

EPPING TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON 13 APRIL 2018 AT 8.00PM IN EPPING HALL, ST JOHNS ROAD, EPPING

PRESENT: Town Councillors: A Church (Town Mayor), N Avey (Deputy Town Mayor), Mrs D Baird, L Burrows, Mrs C McCredie, H Pegrum, Mrs B Scruton, G Scruton, J A Smith, Miss H Whitbread, M Wright, J Whitehouse

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss B Rumsey (Town Clerk, Epping Town Council)
Mrs G Vallis (Planning & Events Officer, Epping Town Council)

23 members of the public were present.

563 OPENING OF MEETING

The Town Clerk welcomed residents to the meeting and handed over to the Town Mayor who explained the format for the meeting. Intro councillors

564 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Brian Rolfe and David Lodge.

565 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 31st MARCH 2017

NOTED that the minutes of the above meeting were submitted to an Ordinary meeting of the Town Council held on 11th April 2017 and appropriate action had been taken where necessary. The meeting approved the minutes and the Mayor signed the minutes as a correct record.

566 ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Report for 2017/18 was received. The Town Mayor advised the meeting that any questions would be taken under agenda item 9 Open Forum.

567 REPORT OF THE TOWN MAYOR

The Town Mayor gave a brief resume on the Town Council's main areas of work in the past year.

Town Mayor's speech

Mayor's introduction

It has been an immense honour and privilege to have served Epping and its people as Mayor this year, particularly as I follow in my father's, great grandfather's and great great-grandfather's footsteps, being the 4th family member

Together with Hilary, the Mayoress, we have attended so many varied and interesting events and we were/are proud to represent this great Town of ours. It has been a very busy and difficult year with new meetings and committees being set up to cater for the new problems and tasks that face us. So, I would like to thank Hilary for her support and also to Nigel Avey, as my deputy Mayor, all the Councillors and all the staff at the Council for their stalwart help. What a sterling job they do!

Where to start?.....

Antisocial behaviour/community policing working party (Holly to speak about in more detail)

The Council has set up an Antisocial Behaviour and Community Policing working Party which has been opened to other concerned members of the Town to study and try to find solutions to increasing problems that the town faces. I will let the Chair of that group speak to you later on her

findings.

Blue plaques

The Town Council is very proud to have unveiled 3 Blue Plaques this year to recognise individuals and families that have enhanced Epping's rich cultural history and provided selfless services to our town, including the Silley family, Sidney Hills and very recently Sir William Addison.

Parklands, Coopersale Playground refurbishment

The Council has continued its planned refurbishment of our local playgrounds which we feel is extremely important to young families living in our parish. I recently opened the new playground at Coopersale at a cost of £28,000 to the Council

War Memorial

This is a very important year for the War Memorial as it is the 100th Anniversary of the end of the First World War and we are pleased to announce that the Council has refurbished the memorial with the cleaning and re-lettering of the names of the Fallen of Epping and the re-dedication of the memorial is to take place on Monday 23rd April conducted by the Rev Lee Batson together with the Royal British Legion.

Jack Silley's Pavilion

I am pleased to announce that refurbishment works are about to commence on the Jack Silley's Pavilion at Stonards Hill with the refitting of the changing rooms to FA standards and hopefully the provision of a café and toilets which I am sure will prove very popular, as well as needed.

St. John's School site

As I am talking about development, I feel I should give you an update on the St. John's Junior School site.

As I have stated before in public, The Town Council will only enter into this project if it benefits Epping and we are still awaiting final written assurances of such benefits, so we have nothing further to report. As negotiations are still in progress, I am not at liberty to go through the details but please be assured that we will only sign the agreement when we believe it will benefit Epping and its residents.

Town Awards

The Town Council recognises many individuals and businesses throughout the year with Town Awards and tonight we will be awarding the winners of the Civic Award for a sensitively restored or well-maintained building and the best kept allotments at our two sites in Lower Bury Lane and Meadow Road.

Epping at the Movies

Susie Evans-Frank and her dedicated team have provided an excellent programme of movies to Epping which have proved very popular and such an asset to the people of Epping. Well done.

Town Show and Christmas Market

One of my many highlights as Mayor was to open the Epping Town Show last July which was well attended. The event is increasing in size and popularity and a great deal of the success is due to the meticulous organisation and time-consuming dedication by Geraldine Vallis, a valued member of Council staff.

The Council continues to support our long-established Epping Market held on Mondays as well as holding the Christmas Market with the Christmas lights in the town and the re-introduction of the popular Christmas Tree on the Piazza. We also hosted an Italian Market in June and a French Market in July which add additional flavour to our town.

