

## EPPING TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON 7 MARCH 2019 AT 7.00PM IN EPPING HALL, ST JOHNS ROAD, EPPING

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

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

62 members of the public were present.

#### 553 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

#### 554 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs D Baird and Letitia Berry.

#### 555 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 13<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2018

**NOTED** that the minutes of the above meeting were submitted to an Ordinary meeting of the Town Council held on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and appropriate action had been taken where necessary. The meeting approved the minutes and the Mayor signed the minutes as a correct record.

#### 556 ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

The Annual Report for 2018/19 was received. The Town Mayor advised the meeting that any questions would be taken under agenda item 9 Open Forum.

#### 557 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**

##### **Introduction**

Ladies and Gentlemen and fellow Councillors, welcome to the Annual Town Meeting organised by the Town Council. Thank you for coming out this evening.

It has been a great honour to serve Epping as Mayor and Chairman of the Council for what has been quite a challenging and busy period.

Together with Caroline, the Lady Mayoress, we have attended a great number of varied and interesting events. What has struck us most is the warmth of the welcome given to us by local residents and the real sense of community in the Town.

As Chairman of the Council there have been a lot of issues for the Town Council to deal with on our residents' behalf, in addition to those key responsibilities listed behind me.

##### **Jack Silley Pavilion**

We have refurbished the Jack Silley Pavilion and improved the changing rooms, which are used by teams playing at Stonards Hill, including the revitalised Epping Town Football Club. We have added a café extension, which we hope will be open in April 2019.

## **Playgrounds**

As part of our ongoing programme of refurbishing playgrounds, I am happy to report that the Parklands playground in Coopersale is now complete.

In this regard we have established a Playground Association with parents to try and obtain funding for the Lower Swaines playground, which we would like to refurbish.

## **Monday Market**

We have been undertaking a thorough review of the Monday market in Epping. We hope the changes we are planning will to give this historic market a healthy future and continue to attract residents and visitors.

## **Blue plaques**

We will be unveiling a Blue Plaque to Dr Joseph Clegg tomorrow, 8<sup>th</sup> March, at the Water Tower in the High Street. More blue plaques are planned and we would welcome suggestions from residents.

## **Planning**

Planning continues to be a very busy part of the Town Council's work. We act as consultee on planning and TPO tree applications, which we receive from the District Council's Planning Office. We have dealt with **147** separate applications, broadly the same as the year before.

Most are straightforward, but a number have been problematic, in particular a number of applications which sought to knock down existing family homes to be replaced with flats. One such application was in the conservation area in the High Street. We have strongly objected to these applications.

Where we object to a scheme, this will mean that the application is referred to the District Council's Planning Committee, which the Town Council can address. I think residents have discovered that their objections should be put to the Town Council, often in person, in order to gain the most leverage for their objections to poor schemes.

## **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.

## **Town Show and Christmas Market**

Both the Christmas Market and the Town Show were again very successful. Residents may not be aware of the enormous amount of work that goes into staging these events behind the scenes. A lot of thanks goes to Geraldine our chief organiser for bringing order from chaos and I am not just talking about the dog show.

## **Grants**

The Town Council has awarded a number of grants this year; including Epping at the Movies and Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau. The Town Council also makes donations to other important local community events, such as the Pipe Band for Remembrance Sunday.

## **Neighbourhood Planning**

We have continued to work hard on the Neighbourhood Plan with the assistance of a dedicated group of residents. We now have the Plan in a state where it can be submitted to the District Council for examination. We are awaiting completion of the Local Plan's examination before we move forward as any changes, if any, recommended by the Inspector would need to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan, to ensure conformity of the Neighbourhood Plan to the Local Plan.

In this regard the Neighbourhood Plan has not added possible sites for development, as it could do, but followed in the main those sites selected in the Local Plan. We believe residents do not want to use any green belt than is absolutely necessary and that our key questions surround the infrastructure, which must be put in place before development commences in the Town.

We are scheduled to appear before the Inspector of the Local Plan in May and this will be on

my last day as Mayor, which will be fun way to bow out.

### **St. John's Road site**

I have left the best till last.

There may be some light at the end of the tunnel in the protracted issue of what will be done with the derelict St John's Road site. As you all may have read, the previous scheme for the site is now defunct. However, this presents a great opportunity for the Town to build a leisure centre on the site to replace the aging sports centre in Hemnall Street. We believe this is exceptionally good news for the Town.

At the moment the District Council is undertaking a survey of the site in order to build a leisure centre. The Town Council will be working with the District Council to try and realise this vision and I hope we can give you some more news on this project in the near future.

