

EPPING TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21



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ANNUAL TOWN MEETING: Thursday 25th March 2021. 6.30pm. By Zoom.
Epping Hall, St Johns Road, Epping, CM16 5JU. ([Zoom link on website/request by email or phone.](#))

TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

The Town Council has had a very challenging year having to adapt its services, facilities, working practices and meetings to fit in with the Covid-19 restrictions and to make changes to these as and when the restrictions have changed, often with little notice.

From the councillors point of view, the most noticeable change was the switch to digital meetings. Just twelve months ago, Council meetings had to be physical meetings, but a change in legislation allowed digital meetings. This has allowed Councils to continue to meet and make decisions. Epping Town Council embraced this technology and have met digitally for the monthly Council meetings, the twice monthly Planning meetings, the twice annually Corporate Governance meetings, as well as the numerous working party meetings. These digital meetings have also enabled any interested parties to more easily attend the meetings.

For most of the year Epping Hall and the Jack Silley Pavilion have been closed to the public. We were able to assist the NHS with the use of one of the rooms at Jack Silley Pavilion as a specialist blood testing facility, away from the main hospital.

The Monday Market has had to adapt to social distancing rules with the result that currently it is a smaller market. It is hoped to return it to a full market during the course of the summer, as restrictions are relaxed. You may have noticed that the traditional stalls have been phased out in favour of gazebo style stalls. These are easier to work with and adapt and are preferred by the market traders.

The Town Show had to be cancelled in 2020, but

the 2021 Town Show is being planned and is due to take place on Sunday 4th July, subject to the easing of restrictions. The Christmas Market took place on a smaller scale this year but for those who were able to attend was, as always, an enjoyable event.

During the past year, Stonards Hill recreation ground has been an invaluable open space for residents to exercise and to meet family and friends when the restrictions have allowed. These grounds are maintained to an extremely high standard by the Town Council's own grounds team headed up by Bill Towers. Bill will shortly celebrate thirty five years working for the Town Council. The grounds team also maintain the other recreational grounds and play areas listed at the back of this Annual Report, as well as managing our cemetery at Bury Lane.

The Town Council were able to have the tennis courts at Stonards Hill refurbished during the summer of 2020. These proved to be very popular during the time that they were allowed to be open and will certainly be popular once they are able to be reopened.

Largely due to the pandemic, I agreed to serve a second consecutive year as Chair of the Town Council and Town Mayor. The two years have proved to be very different, but the one common feature throughout has been the hard work and professionalism shown by the Town Clerk, Beverley Rumsey and her team of excellent staff. I would like to thank all the Town Council staff, office, ground and caretakers for their hard work keeping the Council's services and functions operating during this particularly difficult year.

Grahame Scruton

Grahame Scruton, Town Mayor

Town Mayor
G Scruton
Deputy Town Mayor
M Wright

Members:
N Avey
I Black
C Burgess

J Duffell
R Griffiths
C McCredie
H Pegrum

B Scruton
M-L Whitbread
J Whitehouse

PLANNING COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Town Council's Planning & General Purposes Committee acts as a consultee to the District Council in respect of any planning application which falls within the Town. It has been a great pleasure for me to continue to chair this Committee throughout the municipal year. There has been no respite from the large number of applications the Committee has reviewed this year; 164 proposals in total and we have made recommendations to the District Council in respect of those applications. A change to the planning procedure has meant that where we object to an application, we are required to attend the District Council's Planning Committee to support our objection. May I thank my Vice Chairman, councillor Barbara Scruton for appearing for the Town Council on many occasions. In making our recommendations, the Committee carefully considers planning issues which arise. We also apply our local knowledge to arrive at a decision which we believe is in the interests of the Town and its residents. The majority of applications we have seen this year are enhancements to family homes which we have not objected to. However, we have seen a small number, which we have objected vigorously to, as we consider they will entail the loss of family homes and damage the amenity of prominent residential streets in the Town. In particular, we objected to one application which we have seen a number of times in different iterations which would have, in our view, been extremely detrimental to the conservation area in the town centre. This involved the demolition of an existing house and the erection of flats. Unfortunately, this theme is becoming more common and more applications of this type are being received. While the Committee does not object per se to flat developments, we will continue to carefully

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

consider any which we believe will affect the fabric and feel of Epping as a market town in a rural setting and robustly object to applications the Committee finds frankly offensive.

