



Annual Report 2016

I am pleased to start my report by confirming we have met many of our main targets – the refurbishment of the popular and well used Traps Hill play area is now scheduled for June; we have added some of the missing names of fallen servicemen from the town to the war memorial on Kings Green; and we will soon be saying goodbye to our home at Buckingham Court as an office move to the library is planned. This will ultimately save on operational costs and provide a more central location for residents by creating a community hub with more services available under one roof. It should also secure the future of the library in Loughton.

Communication is everything these days and we continue to publish our quarterly newsletter Think Loughton as this also provides an ideal vehicle to support the work of local groups and charities by publicising their activities. Our website, originally created in 1997, is finally being replaced with a new design from April.

Our future plans include major improvements to the Roding Valley Recreation Ground, in particular the football changing rooms, which are in need of a face lift and the car park area. Our plans include a café and toilet to improve facilities for visitors to this lovely area. We are of course very protective of all our green spaces across the town and continue to monitor the work of the district council closely as they prepare the new draft Local Plan. I will, however, allow the committee chairmen to provide you with more details of our plans.

I have enjoyed being a hands-on mayor this year as it has given me the opportunity to serve the community in a variety of ways. I've been involved in activities such as cleaning and painting the milestones on Loughton's roads as part of the Clean for the Queen event, planting a tree in the community orchard, meeting the bees at their new apiary in Roding Road Allotments, serving teas to senior citizens at the LiberTea event in The Broadway and encouraging the contestants in the "It's a Knockout" event on Jessel Green. Part of my role has been to represent the council at important ceremonies including those hosted by the City of London, Epping Forest District Council and other neighbouring councils. I have also attended many local charitable events including those organised by St Clare Hospice, Chigwell Riding Trust, Abbeyfield Society, Loughton Voluntary Care and the Restore Centre.

Other pleasurable events have included presentations to the winners of several town council competitions including awards for the Best Allotment, Christmas cards and Christmas windows. In February I unveiled a blue heritage plaque in memory of Ruth Rendell, the author of the famous Inspector Wexford detective stories. In July I hosted a ceremony to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the falling of the first bomb in the London Civil Defence area and the dedication of a beautiful new planter in The Drive. November saw the unveiling of a new orientation board at the top of York Hill. Also in November I attended the annual Remembrance parade and service, and a moving ceremony to dedicate a new bronze plaque with four new names on the war memorial on King's Green. In December I switched on the Christmas lights in the Broadway and Loughton High Road and had an exciting carriage ride with Santa. I also lit the first candle on the menorah at the Hanukkah celebration on Standard Green.

The annual Civic Service was held in February at the Loughton Methodist Church, during which I awarded Loughton Citizen of the Year to Diane Rhodes and Young Citizen of the Year to Adam Taylor. Full details of this event may be found in the summer 2016 edition of Think Loughton.

I think it very important for the mayor to be involved with local schools and I have continued this tradition by attending events at Oak View School. We have held mock council meetings for the pupils of St John Fisher Catholic Primary School in which they were able to play the roles of councillors and learn about the council's responsibilities. I have also made presentations at Epping Forest College, the Jack Petchey's Speak Out Challenge, the Yes Partnership Motivation Conferences and the Epping Forest Investors in Young People Business Awards.

Finally, with the elections in May so comes the end of the four-year term of this council. I take this opportunity to say "thank you" to my fellow councillors for their hard work and commitment during this time. I would also extend special thanks to the town clerk and her staff for their support and kindness, and their efficiency in organising many of the events I have mentioned.

Cllr Judy Jennings
Town Mayor



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Planning & Licensing

Cllr Jill Angold-Stephens

The last year has seen a marked increase in the work of this committee with 13 of our 19 meetings running well over the 2 hours laid down in our standing orders. The number of planning applications has increased from some 315 last year to 406 this year.

We are seeing a larger number of extensions to properties as families find it more expensive to move within the town or district. Wherever possible we try to support such applications whilst always taking into account the effect on neighbours and the streetscene. As well as these applications, we have seen a number of amendments, revisions and additions to plans already submitted. We have also attended a number of appeals, being represented by me, my vice-chairman or the planning clerk, dependent on our availability; as expected some have produced a successful outcome for the town and others for the developer. We feel it is important for us to attend whenever possible but sometimes at site visits we are prevented by the inspector from speaking.

