



EPPING TOWN COUNCIL

EPPING HALL, ST JOHNS RD, EPPING, ESSEX CM16 5JU

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TO THE TOWN MAYOR and ALL MEMBERS of EPPING TOWN COUNCIL:

You are hereby summoned to attend an **ORDINARY MEETING** of the **Epping Town Council** which is to be held in the **Conference Room, Epping Hall, St Johns Road, Epping** on **Tuesday, 9th January 2024** at **8pm** in order to transact the following business:

Beverley Rumsey
Town Clerk
3rd January 2024

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies and reasons for absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests, along with the nature of those interests, in relation to any item on this agenda.

Cllr L Burrows, Cllr C MCreddie, Cllr R Sharif, Cllr Janet Whitehouse & Cllr Jon Whitehouse declare a non pecuniary interest as Epping Forest District councillors.

Cllr H Whitbread declares a non pecuniary interest as an Epping Forest District Councillor and Cabinet Member and an Essex County Councillor and Deputy Cabinet Member.

3 DISPENSATIONS

To receive requests for dispensations from members concerning any item of business on this agenda.

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - QUESTION TIME

The Mayor will invite public comments and responses in relation to items on this agenda. *Individuals will be permitted a maximum of three minutes each (total time for this session is limited to ten minutes).*

5 CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES

(Attachment A)

To approve as a correct record and sign the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 12th December 2023.

6 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

To receive the signed Minutes of the following Committee meetings and to adopt any recommendations within the Minutes not previously adopted:

Planning & General Purposes Committee 12th December 2023 **(Attachment B)**

7 COMMUNICATIONS TO NOTE/REQUIRING DECISION**(i) Referendum principles for Town and Parish Councils **(Attachment C)****

Epping Town Council have been provided with some information from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) regarding referendum principles for Town and Parish Councils, as per **Attachment C**.

Council is requested to **NOTE** this information.

(ii) Community Ownership Fund

Epping Town Council have been provided with some information about a Community Ownership Fund by Epping Forest District Council (EFDC). **Further information is provided through the link below.**

[Community Ownership Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Council is requested to **CONSIDER** this information and **DECIDE** whether Epping Town Council wish to pursue anything through this scheme. **Please note:** the criteria and existing ongoing projects currently underway.

8 TOWN MAYOR'S & DEPUTY MAYOR'S DUTIES **(Attachment D)**

Council to receive the duties undertaken by the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor since 12th December 2023.

9 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

To receive reports, if any, from Members on meetings or visits made since the Ordinary Council Meeting on 12th December 2023.

10 REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK AND COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS **(Attachment E)**

A report from the Town Clerk on current activities and matters of interest to Council is attached.

11 REPORTS FROM EPPING FOREST DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

A verbal report from ward councillors who also serve on Epping Forest District Council on any matter that may be of interest to Epping Town Council.

12 FINANCIAL REPORT TO 31st DECEMBER 2023 **(Attachment F)**

Statutory Basis: Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Key Member: Cllr G Scruton

Council is requested to **CONSIDER** and **APPROVE** the summary financial report to the end of December 2023 and **DECIDE** if any further action is required.

13 **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT** (Attachment G)

Statutory Basis: Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Key Member: Cllr G Scruton

Council is requested to **APPROVE** the payment of accounts for December 2023 totalling £67,233.55 (The Co-operative online £20.08, Barclays: £49.30 & The Co-operative £67,164.17).

14 **BUDGET 2024/2025 SECOND ESTIMATES** (Attachment H)

Statutory Basis: Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 and the Audit Commission Act 1998 s44, Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

Key Member: Cllr G Scruton

Attachment: Detailed Draft Budget (Attachment H)
Attachment: Draft charges 2024 (Attachment H1)
Attachment: Budget with funds transfers (Attachment H2)

Epping Town Council's first draft budget has been considered at the Ordinary Council meeting on 12th December (Minute #322 of 2023/24) and this showed a budget presenting a £5.58 increase to a band D equivalent property per annum through Epping Town Council's share of the precept, with a second draft brought back to Council in January 2024. This budget was prepared based on the tax base figures provided by Epping Forest District Council on 4th December 2023, as detailed at the Council meeting on 12th December 2023.