Local Council Award Scheme – Quality Award

I must also give praise to our dedicated Town Clerk, Beverley Rumsey, and all our staff, ground staff and Councillors who together have improved our services to the Town which has resulted in the Council being awarded the Quality standard in the Local Council Award Scheme, building on last

year's Foundation Award. What can we expect next year?

Grants

Epping Town Council are pleased to have awarded a number of grants this year; to:

2nd Epping Rainbow Girlguiding

Epping at the Movies

Epping forest District Citizens Advice Bureau

1st Theydon Garnon Scouts

Epping Bowls Club and

Coopersale Cricket Club

The Council make donations to other important local community events, such as the Pipe Band for Remembrance Sunday.

Neighbourhood Planning & Local Plan

This has been a very busy but important year for the future of Epping with the Emerging Local Plan being published, the Council's continued work with the Neighbourhood Plan working group and the normal duties of our Planning committee, but I will defer to our Chairman of these committees to talk to you about them later this evening.

Clubs, Societies and Schools

The Council continues to support our local Schools, Clubs and Societies, including but not limited to the Epping Arts Society, The Heart of Epping (for which I led a group of 8 people on a 14,000 feet fundraising skydive, something I am glad I needed to do only once), The Royal British Legion, Horticultural Society, Epping Town Partnership, the Boxing Club at the Rugby Club, the Epping-Eppingen Twinning Association for which I was privileged to visit Germany as Mayor (at my own expense I hasten to add), and many other clubs and local businesses. This is an important role of the Council to ensure the Town continues to enjoy a rich and varied cultural heritage.

Celebrations

This year, I have been extremely fortunate to represent the Council in some very important celebrations, being Probus' 40th Anniversary, Rotary's 80th, the WI's 100th, Evergreen's 70th and a former Epping resident's 100th Birthday, a former Mayor, Denys Favre, who was planning to be here tonight but now, sadly, cannot attend

Epping in Bloom

The Council is proud to continue our support for Epping in Bloom who provide colour to the Town, particularly in the Market garden and entrances to the Town on the greens. Congratulations to them as they have won a Silver Award presented by Anglia in Bloom against stiff competition.

Services

We continue to provide services to the Town, including the maintenance of the Greens, recreation and Playgrounds, the cemetery, allotments and the toilet in Cottis Lane car park, to mention but a few. Although these are essential to the Town, I am sure that you will agree, these are being provided at an exceptional standard, and I would like to thank the Council staff and grounds staff for all their hard work which is much appreciated but we do not show our appreciation enough.

Talk About Epping

I must also take the opportunity to thank our Town Clerk, Beverley, for her amazing production of our quarterly town magazine, Talk About Epping. It is informative, very professionally produced and gives an essential guide to the Town, particularly on the activities of the Council and local clubs and associations.

I hope we do not lose her to Hello Magazine.

Staff

I would like to thank all the staff at the Council for their hard work and loyalty to the Council and for providing such excellent support. I would also like to particularly thank Tony Clark, one of our Groundsman, who has retired after nearly 20 years with us, often out in all weathers and we wish him well in his retirement.

Precepts

We have had to increase the precepts by a very small percentage this year, the first year for some time in order to meet increasing costs, particularly for the refurbishments of the playgrounds, Jack Silley's Pavilion and such other costs, for example the Christmas Lights. It is a difficult task to try to keep the precepts the same each year whilst all other costs increase with inflation or beyond. I hope you will agree that the Council is providing good value services.

And in conclusion...

There are still many challenges left facing our town and I wish the next Mayor success for the forthcoming year and would again thank all the Councillors and staff for their unwavering support and help this year.

568 GUEST SPEAKERS

The Town Mayor introduced the guest speakers.

(i) **Clr Miss H Whitbread** – Talked about the work she does with other Councillors on the issue of antisocial behaviour in the parish including Coopersale and policing committee through the Epping Forest District Council.

- A notable increase in anti-social behaviour in the past year or so
- The Anti-Social and Youth Strategy Working Group – engaging and updating
- Activities for young people
- Epping Forest District Council Community Safety Team - Community Safety who will work in very close proximity with police in an integrated Hub environment.
- Parkguard
 - Parkguard have been employed by the council since the end of January 2018 to provide some high visibility targeted engagement.
 - They provided a high visibility presence. They have been patrolling Epping Market on a Monday to prevent purse dippers.
 - They are deployed to address reported anti-social behaviour. This includes in Parklands, Coopersale, Birch View, Epping and St Margarets Hospital.
 - Parkguard officers have a specialism in youth work.
- Local Policing

Miss H Whitbread invited residents to ask questions:

Resident 1: What is the definition of antisocial behaviour as they are hanging about, where do you draw the line.

Clr Miss H Whitbread: There is intimidation when in larger groups, gas canisters with the large groups intimidating and we need to find an alternative for them to do, it's the intimidation and antisocial behaviour and it is hard to define.

