



Loughton Town Council

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Town Clerk **Enid K Walsh**

Annual Report 2011

I would like to start my report on a personal basis by saying how much I have enjoyed my term of office as Town Mayor. I have had duties to perform and events to attend and to date these engagements number fifty seven with still a few weeks left before my year as mayor concludes in May.

What has struck me most is meeting so many people who give up their time to do voluntary work, often to help run local clubs and societies or to raise funds for charities. These people's efforts are rarely widely recognised but at our annual Civic Service and Citizenship Awards presentation we were able to honour two such people. Joyce Barclay who has spent many years working for the Brownies and Girl Guides and, in the under 25 age category, Taylor Baldwin for his work at the Loughton Youth Project.

Once again we are grateful to the Revd Tony Morling for allowing us to use the Methodist Church for the service and I would like to thank all those who helped to make the event a success – a good example of teamwork.

Another example of teamwork is our Debt of Honour exhibition which you may have seen on view in the entrance foyer of the Murray Hall. This results from ideas and research by several of our councillors and was formally opened in November 2010 to coincide with Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday. The exhibition will continue but the displays will change in June 2011 when other servicemen will be honoured.

It would be difficult to select a single highlight from all the events that I have attended but I think that it is worth mentioning two; both are 100th birthdays, although these were quite different in nature. On 3 July 2010, I attended the 100th birthday celebrations of the Loughton Club in Station Road and on the 29 December I was honoured to be invited to the 100th birthday party of Mrs Edith Shellibeer at The Mellows, also in Station Road. Well done to both!

One of my regular duties has been to compile a monthly report for the town council's website. My "blog" gives detailed reports of all the events that I have attended, but I have also used it for another purpose, namely to give publicity to some of the many organisations and societies that help enrich the social and cultural life of Loughton. My visits to these organisations have been done entirely on an unofficial basis and to date I have submitted eleven such reports.

There is plenty to do in Loughton with many events listed in our quarterly magazine *Think Loughton*, the 50th edition of which was published last autumn.

In these difficult economic times there are many reports of council cut-backs and job losses from various parts of the country. I'm very pleased to say that good financial management for many years means that this council's finances are in good order and that our precept will not be increased for the year 2011-12 while at the same time there will not be any dramatic reduction in council services or projects. This situation is very much to the credit of present and past management.

I would like to thank all councillors and officers for their efforts during the last year and in particular Joan Innis who has acted as my secretary and has assisted me in my duties as mayor.

I finish by paying a tribute to Cllr Roy Thomson who died on 25 November 2010. Roy served on the Recreation and the Planning and Licensing Committees. We all miss Roy who particularly enjoyed working on the Planning and Licensing Committee where knowledge gained during his working life was of great value. As there was no request from residents under statutory regulations for a by-election to replace Cllr Thomson, co-option procedures are now in place for applications to be considered at the council meeting on 27 April 2011.

Cllr David Wixley
Town Mayor

Resources & General Services

Cllr Stephen Pewsey

The Resources Committee has three main roles. It looks after the town council's finances and statutory obligations, it works with local organisations which support and build the community, and it takes a strategic overview of the council's staffing, policies and goals.

This committee co-ordinates the financial plans of the other committees and sets the precept, that part of the council tax which is raised in Loughton specifically for Loughton.

The good news headline is that for 2011/12 there will be no increase in the precept. The district council, Epping Forest, will be rewarded by government with an extra grant for keeping its council tax rise down this year – the town council gets no reward, so we have kept the precept down by running an efficient and cost-effective operation offering residents really good value for money. We still provide the same level of service, but Loughton is now a low-tax town – with a precept lower than Buckhurst Hill, Epping, North Weald, Ongar, Theydon Bois and Waltham Abbey.

Working with community groups is an important part of our work. Every year we make grants available to local organisations ranging from the Citizens Advice Bureau to Loughton Festival, and these grants directly benefit

Loughton residents. Our grants support projects working with children, young people, older residents, sports teams and arts groups, people with mental and physical health issues, and our allotment associations.

Our aim is to make our community stronger, and every year it's a pleasure to see new groups springing up and new initiatives to make our town a better place. This year it's been great to work with the new Loughton Film Society, which aims to bring the magic of the movies back to the town and with the Royal British Legion, to create the *Debt of Honour* display in Murray Hall, which honours our war heroes, those who did not return from the battlefields.

As elected councillors, we are lucky to work with a first-class staff team, all working hard on residents' behalf around the town, keeping playgrounds safe, litter picking, preparing our town magazine *Think Loughton*, looking after Murray and Kingsley Halls, and all the many other things we ask the town council staff to do.

