



Community hall plan wins boost

LOUGHTON Town Council is delighted to be the preferred bidder to purchase the former United Reformed Church in Borders Lane.

The bid was submitted following two meetings last autumn at which the Town Council resolved to secure the site for community use and finalised the offer.

Councillors are excited about the opportunity to provide much-needed facilities for the whole community, including Loughton's young people – the lack of youth facilities is a continual source of complaint.

The Town Council is in talks with potential partners, such as Essex County Council, over sharing the site to establish youth services there.

The building, which has a central location and is probably larger than any other hall in the town, could be used for:

- Meetings, drama and concerts
- Local clubs and societies to hire
- Parties and other social functions
- A club for the elderly
- Weddings/wedding receptions
- Offices for local organisations

The site is big enough to accommodate several uses at the same time, is reasonably well-served by public transport and will include car parking.

The Town Council would regulate the site's use to stop undue noise and disturbance late at night – we want to be good neighbours.

Many questions need to be resolved before the Town Council is finally able to go ahead with the plan – there are still major issues to be resolved.

Even so, councillors are determined to do their best to secure this facility, so badly needed in Loughton.

A considerable sum of money will also have to be raised for

the scheme to proceed. The Town Council's share of Council Tax on a Band D property, for example, will have to rise from £29 to £38. Councillors believe residents

will agree the extra 18p a week is worthwhile to turn the vision into reality.

■ What would you like to see provided on the site? Let us know (contact details on page 4.)

Doing the continental



Loughton High Road Town Centre Partnership arranged for French traders to come over for the weekend of 24/25 November to sell their wares in Centric Parade. Goods on sale ranged from cheeses, paté, bread, vegetables, herbs and spices to basketware, clothes, confectionery and wine. The market did brisk trade and the Town Centre Partnership hopes to repeat it.

RON HEATH

CONTACT NUMBERS

COUNCIL SERVICES

Loughton Town Council	020 8508 4200
Epping Forest District Council	01992 564000
Epping Sports Centre	01992 564564
Waltham Abbey Sports Centre	01992 716194
Waste Management Hotline	01992 564320
Essex County Council	01245 492211
Registrar of Births & Deaths	01992 572788
Registrar of Marriages	01992 572789
Education Office	01245 436231
Loughton Library	020 8502 0181
Debden Library	020 8508 5869
Social Services	020 8508 9311

POLICE & FIRE (dial 999 for emergencies)

Loughton Police Station (non-urgent)	020 8502 3881
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HEALTH & HOSPITALS

Forest Medical Centre	020 8505 2288
Health Information Service	0800 665544
Holly House (Private)	020 8505 3311
King George	020 8983 8000
Loughton Hall Clinic, Rectory Lane	020 8272 4600
Princess Alexandra	01279 444455
Roding (Private)	020 8551 1100
St Margaret's & Primary Care Trust	01992 561666
Silverthorn Centre, Chingford	020 8529 3706
Wanstead	020 8532 2711
Whipps Cross	020 8539 5522

SPORT

David Lloyd Centre	020 8559 8466
Essex School of Swimming	020 8505 9436
Loughton Cricket Club	020 8502 2064
Loughton Rugby Club	020 8504 0065

Roding Valley Cricket Club	020 8506 1001
Roding Valley Tennis Centre	020 8505 4008
South Loughton Cricket Club	020 8530 2200

ADVICE, HELP & INFORMATION

Citizens Advice Bureau	020 8502 0031
Epping Forest College	020 8508 8311
Family Care Counselling Service	020 8501 2714
Loughton Information Centre	01992 564808
Loughton Job Centre	020 8258 4740
Trading Standards Office	01245 341800
Social Security, Department of (Wentworth House)	020 8532 4200
Samaritans	020 8520 9191
SSAFA, Forces Help	020 8508 8960

