

EPPING TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25



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ANNUAL TOWN MEETING: Thursday 1st May 2025. 6.30pm for a 7pm start.
Main Hall, Epping Hall, St Johns Road, Epping, CM16 5JU.

TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

As my term of office draws to a close, I look back to where it started and remember when people asked me how long had I been Mayor. At my first event I replied: "Since last night". Now nearly twelve months on, it is almost a countdown to the end of what has been a privilege and a pleasure. My eyes have been opened to the many charities and individuals, groups and societies who do so much for our town without any financial reward. It has been an honour to meet you and see your work. I have made mention of many events in my reports in Talk About Epping, our quarterly magazine, so I need not repeat myself here. We have a new addition this year; the Mayor's Cadet. We are delighted to welcome Flight Sgt Holly Edwards to this position and I look forward to her joining me at events. The process of the appointment started last year by my predecessor, Cllr Christine Burgess and I, and future Mayors will be fortunate to reap the benefit. I will just mention two events. Firstly, the Town Show. Sadly we were deluged with rain but it was a wonderful event, if rather soggy! Secondly, the Christmas Market, which had to be cancelled at the eleventh hour for safety reasons due to the high winds. However, I had a most enjoyable day as Santa's Little Helper at the Fire Station. I cannot leave this report without an immense thank you to Epping Town Council's staff. The team in the office who are so efficient, polite and friendly. They are always willing to help. Nothing is too much trouble for them. Then we have our great grounds team. They really know their job and again, are always so polite and friendly. I would also like to thank our wonderful caretakers who keep our halls running smoothly. They are always ready to help with a smile. Just a brief look back and look forward, although this is by no means exhaustive. Lighting the beacon in Epping always marks a

special occasion. On 6th June 2024, it was lit for the commemoration of 80 years since the D Day Landings. Our own veteran joined us for the evening, a very special gentleman, 98-year old Ted. It was such a privilege to meet him with his family and friends. The beacon was placed in the Fire Station yard, which seemed quite appropriate should it have got out of hand! The Hemnall Social Club were wonderful hosts with the entertainment, which was widely appreciated. We now look forward to the 8th May for celebrations to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day. There will again be a beacon lighting and hospitality as last year.

The Remembrance Day events were so well organised as always by Town Councillor John Duffell; such an important time for our town. As I read the names of the fallen, it struck me how some families had lost more than one member in more than one conflict; such a sacrifice was made. Our brand new awaited skate park was opened, completely externally funded (which is even better) and it is being very well used by all ages. We must not forget dear Noddy! Formerly outside Piccola and always so popular, he was purchased by Epping Town Council to be retained for the children of Epping. He really is a part of the Town but still awaits his new home. He became quite famous and I was even interviewed on Radio 2's Jeremy Vine Show to talk about his acquisition.

The annual budget setting process is a most important time. We have set a 2% increase for the Town for this coming financial year to help cover increases in our operating costs.

Local Government reorganisation is a very important forthcoming change to how Councils are structured. There will be major changes and the effect on Town and Parish councils is not currently known. Please be vigilant for any consultations and do take part in them and have your say.

Cherry McCredie

Cherry McCredie, Town Mayor

Town Mayor:
Cherry McCredie

Deputy Town Mayor:
Janet Whitehouse

Members:
Nigel Avey
Christine Burgess

Les Burrows
John Duffell
Hugh Pegrum
Grahame Scruton

Razia Sharif
Holly Whitbread
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 significant number of applications at Committee this year, albeit this is a reduction on the previous year. We received 124 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. 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 over-development 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 notable 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 in rear gardens are acceptable, some are not and represent overdevelopment and often a negative impact on neighbours and the locality.

We are aware of the strong feelings which surround the development of South Epping. Although we have been given access to some aspects of the Master Planning concerning this site, we await final details of housing design, amenities and housing

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

mix. A key concern of residents is lack of infrastructure which accompany large developments and thus far South Epping appears to be following this path, which is to be regretted.

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. Given changes to EFDC's rules around planning procedures this is no longer a straightforward process, which in the view of the Town Council is not acceptable. May I thank my Vice Chairman, Councillor Michael Wright and also 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, 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 was a relatively long-winded process which is now at an end. The Neighbourhood Plan has now been submitted to an external Inspector. We hope that the end of the process is in sight and the Plan 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 and have worked hard to protect our Town, its character and amenities for the future. The hopeful adoption of the Plan comes at a timely juncture as a great deal of uncertainty surrounds proposed changes to planning and possible re-evaluation of land previously designated as part of the Green Belt. As many Epping residents have appreciated, the green spaces around the Town have been purchased by developers eager to concrete over them. I hope residents will work together to resist this becoming a reality.