### **In conclusion...**

I would like to thank the Lady Mayoress for all her support and to Councillor Grahame Scruton as my Deputy for all his help. I won't thank the chain of office which has been a constant and painful nuisance during my mayoral year and I am sure other Councillors are bored with me moaning about it!

And finally, I would also like to thank my fellow Councillors and the Council's staff for all their hard work and help. In particular a special thank you to Beverley who has worked so hard. I would add that everyone involved with the Council really work, bar the politics, as a harmonious team, making my job as Chairman so much easier. Thank you.

## **558 TOWN AWARDS**

### **Civic Award**

The Town Mayor, Cllr N Avey, presented the Civic Award to WKN Barley Ltd Greengrocers, High Street, Epping in recognition of careful attention to the building created using sympathetic materials which complements and enhances the street scene. N Benzater, C Kasi and M Shergi received the Civic Award Certificate of Merit from the Town Mayor.

### **Allotment Awards**

**Allotment Award Winner:** Lower Bury Lane: The Phillip Hockley Allotment Award

The Town Mayor, Cllr N Avey, commemorated former allotment gardener Phillip Hockley, as the Town Council renamed the Lower Bury Lane Allotment Award in his name.

### Town Mayor's speech

Epping Town Council were very sad to hear of the death of Phillip Hockley, who was a long-standing allotment gardener at our Lower Bury Lane allotments and has won the best allotment award for four years out of five.

Phillip's family tell us that he loved his allotment and had been an allotment gardener all his life and his love of gardening was reflected in his own beautiful garden at home. Phillip grew sunflowers and used to measure the height of his family children up against them. He had a huge end plot, which was beautifully kept. He managed to grow pumpkins, potatoes, carrots and many other things in abundance. Phillip used to grow gladioli and take them to landlady Marlene in the Duke of Wellington. He was a real part of our community.

Phillip was well known at the allotments as he enjoyed much time there and had made many friends, all of who were very sad to hear of his passing.

In honour of his commitment to his allotment, to mark his outstanding work and to keep him part of our allotment family, I am delighted on behalf of Epping Town Council to rename the Lower Bury Lane allotment award The Phillip Hockley Allotment Award.

...I will now present the Phillip Hockley Allotment Award to this year's winner.

Mr A R Carr was awarded with the best kept allotment for Lower Bury Lane. Mr Carr was awarded a certificate and cheque for £20 for work on his allotment.

**Allotment Award Winner:** Meadow Road

The Town Mayor presented an Allotment Award to Mr J Cooke from the Meadow Road site for his best kept allotment on that site. Mr Cooke was awarded a certificate and cheque for £20 for work on his allotment.

#### **559 EPPING QUIZ**

Attendees were invited to take part in the Epping Quiz. Quiz sheets were distributed, and a prize would be awarded at the end of the meeting.

#### **560 GUEST SPEAKER**

The Town Mayor introduced the guest speaker, John Duffell – Speaking about the history of Epping during World War II. Full speech to follow to include on minutes. The Town Mayor thanked John Duffell for his talk.

#### **561 OPEN FORUM**

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

Mr Compton: There is a need for homes and housing and increased density in the town. One aspect is the names being used in Epping for example Half Moon replaced by Billy Jeans for the large block of flats, name of Half Moon Court - nothing to do with Epping. With the building work going on, let's try to make sure old names are perpetuated in naming of places.

The Town Mayor responded to say that yes, there does need to have a sympathetic use for names which is included in the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan. This was also agreed by other Town Councillors at the meeting.

Mr Geddes: On behalf of residents of Theydon Grove, thank you to Epping Town Council for taking over Esso Grove ownership from Exxon.

Ms Mott: In 2018, we achieved 1,800 names - 1,500 of which are members of Epping Sports Centre who signed a petition to have a new centre in Epping. We hope that this local proposal will go forward.

The Town Mayor responded to say that yes it would be a part as best use of St John's site when the site was being discussed by Epping Town Council with Epping Forest District Council and the clearance of the site will start in the Spring/Summer 2019.

Mr Valder-Hogg: I have a leisure centre question, with St John's site, what are the Town Council's plans for this Epping Hall building and how can residents get involved.

The Town Mayor responded to say that Epping Town Council will be giving up this Epping Hall building to become part of the scheme. Any development of a leisure centre, there will be consultation beforehand and a high degree of agreement about the site.

