



Annual Report 2019

This has been another busy year for your town council.

It is my strong belief that as a town council we deliver the services we are responsible for in an effective and cost efficient manner.

Feedback we receive from Loughton residents is very nearly always positive and our many community events are well supported. Like last year we have spent time on issues hugely important to our town for which we have no direct responsibility.

Safeguarding our green open spaces from development particularly Jessel Green and Marlescroft Way green has continued to be an important part of discussions. The local plan inspection stage has started and we have ensured that the town council is properly represented at all relevant sessions. This will not be cheap but we need to do our utmost to save Jessel Green, for as they say in the advert "once it's gone, it's gone".

The second issue that quite correctly took attention away from our direct responsibilities was that of rising crime and the inadequate level of policing:

Following two very well attended public meetings we have kept pressure on local police to maximise their presence in our town – something we will continue to do.

Lastly I would like to reflect on my civic role as mayor. I regard it as a great and unexpected honour to have been appointed mayor for this last year. Loughton is the community I have lived in for very nearly 60 years and my time as mayor has confirmed what I already knew, despite all the high profile issues confronting our town, Loughton is a wonderful place and community in which to live.

Having attended 138 events, I have found strong community groups making a difference in so many wonderful different ways. It was so good to see many of those groups present at the Annual Town Meeting.

I would like to mention them all but have selected some important highlights

- My first engagement was the initial weekly meeting of a new group, Open Door, at St Michaels supporting residents with mental health issues – it is great that they have continued to grow
- I have attended all the wonderful productions of Loughton Amateur Dramatic Society, who along with other groups in our town ensure Loughton has a flourishing arts and drama scene
- The Jessel Green community fun day in July was again very well attended and demonstrated the importance of this living green in the centre of one of the more densely populated parts of town
- Meeting the new principal of the college Janet Smith to discuss issues affecting our town
- Attending the fifth anniversary event for our local food bank, I would like to pay tribute to the crucial work of this organisation and its volunteers, helping ensure all Loughton families can put food on their table
- The most solemn occasions of the year were the events on 11 November marking 100 years of remembrance - our town, one of many across the country, held a Battles Over Tribute lighting a beacon at Hillyfields
- I am sure we would all agree the importance of continuing to remember the sacrifices made by previous generations of Loughton residents.

There are many more events and groups I would like to mention but obviously cannot do so, suffice to say everywhere I have been this year I have been struck by the volunteering spirit and would like to thank all the community and faith groups that help make Loughton the wonderful place it is – thank you for all you do in and for our town.

My thanks to all my fellow councillors for their support, particularly my deputy, Stella Murphy, who has kept me on my toes and been a great support to me this year.

Loughton Town Council has a dedicated hard working staff team often going well beyond their contracts to deliver our services, particularly in ensuring the smooth running of community events.

I would like to conclude my report welcoming our new clerk Mark Squire and recording our thanks to former town clerk Enid Walsh for her many years of dedicated service to Loughton and the Town Council. Enid has now retired to a well-known UK holiday destination. I don't think she has started doing bed and breakfast or at least not yet, perhaps we should update you next year.



Loughton Town Council

Loughton Library & Town Hall
Traps Hill
Loughton
IG10 1HD

Tel **020 8508 4200**

Fax **020 8508 4400**

contact@loughton-tc.gov.uk

Town Clerk **Mark Squire**

Cllr Stephen Murray

Town Mayor

Planning & Licensing

Cllr Jill Angold-Stephens

This year we have had less applications to consider; only 293, down from 362 last year; but some have been more complicated such as those for 12-15a Alderton Hill and the rear of 256 High Road, both providing apartments for the elderly; the latter currently being built. We have objected to 62 applications and this now sometimes involves a member of the committee going to Epping to voice our objections at the Plans Area South meeting. Raising a concern relating to an application highlights this to the officers of EFDC; but doesn't necessarily mean that the application is discussed by councillors at their meeting. Of the applications there are usually some relating to pruning or felling of trees either in gardens or on the street. We always object to the felling of trees but are prepared to waive our objection if the Arboriculture Officer at EFDC deems it an appropriate action, through disease or decay. We usually ask for a new native tree in place of a felled tree. Where an application is for front walls, railings and electronic gates we always ask that the applicant plants a hedge of native shrubs behind to soften the look of the frontage. Before some of our meetings we have had a talk from a member of the EFDC team to bring us up-to-date with changes and this is very useful.

