



LRA's Loughton News

16 December 2022

In this issue you can read about the difference between [County and District Council owned street lights](#), [clearing snow from pavements](#) and [find out where the gritters are](#).

Read also police advice on [your personal safety on a night out](#), and how [auction websites are used for fraud](#).

With the cold winter and high energy costs, remember there are [seven warm place locations locally](#) with free, safe, warm and comfortable space for those who need it.

Various support is also available to [help with the cost of living](#) There are also [tips from the Fire Service](#) on saving money while staying safe at the same time.

There have been [disruptions to bin collections](#) this week, and remember that [bin collection dates vary](#) over the Christmas period.

From all of us at LRA, thank you again for supporting us through the year. We wish you a Happy Christmas and New Year, along with our hope that 2023 is a better year for us all.

You can always contact us by email at contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk to raise an issue, to give your views, or to offer help.

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LRA News

New District Local Plan

The [consultation on changes](#) to the Main Modifications of the Local Plan ended on December 9th.

LRA comment: LRA submitted further objections based on the inadequacy/illegality of SAC mitigation. The District Council Service Director for Planning Services, Nigel Richardson, has said the Inspector would consider these probably during January.

[Background on our website.](#)



Transfer of Grounds Maintenance to Qualis

The District Council has approved the transfer of the Grounds Maintenance Service to Qualis Management, part of the Council-owned Qualis Group which also includes Qualis Commercial and Qualis Living.

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had opposed the proposal and questioned the financial benefit of the transfer ([read the minutes and questions raised here](#) - from p2). However at the subsequent Cabinet meeting, the transfer was approved for April 2023.

A consultation has now started on the proposed transfer with [a survey for Council tenants and leaseholders](#). [More](#)



Street lighting

On some estates and former estates, the County Council do not own or service all the street lighting, but the District Council often do. The main place where this applies is Oakwood Hill Estate. However, this also happens in, for example, parts of The Seymours, Trevelyan Close, and part of Englands Lane.

As a tip, if the lamp has a white "witch's hat" atop or next to it, then it's a County Council light. If not, it's a District Council or private lamp.

The Town Council own no street lamps.

LRA Cllrs have noticed longer time gaps in getting lamps repaired and wonder, especially with old yellow 250-watt lamps, if this is designed to save money. In the County Council's defence, there has been a great shortage of spares (especially for older units) and if the electrical supply fails the contractor is under no obligation to act fast.

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

District Council Leisure Centres

The District's Leisure Centres are facing enormous bills for energy so between Christmas and New Year Places Leisure will close the Epping and Ongar centres completely. The Loughton and Waltham Abbey centres will be open for fewer hours than usual to save money. One regular user contacted LRA Cllr Rose Brookes asking if the Loughton centre could open earlier than the advertised time on December 28th, 29th and 30th. She raised this and the centre will be opening an extra 30 minutes earlier at 7:30am.



Several parents have complained to Rose about swimming lessons being cancelled or classes being merged. She raised this at a Leisure Contract meeting, along with increasing the cost of lessons again by another £2 to £32 a month. The Contract Manager responded by emphasising there was a national shortage of teachers as many instructors had left during the Pandemic when pools were closed. The Company are subsidising the cost of training several teachers and that they expect things to improve in January when they will be qualified to teach. A new coordinator of swimming lessons was appointed in Loughton at the beginning of October and she is improving communication.

Eagle eyed LRA Cllr David Wixley asked Rose to also report to Places Leisure that many gutters at Loughton Leisure Centre were blocked. Following his alert the gutters were cleared out.



Santa Claus came to Town

On Friday December 2nd many local children queued for a free visit to see Santa at the District Council's former housing office on the Broadway. This event was organised by Loughton Broadway Town Centre Partnership (BTCP).