Nigel Avey **Chairman, Neighbourhood Planning**

PLANNING COMMITTEE COUNCIL OFFICERS

MEMBERS

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

B Rumsey - Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
K Harrigan - Senior Finance Officer R Wright - Finance & Bookings Officer
J Lewis - Planning, Market & Events Officer
I Tyler - Allotment & Administration Secretary
K Canty - Cemetery & Administration Officer
W Towers - Recreation & Amenities Manager & Cemetery Superintendent
S Willsmore - Groundsman B Gough - Groundsman K Fehim - 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 2024/25

<u>COUNCILLORS'</u> <u>ATTENDANCE SUMMARY</u>						
2024/2025	Council & (ExtraOrdinary Council)		Planning & General Purposes		Corporate Governance Advisory	
	Held	Actual	Held	Actual	Held	Actual
Avey, N	12 (2)	9 (1)	21	18	2	2
Burrows, L	12 (2)	6 (2)	(0)	(0)	0	0
Burgess, C	12 (2)	10 (0)	21	19	0	0
Duffell, J	12 (2)	9 (0)	(0)	(0)	0	0
McCredie, C (Town Mayor)	12 (2)	12 (2)	21	20	2	(2)
Pegrum, H	12 (2)	12 (2)	(0)	(0)	0	0
Scruton, G	12 (2)	10 (1)	21	17	2	2
Sharif, R	12 (2)	9 (2)	21	13	0	0
Whitbread, H	12 (2)	5 (0)	(0)	(0)	0	0
Whitehouse, Janet (Deputy Mayor)	12 (2)	10 (1)	(0)	(0)	2	2
Whitehouse, Jon	12 (2)	9 (1)	(0)	(0)	0	0
Wright, M G	12 (2)	10 (2)	21	20	0	0

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

Meetings from 27 March 2024 to 11 Mar 2025 inclusive.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY FOR 2024/25 & BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR 2025/26

EPPING TOWN COUNCIL	2024/25		2025/26	
SUMMARY & ESTIMATES				
	GROSS	NET	GROSS	NET
Service & Committee Support	245105	242505	267810	265510
Loan payments	83996	83996	22324	22324
Grants	650	650	2000	2000
Events & Publications	23820	15820	34320	25320
Public Halls	78400	400	79320	320
Market	32240	-11260	33260	-10740
Cemetery	5940	-30060	6960	-23040
Parks & Maintenance	327850	318350	300350	290150
Public Toilet	9980	9980	19100	9100
Allotments	1500	-2800	1820	-2620
Street Furniture	2550	2550	5000	5000
Leases	2001	-10499	1651	-9349
Capital Projects	0	0	0	0
Neighbourhood Planning	1000	1000	1000	1000
War Memorial	100	100	100	100
Total	815132	620732	775015	575075
Less				
Transfer to (+) from (-) reserves		1063		70716
PRECEPT + LCTS GRANT		621795		645791

COUNCIL FUNCTIONS

RECREATION GROUNDS/PLAY AREAS:

Stonards Hill recreation ground/play area
Lower Swaines recreation ground/play area
Ivy Chimneys recreation ground/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 invaluable help and support to our Town and Parish through the advice, services and facilities we manage. Many of our facilities offer real community benefit to our residents and visitors. These include Stonards Hill recreation ground, with five football pitches, high quality tennis courts, a petanque piste, outdoor gym, outdoor table tennis table and chess table and a brand new skate park which was delivered this year. We also manage 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, Christmas tree and Christmas lights. The Town Council's planning committee meets twice a month to analyse planning, tree and any licensing applications in Epping Parish.

The Town Council led Neighbourhood Plan is now with the Planning inspector following 11 years of detailed work by residents and councillors and we expect there to be a referendum and examination by the summer of this year. The Plan has lots of policies which are designed to protect the character of Epping as a historic market town. In addition to looking after our 104 year old listed war memorial, we also support the wonderful work of Epping in Bloom's volunteers at the community garden at Market Garden Terrace (beside Marks & Spencer) and any other projects. 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 were also very pleased to purchase Noddy (the children's toy formerly outside Piccola, when the shop closed), to ensure it stayed in our town. We look forward to hosting the VE Day beacon lighting event in May 2025 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day and will be supporting schools and businesses in joining in with this important event. You can find details of what we do in our quarterly Town Magazine Talk About Epping, which can be found online and in selected locations around Town.

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) Opening of the Stonards Hill recreation ground skate park. 2) 80th anniversary of D-Day commemorations, 3) Epping Town Show, 4) JW Tennis Academy, new coaching partner at Stonards Hill recreation ground tennis courts, 5) Epping Monday Market card and gift stall, 6) Meadow Road allotments.



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