



Formed 1972

# Hills Amenity Society

Working for the Conservation Areas of York Hill, Baldwins Hill and Staples Road

## How does future look now for Hills?

Hills Amenity Society was formed in 1972 following the development of five chalet-type houses on the corner site of Woodbury Hill and York Hill followed by an application for four properties on the site of Woodberrie, which occupies the next corner of Woodbury Hill and Kings Hill. A number of applications over the ensuing 40 years were successfully opposed by Hills Amenity Society, local residents, town and district councils. A recent application was taken to appeal for a new house to the east of Woodberrie and upheld by the Inspector. Is this the end of the story - or just the start of a new chapter? And what does it mean for the future of the Hills. On Page 3 Cllrs. Chris and Caroline Pond assess where we are.

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## Hills AGM and Open Meeting

All welcome at the Hills annual open meeting plus AGM

**Thursday 19 May**

**The Gardeners Arms, York Hill at 7.30pm**

This is your opportunity to make your views known about the area in which we live

**Our speaker will be Cllr Mrs Judith Jennings on being Town Mayor 2015-16**



## Join us for Queen's 90th on 12 June

Hills Amenity Society is planning one of its popular picnics on York Hill Green on Sunday 12 June. Make a date now to join us with all the family - and see Page 2 for Gardeners Hog Roast.

## Help us turn back litter tide

National litter-pick day was 21 March and Hills litter-pickers were out as usual - both...or was it all three of them. People like Lawrence of York Hill who quietly go about their work picking up any litter they see. In truth we do not know how many as they tend not to make too much of what they do. But they do make a difference and a very big thank you to whoever they/you are. School time is peak time for litter-dropping. Theydon Bois, Buckhurst Hill, Woodford Green and even Leytonstone and Walthamstow have organised litter-picking groups. Should we? Do let us have your views on [hillsamenitysociety@gmail.com](mailto:hillsamenitysociety@gmail.com).

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In the Hills—for the Hills



**HillsWatch** is a registered neighbourhood watch community covering the three conservation areas plus immediately adjacent roads. The scheme encourages a caring attitude towards others in the community, keeping an eye open for loutish or suspicious behaviour and taking appropriate action. In this issue we highlight the apparent easing of the of juggernaut problem following new signage, closure of Loughton Police Station from 1 April and the apparent cessation of open meetings, with local police, and ever-growing problems with litter. For more information see <http://www.ourwatch.org.uk>.

**Loughton Police Station** is now closed to the public. This means a trip either to Harlow or Chelmsford to report a crime or lost property - or use the telephone or websites. See "who to contact" below.

**Essex Crimestoppers** can be called to report crime anonymously on 0800 555111: [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)



## Juggernaut watch

According to vigilant "juggernaut watchers" around School Green the invasion appears to have abated following the introduction of new signage. If you see a juggernaut (such as this one) attempting to negotiate the Hills do please try to get a picture and a numberplate together with a time and date. It is very helpful to keep a log of incidents which can be reported to the local police and to Essex County Council.

## Meet the police

Following closure to the public of Loughton and Epping Police Stations our nearest is now Harlow, open between 9.00am and 5.00pm. Monthly local community meetings will alternate between Brentwood and Epping Districts, the first being on 13 April at 18:30 at Roding Valley Hall, Station Road, Buckhurst Hill. Local meetings will be advertised on the Essex Police web page under "my neighbourhood" for Epping/Brentwood. The Community Police can be contacted at [hubofficeefdbrentwood@essex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:hubofficeefdbrentwood@essex.pnn.police.uk) Telephone: 101 extn 313603.

### Who to contact

**Noise:** ring the District Council Environmental Health team (01992 564000, 24 hours), not the Police

- **Anti-social behaviour**, such as drunk and disorderly, intimidation etc, ring 101 and get a crime number or telephone 01245 491491

- **Criminal activity**, such as a threat to life/safety or property (an emergency situation) - ring 999;

### Help wanted

Please let the Committee know if you would be interested in becoming a Hills Watch Street Coordinator.

