



Annual Report 2020

This has been yet another busy year for the Council which saw the saving of Jessel Green, a project close to the hearts of everyone in the community and a wonderful achievement for all those involved.

Much effort, time and resources was put into attending the Local Plan Hearings at the District Council and defending the green space in Loughton. Ultimately it was good news for Jessel Green, the well-being of local residents and common sense in general. We are proud of Loughton Town Council's role in securing this valuable green space. Thanks again to the highly effective 'Save Jessel Green' campaign and a host of other groups and individuals. Together we have shown great community spirit and with an abundance of hard work, we have made a real positive impact.

In May 2019 it was an honour to be elected as Town Mayor. It has been a privilege to serve the community I have spent my whole life in and to raise funds for my chosen charities; CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young), Oakview School, Essex Air Ambulance, Yes Partnership, Local Food Bank and Restore. All of these charities are hugely important to our local community and it has been incredibly rewarding to be able to support them and learn more about what they do. I thank Cllr Wixley for introducing me to the Cardiac Risk in the Young charity.

My duties as Mayor have seen me attend 53 functions and events thus far. Each has been a fantastic occasion and it has been great meeting so many of our local residents of all ages. My first engagement was at Sainsbury's to celebrate their 150th anniversary.

I was also invited to the lighting of the Menorah Candle and was made to feel so comfortable and welcome by our Jewish friends.

I was especially moved by the Holocaust memorial event at Waltham Abbey and it was touching to once again see the community out in force for the Remembrance Day parade in Loughton. It was an honour to lay a wreath amongst war veterans. This is always a well organised event by the Loughton branch of the Royal British Legion, the Town Council and with the Churches of Loughton coming as one to remember the sacrifices made for us.

I have also enjoyed performances organised by LADS (Loughton Amateur Dramatic Society), The Loughton Operatic Society and the National Jazz Archive.

The Jessel Green Community Fun Day was yet again successful and well attended and highlighted the great community spirit and importance of this space in our town.

Not forgetting the Horticultural Show and Awards to the Best Allotment Winner, we had so many great entries; it was a wonderful community event. *At the time of writing it is unlikely that the Horticultural Show scheduled for 22 August will take place. Please monitor our website, Facebook page and noticeboards for further updates.*

Our community was shaken in December 2019 by the tragic event at Debden Park School which resulted in the loss of one of the students, Harley Watson. The decision was made to cancel the annual Christmas festivities in The Broadway out of respect for Harley and his family. My thoughts are with Harley, his family, friends and everyone affected by this tragedy.

I would like to thank my deputy, Tessa Cochrane for her support this year and attending many events with me.

I would also like to thank Pippa Bryce for the smooth running of everything and keeping the diary so well organised, my thanks for all her help and support this year.

A special mention to Mark Squire who has done an excellent job in his first year as town clerk and he has been a great help to me.

Finally, thank you to my fellow councillors for their support in what has been a truly incredible year.

Cllr Stella Murphy
Town Mayor

Loughton Town Council

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Town Clerk **Mark Squire**

Planning & Licensing

Cllr Jill Angold-Stephens

We have, as usual, had over 20 meetings throughout the year but this year there have been fewer applications at each meeting with a total of 278 new applications and 14 amended ones. This follows a decrease in planning applications recorded nationally.

We have looked very carefully at each application before recording our comments for EFDC. These often include suggestions for change where we have objections or concerns. We have objected to some 74 applications and some of these have re-appeared with changes.

EFDC Area Plans South Committee, now held at Epping, considers those Loughton applications where there are several objectors including LTC or where a town councillor registers to speak against an application. Planning officers decide all other applications.

There have been fifteen appeals brought by applicants this year; 7 have been dismissed, 3 were allowed (with conditions imposed) and the rest are awaiting decisions, so I feel that we are doing something right. We always need to balance the need for more housing, including extensions, against the need to protect the environment. This has been particularly pertinent of late with Epping Forest being declared a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) both in relation to pollution and damage caused by increases in visitor numbers and frequency. Three of the appeals that were dismissed gave the effect on the SAC as one of the reasons for dismissal.

There have been 17 licensing applications, relating to new or changed opening hours; the sale of alcohol or extended hours for the sale of alcohol. We try, so far as is possible, to be consistent throughout

the town in the matter of licensing hours as we feel this is fair both to residents and applicants. Of the seventeen applications, four have been for street trading licenses, usually renewals, and as there have been no complaints about these we have not objected to them.

The town council spent a large amount of money on advice and representation in relation to the hearing in public before the inspector last summer. This resulted in us being successful in saving Jessel Green from development to the advantage of Loughton residents. This involved a great deal of hard work and we are grateful to all those who contributed to this.