There have been 22 planning appeals on which we have commented. This is considerably up on previous years. Of these a recent one, for 12-15a Alderton Hill was a Public Inquiry lasting some four days. I spoke to this on the first day and discovered that we are unlikely to hear a

result until the autumn. This means that the application for a smaller development (down from 105 to 89 units) will not be submitted unless the appeal is rejected so no new building on the site any time soon. Some appeals have been rejected and some upheld so we feel that our input has been worthwhile.

We have also considered 14 licensing applications, including two successful re-applications from street traders to which we had no objections. We did object to 7 applications.

As the Mayor has told you the new EFDC local plan is now in the phase of the hearing in public so there is nothing more we can do about this at present. LTC has engaged experts to speak on our behalf using the extra money we raised when we increased the community charge last year. This is really important as it will affect how the town develops up to 2033 and it could be of benefit or disadvantage to Loughton residents.

Before I finish my report I should like to pay tribute to our very efficient planning clerk, Debra Paris who provides all the applications for us to consider, and patiently guides us through our work. I would also like to thank my vice-chairman, Cllr Kevin Latchford; Cllr Philip Abraham who as well as being a member of the committee operates the projector showing the plans for our consideration, and my fellow committee members for their carefully considered contributions to our meetings.

This year we have not awarded the Building Design Award as none of the buildings submitted for our consideration met all the criteria for this.

Recreation

Cllr David Wixley

As in previous years the committee has dealt with a wide range of issues including the following:

Flood Alleviation Scheme

Essex County Council has identified some properties in the Pyrls Lane area as being at risk from flooding due to water run-off from the Hillyfields Open Space. A bund is to be constructed on land belonging to the City of London immediately adjacent to Pyrls Lane with the objective of holding back flood water and gradually releasing it into the drainage system. The scheme has involved discussions between Essex County Council, City of London, Epping Forest District Council and Loughton Town Council. Public consultation and a presentation to the committee have also taken place. An archaeological survey has uncovered a piece of pottery which is being examined to see if it is of historical importance.

Roding Valley Recreation Ground

Partnership working with the EFDC Health and Wellbeing team has provided tennis and athletic coaching for youngsters and walking football for an older generation. The venue also hosts Parkrun and Junior Parkrun.

The committee was pleased to support the Teens Unite Cancer Charity whose obstacle race raised almost £2,000 with over 100 children taking part.

The biggest issue facing the committee is the refurbishment of the football changing rooms currently closed because they have become uneconomic to run due to plumbing and electrical problems. It is proposed to retain the existing buildings but to infill the gap between them.

Meetings have taken place with the Essex FA, EFDC and an architect has provided drawings of the improved facility.

The project will be funded by a combination of earmarked reserves, grant funding and a low interest loan from the Public Works Loan Board.

The scheme will be subject to public consultation and planning permission.

Essex Playing Fields Association Awards

I'm pleased to report that Loughton Town Council has again received awards for its playing fields and playgrounds. The Roding Valley Recreation Ground was the overall winner of the Best Kept Playing Field and there were Gold awards for the playgrounds at Newmans Lane and Westall Road with a Silver for Traps Hill.

The committee is grateful for the efforts of Loughton Town Council staff and volunteers, who help with litter picking to keep these facilities looking tidy. However, much credit for awards received over several years is due to Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) Grounds Maintenance Team and it was felt that this should be recognised. I was therefore pleased to be

present when the Town Mayor presented the team with a framed certificate last July.

The Jessel Green Family Fun Day

This will be held, as normal, on 30 June 2019. Plans to build on the Green have yet to be decided.

Community Safety

During the summer there was much concern about local youngsters being intimidated or attacked by other youngsters from outside the District. At two public meetings it was suggested that the town council could help with this problem. Various options were considered but most of these were both very expensive and not entirely practical. However £10,000 has been set aside with a view to employing, if necessary, a private security company that is approved by Essex, Hertfordshire and Metropolitan Police Forces.

While not an ideal solution to having more police on the beat it could prove to be a flexible and cost effective option.

Finally I would like to thank members of the committee and Loughton Town Council staff for their contributions and work throughout the year.

I also take the opportunity to thank our former Town Clerk, Enid Walsh who retired in January, for her work and support to the committee. I'm now very pleased to be working with her replacement, Mark Squire and welcome him to Loughton Town Council.