I'd like to thank the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk, my Deputy Chair, Jill Angold-Stephens, and all my fellow councillors who sit on the Resources Committee, for the non-partisan way in which we all have worked over the past year to make Loughton a better place to live for you the residents.

Recreation

Cllr Suzanne Harper

There have been five well-attended meetings of the committee this year. Sadly we have lost Roy Thompson, a stalwart member for two and a half years and gained Tracey Thomas, a co-opted member for St Mary's ward. At our meetings we have been ably supported by the Town Clerk, Enid Walsh and the Services Manager Paul Hoy.

■ Roding Valley Recreation Ground

Outdoor gym

This is being installed in an area near the changing rooms at the bottom of Roding Road in May 2011 and provides about 6 items of equipment which will be suitable for everyone apart from the very young. There is no charge, residents can just go and use any item for as long or short a period as they wish.

Improvements to the changing rooms and surrounding area

I hope many residents will have had a chance to look at the display with our outline plans for improving this area. We have already held a consultation at St Michael's Church Hall and we will also be consulting with our regular user groups and young people. Our plans include a new café between the two changing room blocks with planting to discourage graffiti and alterations to the car parking area.

Park warden

We have employed an additional park warden during the past year and I am pleased to confirm that this post is to be made permanent giving a greater visual presence on the recreation ground and help keep the area in tip top shape. Events by other bodies on the fields continue to increase and include park ranger events, a family fun day, fitness classes and a ladies running group.

Tennis courts & multi sports court

The tender process is in hand and hopefully we might see progress on the ground in the not too distant future.

■ Murray Hall

Entrance foyer display

I hope many of you will have seen the photographic display in the foyer; this was opened by Lord Petre in November with members of the Royal Anglian Regiments and Royal British Legion present and a relative of one of the people featured. The display is to commemorate local war heroes and will be changed every six months.

CIF projector screen

The council has been successful in its bid for £1,200 towards the cost of a projector screen for this hall, providing improved facilities for hirers.

■ Playgrounds

We are continuing the refurbishments of our eight playgrounds with work at Hillyfields being completed in March 2011 and changes to the Westall Road area including the removal of the tunnel and mound, and the installation of a one-bay swing with two bucket seats scheduled to take place during early May 2011. We are in the initial stages of looking at the small playground at Monksgrove to ascertain what improvements can be made.

At the first of the twice yearly RoSPA safety inspections of our play areas, the council was praised for its high standards of maintenance at all our play areas.

■ Skateboard Park

The council had hoped that the old allotment site would be ideal for our skateboard area, but it seems we are to be defeated yet again, but this time by slow-worms. We are looking at two alternative areas in Roding ward which will be brought to our next committee meeting. The Skate Loughton Action group has drawn up plans which we will be viewing shortly and will be suitable for any area.

■ Millennium Remembrance Grove

We are still replanting trees in this area in line with our original design, but the trees will be larger specimens which establish more easily. At the moment we are waiting for the district council's tree officer to prepare his recommendations as to future species.

■ Willingale Road Open Space/Nature Reserve

Clearance work, mainly undertaken by volunteers through the Epping Forest Countrycare scheme, continues to improve this overgrown area.

■ Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge

The committee has agreed to put forward three areas; Hillyfields Open Space, Roding Valley Recreation Ground and Willingale Road Playing Field. This will give the areas greater protection to remain as they are.

■ Loughton Film Society

The committee has been instrumental in setting up this society which appears to be flourishing in its attempts to bring films back to Loughton after a gap of over forty five years.

■ Essex on Tour

Funding will continue for another series of professional arts performances and we plan to hold the next event in Spring 2012, so watch our notice boards etc for details nearer the time.

■ Youth Forum

The initial decision to set up a youth forum has been made and discussions are ongoing.

It just remains for me to thank the members of the committee and our supportive staff for all their hard work in the past year.



Environment & Heritage

Cllr Caroline Pond

I am pleased to present my third report for this committee. We have carried out its usual work and responsibilities, to encourage the environmental well being of the town, and interest in its heritage.

■ Salt & grit bins

Essex County Council changed its policy this year, and only guaranteed to fill the bins up once a season. Instead we were supplied with a tonne of salt and grit, and our own staff have had to go round putting some in each. Following the bad weather in the 09/10 winter we had decided to install six instead of our usual three new bins, but this scheme was also cancelled by the county. The committee has written to the county with its grave concerns about the new policy, in which we have been supported by our county and district councillors. We understand that it will be looked at again before next winter. I want to thank the staff for their extra work, and also a volunteer.