Resident 2: What about the people who drive around in cars as it's not all antisocial behaviour.

Clr Miss H Whitbread: It's mainly youth but agree that this goes further but Police have got powers.

Resident 3: People coming outside Epping from London, some cause problems

Clr Miss H Whitbread: Halloween was really bad but Police worked through intelligence on these one-off occasions, the drugs issue is separate. It is antisocial behaviour and Police have various initiatives in place.

Resident 4 : Police are seriously lacking on the beat – how far can Park Guard do the role?

Cllr Miss H Whitbread: There is greater visibility with patrols but nothing substitute real police officers. Roger Hurst, the Police and Crime Commissioner has increased numbers of police with targeted on operations; but not replacement - presence and reassurance to residents.

Resident 5 : Speaking of showing presence, as an instance a young person who I saw throw rubbish and jumped on to travel on lorry as moving.

Cllr Miss H Whitbread: That's awful, please report and contact Epping Forest District Council.

Resident 5: It happened quickly, I couldn't get the photo but don't intend to be put in the firing line.

The Town Mayor thanked Cllr H Whitbread for her talk on antisocial behaviour in Epping.

- (ii) **Liz Jones, Friends of St Margaret's Hospital** – Talked about the work of the League of Friends to raise money for the local hospital since 1949, one year after the NHS was founded. Liz also explained the history of the hospital building and brought an information board to give further information on their fundraising. **Full speech to follow to include on minutes.**

The Town Mayor thanked Liz Jones for her talk on the history of the hospital and the league helped his family when it was needed.

569 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF PLANNING COMMITTEE & NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Planning & General Purposes Committee, Cllr N Avey provided a brief report on the work of the Planning Committee over the previous year and talked about Neighbourhood Planning.

Intro

Good evening Ladies and Gentleman. Now what may be the dullest part of the evening or the most interesting! I am the Chairman of the Planning Committee and the Neighbourhood Planning Committee. I want to talk to you about the Planning work undertaken by the Council and progress with Epping's Neighbourhood Plan.

Slide 1

We hold planning meetings throughout the year – 16 in all and we have considered 158 separate applications. We act as a Consultee on all planning and tree protection applications in the Epping Parish. Our comments are returned to EFDC. We do make a difference, as an objection by the Town will ensure that an application is referred to EFDC's Planning Committee. Without that objection some applications, which in our opinion are unacceptable, could be approved by planning officers at the District Council

Slide 2

All our meetings are public and members of the public, including those who are objecting to applications, are welcome to attend. Hearings are relatively informal in comparison to the District Council's planning meeting. We welcome what you have to say. If you don't want to attend you can make objections by email or post.

Slide 3

I thought it would be helpful to show you some applications we have received over the last twelve months. We have chosen them to show you the amount of work undertaken by the Committee in respect of each application and to highlight some themes, which face Epping in planning terms. The first is an application to erect a block of flats behind the High Street on a narrow piece of land by the Black Lion Pub (which everyone knows is the Mayor's unofficial office).

Slide 4

As you can see the design is very modern and not lacking in imagination.

Slide 5

However we objected to this application. This is our written objection as submitted to the District Council. To summarise, we objected given the size of the site the Committee quite rightly considered this was a vast overdevelopment in its height, bulk, mass and scale.

Equally we considered the building in situ and its proximity to the Black Lion Pub, which is a listed building. It was clearly inappropriate in that context. I would note that one of the values of this Committee is the Councilors are also local residents and hopefully more in tune with the local area than Planning Officers at EFDC. Given the parking problems in Epping the Committee was particularly unhappy with the lack of parking provision for residents. Unfortunately this is a common problem, which has arisen in a number of High Street developments and the Committee attempts to resist this where we can.

Slide 6

Well the District Council agreed with the Committee and the development was rightly refused permission.

Slide 7

The second is another example of inappropriate development. The demolition of an existing house at 4a Kendal Avenue and the construction of 6 revised to 5 apartments. In my personal view we should not allow the demolition of perfectly good houses to make way for flats. Unfortunately this is a theme we are seeing more of and I expect more applications of this nature will continue to be submitted.

Slide 8

We objected to this application as you can see. A very detailed objection was submitted to the District Council. The main objection was on the basis that it was a vast overdevelopment of the site in terms of height, bulk, scale and density. I would note that the applicants proposed in the final iteration of the application to sink an underground car park beneath the building with a lift to raise and lower cars. You can imagine the effect this would have had on the neighbours to this property.

Slide 9 then 10

This is a long and detailed objection, as the Committee believed it needed to stop this development for the good of the residents of Kendal Avenue and surrounding area.

Slide 11

The District Council thankfully refused permission for this development.