Environment & Heritage

Cllr Chris Pond

This report is on the basis of 3 meetings only, as the January meeting was postponed and instead we said our corporate goodbyes to Enid Walsh former Town Clerk on her retirement.

The committee noted an improvement in the cultivation and letting of allotments. There are still a few available, but the response to the inaugural horticultural and allotment show on 1 September had been very heartening. Thanks to all the members of staff for their work on this.

During the year, **heritage plaques** to Lionel Murray and Josiah Oldfield/ the Oriole Hospital were installed, reflecting Loughton's illustrious past at 42 locations.

The committee supported the Hills Amenity Society request for a 20mph zone in the Conservation areas. This has not been progressed as we are waiting for documentation from the Hills Amenity Society.

A **bus shelter** was installed opposite the Library and Town Hall following public request and I am very pleased to report that this is being used.

New **Christmas lights** were provided in the High Road and the Broadway. These were well received, but had to be replaced at the suppliers' cost, as blinking lights had been erected, contrary to specification.

The **Heritage Open Days** were very well supported in particular the Classic Car Display organised by District Councillor Howard Kauffman, a very successful event where there were between 2,000 – 3,000 visitors. Loughton Town Council take part in the Heritage Open Days event every other year, the next event will be September 2020.

New **signage** was provided on the Oakwood Hill Estate, in a joint ECC/EFDC/LTC scheme. It was reported in last year's minutes that it was agreed to repaint some of the white-on-black Chigwell Urban District Council street nameplates, it is nearly 50 years since CUDC existed. These will take place in the course of the year ahead.

Pleased to report that EFDC has withdrawn an application to build a car park on Marlescroft Way green.

The committee responded to public concern on the Broadway Area **Parking Review** by suggesting the parking permit area zone

be limited to those streets where commuter parking was already causing nuisance, with all the outer areas being held back, so as not to cause unaffected residents unnecessary expense, but to relieve those who suffer parking stress already. We are waiting the outcome of the consultation.

The committee asked EFDC to take action in the case of two areas of **untidy/littered land**: they seem reluctant to do so. EFDC have been requested to increase the resources of their Environmental Team.

We thank all the staff, and particularly Enid Walsh for her wise and sympathetic guidance of the committee over the last decade. She was presented with an antique map of Essex dated 1782 as a retirement present.



Resources & General Services

Cllr Stephen Pewsey

Cllr Judy Jennings, Acting Chairman, reported on the activities of this committee over the past year.

The Resources and General Services Committee looks after the town council's finances.

Staffing, services and projects are all carefully scrutinized to make sure the town council is open and transparent in its business.

The committee oversees the day to day financial transactions necessary for the council's smooth running, including staff salaries, insurance and payment of bills, maintaining Kingsley and Murray Halls and producing the town council magazine and website.

To keep council tax increases to a minimum we have postponed some of the committee's projects such as installation of town signs and managed to reduce staffing costs without losing jobs.

To offset costs and keep the precept as low as possible we have taken c £25,000 from our General Reserves this year, made several reductions in budgets and achieved savings in many areas to fund the vital and growing range of local council services our community depends on. Of all the local towns in Epping Forest District, Loughton maintains by far the lowest precept.

The annual council tax for a Band D property this year is £53.59 a small increase of less than four pence a week. From this money we support a wide range of services such as banking and administration for the whole Council, personnel and employment matters, staff training, Civic celebrations and Citizenship awards, providing town noticeboards and the popular Christmas card competition. We also support community events such as the Loughton Festival and the Fun Day on Jessel Green.

While other councils have had to close playgrounds we ensure our playgrounds remain safe and available.

In response to residents' concerns about low police cover we have put an extra £10,000 into resources for community safety.

A key priority this year has been our response to the Local Plan. The challenge of overdevelopment and the threat to build on our green spaces is of great concern. Funds were put aside for legal representation at the hearing that took place in February.

We work closely with local voluntary organisations and provide grants for projects that offer a positive benefit to help improve life for the people of Loughton.

In 2019 we have supported

The Loughton Youth Project;
"Sportability" a club for children with special needs;
Loughton Voluntary Care;
GROW Community Garden project;
Revitalise, offering respite care for disabled people; and
The Samaritans, amongst others.