■ Green spaces

The process of collecting evidence to register six open spaces as commons and village greens to protect them from development is still continuing. We have added our own Hillyfields open space to the list.

■ Summer and winter flower baskets

These were installed in the Broadway when the enhancement was completed. We have added some more on lampposts in the High Road. The summer replanting will be carried out soon.

■ Heritage plaques



Four plaques to notable past residents were installed – D W Gillingham, author, Ethel Haslam, suffragette, Rupert Brabner MP who died serving in the Second World War, and his sister Dr Jean Brabner who died in an air raid while working as a doctor, and Rowland Hill and Francis Stevens who are thought to have invented the postage stamp. Two more have been approved by the property owners - one for Octavius Dixie Deacon, artist, and one for

Sir Frank Baines, a Government architect. Thank you to those property owners for letting us install these - thirty odd now, for which we have been commended by English Heritage.

■ Allotments

The second Best Allotment competition was instituted. The winner was Neil Jackson, of the Debden Horticultural and Allotment Society, which manages the Willingale Road allotments. There were two Highly Commended gardeners, Lesley Church from the Roding Road site, and Rosie Partridge from the Loughton Potato Ground. We are grateful to Ken Crowther of BBC Radio Essex for judging the competition. The Willingale Road and Roding Road sites are owned by the town council, but managed by allotment associations.

■ Best dressed window competition

This Christmas competition was again well supported, and winners were for the Independents Geraldine's Hair Fashions, Zee and Co for the Multiples/Chain stores, and in the charity shop section St Clare Hospice. This year the procedure was changed so that traders did not have to actually enter, and the judges looked at all the shops in the town.

■ Litter pick day

Councillors and residents, including some youngsters helped clear several areas in the town that are normally neglected. Details of the next day are coming soon.

■ Town signs

We have received some funding from the Essex County Council Community Initiatives Fund for town signs - one to be installed near the High Road, and one near the Broadway.

■ Bus shelters

Funding has also been received for two extra bus shelters – Jessel Drive/ Colebrook Lane and outside the Spinney in Borders Lane.

■ Alleyway name plates

Six alleyways received new name plates this year – four sites were to replace vandalised signs and two new ones have been installed; Wauchope Path, which commemorates the family who lived nearby in Goldings House, and Jackson Alley, named after Edward Jackson, a well known local character.

■ Loughton Cemetery

Forty four new plots have been made available for ashes interments. The rolling programme of works to repair paths has continued.

Much of our work is concerned with keeping an eye on matters that affect Loughton, which others are responsible for. This year we have often commented on changes to bus services, in particular the direct service to Epping. Although the county council has ended Route H1 (Saturdays only) there is now a new commercial route (X5) six days a week. Like our planning committee colleagues we have also commented on planning policy documents.

Thank you to those councillors who attend meetings of the Local Highways Panel, the Town Centre partnerships, and with the Waste and Road cleaning team from the district council.

Finally I thank my fellow councillors on the committee, and the officers for their hard work during the year.

Planning & Licensing

Cllr Chris Pond

The Planning and Licensing Committee has had another busy year, with over three hundred and sixty planning applications and ten licensing issues dealt with so far, with three meetings to go, a total of twenty four in the year. In one week in early November, thirty six applications were to be dealt with, so the committee negotiated a derogation from the usual time limit, and reconvened the following Monday to deal with the twelve for which we had no time.

There have been several contentious planning applications, including those for a care home near Loughton Hall on the site of the Debden Sports Hall, a retail park at Langston Road, the demolition of a locally listed building in the High Road, all of which the Committee opposed, and three contentious licensing issues, a burger van near the college, a sex shop in Borders Lane, and the night club in the former Royal Standard Public House. All these the committee opposed with appropriate reasons, and at the last, I was deputed to make oral representations to the District Licensing Committee.

This year, we have had many more instances of those for or against

an application coming to a committee meeting in exercise of their right to speak for three minutes. We welcome this, though of course it does mean meetings can get rather long. We do not very often exceed the 105-minute standing order relating to duration of meetings, and I am glad to report member contributions are mostly short and to the point.

An innovation this year has been the use of Google Street View in the committee meetings when considering applications that affect the frontage of any property. We adopted this, much clearer than any plans for giving context and streetscene information, the week after it became available for Loughton.

We greatly miss the late Roy Thomson, whose knowledge of building work and plans was invaluable. But we welcomed his successor on the committee, Tracy Thomas.

In conclusion, I would like to thank our indefatigable planning clerk, Vivienne Messenger, the other officers, and of course, councillor colleagues who are so assiduous in their attention to detail in this hard working committee.