# Gardeners Arms

York Hill, Loughton Tel: 020 8508 1655

## Always a warm welcome

Lunch served every day  
Mon-Fri 12 noon to 3.00pm  
Sat-Sun 12-4.30

-oOo-

### Queen's 90th Birthday Celebration



Saturday 14 May

Hog roast from 5pm  
live music from 8pm

### Free beer tasting

-oOo-

Father's Day  
Saturday 19 June  
Two sittings 1pm and 3m  
£28.90 for 3 courses

-oOo-

Live music each month  
14 May 4 June 2 Jul 6 Aug  
3 Sept 1 Oct 12 Nov



## Every Weds

8pm start

Discounted  
Beers and  
Wines

Good Prizes

Teams of up to 8  
people

£2 per person

## Go-ahead for new build on Woodberrie site - what will this mean?

Since 1972 successive applications to develop on the site of Woodberrie, a signature property on Woodbury Hill in the York Hill Conservation Area, have been refused by the local authority. The latest application for a new dwelling to the east of the property, opposed by HAS Committee, Loughton Town and refused by Epping Forest District Council, has been approved on appeal. What does this mean for the Conservation Area? **County Councillor Chris Pond and District Councillor Caroline Pond give their assessment of where the conservation areas are now:**

The Government is very pro-housing-growth, and successive ministers have tweaked the planning laws to favour development rather than the prevention of development. Conservation areas are still protected, but the likelihood still is that, whatever local councillors decide, a challenge may be mounted with the Planning Inspectorate, and that is ever more likely to be successful. Local planning officers may also be more inclined to recommend an application (say, for an additional house on a large plot or a massive extension) for approval, which means the job of those resisting it, whether resident/amenity groups or cllrs, is made more difficult.

Needless to say, if an application is approved, those who were against it have no right of appeal. This is an inherent unfairness in the system.

As far as the Hills' three conservation areas are concerned, there are two main dangers. These are infilling of spare and side plots, and the development of the Green Belt parcels to the west of Woodbury Hill, those large gardens abutting the Forest. A third might be added, which is the planting of buildings of design unsympathetic to the *genius loci* (sense of place) of the area.

### **Infilling**

The 2016 inspector's decision to allow a new house approximately on the site of Woodberrie's garage was an example of this. With Loughton land values established at £4 million an acre (by the sale of the RVHS tennis courts elsewhere in the town), the value of a side or corner plot is now immense. New houses tend to have pocket-handkerchief sized gardens because of this high land value, so that means the sense of spaciousness established by what 100 years ago were ordinary gardens of a sixth of an acre or more is compromised. The new house to be built next to Woodberrie was not of an offensive design, but it would arguably still detract both from the amenity of



neighbours, by its relative proximity, and from the general pleasantness of the area. There is a current proposal to build in the conservation area in what was the rear garden of 25 Staples Rd. That was refused by an inspector once before; we shall have to see what happens to this application, which is without vehicular access, given the recent changes in planning law.

### **Land to the west of Woodbury Hill**

The Government seem to be keen at present on additions to built up areas. The very large plots of houses on the west side of Woodbury Hill, from Woodbury Hollow to Dryads Hall inclusive, are in green belt. They were lands enclosed from the Forest in the early 19c, possibly illegally, and some are still heavily wooded. The reasons for maintaining land in Green Belt are established in planning law, and include "protecting the setting of historic towns" - but unfortunately not the setting of a conservation area. These lands are therefore vulnerable, and their loss would greatly affect the setting of the York Hill CA.

### **Buildings of unsympathetic design**

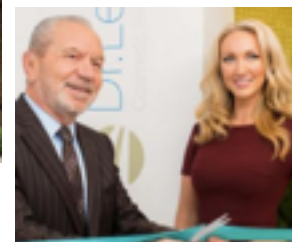
Architects at present seem to be following a fashion for bizarre buildings. You can of course get more for your money by building a concrete

and glass construction than by traditional methods, especially as bricklayers are a shortage trade. Because the Hills areas, with the exception of Staples Rd, are a real mixture of styles, it is difficult to resist a building on the grounds of incongruent style. Whilst one can accept that in every generation there may be a building of real merit and real novelty erected, the run of the mill modern building is likely to be an intrusion in the design of the Hills CAs, but it can be very difficult to convince the Conservation Officer and planning inspectors of that. With the two new buildings added to Staples Rd school, the firms of architects concerned did try to adapt and reflect the styles of the CAs, with (eg) pitched roofs, polychrome brickwork, and diapered tile hanging. The 2015 building won the Loughton Design Award on the basis of being a modern variant on the traditional idiom. The fallback position is that conservation area status does not *preclude* new development, but it should always "conserve and enhance" the area.