TRAVEL & TOURISM

Arriva Herts & Essex	01279 426349
Arriva London North East	020 8595 3088
Essex Traveline	08457 000 333
Gatwick Airport	01293 535353
Heathrow Airport	020 8759 4321
London Regional Transport	020 7222 1234
Luton Airport	01582 405100
National Express (Victoria Coach Station)	0990 808 080
National Railways Enquiry Line	0345 484 950
Stansted Airport	01279 680500
Thamesway	01245 353104
Tourist Information Centre	01992 652295

PUBLIC UTILITIES

British Gas	08459 555208
London Electricity	0800 096 9000
Thames Water	08459 200 800

COMMUNITY

Care & Repair Service	01992 564086
Churches Together in Loughton	020 8508 0811
Epping Forest CVS	01992 564178
Epping Forest Volunteer Bureau	01992 564256
Royal British Legion	020 8508 5044

CINEMAS

ABC (South Woodford)	020 8989 3463
Odeon (Gants Hill)	020 8554 2452
UCI (Lee Valley)	0870 603 4567
Virgin (Harlow)	0870 505 0007

BREAKDOWN SERVICES

AA	0800 887766
RAC	0800 828282

LOCAL AMENITY REFUSE POINTS

Chigwell (closed Bank Holidays)	Luxborough Lane
Ongar	Mill Lane
Waltham Abbey	Brooker Road

For enquiries and opening time details, call Epping Forest District Council.

Editor's notes

THE Town Council has completed the process of setting its precept (the amount of Council Tax Loughton householders will be paying for its services).

This is never an easy task at the best of times as the Town Council strives to keep the amount at an acceptable level, while being realistic about the need to provide

good services and facilities.

It has been even more difficult this year as the proposed purchase of the former United Reformed Church in Borders Lane to provide a community centre will incur additional cost which will be reflected in the local charge.

You can rest assured that councillors take their responsibilities in setting the precept very seriously indeed and are always acutely aware of the effect their decisions

have on local people. Part of the increase in the precept is also due to the appointment of a park warden for the Recreation Ground. We know this addition to our workforce will be welcomed by residents.

You can see from articles elsewhere in this issue that we have finally managed to resolve some outstanding matters, and we are pleased to be able to move some of our plans along.

Unfortunately, the purchase

of the land in north Loughton does not yet fall into this category, though the process is still plodding along. We look forward to having the land in our possession.

Don't forget to come along to the Annual Town Meeting and Community Forum, both mentioned elsewhere, as they are your chance to have your say and get involved in the Town Council's activities.

Louise Fuller
Town Clerk

Site found for skateboarders

At last, a suitable site has been found for local skateboarders.

The Town Council has reached agreement with Epping Forest College to lease part of the playing field opposite the college in Borders Lane.

The equipment will be

located next to Borders Lane, so its visibility from the road will reduce anti-social behaviour.

The facility will also be situated well away from housing. Meanwhile, the location will be accessible from all parts of Loughton.

Skateboard facilities can take different forms and don't just accommodate skateboarders, but also in-line skates, BMX bikes and even scooters – but not the motorised variety.

When the Town Council last canvassed local young people about the facilities they would like, they said the most versatile and cost-effective item was a half-pipe.

However, this was some time ago, and ideas and fashions change. Young people who would like to see a half-pipe, a street course, or other facility for wheeled sports (within the inevitable constraints of space and money), please drop us a line. Email the Town Council on loughton_tc@compuserve.com.

Stephen makes it four

Roding ward Cllr Stephen Murray aims to complete his fourth consecutive London Marathon, on 14 April.

The Roding Valley High School teacher has raised £5,300 over the last three years for six local organisations.

This year, he is running the 26.2 miles for three groups: the Whitebridge Schools' Parents' Association, the Alderton Schools' Parents' Association and the NCH – Action for Children Family Centre.

To sponsor Stephen, call him on 07931 306636.

Remembrance Grove plan finally takes root

THE order to plant the Millennium Remembrance Grove on the Hillyfields open space has been placed and, by the time you read this, planting should be very nearly complete.

The grove has been designed to commemorate those from Loughton who lost their lives fighting for

their country, with groups of trees representing all the regions of the world where they have fought.

This incorporates the five continents, so there will be trees native to all parts of the globe.