The Town Clerk and Key Member for Finance, Cllr G Scruton, have revisited this to make some adjustments and ensure the balances are as accurate as possible reflecting December and early January's transactions.

Please note: this second draft budget shows an allowance for a revised staffing structure, as detailed in Attachments M, M1 & M2.

The budget (second draft) presented as per **Attachment H** shows an increase to a band D equivalent property through Epping Town Council's share of the precept of £5.58 per annum. This would require a precept demand to Epping Forest District Council of £621,795 for the 2024/25 financial year.

Please note: the second draft budget shows the same precept demand as the December 2023 version (increase per band D equivalent) and the same draft charges with an increase of 5%, the difference being a change to the staffing structure (grounds) (**agenda item 20**) and operational amendments.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Epping Town Council should approve the budget presented as per **Attachment H** and **AUTHORISE** the Town Mayor to sign the precept demand of £621,795 for the 2024/25 financial year on behalf of Epping Town Council.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The draft charges 2024 should be **APPROVED** as per **Attachment H1**.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The budget with fund transfers should be **APPROVED** as per **Attachment H2**.

Council is requested to **CONSIDER** this matter and **RECOMMENDATIONS** and **DECIDE** what to do.

15 **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY** (Attachment I)

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s111

Key Member: Cllr N Avey

Epping Town Council have been awarded £115,000 towards the Stonards Hill skate park project from The National Lottery (TNL). In accordance with TNL's acceptance terms and conditions, Council is required to have a Whistleblowing Policy.

A draft Whistleblowing Policy is provided, as per **Attachment I**.

Council is requested to **CONSIDER** this draft policy and **DECIDE** whether to **APPROVE** it as a policy of Epping Town Council.

16 **UPDATED POLICIES/STATEMENTS** (Attachment J)

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s111

Key Member: Cllr N Avey

Epping Town Council have a suite of policies which are updated regularly through Council or Corporate Governance. Four policies/statements are due for review and these are provided as per **Attachment J**.

These are: **Biodiversity Statement, Crime & Disorder Policy, Optimum Resources Statement and Resource Management Statement**.

Council is requested to consider the four policies/statements and **DECIDE** whether to **APPROVE** them as updated policies/statements for Epping Town Council.

17 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

18 **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CONTRACTS** (Attachments K, K1 & K2)

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s111

Key Member: Cllr N Avey

The Town Clerk has provided some information regarding Council's Information Technology (IT) support, as per **Attachment K**, with supporting documents as **Attachments K1 & K2**.

RECOMMENDATION: Council should tender the IT support, as per **Attachment K**, including any accepted operational amendments suggested when expressions of interest/tenders are made.

Council is requested to **CONSIDER** this **RECOMMENDATION** and **DECIDE** what to do.

19 **STONARDS HILL TENNIS COURTS** (Attachments L, L1 & L2)

Statutory Basis: Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s19

Key Member: Cllr J Duffell

In 2020, the tennis courts at Stonards Hill recreation ground were refurbished and Council began working with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), Club Spark and David Watson tennis coaching. Some current information is provided, as per **Attachment L**, with supporting documents as per **Attachments L1 & L2**.

Council is requested to **CONSIDER** the information and **RECOMMENDATION** and **DECIDE** whether to proceed on this basis.

20 **STAFFING MATTERS** (Attachments M, M1 & M2)

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

Key Member: Cllr C Burgess

The Town Clerk has provided an update on Epping Town Council's staffing situation as per **Attachments M, M1 & M2**.

Council is requested to **CONSIDER** the information and **APPROVE** the **RECOMMENDATIONS**.

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, members of the public and press are welcome to attend the meeting. Members of the public will only be permitted to speak at the beginning of the meeting during Public Question Time.