LRA Town Cllr Carol Davies visited New City College to see the student's designs for a Pop Up Santa's Grotto. The college also produced a poster for the event, provided a First Aider and many college students joined local volunteers to steward on the street. Helpers included parents with children at Thomas Willingale School, local residents, and many Town Cllrs. Independent Councillor Stephen Murray enjoyed being in charge of the queue!

On the opposite side of the road in St John the Baptist church's premises a children's entertainer kept children and parents busy. [Here are pictures from the day.](#)

LRA Cllr Rose Brookes, the interim chair of the Loughton Broadway Town Centre Partnership, would like to say a big thank you to the many LRA Members who donated books or money towards this project at The Bookshop on the High Road. The Debden Traders also gave a substantial contribution to Santa's sack. She commented "After an absence of any special Christmas activity for children on the Broadway for several years, many of us felt it was important to organise something. This really was an excellent example of partnership working, with lots of agencies and individuals making a contribution. The BTCP exists thanks to the financial grant from the District Council."

LRA's Christmas Quiz

[Here's LRA's Christmas quiz for 2022.](#) The theme is based on Essex, or former Essex, Towns and Villages. Bottles of fizz or a £15 book token to the first correct

answer drawn out. So, atlases ready....

Answers, please, to lesandsueharris@aol.com or by post to 32 Upper Park, Loughton IG10 4EQ, by January 6th 2023.



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.

7 Lower Road

The application proposes a change of use of part of the laundry to a takeaway.

The LRA Plans Group are concerned planning applications are being advertised with misleading descriptions. This application is an example where the description of development does not mention an external flue proposed on the side of the building, positioned in front of No 8 Lower Road. In the absence of it being mentioned in the description of development neighbours may not check the drawings and will not be aware. Furthermore, the floorplans show a double flue but the elevation shows only one flue. The roof edging also projects out over the building, yet the drawings suggest it is flush with the brickwork. The flue will have to bend outwards to get past this.

It is very important an applicant's description of development matches what is on the plans.

Reference [EPF/2564/22](#). The formal consultation period ended December 9th, but you can still comment to the Council.

40 Church Lane

This application proposes the demolition of the existing Bungalow with the the erection of two detached houses.

LRAPG has objected to this application. The proposed houses are considered to be too large, poorly designed and will impact on the character of the area. Trees will be lost and there will be an overbearing impact on dwellings to the rear at Hilltop Close. The loss of the bungalow would reduce housing choice, particularly for people with disabilities, which is contrary to the council's policy on mixed and balanced communities. The additional dwellings will impact on the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation and it is not sustainable to knock down existing buildings and replace them with completely new builds. The existing building represents an enormous investment in carbon and energy already, and to simply throw it into the skip is unacceptable.

Reference [EPF/2475/22](#). The formal consultation period ended November 29th, but you can still comment to the Council.

Roads, Parking and Travel

Clearing the Snow

Contrary to popular belief, there is no law stopping you from clearing your local pavements, providing you take a careful and common-sense approach. Here is some guidance on [clearing snow](#) yourself, and a guide on [clearing snow and ice from pavements and public spaces](#). Remember:



- do not release snow from the shovel into the actual or potential path of vehicles or pedestrians
- do not dump snow so as to create or conceal a hazard
- do not use water as this can refreeze and create black ice.



Where are the Gritters?

The County Council treat over 2000 miles of roads in Essex which is about 40% of our road network and are the most important routes to keep moving.

They operate 55 gritting lorries with ploughs plus two mini gritters with around 116 drivers who are deployed based on weather conditions, and use around 200 tonnes of salt on each run.

[Here are the routes](#) that salt is laid, you can [see where the gritters are here](#), and there is a [Twitter feed on the gritters](#).

Planned Road Closures

- Homecraft Gardens - the road will be closed until February 9th for gas main reinforcement works by Cadent. [More](#)
- Hillyfields - the road will be closed until January 4th to 6th between 8am and 4pm for road patching by the County Council. [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 and bank holidays throughout December. [More](#)

Proposed Removal of Speed Humps on Smarts Lane

Essex Highways has proposed to remove speed humps from Smarts Lane, after requests from residents. The request has come about because residents have expressed concern over damage caused to their properties when vehicles travel over the speed humps and the proximity to the High Road.

