



# LRA's Loughton News

3 March 2023

In this issue we report on how [the new Local Plan is on the cusp of being adopted](#) by the District Council, after the Planning Inspector has concluded that the plan is now 'sound'.

Also we report that the proposed housing development on Alderton Hill has been [refused by the District Council](#). The District Council has also [objected to the demolition of Loughton Library](#) by the County Council.

The [grass verge on part of Borders Lane](#) has been a muddy mess recently and residents have raised concerns. LRA Cllrs have been engaged, with positive results.

[Waste and recycling collections](#) have been returning to normal, and there's a reminder of the new booking system now in place for [visits to recycling centres](#) from 13 March.

[Council Tax](#) is increasing from April and we summarise the upcoming changes. And the latest Census shows [Loughton has a population of 33,300 along with more data](#).

Thank you for being part of LRA. LRA is 100% run by volunteers locally and supported by your £5 annual membership. Your latest members edition of Loughton Life should have now been delivered, along with a letter either confirming that you've already paid for 2023 or asking you to renew your membership. If you haven't yet renewed, can you please arrange a payment either by a bank transfer or posting a cheque ([how to do this](#)).

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

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## LRA News

### New District Local Plan to be Considered For Adoption

Further changes to the draft Local Plan (known as Main Modifications) thought necessary by the Planning Inspector were proposed last year and consulted on. The Inspector has now issued [a final report](#) to the District Council with [amended Main](#)



### [Modifications.](#)

The Inspector's report concludes that the Local Plan with the Main Modifications is 'sound' and capable of adoption by the Council. The proposed adoption will be considered at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on 6 March. LRA Cllrs will, as always, decide individually how to vote.

Assuming the Council decides to adopt the Local Plan, it would then be subject to a legal challenge period of six weeks, when the Plan could be challenged through an application to the High Court under Section 113 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**LRA Comment:** *A Section 113 challenge is rare and not likely to be successful. LRA has concluded that the new plan, though far from ideal by not protecting the Forest from bad air via a definite mitigation strategy, now provides a way forward. By LRA and Town Council efforts (and money) and much effort at a public enquiry (especially by LRA Cllr Chris Pond and David Linnell), the imposition of 1021 new houses for Loughton in the original plan published in 2017 has been reduced to 455. Of these, over 300 are now in the course of being erected on Lucton's Field and the Middle Site, which were previously owned by Epping Forest College (which was the result of an aberrant decision of another Inspector).*

*LRA Plans Group will keep all this to the fore in considering planning applications post-adoption of the Local Plan.*

[Background on our website.](#)

### **Demolition of Loughton Library - District Council Objection**

Under a Freedom of Information request, LRA was recently able to obtain the District Council's comments on the County Council's planning application to demolish Loughton Library and replace it with a smaller library with 38 flats on top. ([Background on our website](#))



The District Council has **objected** to the application, with the key issue that the 38 flats exceeds the 20 flats allowed for in the draft Local Plan, and that there would be an adverse effect from pollution on the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation and, as the District Council say, on the York Hill Conservation Area as well.

### **13-15A Alderton Hill Another Proposed Block of Flats - Permission Refused**

As we have reported previously, this was a planning application for demolition of houses at 13, 15 and 15a Alderton Hill, to be replaced by linked blocks of 89 elderly persons apartments. [Background on our website](#)

The District Council planning officers have **refused** permission for this development. The reasons cited included the development being too bulky for the surrounding area, loss of privacy for neighbours, insufficient information that it would not affect the Epping Forest Special Area for Conservation and it does not adhere to the draft Local Plan. Read the [Council's refusal letter](#) and the [full report](#).

We know that over 230 households sent in objections to the application. **Thank you all** for your time and effort for doing so. **It made a difference.**

The developer is now expected to lodge an appeal and has six months to do so. We will be following this closely and will keep members and residents informed.

### **Damage to the Borders Lane Grass Verge**

There have been problems recently with parking on the grass verge of Borders Lane, creating a muddy mess of the area. This has been caused by the use of the area by contractors and deliveries related to the Lucton's Field/Epping Gate housing development nearby. Residents have used the grass verge for parking or accessing their driveways for a long time without problems of this scale happening.



LRA Cllrs Chidi Nweke and Ian Allgood have been engaged with residents and the District Council.



The Epping Gate Site Manager has now confirmed that the security guard on site will now be monitoring staff parking in this area, and will direct contractors and deliveries related to their site away from parking on the grass verge and the surrounding pavements. Also new grass turf has been laid where the grass was damaged.

