllrs learning and working alongside those with many years experience.

If you could be interested, or just want to know what is involved, please call Michael on 020 8508 4457 or Chris on 020 8508 2361, or [email us](#).

## LRA News

### District Council Spending Cuts?

In our last news email, we reported that the District Council was considering budget cuts including to that of the District Council's dedicated policing team. Given the Council's recent sale of land at North Weald to Google ([more below](#)) they have now said some proposed cuts will not happen in 2024-25 but remain likely in the longer term.

As a result, the Council have announced that the policing team will continue to be funded, although they have said that this would be for a short period of time. Also the proposed 25% cuts to the funding to Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF) and Epping Forest Citizen Advice have been reduced to a 12.5% cut.

The budget is due to be finalised this month with various other budget cuts being considered. [More](#)

***LRA Comment:** It is disappointing to hear that services such as VAEF and Citizens Advice could be impacted by cuts totalling over £22,000, which is a small sum in the overall budget but helps those in most need.*

### Pyrles Lane Pavement Danger

Local residents have reported that the pavement outside the shopping parade has deteriorated with cracks and uneven surfaces appearing. Some residents have already suffered falls as a result and sustained injuries.

This has been reported to Essex Highways. LRA Cllr Chris Pond has chased this up to try to get some action. He cannot **make** them act but he has asked for urgent maintenance. In the meantime, take care in the area and let any elderly relatives living nearby know of the danger. A resident petition will be presented to the County Council on the 13 February.

### Greensted Road 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.

### 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 up and a temporary repair was soon made. We hope, with residents, that a more permanent repair will happen before too long.

### **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.

### **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 be a container and therefore suitable accessible land may be needed.



Can you (or anyone you know) help? Please [email Chidi](#).

## 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 for Essex.

This year there are [some changes to the names and boundaries of wards locally](#). No matter where you live in Loughton, you will be able to vote LRA as we will continue to stand candidates in Loughton's Town and District wards.

As an LRA member, we assume you will be registered to vote. However if you know of anyone who isn't, please encourage them to [register to vote here](#).

In the meantime, consider registering for Postal Voting (if you have not already done so). Postal Voting is the safest, secure and most convenient method where you vote at home. Ballot Papers are posted to you about 10 days before election day. You mark your choices and simply post the Ballot Papers back in the prepaid envelope. [More](#)

## Your LRA Membership for 2024

The latest issue of the members edition of Loughton Life is currently being delivered, along with a letter either confirming that you've already paid for 2024 or asking you to renew your membership (only £5 a year).

If you've already paid, thank you!

If not, can you please arrange a payment either by a bank transfer or posting a cheque ([how to do this](#)).

*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.*

## 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 Site, 1 Langston Road

The District Council approved a planning application in 2023 for an office and hotel development ([background on our website](#)). 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 are 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 Essex County Council claim they have visited the site, it must have been a fleeting visit.



LRAPG consider Council County 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 5 February but you can still comment to the Council.

### **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 application 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 consider 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 9 February but you can still comment to the Council after that date.

## ***Roads, Parking and Travel***

### **Planned Road Closures**

- The Avenue - the road will be closed until 13 February for gas works by Cadent. [More](#)
- Traps Hill - the road will be closed between the High Road and Eleven Acre Rise from 13 to 15 February between 10am and 3pm for carriageway patching by Essex Highways. [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 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 this 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. It is [reported](#) that the number of trains available over the last fortnight had ranged from 44 to 66, and typically little more than 50. To run a peak service, 78 trains are required. [More in this news report with video.](#)

Refurbished motor parts have been delivered and are being fitted them to allow several trains back into service over the coming weeks. Disruption is likely to continue for some months, and the only practical advice from TfL is to allow for more time for your journey.

It is also [reported](#) that an emergency timetable will be introduced (we understand on 4 March) to try to regulate the gaps between trains. There will also be more buses on bus route 20 between Debden and Walthamstow Central.

A shuttle bus from Epping to Chingford via Loughton is reported to have started running this week (and residents have reported seeing such buses out and about), enabling passengers get to Chingford and onto the Overground service into Liverpool Street.

This problem is separate to the [Central Line Improvement Programme](#) which is overhauling the existing trains over the next few years. The programme will replace the (currently failing) DC motors with AC motors. In 2016 this replacement [was planned to be done by 2022](#), however the work was delayed by the pandemic. Even so the risk of failing motors must have been envisaged by TfL along with some thought to mitigate the disruption that could (and did) happen.

### On the Buses

On bus routes 20 and 167 there will be minor timetable changes from 9 March. The same routes, hours and general pattern of service will continue.

## 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 8 March.

## A104 Epping New Road - Proposed Road Safety Scheme

[As we reported in October](#), the government is funding £1.36m for safety improvements on the road. Plans have been developed by Essex Highways which have been under consideration.

After consideration, the Epping Forest & Commons Committee of the City of London have rejected the changes, given concerns about the scheme's safety, especially for cyclists, pedestrians, and horse riders.