Slide 12

Our final example and the vexed question of bungalows. The Town Council's view is that the Town needs to retain and protect its stock of bungalows. Particularly in areas such as the Orchards where they are the prominent architectural feature. In the Town Council's view a bungalow is a ground floor dwelling with no stairs or living space in the loft area. A chalet bungalow where the first floor is utilized for living space is a house. This application was to 31 Bower Hill and involved a rear extension, loft conversion with dormer windows. You can see the existing and proposed street scene

Slide 13

The Committee objected to this application. You will note that the Committee maintained that the application represented an erosion of this line of bungalows and depleted the stock of bungalows available. We also noted that the Local Plan (more of that in a moment) recognizes the importance of bungalows.

Slide 14

Unfortunately the District Council didn't agree with the Committee on this occasion and granted planning permission.

If I could turn to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Slide 1 (Cover)

As you have seen before, this is the front page of our Neighbourhood Plan – “**Epping Together – Your Town, Your Say**”.

Slide 2 (Neighbourhood Advisory Committee)

We are often asked what is the difference between EFDC's Local Plan and Epping's Neighbourhood Plan. The Local Plan, which is currently ready in a submission form to the Government Inspectorate, will become the main planning document for the next 15 years in the Epping Forest district. It has been a reasonably divisive topic amongst residents and is currently subject to judicial review in the High Court.

Slide 3 (Neighbourhood Advisory Committee)

However, Epping's Neighbourhood Plan, which Epping Town Council is leading, is specific to Epping. It will sit alongside the Local Plan and will provide a local emphasis on planning issues, which affect the Town. However it is obliged to broadly mirror the Local Plan and cannot diverge from that Plan over material issues such as site selection.

Slide 4 (Neighbourhood Advisory Committee)

The Town Council has set up an Advisory Committee to work on the Neighbourhood Plan. This is composed not only of Councillors but also local residents, whose input is invaluable.

Slide 5 (Key Issues)

The Key Issues the Committee has been considering, in no particular order of importance, are as follows:

- Preserving the character of Epping as a historic market town
- Transport and parking
- Recreation and community facilities
- Natural environment
- Building styles, designs and densities
- Protecting bungalows and a mixture of dwelling styles
- Infrastructure such as roads
- Green Belt and green spaces

These are also all important issues in respect of the Local Plan especially preservation of the Green Belt and the delivery of infrastructure.

EFDC did take the Town Council's comments into account when formulating the Local plan and we saw a reduction in the housing numbers for Epping and the removal of a number of Green belt sites from the Local Plan.

Slide 6

We are progressing to completion of the Neighbourhood Plan, which is nearly in its final draft form. Subject to the progress of the Local Plan, we hope to give residents the chance to see the draft Plan in the summer or early autumn.

We will be asking residents to comment on the Plan before we are required to hold a Local Referendum to seek residents' approval for the Plan's submission to the District Council for formal examination.

Residents are most welcome to attend meetings of the Advisory Committee to join in with discussions.

I would like to thank those residents who have given up their time to work on the Plan as without them I don't believe we would have got as far as we have.

Slide 7 – Local Pictures

Thank you and I am happy to take any questions during the open forum later in the meeting.

570 TOWN AWARDS

Civic Award

The Town Mayor, Cllr A Church, presented the Civic Award to Dylan House in recognition of a well designed building created using sympathetic materials which complements and enhances the street scene. Linda Wolfinger and her partner Effi Jonjinski received the Civic Award Certificate of Merit.

Allotment Awards

The Town Mayor presented an Allotment Award to Mr Bill Towers from the Meadow Road site. Bill was awarded a certificate and cheque for £20 for work on his allotment. Bill kindly donated his cheque to the Mayor's chosen charity for the year, the Epping and District branch of the Royal British Legion. The Town Clerk recognised the second winner, Mr P Hockley (absent) from the Lower Bury Road site who would be awarded a certificate and cheque for £20 for work on his allotment.

(iii) The Town Mayor introduced a third speaker, Janet Whitehouse who would do a talk on dementia.

Guest Speaker: Janet Whitehouse

Janet Whitehouse did a talk on dementia and how common it is. Cllr Whitehouse confirmed a meeting to be held at the library for residents to give them more information and the efforts being made to highlight dementia in the district through the establishment of a Dementia Action Alliance.

The Town Mayor thanked Janet Whitehouse for her speech on dementia.

571 OPEN FORUM

The Town Mayor invited residents to raise questions or comments relating to matters of interest specific to Epping.

There were no questions asked under this item.

The Town Mayor thanked the speakers for their presentations as well as thanking everyone for attending. The Mayor also thanked the Town Clerk and Planning & Events Officer for organising the Annual Town Meeting and also thanked Jeanette and Hettie for providing refreshments. The Mayor said that the Councillors will be around now after the meeting if any residents wanted to speak to them.

The Town Mayor, Cllr A Church closed the meeting at 21.02 hours.