The town council's responsibilities include:

- Loughton Cemetery
- Lady Whitaker's Mead (site for new cemetery)
- Roding Valley Recreation Ground
- Willingale Road Playing Field
- Various open spaces including Hillyfields
- Murray Hall (Loughton Community Centre)
- Kingsley Hall
- 1 Buckingham Court (council offices)
- War memorials
- Allotments
- Eight children's play areas
- Blue heritage plaques
- Alleyway name plates
- Historic drinking fountain
- Think Loughton newsletter
- Christmas lights on Kings Green
- Christmas competitions
- Financial assistance to local groups
- Statutory planning consultee
- Emergency planning
- Flower displays
- Bus shelter
- Noticeboards
- Salt & grit bins

Attendance at meetings during the municipal year 2010/11

Committee/ Councillor	Council 6 meetings	Planning & Licensing 23 meetings	Recreation 5 meetings	Environment & Heritage 5 meetings	Resources & General Services 6 meetings
J W Angold-Stephens	4	5	4*	2	5*
K E Angold-Stephens	5			1	2
R E Brookes	6	1	4		5*
M R M Chalk	4	20*	4*		
A P Copland	3	1	2	3	2**
C Davies		17*		4*	
T Frankland	6	19*	2	3*	2**
B Glassman	6	16*			5*
S M Harper	5		3*		2
P J C House	3	1		3*	3*
L J Howe	5	1		3*	
R T Law	5		5*	2*	
S W Murray	5		5*	1	
K Nicholson	5	1	5*		
T G Owen	6			3*	
S Pewsey	5		4	3*	6*
C C Pond	6	22*		4*	
C P Pond	6	1		4*	5*
P Richardson	5				6*
T Thomas***	4	9**	3**		
R Thomson****	2	7**	2**		
D J Wixley	6	1	5*	4	6*

*committee member, **committee member for part of 11/12, ***co-opted 30/06/11, ****deceased 25/11/10

Members' Allowances 2010/11

The Parish Basic Allowance is £108 p.a. for 2010/11			
Councillor	Parish Basic Allowance	Travel & Subsistence	Total
	£	£	£
J W Angold-Stephens	108.00		108.00
K E Angold-Stephens	108.00	26.40	134.40
R E Brookes	108.00		108.00
M R M Chalk	108.00		108.00
A P Copland	108.00		108.00
C Davies	108.00		108.00
T Frankland	108.00		108.00
S M Harper	108.00		108.00
L J Howe	108.00		108.00
R T Law	108.00		108.00
T G Owen	108.00		108.00
C C Pond	108.00		108.00
C P Pond	108.00		108.00
P Richardson	108.00		108.00
D J Wixley	108.00		108.00

The following councillors renounced their claims for Parish Basic Allowance for the financial year 2010/11: B Glassman, P J C House, S W Murray, K Nicholson and S Pewsey

Cllr Thomas, as a co-opted councillor, was not entitled to receive the allowance.

Councillors list, by ward, during the year 2010/11

Alderton Ward

Cllr Rosemary E Brookes
Cllr Tony Frankland
Cllr Rodney T Law

Broadway Ward

Cllr Katie Nicholson
Cllr Thomas G Owen
Cllr Pat Richardson

Fairmead Ward

Cllr Alexander P Copland
Cllr Carol Davies
Cllr Ben Glassman

Forest Ward

Cllr Jill W Angold-Stephens
Cllr Suzanne M Harper
Cllr Peter J C House

Roding Ward

Cllr Kenneth E Angold-Stephens
Cllr Margaret R M A Chalk
Cllr Stephen Murray
Cllr David J Wixley

St. John's Ward

Cllr Stephen Pewsey
Cllr Caroline P Pond
Cllr Dr Christopher C Pond

St Mary's Ward

Cllr Lucette J Howe
Cllr Tracey Thomas***
Cllr Roy Thomson****

Some financial facts and figures

	2010/11		2011/12	
	Gross £	Net £	Gross £	Net £
Council Precept	635,800		641,200	
Council tax for a Band D property p.a.	49.18		49.18	
Budget figures				
Leisure	564,100	493,885	522,650	443,432
Environment, Heritage & Planning	130,535	130,535	131,650	131,650
Community services	127,125	111,125	152,073	137,073
Other services	155,700	137,700	133,102	117,802
Less use of reserves		(237,445)		(188,757)

The accounts for 2010/11 will be presented to the council for approval on 11 May 2011 and available for public inspection from 20 May - 1 June 2011. A summary will be published in the autumn edition of Think Loughton.

Contact details for the councillors appear on page 4 of Think Loughton or can be viewed at www.loughton-tc.gov.uk