These include winter flowering cherries from Asia, Sequoiadendron from America, Cider gum from Australasia, Atlantic cedars

from Africa, and Rowans from Europe.

An opportunity to make a subscription to the Grove will be given to local groups and organisations, as well as individuals, in the coming months.

Donors' details will be recorded in a book of dedication. More details will be published in the next issue of *Think Loughton*.

Have your say

THE Town Council's Annual Town Meeting will be held in Wesley Hall at the Methodist Church, High Road, on Tuesday 23 April.

This year's speaker will be Epping Forest District Council Chief Executive John Burgess. He will be speaking about the current and future relationships between the Town and district council.

As well as reports from the Town Council Chairman and committee chairmen, this is the residents' chance to ask questions and make suggestions.

The meeting begins at 8pm.

Vacant allotment

THERE is a vacant allotment in Pyrles Lane at a rent of £12.50 a year.

Anybody interested should call 020 8508 4200 for further details.

Deadline dates

Edition	Copy deadline
June	22 April
September	5 August

Further copies of *Think Loughton* may be obtained from the Town Council at 1 Buckingham Court, Rectory Lane, or from Debden or Loughton libraries.

Please note that no unattributed articles will be accepted for publication.

GET TO KNOW YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLORS

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

1 Buckingham Court, Rectory Lane, Loughton, Essex IG10 2OZ
 Tel: 020 8508 4200 Fax: 020 8508 4400 Web: <http://www.loughton-tc.gov.uk> Email: loughton_tc@compuserve.com

BROADWAY WARD

Cllr Joyce M Barnett
 59 Colson Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 3RL

Cllr Joan Davis 020 8508 3180
 (Council Vice-Chairman and F&GP Committee)
 4 Barrington Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 2AY

Cllr Thomas G Owen 020 8508 6916
 (Chairman, Planning Committee; EH&L)
 15 Lower Park Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 4NB

Cllr Marion E Taylor 020 8508 5152
 (Vice-Chairman, Community; Planning Committee)
 52 Lower Park Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 4NA

ST JOHN'S WARD

Cllr Kay F Ellis 020 8508 6018
 (Planning Committee)
 31 Algers Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 4NG

Cllr Roger E Pearce 020 8281 1386
 (F&GP Committee)
 32 Millsmead Way, Loughton, Essex IG10 1LR

Cllr Christopher C Pond 020 8508 2361
 (Chairman, EH&L Committee)
 Forest Villa, 7 Staples Road, Loughton,
 Essex IG10 1HP

Cllr Robert J Wilmot 020 8508 1987
 (EH&L and Planning Committees)
 50 Baldwins Hill, Loughton, Essex IG10 1SF

DEBDEN GREEN WARD

Cllr Michael D Hogan 020 8502 5483
 3 Debden House Cottages, Debden Green,
 Loughton, Essex IG10 2NZ

Cllr Montague W Juniper JP 020 8508 5930
 (Chairman, F&GP Committee)
 31 Alderton Way, Loughton, Essex IG10 3EQ

Cllr Michael G Sellaars 020 8502 0782
 (EH&L and Planning Committees)
 76 Roding Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 3EF

Cllr Victoria Wisenfeld 020 8502 1025
 (Community Committee)
 The Garden Cottage, The Warren, Loughton,
 Essex IG10 4RN

ST MARY'S WARD

Cllr Anthony T Lee 020 8508 7649
 (Vice-Chairman, Planning; Community Committee)
 33 Priory Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 1AF

Cllr Pamela Meadows 020 8508 4136
 (Chairman, Community Committee)
 98 Roding Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 3EJ

Cllr Michael W Wardle 020 8508 2771
 (Community Committee)
 61 The Drive, Loughton, Essex IG10 1HG

FOREST WARD

Cllr Suzanne M Harper 020 8508 4770
 (Council Chairman; F&GP Committee)
 23 Algers Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 4NG

Cllr Judith P Woodman 020 8502 0785
 (EH&L Committee)
 164 Forest Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 1EG

Cllr Leslie J Harris 020 8508 1333
 (Vice-Chairman, F&GP Committee)
 32 Upper Park, Loughton, Essex IG10 4EQ