The decision will be taken by Essex Highways.

## Requests for Parking Enforcement

Residents can request parking enforcement by the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) by [completing this form](#).

[Here are the types of parking restrictions](#) that can be enforced.

# Police, Fire and Crime

## What Have the Police Done for Us Locally?

In December 2023 they:

- helped to find 47 people who were reported missing and helped them to get the support they needed.
- responded to 40 mental health related incidents and worked with local partners to help those concerned get the help and support they needed.
- investigated 62 reports of antisocial behaviour having listened to local communities about the things which were causing them concern.
- attended 52 road traffic collisions, helping to keep those involved safe and our roads moving.
- investigated 191 reports of domestic violence incidents and made sure victims were given help, support, and advice, putting them in contact with relevant organisations where appropriate.
- solved 113 crimes, ensuring those intent on committing crime are held accountable for their actions.
- have submitted 280 pieces of intelligence which assists us in targeting criminal activity in our community.



## Keeping Burglars out of your Property

The advice from police is that burglars don't want to be seen or heard by a neighbour or passer-by because they will feel exposed and identifiable.

If you keep your property hidden from prying eyes behind overgrown bushes, trees, high fences or walls, this can make it easier for a burglar to get close to a home unnoticed, and provide somewhere to hide while carrying out a burglary or theft from the property. The police suggest:

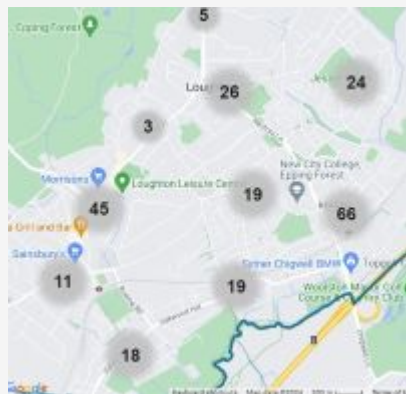
- Lower fences at the front around one-metre high are preferable to high fences as they allow for a clear view over the top and don't provide cover for anyone wishing to hide.
- At the rear and sides, taller fencing is recommended to prevent easy access.
- Trellis, thorny plants, or a suitable anti-climb topping such as plastic spikes make it difficult for anyone climbing over a fence or gate.
- Planting prickly or barbed shrubbery along boundaries and fence lines acts as an effective natural barrier.
- Gravel driveways and paths will make sure you hear anyone approach.

### Scammers Always Have New Tricks

Scammers are always trying new tricks. It's impossible to list them all here, although [here's a list from AgeUK](#).

One recent one is supposedly from Amazon asking to renew Prime membership. The giveaway in this case is that the email is sent from an unknown and unrecognised email address.

[More on how to tell if a message is from Amazon](#), and remember to send any such emails to [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk) or text to 7726. This really does help the relevant companies and agencies to address the problem. **And don't click on any links!**



### More from the Police

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



## Anti-Social Behaviour Public Spaces Protection Order in Place

Following a public consultation, the [Anti-Social Behaviour Public Spaces Protection Order \(PSPO\)](#) (PDF) is now in place for The Broadway, Debden for the next three years and relates to:

- Loitering by persons in Council housing blocks and estates (including but not limited to any stairwell, lobby area, and communal balconies), causing nuisance, intimidation, harassment, alarm or distress or using or dealing drugs directly or indirectly causing damage or other ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour).
- Any person in possession of an open vessel(s) of alcohol/intoxicating liquor in a public place.
- Any person sitting or loitering on the highway or any pedestrian area of the Restricted Area demanding or begging or perceived to be begging by an authorised person for money or any other item, whether placing any item before them for receipt of money or otherwise.
- Any person flyposting (including the unlawful affixing of any placard, notice or sign to street furniture) or any person permitting and/or benefitting from such flyposting.
- Any person using a skateboard, bicycle, scooter, skates or any other self-propelled wheeled vehicle in such a manner as to cause damage to property or that causes or is likely to cause intimidation, harassment, alarm, distress, nuisance or annoyance to any person

## Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order in Place

Following a public consultation, the [Dog Control Public Space Protection Order \(PSPO\)](#) (PDF) is now in place across Epping Forest 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.

## Wombles in Winter

Some hardy wombles were out on 13 January in chilly Loughton. Two groups met; group one at the Esso garage on Church Hill and litter picked up in Goldings Hill and onto Goldings Hill Pond. The second group litter picked in Pyrles Lane. [More](#) (PDF)

Image: Town Council



## Skate Ramps Refurbished

Repairs to the Town Council's skate ramps and trailer have been completed and the equipment will soon be delivered to North Weald Airport for storage by the District

Council. The equipment will remain the property of the Town Council and appropriate groups will be able to use this equipment in the community.

### **Jessel Green Fun Day**

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

### **Filming on Town Council Open Spaces**

The Town Council currently allow filming on the town's open spaces for major documentaries, large scale investment programmes, dramas, films and advertisements, and charge a fee for doing so. The Council was approached by a US-based company called Giggster who can enable booking of Loughton's open spaces for filming. The Council has agreed to a trial period to determine if income can be generated.