Mr Marshall: There needs to be sustainable and recycling facilities for good kerbside collection from domestic houses. There is a new generation of recycling needed for hard tericycle along with an opportunity for big brands to have waste collected. There are Boots and M&S who have found it hard to provide recycling in Loughton. There needs to be a facility in Epping for

hard to recycle waste. There are potential opportunities for larger retailers. Could Epping Town Council take a lead to lend support to get this off the ground in Epping.

The Town Mayor said that waste is one of his responsibilities as District Councillor at Epping Forest District Council. He said he would talk to Biffa who look after recycling for the district and see how improvements can be made. The Town Mayor said that Epping Town Council would be happy to look at what retailers are doing.

Resident: Epping has got so scruffy especially around Tescos and St Johns Road with a lot of top soil on the road and also there is a problem with parking of 4x4 vehicles, could wooden posts be installed.

The Town Mayor said that he agreed and would speak to Biffa trucks about the soil on the road. He also said that the entrance to St John's site from Epping Forest District Council's Depot – there is a problem with the drains and grass under the trees.

Ms Licence: Residents have put a petition in for the development at Buttercross Lane and wanted to know if Epping Town Council will allow it, the trees have been cut down, it's not an easy road to navigate and wanted to know what was planned.

The Town Mayor said that Epping Town Council objected at Plans East to this planning application and there was a split vote. The application was referred, and it has gone to Bristol to appeal. Epping Town Council objected to the last planning application as not enough changes had been made. We agree about the trees and the development. Once Bristol has responded, Plans East will give delegated authority to give opinion. The Town Council have consistently objected to this site being built on.

Mr Wilson: I use the tube in Epping, and it is dangerous for commuters to approach to the station. At the pavement, traffic come at speed at Kendal Avenue around the bend. There are cars parked and the 'wild west' pedestrian crossing, traffic lights etc. This is such a safety issue. We wrote to Councillors so why hasn't something been done.

The Town Mayor said that was a good question. Transport for London owns the approach to Station Road which is dangerous, and Essex Highways need to have better infrastructure as there is more traffic and housing near Station Road with capacity to take life into own hands, for example in the dark; as well as rubbish from building contractors. Transport for London will be redesigning the site with more parking in the station and less pressure on the street which will get done as part of the Local Plan. The Town Council can raise this with Highways as Kendal Avenue is a one-way system. What needs to be changed is the infrastructure, we know the problems and need to get it done by Essex Highways.

Mr Smith: The island between Kendal Avenue and Hartland Road is a rat run and I avoid crossing the road at the junction as you take life into your own hands. There needs to be safety calming measures put in place.

The Town Mayor said that this has been raised as a suggestion for the traffic problem. He said that there was a planning application on the corner there between Kendal Avenue and Hartland Road where there was a suggestion to put a dangerous entrance at this junction. The Town Mayor mentioned consideration being given to farm vehicles using the road in terms of width.

The Town Clerk explained that evidence was needed from local residents to support the request to Essex County Council Highways. This was currently being received and would be sent on when sufficient evidence had been gathered.

Mr Pryor: I live on Ambleside and am appalled by the planning consents that are given where there is changes without recognition. There is so much building work on Kendal Avenue; half of the pubs have gone in Epping – Half Moon demolished and twice the size of Duke of Wellington.

The George & Dragon pub is the only one left. If the Council doesn't do anything, I will never vote again.

The Town Mayor commented that there is a problem with 4x4 vehicles on the pavement and people have to walk in the road and nothing seems to be done. Epping Town Council is not responsible – it is North Essex Parking Partnership who manage the car parking in Epping and residents need to put more pressure on Highways in this area.

The Mayor continued to say that the Town Council's Planning Committee do their best concerning planning applications and speak at Plans East meetings to object to large blocks of flats been approved but sometimes they are approved on appeal when they get to Bristol. The Duke of Wellington could be turned into a community pub, it's a shame if it disappears but there would need to be enough residents to ensure that it stays as a pub. With the planning process, Epping Town Council will try our best to stop it if it doesn't go to Bristol to be turned into flats, the more residents who object the better.

The Mayor said that there is a parking blight in Epping - he covers parking as part of his responsibilities as District Councillor, but we need to find a balance for residents, commuters and those who use the town.

It was asked if an individual can object to Bristol to these developments and the Town Mayor confirmed that these individual objections are allowed and will add weight to the petition to Bristol.

The Town Mayor announced that the winner of the prize for the Epping Quiz was John Duffell who was presented with a £20 gift voucher to be used at Mrs Baker's slippers stall at the Epping Monday Market.

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for attending. 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 N Avey closed the meeting at 20.20 hours.**