### **Talking with the Police**

LRA Cllr Chidi Nweke represented LRA at a recent meeting of the Essex Police Independent Advisory Group (IAG). This group comprises individuals from a diverse range of communities across the district, who come together four times a year to provide insight and constructive feedback to Essex Police on a variety of policing issues. ([More on the IAG](#))

Some of the key points discussed included:

- Complaints against the police have been taking 120 days to resolve, however efforts are being made to improve the length of time this takes.
- There was a high level of complaints from residents who had their cars stolen but were later found by police. These residents weren't told that there was a fee to get their vehicles back. Officers have now been trained and told to explain the procedure to residents in advance.
- Concerns over inadequate street lighting, especially in the Oakwood Hill Estate. The police don't have the power to pressure the County Council to do something about the street lights, and residents need to [report problems to the Council](#).
- A Stop and Search review panel is going well and more sessions are booked. This is a panel that reviews the body worn camera footage involving stop and search. Police were given constructive feedback on what is going well and what needs improvement.
- Some residents have been out on patrol with the police to see how real-life situations are dealt with. Police are encouraging more members of the public to do this. Any resident that wants to ride along should [contact Chidi](#).
- The crime rate is coming down however it is worth noting that the rate of solving some crimes remains low. The solve rate of hate crime in Loughton is at 12% and this is the lowest in the county.

- Members of the far-right political group Patriotic Britain were seen out and about in Epping. They were at Epping St. Johns giving out leaflets. The police gave assurances that they are aware of the activities of the group but encouraged residents to [report any activities to the police](#).

### **Street Lights**

LRA Cllr Chris Pond raised at a County Council Full Council meeting recently the policy of buying no spares for obsolete lamps which were pending conversion to LEDs, as this might have led to months of darkness.

Through the good offices of cabinet member Cllr Lee Scott, a change of policy was effected. Where an old-style lamp fails, the opportunity will now be taken to replace the old lantern with LED as soon as possible, as Epping Forest District comes into Phase 4 of the LED swapover scheme, which should happen thick and fast from April 2023. At least, that's the plan.



### **Concern Over Planned Event**

Notices flyposted around the town advertised a 1930s glamour night 8pm to 1am every Friday at the British Legion Club on Church Hill. Concerned residents and LRA Cllr Caroline Pond contacted the District Council Licensing officer, who confirmed that the club holds a "club premises licence" only whereby alcohol supply is limited to club members and their own guests. The District Council contacted the club and as a result LRA was told the events were cancelled

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

### **Meet your Alderton Ward LRA Cllrs**

Alderton ward councillors hold their monthly drop-in surgery every 1st Saturday of the month from 2pm-4pm at Gullotti Cafe on Borders Lane IG10 3QX. The next one is on Saturday March 4th. Come by to discuss any ward issues. No registration or booking is needed. [More](#)

## ***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.

## **New Data Centre, Langston Road**

This application is for a new data centre on land currently used by Alandale Scaffolding.



There has been a lot of bad publicity about data centres recently. However, they are essential infrastructure for the Internet and cloud storage, etc. In view of the scare stories about their thirst for water for cooling and electricity to run them, LRAPG has asked the District Council to be satisfied these two issues are addressed to their satisfaction.

In view of the amount of parking and increased vehicle movement the use will generate, the Council has also been asked to seek a financial contribution to improve the road junction into Langston Road which cannot cope with the existing traffic.

Reference [EPF/1165/23](#). The formal consultation period ended 1 March but you can still comment to the Council.



## **6 and 10 Lower Alderton Hall Lane**

This is an application for prior approval to construct one additional storey at roof level comprising for a self-contained flat, with associated works.

LRAPG has objected to the principle of the roof extension which will be extremely harmful to the terrace of buildings and break up a uniform roof line. The extensions will stick up like a sore thumb if either are implemented.

The plans are badly set out with, for example, no acoustic separation between the new flat and the dwelling below and the stacking of the accommodation is unacceptable as there will be a kitchen above a bedroom and a bathroom above a bedroom which will harm the amenity of the occupiers below.

Reference [EPF/0229/23](#) and [EPF/0228/23](#). The formal consultation periods ended 28 February but you can still comment to the Council.

## **The Gardeners Arms Pub, York Hill**

Last year restrictions were imposed by the District Council Licensing Committee on the Gardeners Arms to protect the amenity of nearby long suffering residents. This included restricting the numbers of people outside the pub, which had removed the parking at the front to accommodate considerably more patrons. The decision was due to be heard at appeal but unfortunately officers have done a u-turn and agreed to allow 60 people outside the pub. This was notwithstanding continuing problems associated with the behaviour of people using the pub's seating area.