I could not conclude without first thanking all those who have worked throughout the year on the committee; our Planning Clerk Debra Paris who steers us through the applications; my vice-chairman Kevin Latchford who is leaving Loughton in the next few weeks and who will be a great loss; and my fellow committee members, including the Town Mayor who has managed to attend our meetings as well as all her other commitments.

Finally, I wish to draw your attention to the Building Design Award for which we had some seven applications this year. Each property was viewed by the Town Mayor, the Chairman of the Environment & Heritage Committee and me before we pooled our comments. A certificate of commendation was awarded to the owner of a property in York Hill, who had sympathetically restored the fenestration to enhance the appearance of the conservation area. Following a majority decision the award for the winning property was made to the owners and architect for 1 Hillcrest Road.

Environment & Heritage

Cllr Chris Pond

The Committee has had its usual quota of routine and project work.

A good deal of time has been devoted to green issues.

We have been much involved in saving bus route 87; and we are pursuing an attempt via a LHP scheme to renew signage on the by-pass cycle route, and to designate new cycling routes, as suggested by the cyclists themselves.



Loughton Town Council has been greatly concerned with air quality, where Epping Forest has recently been shown to be the worst district in Essex for particulate pollution. Green spaces and good air were two of the major themes behind the evidence LTC gave to the Local Plan Examination in public last summer, which we hope has reprieved Jessel Green from development.

We held our second ever Horticultural Show at The Murray Hall. The afternoon proved to be a delightful and successful community event, with double the amount of entries from last year's inaugural show.

We have purchased and installed habitats for solitary bees. All our own trees have been surveyed, and those within EHC responsibility given a clean bill of health.

A re-greening strategy has been discussed and set in train. An allotment improvement scheme was adopted. The Town Clerk has originated a Loughton Wombles scheme of litter picking; 30 people have volunteered, and training is under way.

The town council protested, to no avail, at the reduction of Central Line services to Debden.

We have raised at Local Councils Liaison why EFDC are not members of the Essex Countywide Traveller Unit, at a cost of under £5000 pa. This means that if we get an unauthorised encampment, we have to pay costs rather than the ECTU. Satisfactory answers are awaited.

On the heritage side, a blue plaque was installed in January to Loughton benefactor, William Dawson, and two more Barbara Harmer; Stanley Baldwin/ Rudyard Kipling are on order. We are participating in a project by the EFDM to commemorate the resettlement in 1945 of Jewish refugees at Holmehurst, Manor Road; this is lottery funded.

A new Loughton Day has been arranged for September, to incorporate the Heritage Open Days.

This will, of course, be subject to Government guidelines concerning the Coronavirus situation.

Recreation

Cllr David Wixley

The Committee's attention has been focused on three main issues:

1. The Flood Alleviation Scheme on the Hillyfields Open Space which was completed in December. The Scheme has a lifespan of 50 years with the purpose of protecting approximately 100 properties from the risk of excessive water run-off from the hill.

Four bodies have been involved in this: Essex County Council who identified the potential risk and designed the Scheme. The City of London on whose land most of the Scheme has been constructed. Loughton Town Council who own most of the Hillyfields Open Space, and will have responsibility for routine maintenance assisted by Epping Forest District Council.

The Scheme is designed to collect water and release it gradually into the existing drainage system for eventual discharge into the Pyles Brook.

2. A second flood alleviation scheme concerns the River Roding where it flows alongside the Roding Valley Recreation Ground. The District Council has received a grant from the Environment Agency to tackle issues associated with this stretch of the river. The grant will provide funding for tree planting to reinforce and help stabilize the bank from erosion. The bank will also be restored in some places. Parts of the footpath will also be repaired or relocated further away from the bank. The native trees that will be planted are also intended to slow down flood waters and so help protect properties downstream.

3. As mentioned in last year's report the football changing rooms on the Roding Valley Recreation Ground are no longer fit for use. Talks with an architect and a grant funding consultant have been ongoing and it is anticipated that a public exhibition outlining proposals for the revamped changing rooms will be held later this year.

The Committee has supported a number of community events held on the Roding Valley Recreation Ground. These included the Loughton, Buckhurst Hill & Chigwell Rotary Club's Wellbeing Festival, the Doggie

Dash Parkrun which raised funds for the Dash Dog Shelter charity, and the Town Mayor's Fun Run.

In conjunction with the District Council we have supported Play in the Park activities (also held on Jessel Green) as well as tennis coaching for youngsters.

We were relieved and delighted to learn, last August, that following the Planning Inspector's intervention Jessel Green had been removed from the District Council's Local Plan, thus saving it from development.

