

Loughton Broadway Town Centre Partnership

The Loughton Broadway Town Centre Partnership (BTCP) has continued to meet every two months. Judy Lovell, from the Restore Community church, who had chaired the BTCP for several years, resigned at the AGM in July, prior to moving to Wivenhoe. We all appreciated her conscientious commitment to the Broadway community, both in her six years at Restore's hub, and in her continuing to chair after it closed in 2018. Rose Brookes agreed to step in as an interim chair for a few months to keep the Partnership going until a more suitable chair could be found.

These are challenging times for High Streets all over the country as the pandemic has only served to speed up changes to the population's shopping habits. The success of the Epping Forest Shopping Park just a short distance away makes boosting footfall a particular challenge. The BTCP has chosen to concentrate on community activities involving various local partners.

Santa Claus came to town in early December when students from New City College designed and built a Pop-Up Santa's Grotto in the recently closed EFDC Housing office. The Loughton Bookshop, the Debden Trader's Association and many local residents made generous donations so the visit to Santa was free, and all children received a good quality book. We were able to use St. John's on the Broadway opposite for face painting and other activities. The Thomas Willingale Primary School at the end of the Broadway, where currently Pupil Premium numbers are at 38 per cent, made special efforts to promote it amongst their parents. Many College students and staff, local Councillors and volunteers stewarded the event.

At Christmas a higher number than usual of the shops decorated their windows in Loughton Town Council's annual competition. The BTCP decided to build on the success of this by organising their own shop window competition for the forthcoming Coronation. Local primary school children are also being asked to design a card to send to King Charles. Prizes will include books remaining in Santa's sack and Coronation mugs.

In September Jordan Dapaah, of EFDC, came to talk to the Partnership about the proposed improvements to the Broadway. We are looking forward to Councillor Lee Scott, Highways Cabinet member for Essex County Council and who also represents the Broadway, attending our meeting in May.

The Partnership would like to thank Epping Forest District Council for the support it receives and are particularly grateful to Lorraine Gibson, Kevin Milligan and Rachel Smith for their help with various events.