Local residents are very aggrieved by this decision. LRAPG had requested that any resolution to deviate from the Licensing Committee's decision should have been reported back to that committee. We do not believe all the affected parties were given the opportunity to make their representations and, in the absence of the correspondence with members, the decision appears to have been made behind closed doors.

The Council has been requested to make public all correspondence with respect to the changes including who finally made the decision to overrule the licensing

committee. The Gardeners Arms co-existed peacefully with neighbours for decades until the increase in outdoor seating took place.

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

### **Planned Road Closures**

- St John's Road - the road will be closed until 12 March, from its junction with Church Hill to its junction with Grasmere Close, while mains installation works are undertaken by Thames Water. [More](#)
- Chequers Road - the road will be closed 7 to 11 March while new connection works are undertaken by Thames Water. [More](#)
- Woodbury Hill - the road will be closed from 14 to 16 March for ducting works undertaken by Virgin Media. [More](#)
- Smarts Lane - the road will be closed 27 March to 11 April between 8am and 5pm for speed humps, new signs and post to be installed [More](#)



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



### **Closed Footpath Between Torrington Drive and Chigwell Lane**

This is part of a signed route between The Broadway and the Retail Park and has been closed for over two years. The County Council (who are responsible for the path as a Highway) closed the path because it runs next to the unsafe retaining wall of Cassis Court. The District Council are in contact with the Freeholder of Cassis Court as the complexity of the remedial work combined with the cost burden on the numerous leaseholders in the building entitles the affected parties to consultation under Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act.

Image: [Google Streetview](#)

### **Railway Guardian Safety App**

The free Railway Guardian app is an all-in-one safety app from the British Transport Police. The app allows you to report crimes or concerns on the rail network, share your journeys with trusted contacts, and get access to news, guides, or support. [More](#) and download for [Android](#) and [iOS](#)

## ***Police, Fire and Crime***

## Social Media Fraud

Police are still seeing reports of fraudsters continuing to target people through social media platforms such as WhatsApp, messaging from an unfamiliar number, who pretending to be a family member who has a new phone number because their phone has been damaged or lost. The victim is then asked for money.

If you get an unexpected message like this, take steps to protect yourself by calling your family member on the old phone number you have for them, and not the new number, in case this is a fraudster.

You can forward the scam message onto [Action Fraud](#) by sending it to 7726. Here is [more advice](#) on protecting yourself against fraud.

## Theft of Company Motor Vehicles

Many businesses use vehicles on a daily basis, but how many have a security procedure in place and are all employees aware of the rules? The police suggest these steps can help prevent incidents and keep vehicles secure:

- Always lock it
- Close windows to prevent 'fishing'
- Do not leave tools in a van
- Keep company vehicle keys locked away securely
- Secure number plates with tamper-resistant screws
- Fit locking, anti-tamper wheel nuts to secure alloy wheels
- Secure anything that's on the outside of the vehicle.

[More](#) on preventing car and vehicle theft.

## More from the Police

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

# Council News

## Disruption to Waste and Recycling Collections

Collections seem to have returned to normal, with only a small number of roads currently affected.

If your collection is missed, [check here](#). If your road is on the list leave your bins out to be collected. If your road is not on the list [report it here](#).



If you are reliant on an assisted collection and this is not happening, [report it to the District Council online](#) or call 01992 564000. (Assisted collections can be arranged for elderly or disabled residents who cannot move their bins to the boundary, providing there is no-one else in their household or they have a willing neighbour who is able to move the bins for them. You can [apply here](#) or call 01992 564000.)



## Advance Booking Required to Use Recycling Centres

From 13 March, you will need to book in advance to use a County Council recycling centre. There is no charge to book, but a booking will be needed for each visit and the latest you can book is the day before. This covers all County Council recycling centres including the one at Luxborough Lane in Chigwell. [More](#) and [book here](#). [Watch this video](#) on how the booking process works.

Once your booking is complete you will receive a confirmation email. You will need to take the booking confirmation and a proof of address when you visit.

Blue Badge holders, pedestrians and cyclists are not required to make a booking. Please remember to take proof of your Blue Badge with you.

## Recycling Centres Opening Hours

With daylight hours becoming longer, all recycling centres across Essex have changed their operating times. Sites will stay open until 5pm on the days they are open. This will continue until mid-October. [Check the opening times here](#).

## Throwing out a Fire Extinguisher?

Fire extinguishers from your own household can be taken to any Essex County Council recycling centre. Before visiting a recycling centre, ensure the fire extinguisher is empty by squeezing the lever to ensure no pressure remains inside. Remove the extinguisher head to make it apparent that it is not charged, and ask a member of site staff where to place the fire extinguisher. [More](#), including how to dispose of household hazardous waste.

