

EPPING TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24



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ANNUAL TOWN MEETING: Thursday 9th May 2024. 6.30pm. Main Hall, Epping Hall, St Johns Road, Epping, CM16 5JU.

TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

What an exciting time this last Civic Year has been for me. It has been such an honour to represent Epping as Town Mayor. One of the roles as Mayor is to chair Council meetings and my thanks go to my fellow Town Councillors for working so well together and supporting me to produce the best results for Epping.

As well as undertaking several training sessions and charring meetings, I have also been to over fifty engagements, proudly wearing the chain of office and representing the people of Epping. My first engagement was with Voluntary Action Epping Forest, opening an outlet for ACE Upcycling at Abridge Nurseries. This group, with supervision, make all sorts of useful items from recycled wood and sell the items to raise funds. They learn lots of new skills in the process and I have been to several of their events. I am really proud to join them on their journeys through life. One of my favourite places and charities.

Another memorable time was travelling to Eppingen in Germany to help celebrate 40 years of Twinning between our towns. This was a wonderful trip; we were made so welcome. It was also one of the most daunting things for me as I had to stand on a stage and make a speech – something I'd never done before and sign the declaration of Friendship and Twinning between our Towns for the next 40 years – a truly great honour.

Probably the most challenging occasion was Remembrance in November. After laying wreaths and watching the parade, I read the names of the fallen in St John's Church, another first for me, especially on such an important occasion.

I have enjoyed working with young people and have attended several events aimed at improving opportunities for them, including workshops and celebrations led by Councils and charities. It was great fun attending a BMX course aimed at very young children – no competition there – I can fall off a bike as well as any youngster!

I am really pleased at the progress being made for the Skate Park project at Stonards Hill and am looking forward to my turn on a skateboard. I feel we must encourage our youngsters to fulfil their potential and guide them to a bright future. Helping provide good facilities should be a priority. I have spent a lot of time this year out and about around the town networking, talking to people and explaining what the Town Council does and the vital services it provides.

The Christmas Market is one of my particular interests and this year, we are hoping to extend the market into the early evening. With help from colleagues, I procured funding for the last Christmas Market and the coming Christmas Market and this really helps what the Town Council can provide for the town at the event.

I am really looking forward to the Mayor's Civic Reception, which is a celebration of the many societies and volunteers in our town and is one way to thank people for their contributions to the community. Any charitable donations from this will go to ACE Upcycling and Marie Curie.

The Monday Charter Market is another of our priorities and we are proud to work with market experts to protect and maintain an accessible and thriving market and to provide an excellent shopping experience which compliments our own very important shops and traders.

Epping Town Council is a very busy, hardworking Council who look after so much, which you can find on page 6 of this report. We work together with the District Council and community partners and others for the benefit of the town.

On behalf of the Town councillors, I would like to thank the Town Clerk and all of our staff members for their commitment and dedicated hard work both in the office and outside in our green spaces. Teamwork enables us to achieve so much.

Christine J Burgess

Christine J Burgess, Town Mayor

Town Mayor:
Christine Burgess

Deputy Town Mayor:
Cherry McCredie

Members:
Nigel Avey
Les Burrows

John Duffell
Hugh Pegrum
Grahame Scruton
Razia Sharif

Holly Whitbread
Janet Whitehouse
Jon Whitehouse
Michael Wright

PLANNING COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: **PLANNING**

The Town Council's Planning & General Purposes Committee acts as a consultee for Epping Forest District Council regarding any planning application which falls within Epping Parish. It has been a great pleasure for me to continue to chair this Committee over the municipal year. We have continued to receive a large number of applications at Committee this year; 133 proposals in total and we have made recommendations to the District Council in relation to all those applications. 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, its particular location and its residents. The majority of applications we have seen 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 feel they will be detrimental to the particular location and/or character of the town. We continue to monitor the prevalence of flatted developments, as our town needs a mix of dwelling types. Epping Town Council are keen to protect the fabric and feel of Epping as a historic market town in a rural setting. We have also objected to the practice of developers purchasing a single house and applying for its demolition and construction of new houses. In limited cases this may be acceptable. However, we have seen cases which are clearly overdevelopment and damage the street scene around the site. Regrettably we see no evidence that this practice is abating and the District Council has not in several cases supported our objections. In this context, the practice of "garden grabbing" which used to be frowned upon is now also a trend which is developing. While some applications for building

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

in rear gardens are acceptable, some are not and represent overdevelopment and often a negative impact on neighbours and the locality. Where Epping Town Council's Planning Committee objects 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 Michael Wright for his support and I also thank my fellow councillors who work alongside me on this Committee.

Nigel Avey **Chairman, Planning Committee**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING**

I have also had the pleasure to continue to chair the Neighbourhood Planning Advisory Committee this year, with the help of fellow councillors and residents who have given up their time to sit on the Committee. This year the Committee has not met in person as the Neighbourhood Plan is largely finalised.

As the Local Plan has been adopted, the Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the District Council for review and eventual adoption. The process of submission, review and amendment has been a relative long-winded process and we are now hopefully nearing the end.

If we can now move to adoption by the District Council, the Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to an external Inspector. We hope that the end of the process is in sight and can finally be submitted to residents in the form of a local referendum. I would like to thank our Neighbourhood Planner Martin Small, who has ensured our Plan complies with planning law.

We have invited residents to input at every stage of the process (which has taken ten years) and have worked hard to protect our Town and its character and amenities for the future.