### **Land at North Weald sold to Google**

The District Council has sold 52 acres of land at North Weald Airfield to Google 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. [More](#)

This is in addition to the data centre planned by Google for Waltham Cross.

### **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 have 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.

The Council say 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 2024 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.

## Free Self Defence Classes

The District Council are providing free self defence classes. This initiative is part of Operation Minerva which aims to reduce violence against women and girls.

The classes will be led by a qualified Self Defence Trainer, to provide you with information about the law, how to improve your personal safety, and techniques that you can use if you are at risk of serious harm. The class will be educational, informative, and will also include elements of practical exercise and will be at the Murray Hall on Borders Lane on 22 February and 9 March. Booking required. [More](#)

## New Bus Stop Contract

A new Bus Stop contract has been signed by the County Council with Clear Channel, who have been the 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.



## Tenant Satisfaction Survey

The second wave of the District Council's Tenant Satisfaction Survey started on 1 February with calls to Council tenants.

Acuity Research & Practice Ltd will be making calls on the Council's behalf, and will only call between 9am-8pm on weekdays and 10am-6pm on Saturdays, the number will display as 01992 905307.

Your response will help the District Council gauge your satisfaction with your home and its services. [More](#)

## Hate Crime - Have Your Say

The County Council want to hear your views about hate crime. The research is being led by the Strategic Hate Crime Partnership (SCHPP) and findings will set the focus and direction for the group going forward.

You can use your own experiences and concerns about hate crime, including online hate. Residents who might not have experienced hate crime are also invited to share their views.

[Have your say here](#). The consultation is open until 19 February.



## What's On in Epping Forest?

The District Council has published details of all activities, events, exhibitions and workshops from the Community Development and Wellbeing team. There's something for everyone. [More](#) (PDF)

## Local News



### EV Charging Stations at Traps Hill Car Park

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

[Here is map of EV charging stations.](#)

### Countrycare Winter Bird Walk

Countrycare are leading a Winter Bird Walk on Roding Valley Meadows Saturday 10th February, from 10am to 12pm.

Come and discover what birds are present at this time of year, some of which may have migrated long distances to join us for the season. Due to the nature of the walk route, there will be some rough ground and unfortunately it will not be wheelchair accessible. Booking required. [More](#)

### Warm Places over Winter

Warm places are again open in 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
- Epping Forest Campus, New City College
- Loughton Library
- Oakwood Hill Community Centre
- St Mary's Church.

## Health and Wellbeing

### Are You a Carer? Share Your Experience

Do you help someone in their day-to-day life? Perhaps with their shopping, getting out and about, keeping on top of their bills or medication? Or perhaps you keep them company if they can't get out much, or help them with personal care or housework?

Healthwatch Essex have a new project called Carers Voices and would like to hear from you about your experiences. They want to know what you feel works well, or not so well, for you and the person you are helping. They are working in partnership with the County Council and other agencies to make sure that your voice is heard and

used to ensure that services and support are developed to meet the needs of the many people in Essex, like you, who care about others. [More](#)

## Epping Forest



### Epping Forest: Worth £1.9 billion, but Priceless To Us!

It has been [reported](#) that 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.

### The Geology of Epping Forest

The varied landscape of the Forest is determined by the geology and the changes that have occurred over thousands of years. [Read more](#) about the different soils produced over many centuries have ensured a variety of vegetation and its varied and beautiful landscape.

### Forest Focus - December 2023

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



## And More



### How to recycle something

Do you want to know if something can be recycled locally? [Recycle Now provides this handy tool](#) to enable you to find out how to correctly dispose of your household item, which includes where to recycle plastic bags, pouches and plastic wrappings, and take-back schemes for difficult-to-recycle beauty and grooming packaging.

### Disposing of Large Electrical Appliances

A partnership between Essex County Council and the [Lighthouse Furniture Project](#) enables residents to donate larger electrical appliances for repair, reuse and redistribution to individuals and families in need. They will be repaired and refurbished if required before being tested by Lighthouse engineers.

These items are either passed on or sold at affordable prices in the local community. [More](#)

The nearest dropoff point is Chigwell Recycling Centre on Luxborough Lane. Remember you need to [book a slot](#).

## Research about Recycling in Essex - Get Involved

[Love Essex](#) is looking for volunteers to take part in research sessions about recycling and waste, whether you are a keen recycler or someone who doesn't recycle at all. The research will help understand how to improve the information that the County Council provides online about recycling and waste.

If you are interested, [complete this form](#).

*Thank you for supporting LRA. Our next Loughton News email is due to be issued Friday 1 March, 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](mailto: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](mailto:contact@LoughtonResidents.co.uk)

To update your membership details, email [membership@LoughtonResidents.co.uk](mailto:membership@LoughtonResidents.co.uk)

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