We also provide vital support for Citizens Advice (CA) whose help in the community has been needed more than ever following the introduction of Universal Credit last December.

Finally, I would like to thank our new Town Clerk, Mark Squire, our new Assistant Town Clerk, Brent Smith, and all the council officers in acknowledgement of their hard work on behalf of Loughton residents.

I would also particularly like to thank Cllr Jill Angold-Stephens whose knowledge and expertise has greatly assisted the committee. The constant vigilance and attention to detail of the Resources Committee means members are always working for the benefit of the town and I thank them for their dedication and commitment over the last year.

Attendance at meetings during the municipal year 2018/19

Committee/ Councillor	Council 8 meetings	Planning & Licensing 23 meetings	Recreation 5 meetings	Environment & Heritage 4 meetings	Resources & General Services 6 meetings
P Abraham	8	20*			
J Angold-Stephens	7	18*	1		4
P Beales	5		1	2*	
R Brookes	6		4*		
T Cochrane	8	23*		4*	
B Cohen	6	5	5*		
M Dalton	5				5*
C Davies	4	14*		2*	
T Downing	6	15*		1	
J Jennings	8	1		1	6*
J Jogia	7	3	5*		5*
K Latchford	6	19*			
J Mahoney	6				6*
S Murphy	8	21*		1	
S Murray	8		5*		5*
A Omer	3	3	5*		4*
T Owen	8			4*	
S Pewsey	4	1	1	3*	2*
C C Pond	8		1	4*	
C P Pond	8		2	4*	
M Stubbings	8	5	5*		
D Wixley	8	1	5*	3	3

* a member of that committee

Financial Report

£	2017/18**	2018/19**
Band D precept figure per household	51.63	53.59
Income		
Precept	634,800	665,000
Local Council Tax Support grant	27,016	13,508
Interest	2,627	5,009
Operating income	153,442	194,206
Total receipts	817,885	877,723
Running Costs		
Resources & General Services	144,340	169,789
Environment & Heritage	161,572	175,043
Recreation	483,058	495,623
Planning & Licensing	32,821	73,500
Total payments	821,791	913,955
Summary		
Balance c/forward	711,875	707,969
Add receipts	817,885	877,723
Less payments	-821,791	-913,955
Balance c/forward	707,969	671,737
Total net assets represented by:		
General fund	320,242	277,235
Earmarked reserves	387,727	394,502
Overall balances	707,969	671,737

**Unapproved & unaudited. For a detailed copy of the accounts please contact the council.

Members' Allowances 2018/19

The Parish Basic Allowance for 2018/19 is £108 p.a.			
Councillor	Parish Basic Allowance	Travel & Subsistence	Total
	£	£	£
P Abraham	108.00		108.00
J Angold-Stephens	108.00	13.60	121.60
P Beales	108.00		108.00
R Brookes	108.00		108.00
T Cochrane	108.00		108.00
B Cohen	108.00		108.00
M Dalton	108.00		108.00
C Davies	108.00		108.00
T Downing	108.00		108.00
J Jennings	108.00		108.00
J Jogia	-	166.39	166.39
K Latchford	108.00		108.00
J Mahoney	108.00		108.00
A Omer	108.00		108.00
T Owen	108.00		108.00
C C Pond	108.00		108.00
C P Pond	108.00		108.00
M Stubbings	108.00		108.00
D Wixley	108.00	181.14	289.14

Cllrs S Pewsey, S Murphy and S Murray have renounced their right to claim the allowance.

Councillors list, by ward, during the year 2018/19

Alderton Ward

Cllr Philip Abraham
Cllr Adam Omer
Cllr Michael Stubbings

Roding Ward

Cllr Rose Brookes
Cllr Mark Dalton
Cllr Stephen Murray
Cllr David Wixley

Broadway Ward

Cllr Jayna Jogia
Cllr John Mahoney
Cllr Stella Murphy

St John's Ward

Cllr Stephen Pewsey
Cllr Caroline Pond
Cllr Chris Pond

Fairmead Ward

Cllr Carol Davies
Cllr Kevin Latchford
Cllr Tom Owen

St Mary's Ward

Cllr Philip Beales
Cllr Barbara Cohen
Cllr Judy Jennings

Forest Ward

Cllr Jill Angold-Stephens
Cllr Tessa Cochrane
Cllr Trevor Downing

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