



### **Loughton Town Council**

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Town Clerk **Enid K Walsh**

# Annual Report 2010

**T**he 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Town Meeting took place in the Murray Hall on 24 March 2010 and the following is a copy of my report presented at that meeting by my Deputy, Cllr David Wixley.

In my year as Town Mayor, I have taken a keen interest in the fortunes of Loughton's two main shopping centres, the High Road and Broadway. As a District Councillor, I have worked with others in persuading Epping Forest District Council to reduce rents for Broadway traders as compensation for loss of business resulting from the disruptive work on the Broadway enhancement scheme.

Both shopping centres benefit from having Town Centre Partnerships which exist to promote the interests of traders. The public face of these voluntary organisations is seen each year with the provision of Christmas lights and associated "switching on" ceremonies. In addition they play a big part in organising the Howzat Loughton Festival and the Debden Day events in the Broadway. As part of the 2009 Debden Day, I was pleased to make a special presentation to local resident, Sapper Jake Luton in recognition of his bravery while engaged in mine clearance work in Afghanistan.

I would like to thank both Peter Sheen and Dave Stannard for all their hard work in chairing the Loughton and Broadway Town Centre Partnerships respectively. Also congratulations to Dave whose service to the community had been recognised by Epping Forest District Council with an award under its Citizen of the Year scheme.

Mention of the Afghanistan conflict led me to think of Royal Marine Georgie Sparks who was tragically killed in action in 2008. Although not resident in Loughton, Georgie was a former pupil at Debden Park High School and the town council was pleased to contribute to the funding of a memorial bench which is now situated in the school's grounds.

November saw our 10<sup>th</sup> annual "Light up a Life" ceremony, which as usual took place on Kings Green following a torch light procession from the Methodist Church. Our continued collaboration with St Clare Hospice at this event enables them to raise valuable funding.

It is always nice to recognise voluntary community work and in December informal presentations were made to two residents who, independently of each other, have taken it upon themselves to clear litter on a regular basis and over a number of years from the Roding Valley Recreation Ground.

A more formal event was our second Annual Civic Service and Citizenship Awards presentation. Youth was very much a theme here with awards going to Girl Guide Katy Short for bravery in coping with health problems and Keith Campen who has spent 45 years providing football for young people since he founded Loughton Football Club

Our thanks must go to the Staples Road School choir and Epping Forest Youth Councillor Duncan Haslam and Cllr Katie Nicholson for the parts they played in making the event a success. A collection during the service raised £485 for Haven House Children's Hospice. We are grateful to the Revd Tony Morling for his hospitality in providing the Methodist Church as a venue.

During the year meetings took place between the town council and Epping Forest College and so it was appropriate that as guest speaker at the Annual Town Meeting we invited Quentin Buller to talk about the college's progress and future plans. The council was heartened by the encouraging OFSTED monitoring inspection in November 2009 but disappointed that any proceeds from the sale of the Sports Hall would not, because of the college's financial position, be channelled back to provide funding a new sports hall to be built, at least not in the immediate future. The council was also grateful for the help the college provided for the Town Mayor's charity Fun Run.

An innovation this year had been the formation of a Town Mayor's charity, which took the form of a Fun Run on the Roding Valley Recreation Ground on 18 April. We welcomed the support in organising this from a number of organisations including the Loughton Athletic Club and 2324 (Chigwell) Squadron, Air Training Corps. This year's chosen charity was "The Dream Factory", which offers valuable support to seriously ill children.

Looking ahead to 2012 sees the coming of the London Olympics and national celebrations to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne. A small committee of town councillors has been formed to explore ideas for how these events can be celebrated in Loughton.

Finally I would like to thank the Town Clerk and her staff for all their hard work during the last year and in particular for obtaining grant funding totalling £80,100.

**Cllr Ken Angold-Stephens**

Town Mayor

# Planning & Licensing

## Cllr Chris Pond

This committee meets every fortnight to consider the planning applications and decisions relating to Loughton that are sent to the town council by the local planning authority. At the time of writing there had been 21 meetings and 302 applications so far in this municipal year and the committee has endeavoured to conduct business briskly and efficiently.