It is not proposed to remove the speed cushions, otherwise there is a high probability of increasing vehicle speeds.

Residents can object to the proposed removal by sending their views to Essex Highways via [email](#) by December 19th.

Parking Enforcement

Enforcement Officers will be working as usual on December 24th, 27th and 28th, so do not park on yellow lines/red lines or in Controlled Parking Zones on those days. However officers will not be working December 25th and 26th, or January 1st.

Remember that private car parks (e.g. most supermarkets) will enforce parking rules separately.

DaRT87 Bus New App

DaRT87 is a bookable bus service with routes from Debden to/from Harlow. You can now book via the new Flexiroute Passenger app which can be downloaded for [Apple](#) and [Android](#) devices. Once installed select Epping Forest from the regions list.

[More](#)



Concessionary bus passes are accepted from 9:30am onwards. There is a flat-rate fare of £2 for a journey up to 7 miles and £5 thereafter. The service must be prebooked at least 24 hours in advance either for one-off trips, or block bookings.

You can also book by calling 01992 579556 or [email](#).



Buses and the Tube Over Christmas and New Year

There will no TfL Bus or Tube service on Christmas Day, and on other days services may vary. [Check here](#) for what services will run on each day.

Tubes and Trains - Industrial Action

You can see the latest updates on industrial action on the tube network at the [TfL website](#) plus on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

Updates from the rail network are at the [National Rail website](#), plus on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).



ULEZ Extension

Currently the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) currently operates within the North and South Circular Roads. The Mayor of London has now decided to expand the ULEZ to all London boroughs and this will be in force from August 29th 2023. The expansion does not cover Loughton and the rest of Essex. [More](#)

Police, Fire and Crime

What have the Police Done

The police report that in Epping Forest District in November 2022, officers have:

- helped to find 37 people who were reported missing and helped them to get the support they needed.
- responded to 28 mental-health related incidents and worked with local partners to help those concerned get the help and support they needed.
- investigated 108 reports of antisocial behaviour having listened to local communities about the things which were causing them concern.
- attended 74 road traffic collisions, helping to keep those involved safe and our roads moving.
- investigated 175 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 79 crimes, ensuring those intent on committing crime are held accountable for their actions.
- have submitted 276 pieces of intelligence which assists us in targeting criminal activity in our community.
- stopped and searched 98 people within our district to make sure they weren't carrying anything which could cause harm to themselves or someone else.



Personal Safety during a Night Out

The police have provided some steps to help with your personal safety:

- Never leave your bag or coat unattended in a pub or nightclub, it is an ideal place for thieves.
- Never leave your drink unattended, as it is very easy for someone to put an illegal substance in your drink, which could have very serious consequences for you.

- Always make sure you know how you are going to get home after a night out. It is best to travel home with friends and not on your own.
- Book a taxi home before going out, do not flag down a taxi as you cannot be sure they are a licensed cab driver.
- Avoid any confrontation or fighting, if someone is threatening you, tell a door supervisor but do not get involved.
- Never accept a drink from a stranger. Go with the person to the bar if you want to accept a drink.

In general, wherever you are, try and remember the following suggestions:

- Do not walk home alone late at night. If you do, choose well-lit main roads and walk confidently.
- If someone does grab your bag fighting back is not always a good idea, you do not know if your attacker has a weapon.
- Always be aware of your surroundings and the people around you. Reading and listening to music can be distracting.
- In a busy public place, try to only use your mobile phone in an emergency as it is advertising the fact that you have a phone and you are distracted whilst using it, making it easier to take it from you.
- If you are attacked it is often better to shout 'fire' rather than 'help', it tends to attract more attention.