RODING WARD

Cllr Edward V Boatman 020 8508 1890
 (F&GP Committee)
 24 Roding Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 3ED

Cllr Larry M Ford 020 8508 4344
 (EH&L and Community Committees)
 47 Stonards Hill, Loughton, Essex IG10 3EH

Cllr Stephen W Murray 020 8508 7548
 (Vice-Chairman, EH&L; F&GP Committee)
 1 Avondale Court, Loughton, Essex IG10 3BT

Cllr Betty R Saggars 020 8508 2100
 (Planning and Community Committees)
 10 Southview Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 3LG

EHL= Environment, Heritage & Leisure
 F&GP= Finance & General Policy

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

ST MARY'S WARD

Cllr Ron V Heath 020 8508 3458
 46 Ollards Grove, Loughton, Essex IG10 4DW

Cllr Michael W Wardle 020 8508 2771
 61 The Drive, Loughton, Essex IG10 1HG

FOREST WARD

Cllr Ron Gow
 15 Albion Hill, Loughton, Essex IG10 4RA

Cllr Leslie J Harris 020 8508 1333
 32 Upper Park, Loughton, Essex IG10 4EQ

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

ST JOHN'S DIVISION

Cllr Colin Finn
 16 Church Close, Loughton, Essex IG10 1LQ

ST MARY'S DIVISION

Cllr David Linnell 020 8508 2932
 20 Eleven Acre Rise, Loughton, Essex IG10 1AN

ST JOHN'S WARD

Cllr Brian W Moore 020 8508 7112
 6 Forest View Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 4DX

Cllr Roger E Pearce 020 8281 1386
 32 Millsmead Way, Loughton, Essex IG10 1LR

Cllr Dorothy F Paddon 020 8508 2238
 12 Forest View Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 4DX

DEBDEN GREEN WARD

Cllr Stephen W Barnes 020 8502 1152
 34 Durnell Way, Loughton, Essex IG10 1TG

Cllr Sue Lipscombe 020 8508 4938
 111 Grosvenor Drive, Loughton, Essex IG10 2LA

Cllr Colin J Huckle 01992 813520
 15 Middle Boy, Abridge, Essex RM4 1DT

PARLIAMENTARY & EUROPEAN

MP FOR EPPING FOREST

Eleanor Laing MP 020 7219 3000
 House of Commons,
 London SW1A 0AA

MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Robert Sturdy Eryl McNally Jeffrey Tittford
 Andrew Duff Bashir Khanbhai Richard Howitt
 Christopher Beazley Geoffrey Van Orden

District council control goes up for grabs

THIS May sees an unusual local event - a full Epping Forest District Council election.

This has only occurred once before, when the district council was formed in 1974.

Following a review of district ward boundaries, the number of councillors is being reduced by one to 58.

Voting will be on Thursday 2 May from 8am to 9pm in all areas of the district.

Polling cards will be delivered a few weeks before the election, and this will

outline where your polling station will be.

The venue of some polling stations has changed, so check the details on the poll card carefully.

The district council can now update the register during the year. If your name is not on the electoral register, you will not be able to vote.

So, if you moved house after 15 October 2001 or your details have changed since then, please contact Epping Forest DC's Electoral Services on 01992 564411 for a form, so you can have your name added to the register, or have your entry



altered. The latest date for receiving completed application forms is 12 March - after that, it will be too late for the May elections.

If you would like to vote by post, and have not already applied, please contact the Electoral Services Office as

soon as possible for an application form. Completed forms must be received by 5pm on 24 April at the very latest (this deadline is set by the Government, not the district council).

This is your chance to have your say - make it count.

John Burgess
 Returning Officer

Service chiefs want your views

ESSEX Ambulance Service is asking the public to provide feedback on how it is performing.

The service wants to hear your views and suggestions, all

in the strictest confidence. To comment, call freephone 0800 028 3021 (24-hour), or write to the Chief Executive, Essex Ambulance Service, Broomfield, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 7WS.

Use your vote!