On two occasions we have been invited by the district council to submit ideas for names of new buildings; one of what is now called Sovereign Place by the developer, but our suggestions were ignored as the developer had already put up hoardings announcing the name. The second time for the 2 blocks of flats to be built in Burton Road where our suggestions are under consideration.

The town council has also successfully designated Loughton as a neighbourhood plan area. The plan, once completed should enable us to have better control over what and where development occurs

in the future. Our work in trying to register the precious green spaces in Debden, currently with Essex County Council, has provided useful evidence for the neighbourhood plan. We are watching with interest the district council's work on the Local Plan but this is now not due for completion until the end of 2017 at the earliest.

In all this work the committee has been ably supported by the planning clerk, Vivienne Messenger who works so hard to keep on top of everything including the large number of matters for enforcement that we bring to her attention at each meeting. I wish to record our thanks to her. I would also like to thank cllr Carol Davies who has been a valued vice-chairman for me, cllr Phil Abrahams who takes us through the projected plans at each meeting and all my fellow committee members for their thoughtful contributions to the consideration of each set of plans so that our decisions are for what is appropriate for our town.

Finally, we are very pleased to present the 2016 LTC award for building design to the architect of the new extension at Staples Road Primary School. Almost all the local primary schools have needed to increase their size in the last few years to accommodate the growing number of children of school age in the town and we know that we will soon need to increase the size of our secondary schools. It is very gratifying to see that the architect for Staples Road Primary School has been able to produce an extension that meets the needs of the school whilst maintaining the period feel and its empathy with the forest opposite.

Recreation

Cllr David Wixley

I start my report by mentioning 5 awards received from the Essex Playing Fields Association. The playground at Monksgrove received a silver award while those at Colebrook Lane and Westall Road both received certificates of merit. The Roding Valley Recreation Ground also received a silver award and the Willingale Road Playing Field a certificate of merit.

The council has also received an award (the Acumen Wages Service Award for Community Work) for the range and number of community events held throughout the year. Examples of these events are the annual fun run, dog microchipping (in conjunction with the Dogs Trust), the community fun day on Jessel Green and Santa Comes to Town.

Future events include Park Run, and Xplorer which is a form of orienteering for children and families. We welcome the support of the district council, Intersport and Run Active in promoting these activities.

We hope that the Traps Hill playground will be a strong contender for an award in 2016 as it is soon to be refurbished following extensive public consultation including input from a Loughton mums' group. A consultant, Maria Cook from Craigmene Ltd, has helped with this project, which is supported by a £20,000 Community Initiatives Fund grant towards the estimated cost of £80,000.

The late cllr Ken Angold-Stephens had been the driving force behind the restoration of the Memorial Garden in Roding Road. The garden is on land owned by the church from which the council has obtained a 21-year lease thus ensuring that it is kept maintained as an attractive public garden.

Work on the Willingale Road Nature Reserve by Countrycare and its volunteers has included the planting of fruit trees with the aim of developing a community orchard.

The Queen's 90th birthday was celebrated by the lighting of a beacon on



Hillyfields on 21 April.

The committee continues to support Skate Loughton enabling it to hold regular events at Roding Valley High School.

The committee's remit extends beyond recreation and includes matters relating to community safety and welfare so we have received presentations from Luke Lowrie of the Red Balloon Family Foundation and Nick Robinson of the Loughton Youth Project and two of its members. We also support the Epping Forest Positive Activities Group which promotes services for young people.

For older people there are plans to host a Senior Safety Day at the Murray Hall.

We send representatives to the police local community meetings and also the annual police conference organised by the Essex Association of Local Councils.

We are concerned about the danger and litter associated with the misuse of nitrous oxide (laughing gas) cylinders known as a legal high. This concern has prompted correspondence with Eleanor Laing MP who advised that a Psychoactive Substances Bill, leading to legislation, is being introduced to address this problem.

The committee has been invited to comment on future proposals for both the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and also the Sure Start Children's Centres.

Both the Kingsley Hall and Murray Hall, which now has a wedding licence, continue to be popular venues with positive feedback from users. A community centres working party consisting of officers and councillors meets twice a year to consider matters relating to the running and maintenance of the halls.

I thank the members of both the working party and the Recreation Committee for their contributions throughout the year with a special "thank you" to officers for their hard work and support.

Environment & Heritage

Cllr Chris Pond

This committee has met bi-monthly, supported by the town clerk and services manager (to whom our thanks are due) and continues to make good progress within its area of responsibility.