May I thank my fellow councillors who also served on the Committee.

Nigel Avey Chairman, Planning Committee

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I have also had the great pleasure to continue to chair the Neighbourhood Plan Committee. With the help of fellow councillors and residents who have given up their time to sit on the Committee, enormous progress has been made on the Neighbourhood Plan. The submission version of EFDC's Local Plan has been subject to examination by an Inspector and EFDC is currently dealing with issues arising as a result of that examination. However, it is likely that the Local Plan will be adopted at some point in the near future. As a result, we have proceeded on the basis that the Neighbourhood Plan must mirror the Local Plan. We have therefore halted any further work on our advanced Neighbourhood Plan, until the Local Plan is nearer to adoption and the Inspector's issues have been resolved. We have not amended the sites identified in the Local Plan for development and we have chosen not to add sites for development, as the Committee wishes to protect as much Green Belt surrounding Epping as possible. We continue to maintain that any development undertaken as a result of the Local Plan must carry such infrastructure enhancements as are necessary to support the development without damaging the Town's character. In particular, we are concerned that Epping's traffic problems must be mitigated before any future large development is undertaken. We hope to be able to return to the Neighbourhood Plan shortly and move towards its adoption.

Nigel Avey Chairman, Neighbourhood Planning

PLANNING COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

N Avey (Chairman)
B Scruton
(Vice Chairman)
C Burgess
C McCredie
G Scruton
(Town Mayor) (ex-officio)
M-L Whitbread
M Wright
(Deputy Town Mayor) (ex-officio)

COUNCIL OFFICERS

B Rumsey - Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
K Harrigan - Finance & Cemetery Officer
R Dennis - Bookings & Administration Officer
G Vallis - Planning & Events Officer
J Lewis - Cemetery & Market Officer
W Towers - Recreation & Amenities Manager & Cemetery Superintendent
M Patience - Groundsman
D Manning - Groundsman
S Willsmore - Groundsman
D Hogan - Market Supervisor
S Alderton - Market Assistant
B Jones - Caretaker
J Tappenden - Caretaker (Epping Hall)
P Morton - Caretaker
J Bayley - Caretaker (Jack Silley Pavilion)

COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCE SUMMARY 2020/21

<u>COUNCILLORS'</u> <u>ATTENDANCE SUMMARY</u>						
2020/2021	Council & (ExtraOrdinary Council)		Planning & General Purposes		Corporate Governance Advisory & (Neighbourhood Planning)	
	Held	Actual	Held	Actual	Held	Actual
Avey, N	10 (3)	10 (3)	18	17	1	1
Black, I	10 (3)	9 (2)	(0)	(0)	0	0
Burgess, C	10 (3)	9 (3)	18	15	0	0
Duffell, J	10 (3)	10 (3)	(0)	(0)	0	0
Griffiths, R	10 (3)	10 (2)	(0)	(0)	0	0
McCredie, C	10 (3)	10 (3)	18	15	0	0
Pegrum, H	10 (3)	9 (2)	(0)	(0)	0	0
Scruton, B	10 (3)	9 (3)	18	17	0	0
Scruton, G (Town Mayor)	10 (3)	10 (3)	18	17	1	1
Whitbread, M-L	10 (3)	10 (2)	18	14	0	0
Whitehouse, J	10 (3)	9 (3)	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	0	0
Wright, M G (Deputy Town Mayor)	10 (3)	10 (3)	18	18	1	1

NB. Numbers underlined indicate not a member of that Committee but has attended some or part of some of the meetings of that Committee.

Where no figures are given, the councillor is not a member of that Committee.