Everyone's a winner

THE Town Council's two Christmas competitions become more popular each year.

This year's card competition attracted lots of entries and the judges, Town Council Chairman Suzanne Harper and Community Committee Chairman Pam Meadows, had a hard time choosing the winners.

The overall winner was Annie Skipper, 13 (Key Stage 3), whose entry was made into the Town Council's official Christmas card.

The other winners, by category, were:

- Adult: Nathaniel Greenleaf
- Key stage 4: John Innis
- Key stage 2: Harriet Mason
- Key stage 1: Roberta Pidgeon.

All the winners received a £20 gift voucher, presented to them by Cllr Harper at the Community Forum on 22 November.

The Best Dressed Window Competition attracted even more entries than last year, and Community Committee vice-chairman Marion Taylor joined Cllrs Harper and Meadows to judge the entries.

The winning entry in the local/independent category was Flowers & Co @ 258, and Intersport won the multiple/chain category. Both are High Road shops.

The winners each received an



Window dressings: Intersport, left, and Flowers & Co, right, receive their Best Dressed Window Competition certificates

Better by design: the Christmas card competition winners with Cllr Harper

PICTURES: GUARDIAN NEWSPAPERS

engraved cup to keep for 11 months, a framed certificate and a £100 donation to the charity of their choice. Their chosen charities were the NSPCC and St Francis Hospice respectively.

The Needlework Box and Travelcare, both in the High

Road, were runners-up, with Bird & Fairley in the High Road and Save The Children in the Broadway highly commended.

Runners-up and highly commended winners each received a framed certificate.



Epping Forester at the forum

NOVEMBER'S Community Forum hosted Epping Forest Superintendent Jeremy Wisenfeld.

He gave a talk and slide show on the forest's history, his work within it and the Corporation of London's vision for its future.

The event ended with an 'open forum', when councillors the Town Clerk, and

Community Police Team Sgt Tracy Sanders answered questions from the public.

The next Community Forum will be held in the afternoon – 2pm – of Friday 22 March at the Methodist church hall in the High Road. The aim is to give members of the public who may be unable to attend in the

evening a chance to come along.

Christine Coates, of Essex Social Services, will be giving a talk about facilities in Loughton for older people and planned future developments.

Make a note in your diary to come along to what promises to be an interesting afternoon.

Building on the past

ENVIRONMENT, Heritage & Leisure Committee chairman Cllr Chris Pond has been asked to look into the history of Loughton's buildings.

The request was made by the Essex edition editor of *Pevsner's Buildings of England*, the foremost book on our architectural heritage.

And residents can help, particularly those who live in an

unusual or older house, and know something of its history and its architect. Chris wants to hear any accounts residents have about their house, its builder or inhabitants.

Quite a few architects of national importance designed buildings in the town, especially between 1880 and 1939.

Chris can be contacted via the Town Council or by e-mail at loughton_ponds@hotmail.com.

Dates for the diary

■ **16 Mar, 7.30pm:** Roding Players Orchestra's Spring Concert, Methodist Church Hall, High Road. Will include music for St Patrick's Day. Tickets: £4.50, cons £3.50, children under 11 free (inc refreshments). Details: Miles Harwood 020 8505 4329.

■ **16 Mar, 7.30pm:** Epping Phoenix Choir, St John's Church, Epping. Includes Mozart's Coronation Mass. Tickets: £6.50 (£5 concs/£2 children). Tel: 020 8923 5025.

■ **18 Mar, 8pm:** St John's Wives Group, Easter Goodies with Anne Pratt, St John's Parish Hall, Church Lane.

■ **11 Apr, 8pm:** Loughton Historical Society, talk on the history of the British funeral (John Cribb), Methodist Church, Loughton

■ **15 Apr, 8pm:** St John's Wives Group AGM, St John's Parish Hall, Church Lane..

■ **9 May, 8pm:** Loughton Historical Society AGM and talk on A History of Nursery Rhymes, Methodist Church, Loughton.

■ **20 May, 8pm:** St John's Wives Group: "Fashionable Fruit and Veg – The Reynolds Organisation", St John's Parish Hall, Church Lane.