■ Allotments

We were pleased to run a successful annual best allotment competition again, with some very worthy prizewinners. Bee hives returned to the Roding Road site after a 25-year gap, and the new committee there has worked very effectively with council officers on improving the site. The management appointment discussions are in progress. A consortium of charitable users is interested in taking over the Pyles Lane site as a social enterprise, and negotiations are ongoing. Continuation of the water supply there has been inserted into the outline planning permission for the adjacent development.

■ Christmas festivities

More businesses than ever decorated their windows. The lamp post decorations were again very tasteful, but perhaps did not make sufficient impact against the bright street lighting. Efforts to get Essex County Council to replace the lamp standards in the northern part of the High Road, which are too weak to support heavy decorations, again came to nothing, but our appointment of a town centres officer will, we hope, result in this dark area being enlivened for Christmas 2016.

■ Heritage issues

The drinking fountain's oak corner posts were repaired effectively by a specialist contractor. Ceremonies were held in July and November to mark the installation of a planter to commemorate the falling of the 75th anniversary of the first bomb in the London region, and the addition of further names to the war memorial. Essex Police had withdrawn their support for Remembrance Day parades across the county but folks in Loughton handled the arrangements well.



A blue plaque was installed to commemorate Ruth Rendell at her former house in Millsmead Way in February, and one more has been agreed, awaiting the necessary permissions. There are now 38 plaques in Loughton. The 200-year old milestones in Loughton were cleaned, painted, and re-lettered in March.

■ Transport and traffic regulation orders (TRO)

The committee continues to monitor changes to local bus services particularly following ECC's tendering round and the ending of funding from Transport for London for 2016/17. We are also pressing for all-night

street lighting in the town with the introduction of 24-hour tube services.

Moves to ban heavy vehicles from the conservation areas and other roads near the forest edge were supported by the committee and we have commented on other schemes, some major, such as the revised road layouts following the Langston Road development. A potential TRO is sent for consultation, and the town council uses its local knowledge in commenting.

■ Footpaths

Minor modifications to footpaths near Englands Lane, and naming thereof, were agreed, and a new footpath (to be called Royal Oak Path) dedicated near the former Royal Oak Public House, Smarts Lane to Forest Road. ECC resurfaced the Shaftesbury-Forest Road path in accordance with City of London specifications. Bulb planting, in memory of former resident Dennis Jones, by Lady Mary's Path was undertaken to create a lovely spring display.

■ Flower baskets

The displays were extended along Old Station Road, but winter planting was abandoned, as they had not proved attractive.



■ Northern Gateway Access Road

I attended the public enquiry into this road proposed by the London Borough of Enfield, which we, EFDC, ECC and the Corporation of London fear would increase traffic on the A121 and A1168. The proposal, as such, was withdrawn as a result.

■ Cemetery digitisation of burial registers

This project was completed in 2015 and the burial records for Loughton Cemetery from the first burial in 1888 are now available online.

Resources & General Services

Cllr Stephen Pewsey

This is the committee that oversees the finances of the town council and the standards and the quality of our public service.

The committee's priority is to make sure that the precept – that part of the council tax which is allocated to Loughton Town Council – is invested wisely and used effectively in projects and services which offer really good value for money, are high quality, and which help to make our town a better place.

As town councillors we all live in Loughton, and we are all unpaid volunteers, and that is your guarantee that we are as keen as you are for Loughton to be a low-tax town which welcomes new enterprise, is a place where existing businesses can flourish, and is a great place in which to live and bring up our children.

So our main purpose is scrutiny – to make sure that every penny counts, and is not wasted but well spent, and that everything the town council does is open and transparent. We go above and beyond our very strict national audit rules in every aspect of the council's work, which is one of the reasons we are a Quality Gold accredited council and have a trophy cabinet full of other awards back in the council offices.

Thanks to this careful scrutiny, our precept – or local rate – has not

increased for the past 7 years. Residents still pay less than £1 a week in a Band D property for all our services, from bus shelters to playgrounds, from blue plaques to grit bins, from community centres to tennis courts.

The committee also awards grants to help good causes; those which directly help improve life for the people of Loughton. The voluntary sector plays a vital role in our town life – and I would like to thank and pay tribute to all those who give up their time to make this town a better place. With £27,500 available in total in 2016 we have focussed our awards for Loughton's young people, through groups such as the Loughton Youth Project, playgroups and the scouts, and also on organisations which help the vulnerable elderly. We are also delighted to help support yet again the Loughton branch of the Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau with an £8,000 grant. This is a charity which has made such a difference to so many lives.