Meetings from 14 May 2020 to 11 Feb 2021 inclusive.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY FOR 2020/21 & BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR 2021/22

EPPING TOWN COUNCIL	2020/21		2021/22	
SUMMARY & ESTIMATES				
	GROSS	NET	GROSS	NET
Service & Committee Support	197280	196180	202850	201750
Loan payments	102416	102416	102416	102416
Grants	4650	4650	4650	4650
Events & Publications	33530	33530	30470	25970
Public Halls	51910	-1590	53060	3060
Market	60390	-9610	43820	-6680
Cemetery	5750	-34250	5680	-38320
Parks & Maintenance	210700	204900	217710	212199
Public Toilet	6820	6820	12300	12300
Allotments	1400	-1400	1500	-1700
Street Furniture	2000	2000	1800	1800
Leases	2001	-4699	2001	-4424
Capital Projects	0	0	0	0
Neighbourhood Planning	3000	3000	4000	4000
War Memorial	100	100	100	100
Total	681947	497047	682357	517121
Less				
Transfer to (+) from (-) reserves		3094		208
PRECEPT + LCTS GRANT		500141		517329

COUNCIL FUNCTIONS

RECREATION GROUNDS/PLAY AREAS:

Stonards Hill Recreation Ground
Ivy Chimneys Playground
Lower Swaines
Frampton Road
Brook Road
Parklands, Coopersale

Epping Monday Market
Bakers Lane Toilets
Epping Cemetery, Bury Lane
War Memorial, Town Green

COMMUNITY HALLS:

Epping Hall, St Johns Road
(also the offices of Epping Town Council)
Jack Silley Pavilion, Stonards Hill Recreation Ground

ALLOTMENTS:

Lower Bury Lane, Meadow Road

STREET FURNITURE:

(Bus Shelters, Seats, Notice Boards,
Town Signs, Finger Post Signs)
Maintenance of selected greens
Christmas lights and trees

PUBLICATIONS:

Town Magazine: Talk About Epping
Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter
Residents are invited to submit material for consideration.
Deadline dates in the back of each issue.

EVENTS & OTHER DUTIES:

Town Show, Stonards Hill recreation ground
Christmas Market, Epping High Street
Specialist Markets, when available
Consultee for Planning & Highways matters within the Town
Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan

COUNCIL PRIORITIES

2020 has been a very unusual year and one which has changed many people's way of working, quickly and unexpectedly. Despite the challenges we have faced, with ever changing government guidance and national lockdowns, Epping Town Council has continued to provide our town with the many services and facilities we operate, including Stonards Hill recreation ground, five playgrounds, two allotment sites and Bury Lane cemetery. We have continued to deliver Epping's historic Monday Charter Market, often with essential traders only, as government rules have allowed. We have operated two sets of public toilets, one at Bakers Lane and one in Stonards Hill recreation ground to support those who have been shopping and exercising outdoors.

Despite the challenges of 2020, we undertook the refurbishment of the tennis courts at Stonards Hill recreation ground and now provide vastly improved tennis facilities with floodlights and free public play times, plus the capacity for private coaching for those who require it.

We also managed to light up Epping with Christmas lights and a central Christmas tree and deliver a socially distanced Christmas market to support the High Street and local businesses and enable residents to do some Christmas shopping outdoors.

Council and planning meetings have continued by Zoom and many residents have joined us on those. We have continued to analyse planning and tree applications in Epping Parish as we would under normal circumstances. We continue to wait for progress on Epping Forest District Council's Local Plan, when work will recommence on our Town's Neighbourhood Plan.

This year, we will be working with Epping Playground Association to deliver an exciting new playground refurbishment at Lower Swaines and cleaning and commemorating our 100-year old War Memorial. We hope to reopen our hiring spaces at Epping Hall and the Jack Silley Pavilion, welcome the return of Epping's Monday Market in full and hopefully return to some brighter times.

CONTACTING THE TOWN COUNCIL

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TALK ABOUT EPPING
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