■ **17 Jun, 8pm:** St John's Wives Group: "Naked Chef Territory – Outing to Darkest Essex".

■ **Every Sunday, 3.30pm-5.30pm (term time):** Kidz Club for children aged 6-12. Details: 020 8502 0695.

■ **Every Sunday, 7.30-10.30pm:** Dance – ballroom, Latin and popular sequence, Victory Hall, Hainault Road, Chigwell. Admission: £3 + refreshments. Details: 020 8508 0313 (after 6pm).

■ **First Sunday of month at 3.30pm:** Church Service, St Michael's Church, Roding Road, Loughton. Friendly, informal service, welcomes those who have learning difficulties and their friends. Includes a number of modern Christian songs, a talk and a few prayers. Lasts about half an hour and is followed by tea. All welcome.

■ **Every Monday, 7.15-9.15pm:** Roding Players Orchestra rehearses at Roding Valley High School, Alderton Hill, Loughton. New players welcome. No audition. Call Miles Harwood on 020 8505 4329 for details.

■ **First and third Monday, 8pm:** St John's Wives Group, St John's Parish Hall, Church Lane.

■ **Every Monday, 8-10pm:** Epping Phoenix Choir meets at Epping Methodist Church Hall. New members welcome, especially tenors and basses. Details: 020 8923 5025.

■ **Every Monday, 9.30pm:** Loughton Mountaineering Club, Victoria Tavern, Smarts Lane, Loughton. All hill walkers and climbers welcome. Call Jeff Harris 020 8508 2888.

■ **Every Tuesday, 7-9pm:** Reiki Healing, Kingsley Hall, Kingsley Road, Loughton. Details: 020 8502 3169.

■ **First Tuesday of month, 8pm:** Royal British Legion Branch and Club meetings, 118 Church Hill, Loughton.

■ **Second Tuesday of month, 7.30pm:** Forest Philatelic Society meets, Centenary Hall, Loughton Methodist Church, High Road. Details: 020 8508 1244.

■ **Every Thursday, 12.45pm:** Rotary Club of Loughton meets Roebuck Hotel, North End,

Buckhurst Hill. Call: 020 8504 6367.

■ **Every Thursday, 4.45pm-7.45pm:** The Valley School of Dancing, Children's Dancing Classes, Kingsley Hall, Kingsley Road, Loughton. Details: 020 8508 7349.

■ **Second Thursday of month, 8pm:** Loughton Historical Society, Methodist Church, High Road, Loughton. Guest visitors welcome on payment of £1.50.

LABOUR COUNCILLORS' SURGERIES:

First Saturday in each month:

■ **9.15-10.15am:** Oakwood Stores, Longcroft Rise

■ **From 10.30am:** The Broadway shopping parade (under the walk-through)

Second Saturday in each month:

■ **9.30-10am:** outside Londis, Valley Hill

■ **10.30-11am:** outside the Mother Hubbard pub, Valley Hill

Further copies of Think Loughton can be obtained from the Town Council's offices at 1 Buckingham Court, Rectory Lane, Loughton, or from Debden or Loughton Libraries.

Copy date for next issue: 22 April. Next issue covers June to mid-September

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

2002			
March	6	Wednesday	Full Council
	11	Monday	Planning
	20	Wednesday	Community
	22	Friday	Community Forum*
	25	Monday	Planning
April	3	Wednesday	Environment, Heritage & Leisure
	8	Monday	Planning
	17	Wednesday	Finance & General Policy
	22	Monday	Planning
	23	Tuesday	Annual Town Meeting‡
May	1	Wednesday	Full Council
	7	Tuesday	Planning
	15	Wednesday	Annual Council

* 2pm, Methodist Church Hall, High Road

‡ 8pm, Wesley Hall, Methodist Church, High Road

All meetings held at the Town Council offices at 1 Buckingham Court, Rectory Lane, at 7.30pm unless stated otherwise. Please telephone the Town Council for dates of meetings after 15 May.