The Hills have always been active on planning matters, and have a good reputation with EFDC. The price of conservation is eternal vigilance!

## New 'healthy life' centre on York Hill

Alan Sugar and his 2013 Apprentice Dr. Leah Totton are behind the make-over and new look for the corner of York Hill and Kings Green. Dr Totton is the third winner of the BBC show to set up shop in the district, with 2011 winner 'Inventor' Tom Pellereau based in Debden and 2012 winner Ricky Martin in nearby Golding's Hill. Guardian Gazette picture shows Alan Sugar and Dr Leah cutting the tape to open their new business. Other pictures show the site before and after.



Picture and story [Joseph Flaig](#), Guardian Gazette 07795 316 211 / [@JosephFlaigEFG](#)

## Recent planning applications

**58 York Hill** - Formation of off street parking area in the front garden with perimeter retaining walls, additional landscaping, and the provision of a 3 metres wide opening onto York Hill.

**71 Queens Road** - Permission refused for two storey rear extension with balcony, balustrades and 2m high privacy screens on either side of the balcony area. Relocation of existing external steps and landing area to provide access to the garden.

**Woodbury Hollow Cottage Woodbury Hill** - Listed

building application permission refused for proposed single storey rear extension.

**26 Stony Path** - Permission granted for erection of single storey outbuilding for use as a garden room.

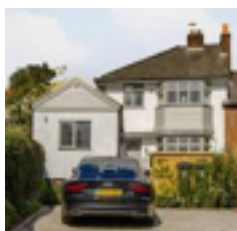
**Trevelyan House Arewater Green** Permission has been refused for demolition of three existing properties and associated buildings to be replaced with 10 new dwelling houses, new access road, parking and landscaping.

**25 Staples Road:** Permission to develop land to the rear has been refused "by reason of the location, design, height and bulk of the proposed new house"

## Pick of Hill's property for sale

In association with

**WOODBURY HOMES**



**York Hill:** Four bedroom cottage £975k



**Kings Green:** Three bedroom end of terrace. £550k

Pictures and details [Zoopa](#)



**The Summit:** Five bedroom detached house £1m



**York Hill:** Two bedroom, mid-terrace house £450,000 stc



**Baldwins Hill.** Five bedroom detached House £1.8m

## ...and some sold recently -

[rightmove](#)



**14 Queens Road**  
3 bed det Sold for £775k Jan 2016 (£378k Jan 2013)



**51 Staples Road**  
3 bed det sold £700k Jan 16



**85a York Hill**  
3 bedroom det sold £715k Jan 16



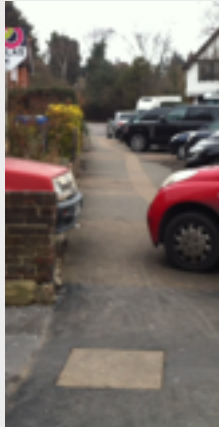
**21 Pump Hill**  
3 bed det £920k Jan 2016



**Baldwins Hill Hill** 4 bed det £800k in Dec 15 (sold Oct 06 for £535k)

## Time to do something about Kings Green?

Kings Green is a disgrace. Prominent for the war memorial adjacent to the High Road and opposite the much-acclaimed cricket ground, the footpath has become a free-for-all. Motorists frequently place their vehicles across the full width of the pavement and so close to the garden wall it is impossible for mothers with prams and disabled mobility scooters to pass. The surface is broken, shabby and dangerous. The Green is part of the York Hill Conservation Area. Hills Amenity Committee has registered its concerns with County Council and hope for similar attention to that given recently to Station Road.



## Record number at Hills lunch



The Hills Amenity Society lunch which followed the unveiling of the plaque at the top of York Hill on Sunday 15 November drew a record crowd at the Gardeners' Arms.