Auction scams

On auction and marketplace websites, most items are genuine, but fraudsters use these sites to offer high value items like electronics or designer goods. It is wise to check the seller or buyer's review history and feedback from other reviewers, and beware accounts that may have been set up very recently with lots of favourable feedback that sounds similar. [More](#) on what you can do to protect yourself when shopping online.



Save Safely

Fires cost. At best it's smoke damage and a new appliance, at worst it's your house or even your life. [Here are the best tips](#) from the Fire Service on saving money while staying safe at the same time.

Clare's Law or the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme enables the public to make enquires about an individual who they are in a relationship with or who is in a relationship with someone they know where there is a concern that the individual may be violent towards their partner. This information may be disclosed via a request from a member of the public (Right to Ask) or be initiated by the police where a proactive decision is made to disclose information in order to protect a potential victim (Right to Know). [More](#)

Policy and Performance for Police Incidents

The County Council has published [a report](#) that provides an overview of the force's Command and Control of Incidents Policy, an assessment of how well Essex Police responds to high harm crimes, and a summary of the ambition set for future delivery.

The report describes such things as attendance targets (current on p3, new on p14), the process for non-urgent incidents (p4) and information on residential burglaries (p5-6).

More from the Police

[Read more](#) from the police for our local area including other news and crime statistics.

Council News

Community Warm Places

Warm Places provide a free, safe, warm and comfortable space for those who need it throughout winter. Many of the venues are offering refreshments (with some offering hot food), activities such as board games and Wi-fi.



Locations in Loughton include Debden and Loughton Libraries, New City College, Oakwood Hill Community Centre, St Mary's Church, St Michael's Church and Trinity Methodist Church. [Check the details and opening times here.](#) and please share with anyone you know who may struggle this winter to keep warm.

The County Council are also looking for individuals to run activities, provide refreshments and signpost residents to support this winter. [Can you help?](#)



Support with the Cost of Living

[Find out what support](#) is available to help with the cost of living. This includes income and disability benefits, bills and allowances, childcare, housing, travel and for small businesses.

Disruptions to waste collections

Due to the severe weather and safety concerns some scheduled collections were disrupted this week. The District Council has advised residents to leave out your waste on your scheduled collection day and it will be collected as soon as possible. Some collections will be made on Saturday December 17th.

There have been no food and garden (green bin) waste collections during the past week (beginning December 12th).

Waste Collection Issues

We have been getting reports (apart from the general missing of bin/sack collections), that crews are ignoring carrier bags of textiles, batteries, and waste electrical items put out on top of wheelie bins.

If this happens to you, [tell the District Council](#) (select Waste and Recycling General Enquiry) or [email them](#). Biffa will then send out a van to collect.

Litter Bins

Please be aware that putting your own domestic waste in District Council litter bins is fly-tipping. Cllrs became aware of an instance where a resident ran out of recycling bags, and put a wad of paper, etc in a litter bin. This was traced from addresses on it, and the resident warned.



Christmas Recycling and Rubbish Collections

Collection dates will vary over the Christmas season. [Here are the revised collection dates](#)

Housing Management Services

As the District Council Cash Office on The Broadway has now closed, the District Council housing management team will be at the Oakwood Hill Community Hall on Longcroft Rise every Thursday from 9:30am to 12:30pm. However given the Christmas and New Year period, the next day it will be open will be January 5th. [More](#)

District Council Budget

Due to reductions in income and higher cost pressures, the District Council have been forecasting a £4 million deficit from forecast expenditure of £19 million and funding of £15 million. The savings proposals at this stage will appear to impact some services such as reducing the size of the policing team (currently part funded by the Council) and reducing or discontinuing some community programmes. [Read the full report](#) which will be considered by the District Council Cabinet on December 20th.

District Council Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The District Council have updated their strategy and it now includes efforts to help with the cost-of-living crisis and potential recession is one of the five main priorities. This means increasing the access to help to support residents with the rising cost of fuel and food. Also, the strategy is to work with employers and other organisations to improve employment opportunities for residents. The strategy will help residents of all ages access education, training, skills development and volunteering opportunities. Finally, it will also put in place ways to improve knowledge and awareness of financial skills and support amongst children, young people and adults.