Recognising that the committee members had the greatest demands on their time of any town councillor, I would like to thank them, and our very diligent and able Planning Clerk, Vivienne Messenger, for the effort they put into the process. Each plan is produced and examined in detail, written submissions read, and persons interested (for or against) listened to if they wished to come to the meetings. This can be in marked contrast to what happens at district council planning meetings, when written representations are summarised, and no paper plans examined, measured and calibrated by the members.

Town council members are involved early on in the process, and do not have the benefit of a planning officer's report on the application. But in contrast, they bring local knowledge to the process, and are not affected by an officer recommendation to judge the application in a particular way. So this is really local. I welcome the recent innovation to provide internet access to Google Street View at meetings of the committee which enables members to consider the impact of an application on the street scene.

The committee has pursued three initiatives outside the run of the application cycle this year. A slot has been introduced at meetings to allow members to report to and through the committee possible infractions of planning controls. With the Environment and Heritage Committee, new Conservation Areas have been proposed for Loughton, to afford protection to parts of the town the character of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. The unenthusiastic response of the district council has been very disappointing, especially given that the initiative is in direct response to a campaign headed by the Chief Executive of English Heritage, Simon Thurley.

The committee has decided to institute a Loughton Design Award each year. There are many examples of unsympathetic new build and extension, and cases where the character of a building had been destroyed through unsympathetic adaptation. But there are also examples of good design in new buildings and alterations. The new awards will be in two categories, new build and refurbishment, and will reward the very able work of some architects, owners, and designers. It is hoped this will spur on our local architects to greater efforts.

An important task in 2010-11 may be the development of the EFDC Local Development Framework. The committee hopes to be partners for good in this exercise, particularly in relation to sustainability, which is always a major concern of its members.

# Recreation

## Cllr David Wixley

Before reporting on the activities of this committee this past year I would like to begin by thanking my fellow members of the committee for the commitment they have shown during this council year. In addition to the usual round of meetings, we have ventured out of Loughton on fact-finding missions to look at skateboard parks and outdoor gyms. We have also attended a number of public consultation events. I am aware that extra work for councillors means extra work for council officers and I am grateful to them for their efforts.

The main items of interest dealt with by this committee during the year were as follows:

### ■ Roding Valley Recreation Ground

Following a public consultation held in January 2010 it is intended to install an outdoor gym on the area known as "The Mound". A grant of £12,100 has already been obtained for this and further grant applications will be made.

In the next few months work should begin on the tennis courts to provide three refurbished courts and a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA). In 2004, the council agreed that two courts could be set aside for the Loughton Athletic Club track to convert into an all-weather running track. This arrangement was subject to legal negotiations between the club and Epping Forest District Council. Astonishingly, legal negotiations are still ongoing six years later. However, it is not intended that this will deflect the town council from commencing work on the other facilities.

There are long term plans to improve the appearance of the football changing rooms and car park area at the end of Roding Road. A budget of £2,200 has been set to enable architectural plans to be drawn up.

### ■ Willingale Road Open Space (adjacent to the allotments)

Work continued on this site for its dual use as a nature reserve and possible skateboard park. Skateboard enthusiasts facilitated by the Loughton Youth Project have visited the site with a view to drawing up plans for use at a future public consultation event. Work on the nature reserve was undertaken by local residents and councillors under the auspices of Epping Forest Countrycare on two days during the autumn and winter.

### ■ Playgrounds

The council has a rolling programme for the refurbishment of its eight playgrounds and this year saw the refurbishment of the Westall Road playground funded by a £50,000 government grant. However, the grant was conditional on the playground conforming to principles set out in Play England's publication "Design for Play". This meant that the old tarmac surface had to be removed and replaced with grass. Regrettably this appears to have led to drainage problems but plans are in hand to rectify this. Despite extensive public consultation on the choice of equipment for the new playground some complaints were aired after completion; more recently there had been some

very positive comments. The official opening of the playground took place on 14 April 2010.