# Sewer blockage and burst main close York Hill

Two events coincided to cause the closure of York Hill and chaos to Loughton High Road. The blocked sewer initially showed itself in one property but after extensive excavation proved to be the main sewer in York Hill. The burst main occurred on School Green at the York Hill, Staples Road, Queens Road junction.



### And would you fatty-well believe it....?...

Within a week or two of everything getting back to normal someone tipped a load of fat and blocked a main drain on York Hill which then caused more problems when Storm Katie turned the hill into a river and caused the usual problems for homes lower down. Bin it - Don't Block it as Thames Water would say!



# Di Rhodes is Loughton Citizen of the Year 2016

Loughton Town Council made Hills resident Diane Rhodes Loughton Citizen of the Year at their Annual Service. The citation applauds Di for dedicating three decades her life to the service of our community.

Her involvement has ranged from leading a campaign to "save the conker tree" in the High Road to creating a thriving visual arts centre run entirely by volunteers. She was a founder member of Loughton Residents Association in 1981 and later served as a district councillor for 12 years but it was for her extensive community work that she received the award.

Her service to the town includes acting as a trustee over many years for Lopping Hall, the Loughton Parochial Charities and the Loughton Potato Ground. She has been heavily involved in the Loughton High Road Town Centre Partnership also serving as its vice-chairman. With her extensive knowledge of local history, she was a member of the Hills Amenity Society team which drafted character appraisals and management plans for the three conservation areas. More recently in 2011 she helped found the new Loughton Arts Centre within the Lopping Hall complex.. [Picture Tom Barnes, Epping Forest and picture and story http://www.guardian-series.co.uk/news/efnews/14315369.Dedicated\\_volunteer\\_honoured\\_with\\_Citizen\\_of\\_the\\_Year\\_award/](http://www.guardian-series.co.uk/news/efnews/14315369.Dedicated_volunteer_honoured_with_Citizen_of_the_Year_award/)



Comment

## Sorry, it's a bit like one of THOSE dinner parties...

You know how it is, a glass of wine and the topic round the table turns to house prices and development. The fact is that house prices really are a talking point just now...and that probably means they have already peaked and levelling off for a while. But a glimpse at Page 4 reveals a house in Queens Road which sold for £378k in January three years ago has just been resold for £775k in Jan 2016 according to *RightMove* figures. And that is serious money talk at any local dinner party. Small wonder then that the vendor of Woodberrie stuck to her guns and appealed the local authority refusal for an additional house on part of the garden to the east....and won. It so happens that the Hills Committee very much regrets this: HAS was formed in 1972 to fight development on that very same plot. The proposed development is modest in size but whether this is the end of the story or just the beginning of a new chapter remains to be seen. Another green space succumbs to brick and concrete but, as a taxi driver observed recently, "Nice up here - plenty of room for more houses" - but then how "nice" would it be?



## Hills plaque unveiled

The Hills plaque on York Hill Green, promoted by Hills Amenity Society to celebrate our 40th anniversary, was unveiled first on Thursday 21 November and then three days later at the Hills Autumn Lunch. The project, conceived by Hills chairman Stephen Cohen, was adopted and supported by Loughton Town Council with Essex County Council community funding and was extended to include general refurbishment of York Hill Green bollards and road signs. The sign and has been proving a popular addition to the spectacular views offered from that spot opposite Gardeners Arms. Full story and more pictures on [hillsamenityociety.co.uk](http://hillsamenityociety.co.uk)

*Our picture shows County Councillor Norman Hume, Town Mayor Judith Jennings and County Councillor Chris Pond.*

## Support our work for the Hills: just £4 a year

Hills Amenity Society has been working since 1972 to preserve, protect, develop and improve features of both historic and public interest and to promote higher standards of planning and design in keeping with existing amenities and the rural character of the three Loughton conservation areas of York Hill, Staples Road and Baldwins Hill. The Society organises social events such as special occasion picnics, autumn lunch and open meeting and AGM in the Spring. It awards a prize for the best kept garden, monitors planning and has been responsible for carrying out detailed appraisals of the area adapted and now adopted by the District Council. New members are always welcome. Membership of Hills Amenity Society costs just £4 per household a year payable to Hills Amenity Society and may be sent to The Treasurer, Woodpeckers, 37 Woodbury Hill, Loughton.

### HILLS COMMITTEE

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