A new initiative, proposed by the Town Clerk and supported by the Committee, is to hold a "Loughton Day" at the Loughton Cricket Club ground on Saturday 19 September. Invitations to local organisations have already been sent out. *This will, of course, be subject to Government guidelines concerning the Coronavirus situation.*

Mention of the LCC ground gives me the opportunity to report that the freehold title of the ground has been transferred to the Town Council and the process of applying for Fields in Trust status for the ground is underway.

I am pleased to report that we have received Essex Playing Fields Association awards for the Roding Valley Recreation Ground and the Traps Hill playground. We are indebted to LTC staff, volunteer litter pickers, and EFDC's grounds maintenance team for their efforts in making this possible.

At our September meeting we received a presentation from Della Tudisca about her support for CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young) charity and the importance of 14-35 year olds being screened for undetected heart conditions.

The Murray Hall continues to be a popular venue and we hope to improve facilities by having a Wi-Fi connection in the near future.

Finally, I thank Committee members and LTC staff for their work and contributions throughout the year.



Resources & General Services

Cllr Judy Jennings

The Resources and General Services Committee is responsible for the Town Council's finances and ensures that the Town Council acts openly, transparently and ethically.

In doing so, we undertake an annual review of the Town's banking and investments. We review all of our insurances. The Committee reviews our Town Council policies, such as the Reserves Policy, the Loughton Town Council Complaints Policy and the Social Media Policy, the Code of Conduct, The Grant Awarding Policy and the Training Policy and we agree a budget for the coming year.

Our income comes from several sources. These include the precept, charging for services, renting out venues, allotments and cemetery fees, pitch hire, achieving grants from other bodies, and finally the meagre amount of bank interest.

The tax base for 2020/21 is 12,719.6 and the precept has therefore

been set at £756,445. This will give the Loughton Town Council's proportion of the annual council tax for a band D property as £59.47, an increase of about 4 pence per week for this year.

This amount is far less than other major towns in the area such as Buckhurst Hill (£68.89), Epping (£93.79) and Waltham Abbey (£111.49).

Elections are a big expenditure this year and will be paid for out of the Council's earmarked funds (although due to the Coronavirus situation these have now been postponed to 2021).

The Committee deals with staff and employment issues, staff handbooks and recruitment.

We run Design Awards, and competitions such as the popular Christmas Card Design Award, The Christmas Window Award, the Loughton Horticultural Show and Awards for the Best Allotments.

Attendance at meetings during the municipal year 2019/20

Committee/ Councillor	Council #8 meetings	Planning & Licensing #23 meetings	Recreation 5 meetings	Environment & Heritage 5 meetings	Resources & General Services #6 meetings
P Abraham	7	19*			
J Angold-Stephens	6	17*			5*
P Beales**					
R Brookes	5		4*		
T Cochrane	7	21*	1	5*	1
B Cohen	3	6	3*	1	
M Dalton	4		1		5*
C Davies	3	11*		3*	
T Downing	2	13*	1	3	
J Jennings	7		1	4	5*
J Jogia	7	2	4*		4*
K Latchford	5	19*			
J Mahoney	4		1		3*
S Murphy	7	20*	1		
S Murray	7		4*	1	3*
A Omer			1*		1*
T Owen	4			3*	
S Pewsey	2			3*	
C C Pond	6	3	1	5*	1
C P Pond	7			5*	
M Stubbings	7	5	5*		1
D Wixley	7	1	5*	5	4

* a member of that committee ** Cllr P Beales has been granted a leave of absence.

following the coronavirus pandemic the following meetings were cancelled:

Council Meeting: 15/4/2020; Planning Meetings: 30/3/20 & 20/4/20;

Resources & General Services Meeting: 1/4/20

DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC THE FINANCIAL SECTIONS OF THE ANNUAL REPORT HAVE NOT YET BEEN COMPLETED. THIS INFORMATION WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE AS SOON AS NORMAL WORKING PATTERNS RESUME FOLLOWING LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADVICE ON THIS SITUATION.

Councillors list, by ward, during the year 2019/20

Alderton Ward

Cllr Philip Abraham
Cllr Adam Omer
Cllr Michael Stubbings

Fairmead Ward

Cllr Carol Davies
Cllr Kevin Latchford
Cllr Tom Owen

Roding Ward

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

St Mary's Ward

Cllr Philip Beales
Cllr Barbara Cohen
Cllr Judy Jennings

Broadway Ward

Cllr Jayna Jogia
Cllr John Mahoney
Cllr Stella Murphy

Forest Ward

Cllr Jill Angold-Stephens
Cllr Tessa Cochrane
Cllr Trevor Downing

St John's Ward

Cllr Stephen Pewsey
Cllr Caroline Pond
Cllr Chris Pond

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



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Town Clerk **Mark Squire**