A grant of £5,000 has also been obtained to replace equipment at the Colebrook Lane playground.

Unfortunately some playgrounds have suffered from vandalism and theft and I would encourage residents to be vigilant and report any incidents.

### ■ Murray Hall

Community use of the hall continues to expand with tea dances and dance lessons added to the variety of activities. The latest venture is the formation of the Loughton Film Society with Cllr Pewsey and the Deputy Town Clerk playing a prominent role in this. The first film show is planned for 9 July 2010. Tickets for the Claire Harper Jazz Trio event sold out six weeks in advance, an encouraging sign that the council is in tune with the entertainment preferences of local people.

The committee's remit also covers policing issues and youth services. Police Inspector Tom Simons has attended two of our meetings to provide informative reports and answer questions. I congratulate Inspector Simons on his promotion from Acting Inspector and thank him for obtaining funding in order to provide events for young people during half-term in October 2009.

Together with Cllr Harper and the Town Clerk, I have recently visited the Loughton Centre for Young People (adjacent to the Murray Hall), the Loughton Youth Project (at Loughton Library) and ignite (the youth club attached to St Mary's Church). In combination these three centres offer much to cater for the varied needs and interests of Loughton's youngsters.



# Environment & Heritage

## Cllr Caroline Pond

This is my second report for this committee and during the last year it has carried out its usual work and responsibilities in encouraging the environmental well being and heritage of the town.

### ■ Green spaces

The process of collecting evidence to register six open spaces as commons and village greens, to protect them from development, has continued. Local residents have been appointed in each of the areas to help in this process.

### ■ War memorial

We are very pleased with the renovations carried out to the war memorial during which the stone was carefully cleaned, and the paving reset. Graham Tite, the former Listed Buildings Officer at Essex County Council, gave us very helpful advice. New names of those who gave their lives will be added in due course.

### ■ Summer and winter flower baskets

These will also be installed in the Broadway now that the enhancement has finished.

### ■ Salt and grit bins

The town council's rolling programme of installing salt and grit bins certainly came into its own this past winter. There is a long waiting list, and the committee will consider new sites in the summer.

### ■ Heritage plaques

Two plaques to notable past residents were installed. Four more have been approved by the property owners.



### ■ Heritage Open Days

The town council opened the Cemetery Chapel to support this annual event on 13 September and assisted the bus rally on the same day.

### ■ Allotments

A Best Allotment competition was instituted. The 2009 winner was Rosie Partridge of the Potato Ground. We hope all three sites in the town will take part this summer when there will be a well-known local gardener as a judge.

### ■ Best Dressed Window Competition

This Christmas competition was again well supported and winners were for the Independents – Ches Boutique, for the Multiples – Mackays and in the charity shop section – St Clare Hospice.

### ■ Walking and cycling routes

Discrete signage for a cycling route along existing quiet roads, and walking routes from the stations to the Roding Valley fields received funding from the County Council, and will be installed soon.

### ■ Litter Awareness Day

Councillors and residents helped clear neglected areas in the town.

### ■ Conservation areas

The committee supported a review of the three existing areas – York Hill, Baldwin's Hill and Staples Road – that the Hills Amenity Society and the district council were carrying out and, jointly with Planning and Licensing, asked the district council to give consideration to having more Conservation Areas in Loughton.

The Staples Road Conservation Area now had a small Interpretation Board, funded by the County, and installed by the town council in the school grounds.

Much of the committee's work is concerned with keeping an eye on matters affecting Loughton, that others are responsible for, but which the town council can only try to influence. Councillors attend meetings of the Local Highways Panel, and with the waste and road cleaning team from EFDC. I take this opportunity to thank fellow councillors and the officers for their hard work and support during the year.

# Resources & General Services

## Cllr Stephen Pewsey

The main work of this committee is to look after the town council's finances and take a strategic overview of the council's goals. Every year the committee reviews the spending plans of all the other committees and draws up the final recommendations for expenditure, which translates into the precept or rate for the next financial year.