[You can read the strategy here.](#)

Epping Forest District Museum

Did you know that the [museum](#) loans out items from its collection? Also it would return items to their countries' of origin if required. The museum also talks to local communities to gain their knowledge about the local areas.

Local News

The Broadway Shops Closing

Pete Sparks, whose family have had a fruit shop on The Broadway since 1986, will be leaving at the end of the year. A new tenant has yet to be finalised but it is hoped that they will be selling fresh produce, possibly fish and /or fruit. There is plenty of interest in the shops when they occur but getting the right mixture is a challenge.

Stuart's Market Shop is also closing shortly.

Local BBC Radio facing cuts

BBC local radio stations will have a significant number of programmes cut under new plans. All 39 networks in England will keep their current schedule from 6am to 2pm but after that shows will be shared. The BBC is having to make these decisions because the government are forcing it to make cuts by freezing the licence fee without committing extra funding.

There are petitions you can sign for our local stations [BBC Radio London](#) & [BBC Radio Essex](#).

Health and Wellbeing

Covid and Flu Vaccines

[Read more](#) on getting a Covid and Flu vaccine. It's never too late to come forward for your Covid vaccine and you can use [a walk in centre](#) or [book an appointment](#), or call 119 for more help.



NHS Industrial Action

This month, some services may be affected due to strike action. Continue to come forward for NHS care, if you need medical help use 111 online. In emergencies call 999.



Improving Access to Mental Health Services for 18-25s

Mind in West Essex are conducting a survey to help will inform, educate and bring awareness about the barriers people face when accessing mental health services. The research findings will be outlined in a final report and presented to mental health services across West Essex. The survey is aimed at those aged between 18-25, live in the West Essex area, have an experience or understanding of mental health difficulties, and self- identify as part of a marginalised group. [More](#)

It's Ok Not to Feel Ok

It's ok not to feel ok this festive period. However you're feeling in the run-up to Christmas, remember there's support available:

- Contact [Samaritans](#) by calling 116 123, or [email](#) or by [these ways](#).
- [Find local help and guidance](#)
- Dial 999 (option 2) if you're in a crisis

Epping Forest

Avian flu

Avia flu has been detected in Epping Forest.

- Do not feed wild birds.
- Do not touch dead or sick birds.
- Keep dogs away from wild birds.
- Do not touch wild bird feathers or surfaces contaminated with wild bird droppings.
- Please report dead wild waterfowl, gulls or birds of prey to 020 8532 1010.

[More](#)

You can [report a dead wild bird here](#), or call 03459 33 55 77. You can report sick or injured wild birds to the [RSPCA](#) by calling 0300 1234 999.

If you have bird feeders in your garden, the [RSPB advises](#) good hygiene is key. [Clean bird feeders and feeding stations weekly](#) and change bird drinking and bathing water regularly. It is normal this time of year to see fewer birds in your garden and this is not linked to avian flu.

Carols in the Courtyard

Festive singing will take place at the Epping Forest Visitor Centre in Chingford on December 17th at 2:30pm. [More](#)



Heathland restoration

Conservation works are being undertaken over the coming months to help restore some of the Forest's heathland sites. Competitive grasses and bracken have spread across the heathlands crowding out other heathland species such as heather, mosses and lichens.

Work will be undertaken over the coming weeks to remove the competitive plants to a shallow depth to reveal the soil and allow seeds of other heathland plants to germinate here.



Forest Focus - December 2022

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

And More

The Official London Theatre Sale is back

Now in its 20th year, find tickets to London's best-loved shows for less and grab great seats for just £10, £20, £30, £40 & £50.

From fun family shows to extravagant musicals to heartfelt dramas; there really is something for everyone, with performances available through January and February. [More](#)

Thank you for supporting LRA. Our next Loughton News email is due to be issued Friday January 13th 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

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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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