## Waste Electrical Items

A resident has reported that after bagging up small electrical items and placing them on a bin for collection, Biffa put the bag into the black bin which was then emptied into the collection vehicle as normal waste. This is contrary to the [District Council guidelines](#) which says '...small waste electrical items...are to be put...in separate plastic carrier bags and leave them on top of your bin to be collected'.

The District Council has confirmed that such waste is not supposed to be treated by Biffa this way and is investigating. If residents observe this happening, report it to the District Council [online](#) or call 01992 564000.

## Town Mayor's Civic Celebration

This year's Civic Celebration, for the first time was held at the Loughton Synagogue on 26 February, and was organised by the current Town Mayor, LRA Cllr Barbara Cohen.



Barbara reflected on her year in office, and highlighted the many engagements she attended, including the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the beacon lighting on the Hillyfields Open Space and the death of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, after which



she read the proclamation at Loughton Library proclaiming the new King, Charles III.  
[More with photos](#)

### **Loughton Wombles 1st Anniversary**

The Loughton Wombles productively carried out their eighth group litter pick marking their 1st anniversary. The community venture has proved to be a great success with a healthy number of regular volunteers. This time around, two teams of Wombles were out litter picking. Group 1 met on the corner of Rectory Lane and Pyrles Lane and collected 14 bags of litter from Hillyfields Open Space. [More](#)



### **Town Council - Annual Town Meeting**

The meeting will be held at 8pm at The Murray Hall, Borders Lane IG10 3SB on Wednesday 15 March.

### **Council Tax from April 2023**

#### ***County Council***

The Council has agreed a 3.5% increase (an extra £49.05 per year for a band D property), which includes a 1.5% general council tax precept and a 2% adult social care precept as set out by the Government. Under Treasury rules the maximum the increase could be without a referendum is 5%.

#### ***Essex Police***

#### ***Essex County Fire and Rescue Service***

Increases has been agreed that will result in band D Council Taxpayers paying an extra £14.94 per year for policing and an extra £4.95 a year for fire and rescue services. There's no limit which requires a referendum.

#### ***District Council***

The Council has agreed a 2.98% increase (an extra £4.69 per year for a band D property). This is the maximum that could imposed without a referendum.

#### ***Town Council***

The Council has agreed a 9.56% increase (an extra £6.23 for a band D property). The Town Council does not receive funding from central Government, so the tax increase has to reflect inflation that the Council has to bear. There's no limit which requires a referendum.

Where charges are levied for Council services, most will increase to reflect inflation.

#### ***Support for those on Low Incomes***

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) is provided to people on low incomes to help with their Council Tax bill. [More](#)

### **Air Quality Action Plan Consultation**

As reporting in [our previous news email](#), the District Council drafted an Air Quality Action Plan to reduce pollution in Epping Forest District for 2023-2028. Part of that plan included a detailed review of the whole area by experts on air quality.

Residents have commented while the review found air quality in the district was fairly

good, that didn't give the whole picture. As well as a high pollution area at Bell Common, the District Council is now monitoring two further areas where, although pollution is not as bad as at Bell Common, it is fairly high and there is housing within the area. One of these is along Rectory Lane where there is very heavy traffic. Air quality monitoring has also been requested in busy town centres, where fumes from slow moving, idling vehicles accumulate. There are several types of air pollutants, one of the most serious being fine particulate matter (PMs), the smallest type of which enter lungs and bloodstream of humans and animals. For the first time, the District Council is monitoring this in a number of areas, which is to be welcomed.

### **The King's Coronation Street Parties**

The Coronation will take place on Saturday 6 May, with Coronation Big Lunches on Sunday 7 May. Organising a street party just for residents and neighbours typically does not need a licence and you will not need to apply for Temporary Event Notice (TEN) unless amplified music is one of the main purposes of the event or alcohol is to be sold.

Residents wishing to close their road may still need to apply for a temporary road closure, and applications should be submitted at least 6 weeks ahead of the event using [this road closure for special events form](#) and [emailed to the District Council](#). The Council has decided to waive the fees normally associated with such applications and to simplify the application process. [More](#)

More about organising a street party from the [District Council](#) and the [Government](#).



### **Find Out What's On For You Locally**

The District Council has published in one publication their forthcoming activities, programmes, events and community initiatives for all ages in the [What's on in Epping Forest](#) booklet.