Since becoming Chairman in 2008, my priorities have been:

■ value for money – ensuring that the council is as efficient and effective as possible within its budget

■ making the best use of the town council's assets for the benefit of townspeople, ranging from our playing fields and playgrounds to our Christmas lights

■ supporting our first class team of staff, who look after the interests of Loughton day in day out

■ promoting Loughton as a place to be proud of, a great place to live in, work in, and enjoy yourself in

All councillors have been very aware of the hardships facing many families in the town caused by the global financial crisis and I have been particularly keen not to add to the financial burdens of those families, which has meant being very careful about every pound we spend and keeping any increase in the annual precept to an absolute minimum. This is why the increase for 2010/11 is only 0.9% - well below inflation – for a Band D property this represents an increase of only 42p a year, or less than a penny a week.

With careful management of our resources and drawing on our "rainy day" reserves, we have been able to keep our town precept much lower than comparable towns and some of the towns around us, while still delivering



a wide range of improvements around the town; better playgrounds, honouring the memory of our war heroes by refurbishing the war memorial, and giving grants to local groups who can deliver real change in people's lives, particularly young people who are the future of the town.

I thank my fellow committee members and, in particular, the deputy chairman, Jill Angold-Stephens and the hard working staff.

## 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 2009/10

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	6		5*		6*
K E Angold-Stephens	6		3	1	6*
R Barrett	5		3*		
R E Brookes	5	1	4		5*
M R M Chalk	6	21*	5*	5	
A P Copland	5		1	1	5*
C Davies	5	15*	1	5*	
T Frankland	5	19*	1	4*	1
B Glassman	6	21*	1		5*
S M Harper	5	1	5*		
P J C House	5	2		2*	2*
L J Howe	6			5*	
R T Law	5		4*	1*	
G D Martin					
S W Murray	5		5*		
K Nicholson**	2		2*		
T G Owen	6			4*	
S Pewsey	6		3	5*	6*
C C Pond	5	23*		5*	
C P Pond	4	2		5*	1
P Richardson	5		1*		6*
R Thomson	6	22*	4*		1
D J Wixley	5	1	5*	4	6*

\* member of that committee \*\*elected 10/12/09

### Members' Allowances 2009/10

The Parish Basic Allowance is £108 p.a. for 2009/10			
Councillor	Parish Basic Allowance	Travel & Subsistence	Total
	£	£	£
J W Angold-Stephens	108.00		108.00
K E Angold-Stephens	108.00	59.20	167.20
R Barrett*	108.00		108.00
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
B Glassman	24.03		24.03
S M Harper	108.00		108.00
L J Howe	108.00		108.00
R T Law	108.00		108.00
G D Martin**	52.24		52.24
T G Owen	108.00		108.00
C C Pond	108.00	29.00	137.00
C P Pond	108.00	8.00	116.00
P Richardson	108.00		108.00
R Thomson	0.00	12.00	12.00
D J Wixley	108.00	78.40	186.40

\* resigned 21/04/10 \*\* resigned 24/09/09

The following councillors renounced their claims for Parish Basic Allowance for the financial year 2009/10: P J C House, S Murray, K Nicholson, S Pewsey and R Thomson

### Councillors list, by ward, during the year 2009/10

#### 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 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 R Barrett  
Cllr Lucette J Howe  
Cllr Roy Thomson

### Some financial facts and figures

	2009/10		2010/11	
	Gross £	Net £	Gross £	Net £
<b>Council Precept</b>	<b>627,700</b>		<b>635,800</b>	
<b>Council tax for a Band D property p.a.</b>	<b>48.72</b>		<b>49.18</b>	
<b>Budget figures</b>				
Leisure	515,855	446,890	564,100	493,885
Environment, Heritage & Planning	122,445	122,445	130,535	130,535
Community services	122,950	106,950	127,125	111,125
Other services	152,000	152,000	155,700	137,700
Less use of reserves		(200,585)		(237,445)

The accounts for 2009/10 will be presented to the Resources and General Services Committee for approval on 23 June 2010 and available for public inspection from 14 June -9 July 2010. 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](http://www.loughton-tc.gov.uk)