



EPPING TOWN COUNCIL

Forward Plan 2019-2023 (Interim May 2021)

Introduction

Epping Town Council look after the Parish of Epping, which includes Epping, Coopersale and Fiddlers Hamlet. The Town Council is the third tier of Local Government and can only look after those sectors which fall under its responsibility. For Epping Town Council this includes recreations grounds, playgrounds, allotments and the market. We work alongside Epping Forest District Council (who look after areas such as waste and recycling and Council Tax) and Essex County Council (who look after roads and potholes), but we are all independent of each other and cover our own services.

Epping Town Council is often the first point of contact for our residents and we are able to signpost people to help and support, where we are not able to solve their issue ourselves. The Town Council works for the benefit of Epping, its community and its residents.

The Town and its Council

The historic market town of Epping enjoys many benefits; including its position in Epping Forest, its proximity to London (17 miles from the centre), being served by Transport For London's Central Line and the M25 and M11. Its position in Epping Forest limits any residential growth into the forest. Epping is surrounded by 92.4% Green Belt and this is highlighted as the tube train travels through open fields into the town.

Epping had a population of 11,461 (2011 Census) and that figure is now likely to be approximately 12,000. There are 5585 properties and 9611 registered electors.

Epping has three conservation areas; including Epping High Street, Bell Common and Coopersale Street. There are many historic and listed buildings; the oldest believed to be Apple Tree Cottage in Bury Lane, parts dating back from the 1470s. Epping is a linear town which is historically famous for its many coaching inns. The town is still busy and vibrant, regarded as one of the two main town centres in the Epping Forest District, alongside Loughton. Coopersale is a village to the north east of Epping Town and is a village in character. Fiddlers Hamlet is separated from the larger two settlements and is similarly a village in character, with many historic buildings.

Epping Town Council was constituted in 1973 following the reorganisation of the Epping Urban District Council, when some functions were taken over by the District Council and some the Town Council. Epping Town Council and Epping Forest District Council share a name, but they are totally different organisations, covering different services. The District Council are based at the Civic Offices near the Town Greens. Epping Town Council's offices are based at Epping Hall in St Johns Road. The Town Council's grounds team are based at Stonards Hill recreation ground at the opposite end of town.



Services and Functions

Epping Town Council operate many services and functions, which include:

- Epping Hall bookings, administration and maintenance
- Jack Silley Pavilion bookings, administration and maintenance
- Undertake burials at Bury Lane cemetery, related administration & maintenance
- Lower Bury Lane and Meadow Road allotments: administration & maintenance
- Lovelocks Meadow maintenance and protection
- Manage the Monday market, administration and maintenance
- Maintain website and Twitter presence
- Organise and advertise events such as the Town Show, Christmas Market, Continental Markets & Farmers' Markets
- Maintain and protect the War Memorial
- Maintain Baker's Lane Toilets
- Administration for dog bin contract
- Maintain recreation grounds, machinery and playgrounds
- Monitor assets and replace as necessary
- Produce Talk About Epping four times a year and distribute to 5,500 households and businesses
- Support Epping in Bloom
- Administer Council's finances, invoicing, payments, banking
- Work towards the Local Council Award Scheme Gold Status
- Work with partners such as Petanque Club and Scouts
- Work with local organisations
- Organise Mayor's Civic Reception
- Fulfil statutory responsibilities
- Produce agendas, supporting documents and minutes

- Running competitions such as: Epping Rosebowl, Townsperson of the Year, Civic Award & Christmas card competitions

Vision

Epping Town Council is extremely proud of our lovely town and works hard to ensure Epping continues to be a popular and desirable place to live, work and visit. Our team of staff and councillors support and assist our residents, listen to issues and provide useful signposts to other people and organisations.

We provide many services and functions to support the town and its residents. We are lucky to have been gifted Stonards Hill recreation ground by the Silley family, to look after for the people of Epping. We have made considerable improvements to this area over the last year, refurbishing the football changing rooms, adding a café extension, providing outdoor fitness equipment and a table tennis table, including inclusive equipment, to ensure this precious green space can be enjoyed by everyone.

We are active in preserving the historic character of the town and its green environment, by responding proactively to planning applications and developing a Neighbourhood Plan to help safeguard our Parish from overdevelopment.

We support the many local clubs and organisations and help them continue their vital work in the town through Civic support, advertising and offering desirable venues to hire.

We act as a voice for everyone in the town and liaise with other organisations and authorities on key strategic issues to ensure the best outcome for the town and its residents.

We value our professionalism and reputation, striving hard to maintain high standards and be a good employer.



Structure

The Town Council consists of 12 Town Councillors, six representing St John's Ward and six representing Hemnall Ward. All 12 Town Councillors are elected every four years by local residents, with the last election in May 2019 and the next in May 2023. A new Chairman (Town Mayor) and Vice Chairman (Deputy Mayor) are elected every year by their fellow councillors.

The Town Council is managed by the Town Clerk (Proper Officer), who is also the Responsible Financial Officer. Epping Town Council employ 15 staff (8 full time and 7 part time).

Full Council meet once a month on a Tuesday evening at Epping Hall and in accordance with its Standing Orders and terms of reference, much of the Council's business is conducted through committees with delegated powers.

The committees are as follows:

- Planning & General Purposes
- Corporate Governance Advisory Committee
- Jack Silley Project Committee
- St John's Development Advisory Committee
- Neighbourhood Planning Advisory Committee
- Discipline & Grievance Committee
- Appeals Committee
- Task & Finish Personnel Committee

Some of Council's business is also considered through working parties. These groups work on one-off and short-term projects and make recommendations to Council. All decisions go through full Council.

The working parties are as follows:

Membership for both groups is made up of Town Councillors (except the Neighbourhood Planning Advisory Committee) under the direction of the Town Clerk.

- Market working party
- Budget working party
- Action Plan working party
- Playground working party
- Lovelocks Meadow working party
- Tennis working party
- Parking working party
- Epping Hall working party
- Stonards Hill working party (& skate park)

Interest groups:

Climate & Environmental Awareness
Old Pastures (footpaths)

Other groups the Town Council is involved with:

- Safer Epping group
- Joint Standards committee

Finances

Epping Town Council are financed from the precept (part of the council tax which is allocated to Epping Town Council) and income from services and functions. The precept is public money and Council ensure that it is spent effectively and wisely.

We look for value for money and minimise waste, while still providing many high quality services, projects and functions. We exercise strict controls and our activities are audited and transparent.

For the 2021-22 financial year, the precept for a Band D equivalent property is £98.76 per annum, which we believe represents excellent value for money.

We assess our spending requirements on an annual basis, keeping our reserves at a suitable level to minimise risk and earmark reserves for specific projects as required. We operate an income and expenditure budget and hold adequate general reserves and dedicated specific reserves to support our multiple operations.



Key Objectives

Epping Town Council review their Action Plan at least annually. Budgets are designed to support these actions. Council's Key Objectives over the next four years are listed in Council's Action Plan. This includes how any priorities will be financed. Most major external projects will be financed from external grant funding (if obtained).

Budgets

Epping Town Council's budget preparations begin in October of each calendar year. They are developed in November and December, until the final budget is set in the January of the next year. Once the budget is set, spending follows the agreed budget. If any further financial input is needed throughout the year, it will be requested at full Council by the Town Clerk. Budgets are monitored by full Council at their monthly meetings. General and Specific Reserves are set as part of the annual budget setting process.