Nigel Avey **Chairman, Neighbourhood Planning**

PLANNING COMMITTEE COUNCIL OFFICERS MEMBERS

N Avey (Chairman)
M Wright
(Vice Chairman)
C Burgess
(Town Mayor - ex-officio)
C McCredie
(Deputy Mayor - ex-officio)
G Scruton
R Sharif

B Rumsey - Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
K Harrigan - Senior Finance Officer
R Wright - Finance & Bookings Officer
G Vallis - Planning & Events Officer
J Lewis - Cemetery, Market & Administration Officer
I Tyler - Allotment & Administration Secretary
W Towers - Recreation & Amenities Manager & Cemetery Superintendent
M Patience - Groundsman D Manning - Groundsman S Willsmore - Groundsman
S Donovan - Groundsman C Mitham - Apprentice Groundsman
B Jones - Caretaker (Epping Hall) J Tappenden - Caretaker (Epping Hall)
K Austin - Caretaking Assistant (EH) P Morton - Caretaker (Jack Silley Pavilion)

COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCE SUMMARY 2023/24

<u>COUNCILLORS'</u> <u>ATTENDANCE SUMMARY</u>						
2023/2024	Council & (ExtraOrdinary Council)		Planning & General Purposes		Corporate Governance Advisory & (Neighbourhood Planning)	
	Held	Actual	Held	Actual	Held	Actual
Avey, N	11 (2)	7 (2)	19	14	2 (0)	2 (0)
Burrows, L	11 (2)	7 (2)	(0)	(0)	0	0
Burgess, C (Town Mayor)	11 (2)	11 (2)	19	16	0	(1)
Duffell, J	11 (2)	8 (1)	(0)	(1)	0	0
McCredie, C (Deputy Mayor)	11 (2)	9 (2)	19	15	2	2
Pegrum, H	11 (2)	9 (2)	(0)	(0)	0	0
Scruton, G	11 (2)	10 (1)	19	17	2	2
Sharif, R	11 (2)	10 (2)	19	16	0	(1)
Whitbread, H	11 (2)	8 (1)	(0)	(0)	0	0
Whitehouse, Janet	11 (2)	11 (2)	(0)	(0)	0	0
Whitehouse, Jon	11 (2)	10 (1)	(0)	(0)	0	0
Wright, M G	11 (2)	10 (2)	19	16	0 (0)	0 (0)

Where 0 is given, the councillor is not a member of that Committee.

Meetings from 2 May 2023 to 26 Mar 2024 inclusive.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY FOR 2023/24 & BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR 2024/25

EPPING TOWN COUNCIL	2023/24		2024/25	
SUMMARY & ESTIMATES				
	GROSS	NET	GROSS	NET
Service & Committee Support	235000	234600	245105	242505
Loan payments	102416	102416	83996	83996
Grants	650	650	650	650
Events & Publications	22320	15320	23820	15820
Public Halls	92380	19380	78400	400
Market	41470	-3530	32240	-11260
Cemetery	5720	-40480	5940	-30060
Parks & Maintenance	263950	256220	327850	318350
Public Toilet	9680	9680	9980	9980
Allotments	1400	-2780	1500	-2800
Street Furniture	1800	1800	2550	2550
Leases	2001	-7399	2001	-10499
Capital Projects	0	0	0	0
Neighbourhood Planning	2000	2000	1000	1000
War Memorial	100	100	100	100
Total	780887	587977	815132	620732
Less				
Transfer to (+) from (-) reserves		1536		1063
PRECEPT + LCTS GRANT		589513		621795

COUNCIL FUNCTIONS

RECREATION GROUNDS/PLAY AREAS:

Stonards Hill recreation ground/play area
Lower Swaines recreation ground/play area
Ivy Chimneys recreation/play area
Frampton Road recreation ground/play area
Parklands, Coopersale play area
Brook Road recreation ground

Epping Monday Market
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:

(Selected 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

Consultee for Planning & Highways matters within the Town
Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan

COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Epping Town Council continues to provide our town with many services and facilities, including Stonards Hill recreation ground (with tennis courts, petanque, outdoor exercise equipment and a skate park), five playgrounds, two allotment sites, Bury Lane cemetery and Epping's historic Monday Charter Market. In addition, Epping Town Council deliver the annual Town Show and Christmas Market and light up Epping at Christmas. The Town Council's planning committee meet twice a month to analyse planning and tree applications in Epping Parish. Now Epping Forest District Council's Local Plan has been approved by the inspector, we are progressing the town's Neighbourhood Plan towards conclusion and it is now with the District Council for review. This document is the result of ten years of partnership working by residents and councillors and will form one of the key Planning documents for the town once approved.

Epping Town Council continue to support Epping in Bloom with their work on the community garden at Market Garden Terrace (beside Marks & Spencer). We are providing a new Town Sign on the Town Green, following damage to the current one in the bad weather. This is a beautifully hand-crafted sign, highlighting the important elements of our town, including its relationship to Epping Forest and the Royal Market Charter. We have also undertaken some vital repairs to the town's listed war memorial this year.

We have been working on providing a new skate park at Stonards Hill recreation ground, following the successful award of National Lottery funding and this is due to be delivered in the summer of 2024. Partnership working with Rotary will result in an outdoor chess table being installed at Stonards Hill recreation ground in spring.

The Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor, along with fellow Town Councillors, have supported many local businesses, charities and organisations over the past year at their events and openings.

We look forward to hosting a beacon lighting event in June 2024 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day and will be supporting businesses in joining in with this national event.

CONTACTING THE TOWN COUNCIL

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Facebook.com/epping.towncouncil

TALK ABOUT EPPING

Town Magazine

Spring, Summer,

Autumn, Winter

Epping Town Council publication



Some of the many things Epping Town Council are responsible for (from top to bottom, left to right): 1) Parklands, Coopersale playground. 2) Epping War Memorial, 3) Epping Town Show, 4 Epping Town Council's tree at the St John's Church Tree Festival, 5) Meadow Road allotments, 6) Epping Monday Market.



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