The gas giants cometh

SPRING officially arrives on 20 March, as the sun climbs north of the Celestial Equator at the Equinox.

The evenings become lighter and there are noticeably fewer hours available for viewing the night sky.

Spring sees our celestial views gradually turn from the adjacent spiral arm of our home galaxy to the open realms of intergalactic space.

By the end of May, the 'Summer Triangle' of Vega, Deneb and Altair rides high in the eastern sky in the late evening.

Planets

At the beginning of this quarter, Venus is close to the Sun and is not easy to see. However, towards the end of the quarter, Venus will begin to appear in the west after sunset.

The orange-coloured planet Mars, which has been

prominent in the south for months, is still visible but is now receding quickly from its closest approach to the Earth and becoming fainter.

The gas giants Jupiter and Saturn are very prominent at the beginning of March and are high in the south by early evening. By the end of the quarter, they will be sinking into the west and are lost in the glow of the sunset.

Saturn is tilted so that its ring system is wide open, a marvellous sight.

On the evening of 14 May, the planets Venus, Mars and Saturn will all be close to the crescent Moon low down in the West after sunset. The Moon will be full on the 28 March, 27 April and 26 May.

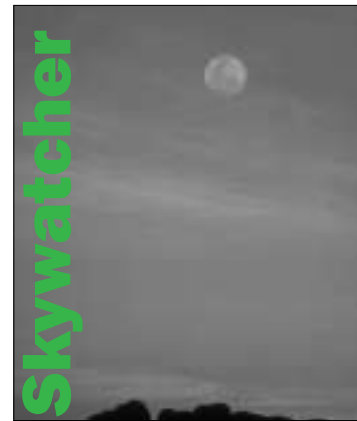
View the asteroid Vesta

The asteroids are chunks of space debris left over from the birth of the solar system. Most of them orbit the sun in the

space between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter.

On the evening of 19 March the asteroid Vesta passes just South of the planet Saturn. This presents a very good opportunity to see an asteroid using a small telescope or binoculars if you've never seen one before.

Measuring 576km Vesta is the third largest asteroid known and was discovered in 1802 by Heinrich Olbers.



Loughton Astronomical Society

If you are interested in astronomy and want to find out more then the Loughton Astronomical Society meets weekly on Thursday nights at the Theydon Bois Scout Hut from 8-10pm. New members are always welcome.

Skywatcher website

For those of you with internet access, you can find the Loughton Skywatcher website at www.loughton-tc.gov.uk/6sky.htm

The site is regularly updated and has useful links to help you find your way around the night sky.

The next time that you're outside on a clear dark night, look up and see what you can spot in the sky, there's always something to look at. In the next edition I'll be taking a look at our summer skies.

Let's hope for clear skies and good viewing.

Town Council swings into action

THE disused play area near the Green Walk in Felstead Road is to be reinstated by the Town Council.

The Epping Forest District Council-owned site has been in a state of disrepair for some time and was recently used for

access by London Underground contractors carrying out work on the nearby Central Line.

But ownership of the site has been transferred to the Town Council, which intends to reinstate the playground after a petition by local residents.

Buckhurst Hill Parish Council

is helping out by adding some additional funds, and London Underground is making a payment relating to the one item of equipment still on the site when its contractors used the land.

Views

The Town Council is drawing up plans for the area and wants to hear the views of local residents, especially young people.

Is there a particular piece of play equipment children really enjoy? Or anything that does not give them the scope to stretch themselves? Do let the Town Council know.

While the budget for the site is not unlimited, the Town Council wants to see a stimulating, exciting and safe play area there that meets the needs of local children, and is sure this can be achieved with residents' help.

■ THE playgrounds at Colebrook Lane, Oakwood Hill, Newman's Lane, Hillyfields and Westall Road are to be added to the list of playgrounds maintained by Loughton Town Council.

These sites had previously been the responsibility of Epping Forest DC's Housing Department but, as they are used by all local youngsters, the Town Council agreed to take them on.

Unfortunately, playgrounds can be a target for mindless damage, which is upsetting for children and is an unproductive drain on Town Council funds.