Finally, on your behalf, I would like to thank my hardworking fellow committee members, especially my deputy chair, Imogen Lawrence, and all the town council officers, especially the town clerk, Enid Walsh, and her deputy, Shirley Haynes, for all their work and support throughout the past year.

Attendance at meetings during the municipal year 2015/16

Committee/ Councillor	Council 7 meetings	Planning & Licensing 22 meetings	Recreation 5 meetings	Environment & Heritage 5 meetings	Resources & General Services 6 meetings
P Abraham	6	22*		1	
J Angold-Stephens	4	15*			4*
K Angold-Stephens	3	1			4*
P Beales	4		5*	3*	3
J Bostock**	4	11*			
M Chalk	5	19*	4*		
C Davies	7	17*		4*	
T Downing	5	11*	1	2*	
L Girling	5		4*	1	
J Jennings	7	2	1	5*	6*
I Lawrence	2	8	1	2*	3*
J Mahoney	5		3*	1	6*
H Mann**	1	1	1		1*
S Murray**	5		1		
M Owen	5		4*	5*	
S Pewsey	6			4*	5*
C C Pond	7			5*	1
C P Pond	7			5*	
E Stacey	2				2*
T Thomas	2		2*		
S Weston	7		2		
D Wixley	7	6	5*	5	6

* a member of that committee **extended leave of absence granted during the year

Financial Report

	2014/15	2015/16**
Band D precept figure per household	49.18	49.18
Income		
Precept	581,700	587,100
Local Council Tax Support grant	58,358	49,529
Interest	9,703	6,961
Operating income	182,796	143,111
Total receipts	832,557	786,701
Running Costs		
Resources & General Services	154,683	179,042
Environment & Heritage	140,207	160,423
Recreation	533,848	496,833
Planning & Licensing	27,000	27,121
Total payments	855,738	863,419
Summary		
Balance c/forward	462,180	386,338
Add receipts	832,557	786,701
Less payments	855,738	863,419
Transfer to reserves	-52,661	36,925
Balance c/forward	386,338	346,555
Total net assets represented by:		
General fund	386,338	346,555
Earmarked reserves	537,776	500,841
Overall balances	924,114	847,396

**Unaudited. For a detailed copy of the accounts please contact the council.

Members' Allowances 2015/16

The Parish Basic Allowance for 2015/16 is £108 p.a.			
Councillor	Parish Basic Allowance	Travel & Subsistence	Total
	£	£	£
P Abraham	108.00		108.00
J Angold-Stephens	108.00		108.00
K Angold-Stephens	108.00		108.00
P Beales	108.00		108.00
J Bostock	108.00		108.00
M Chalk	108.00		108.00
C Davies	108.00	41.70	149.70
T Downing	108.00		108.00
L Girling	108.00		108.00
J Jennings	108.00	25.92	133.92
J Mahoney	108.00		108.00
H Mann	108.00		108.00
M Owen	108.00		108.00
C C Pond	108.00		108.00
C P Pond	108.00		108.00
T Thomas	108.00		108.00
S Weston	108.00		108.00
D Wixley	108.00	73.80	181.80

The following councillors have renounced their right to claim the allowance: I Lawrence, S Murray, S Pewsey, E Stacey

Councillors list, by ward, during the year 2015/16

Alderton Ward

Cllr Philip Abraham
Cllr Ed Stacey
Cllr Tracey Thomas

Roding Ward

Cllr Ken Angold-Stephens
Cllr Margaret Chalk
Cllr Stephen Murray
Cllr David Wixley

Broadway Ward

Cllr Leon Girling
Cllr John Mahoney
Cllr Margaret Owen

St John's Ward

Cllr Stephen Pewsey
Cllr Caroline Pond
Cllr Chris Pond

Fairmead Ward

Cllr Jill Bostock
Cllr Carol Davies
Cllr Judy Jennings

St Mary's Ward

Cllr Philip Beales
Cllr Imogen Lawrence
Cllr Harvey Mann

Forest Ward

Cllr Jill Angold-Stephens
Cllr Trevor Downing
Cllr Sharon Weston

Contact details for the councillors may be viewed at www.loughton-tc.gov.uk