### **Council Elections and Voter ID**

From May 2023, voters will need to show photo identification at polling stations when voting. Acceptable identification includes passports, driving licenses and bus passes. If a voter does not have any acceptable photo ID, a free Voter Authority Certificate can be applied for. [More](#)

There are no local elections in Loughton this year, and if you are registered to vote by post the ID requirements don't apply.



### **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 support for small businesses.

### **Community Warm Places**

Warm Places provide a free, safe, warm and comfortable space for those who need it throughout winter. Locations in Loughton include Debden and Loughton Libraries,

New City College, Oakwood Hill Community Centre, St Mary's Church and St Michael's Church. [Check the details and opening times here.](#)



## Local News

### Learn to Love Composting

Composting is the most environmentally friendly way to dispose of your food and garden waste at home. Love Essex has a free online composting course where you can discover:

- the benefits and top techniques of composting
- the types of bins you could use
- the many creatures that help make your compost
- how to best use your compost


If you complete the course and fill out the feedback form by the end of March, you can enter a draw to win either a free compost bin or £30 of garden gift vouchers. [More](#) (scroll down to 'Free online composting training').

### Can I Prune a Protected Tree?

There are many trees in Loughton that are protected with a Tree Protection Order (TPO). These trees are protected from being felled, pruned or being damaged. [More](#)

Before undertaking any pruning or removal of trees on your property you should check whether the trees are protected, as prior permission may be required for the work.

Here is a [map where you can see](#) what trees have Tree Preservation Orders.

Click on the layers icon () at the top right. In the box that appears, scroll down and tick the box next to "Tree Preservation Order (TPO)". Both block (area) TPOs (hatched pink) and individual TPOs (pink blobs) will appear. You can also choose the Conservation Area (CA) layer, as formal notice (a "TPX") has to be given before a tree in a CA is felled, which is not easy to obtain.

## Health and Wellbeing

### Covid and Flu Vaccines

[Read more](#) on getting a Covid and Flu vaccine. If you have never had a Covid vaccination, it's not too late to catch up. You can use [a walk in centre](#) or [book an appointment](#), or call 119 for more help.

## Epping Forest

## Planning for the Next 10 Years for Habitat Conservation

The next ten year programme for habitat conservation in the Forest is currently being planned. Much of the work proposed involves restoring wood pasture as well as heathland and grassland areas and will include selected tree thinning, veteran tree pruning, creating new pollards, pond management, grazing and mechanical cutting. In some places turf may be stripped to remove competitive plants to allow the recolonisation of scarce species.

[More](#), including maps and how to comment by 10 March.

## Phoenix Trees

Noticeable at this time of the year when the Forest a spartan are 'phoenix trees'. These are trees that have fallen but sprout new branches from the fallen trunk. The root plate, now at ninety degrees to its original position, feeds the tree along the fallen trunk, so that over time, branches grow towards the light, becoming a row of new trees.



## The Epping Forest Big Walk

Previously known as The Centenary Walk, the Big Walk route is about 14 miles long and covers the whole length of the Forest starting from Manor Park in Newham and going all the way to Epping. It was first established in 1978 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the passing of the Epping Forest Act 1878, and was the idea of Harry Bitten and Fred Matthews of the [West Essex Ramblers](#) who produced [the first guide to the walk in 1978](#).

The next Big Walk will take place later this year, but you can walk the route yourself or in [smaller sections](#). [A map can be requested here](#).

## The Bluebells Are Out

It is critical that these tender plants are left alone to grow and not be subjected to trampling. So, please do take care where you walk, even when the woods are seemingly devoid of plant life, the bulbs and new growth can be compacted and damaged if trodden on.



## Forest Focus - February 2023

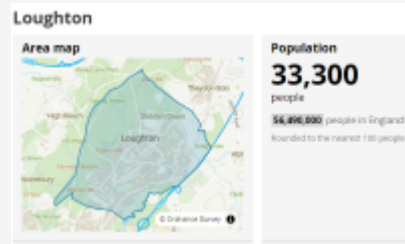
Some items here come from *Forest Focus*. [The latest edition](#) has lots more interesting articles. [You can subscribe here for free](#).

## And More

### Loughton Has 33,300 People

Data from the Census in 2021 for Loughton is now public. Some highlights for our town are:

- there is a population of 33,300 people in 13,500 households.
- 27.4% of households contain only one person; of the rest, most (66.5%) contain just one family.
- 61.2% of people are in employment; 3.6% are unemployed; 35.2% economically inactive.
- 30.8% of households own their property outright; 35.9 own with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership.



[You can look at more data here.](#) On the left, under Select topics, you can choose different data to view.

*Thank you for supporting LRA. Our next Loughton News email is due to be issued Friday 24 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*



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

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