It is impossible to ensure the playgrounds' round-the-clock security, though they are inspected on a regular basis.

However, councillors hope residents will watch over these playgrounds to help keep them in a good condition for our children.

Do your own organic veg

WHY pay so much for organic vegetables when you can grow your own?

It is surprising that from a small bed you can grow enough to feed a family of four. Plant close together, cabbage, carrots and onions – they will be far sweeter when harvested small. Courgettes

are also good: three plants will produce enough for your needs. Pick often before they grow into marrows.

Do not dig the soil. Lightly hoe throughout the summer to say goodbye to weeds. To get rid of aphids, spray with a weak solution of washing up liquid. Use only homemade compost, manure

or chicken pellets. (Bone meal and blood, fish and bone are good long term fertilisers). In time, you will encourage your own predators.

Be experimental with containers – there are so many annuals to choose from. Take into consideration height and colour. Grouped together, they will give more

impact. A few small pots of annuals planted now will fill blank spaces when plants fade in the flower bed.

Among the flowers, grow fennel, thyme and chives – there is no reason not to use every inch of soil.

Garden Guru is written by Cllr Pam Meadows



Family history paper chase

SO you're finding your ancestors using those useful tools of officialdom: the certificates.

The more unusual your surname, the quicker you can progress, which is why I have put the quest for my maternal grandfather, John Cooper, on hold. Your ancestors will double in number every generation.

National registration began in mid-1837, but was not compulsory until 1882. It's fair to say all marriages, and most births and deaths, are recorded. Escapees are mainly rural and female.

Irrespective of initial location, copies of all certificates are sent to the Registrar General, now at the Family History Centre, Myddleton Street, London EC1.

Index books come in three sections: by year, quarter-of-year and alphabet. So, my birth, on 11 July, comes under the red

Tracing your ancestors? Here's the second instalment of Phil Kingham's guide

(birth) index, 1941, September quarter, E to K.

A birth certificate tells you the date and location of birth, the child's gender, address, father's name and occupation, and mother's maiden name.

Armed with these last two and starting from a year later – just in case it was a premature

birth – search backwards in time in the marriage index to locate and apply for the parents' marriage certificate.

The marriage certificate tells you the bride and groom's ages, their addresses and their fathers' names and occupations.

This should point you again to the birth indices and the continuation of the search.

Certificates cost £6.50 and can take up to a week to process. In theory, it should be possible to go back at least 150 years, or six generations.

Viewpoint

Volunteering is not just for Christmas

A S manager of Epping Forest Volunteer Bureau, I write on behalf of the many local groups registered with us who benefited from the help of volunteers last year.

Thanks to everyone who gave

their time and talents to support fellow members of the local community. You may have comforted crime victims, cared for a neglected pet or helped out in a charity shop – the list of voluntary work is endless. Whatever you did, it has had a

very positive impact on others. Most charities and voluntary groups would not exist without volunteers. Many much-needed services which may seem to ‘happen by themselves’ would not happen without them. It’s often those people who work

tirelessly without attention who fulfil many local needs. These needs remain, as does the need for volunteers. If you have spare time and would like to find out how rewarding volunteering can be, call us on 01992 564254.

Jacqui Webb

■ In the last edition of *Think Loughton*, an article appeared under the heading “International Year of the Volunteer”. We want to make it clear that this was not written by Epping Forest Council for Voluntary Service, which has no knowledge of it or the views expressed within it.

Contacting us

WE welcome contributions to *Think Loughton*, but do not guarantee their inclusion and reserve the right to edit them. The views expressed are not necessarily those of Loughton Town Council.

We’re spreading the legal aid net

EPPING Forest’s three Citizens Advice Bureaux are working with the district council, Legal Services Commission and local solicitors to set up a Community Legal Service Partnership.

The partnership will assess the demand for legal advice services across the district and how this need is being met.

We know local people find it difficult to find solicitors to carry out legal aid work.

The next stage will be to

plan how additional services might be provided. Whatever, the partnership will be launched in a few months’ time. Watch this space!

**Alison McBrayne
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