

MINUTES of the **ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING** held in the Conference Room, Epping Hall, on **Tuesday 11th April 2023 at 8pm.**

PRESENT:

Cllr B Scruton	(Town Mayor & Chair)
Cllr C Burgess	(Deputy Town Mayor)
Cllr N Avey	Cllr S Baker
Cllr J Duffell	Cllr C McCredie
Cllr H Pegrum	Cllr G Scruton
Cllr M-L Whitbread	Cllr J Whitehouse

OFFICER: Beverley Rumsey (Town Clerk)

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr H Whitbread, Cllr L Burrows (public session), 1 member of the press

483 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R Griffiths and Cllr M Wright.

484 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr B Scruton (Town Mayor) and G Scruton declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 23 as they are related to the lessee. Cllr B Scruton (Town Mayor) and Cllr G Scruton left the room for the discussion and vote.

Cllr B Scruton, Cllr G Scruton, Cllr N Avey, Cllr C Burgess and Cllr J Duffell informed Council that they were no longer members of the Conservative Party.

485 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

486 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - QUESTION TIME

Cllr H Whitbread asked Epping Town Council the following:

Q. Does the Town Council raise its own precept, as a comment from the Deputy Mayor stated that Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) now gives Epping Town Council less money?

A. Epping Town Council raise their own precept. Income is generated from community halls and other sources. The deficit required to run Epping Town Council's is a precept demand from Epping Forest District Council.

Q. Will the Town Council consult on proposed plans for any enhancements to Epping Hall when Council's PWLB loan comes to an end next year?

A. This will be a decision for the new Council. All current Epping Town Councillors voted to progress the Epping Hall improvement project. Planning permission was applied for and granted. Residents had weeks to comment during this period.

Q. Why is Epping Town Council's precept so high compared to other towns in the District?

A. Each Town and Parish Council is different and runs different services and functions. They have different sources of income and different outgoings. Each has their own individual budget and different reserves and financial positions.

Q. Why was the increase so high for 2023/24?

A. Utilities increased by 400%. The increases were necessary to cover the costs of running Epping Town Council's buildings and functions. Insurance costs also rose dramatically.

Please note: None of these questions related to the agenda but answers were provided as detailed.

487 CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 7th March 2023 be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the ExtraOrdinary Council Meeting held on 27th March 2023 be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council.

488 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

It was **RESOLVED** that the signed Minutes of the following Committee meetings be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council.

Neighbourhood Planning Advisory Committee	1 st March 2023 (Attachment B)
Planning & General Purposes Committee	7 th March 2023 (Attachment C)
Planning & General Purposes Committee	23 rd March 2023 (Attachment D)

489 COMMUNICATIONS TO NOTE/REQUIRING DECISION

(i) Epping Forest District Council Local Plan adopted

Epping Town Council **NOTED** that Epping Forest District Council's Local Plan had been **ADOPTED**.

(ii) Planting of a tree at 1 Theydon Place and 11 Theydon Place

Epping Town Council **CONSIDERED** the residents' applications to plant two new trees in Theydon Place, one on the grass verge outside No 1 and one on the grass verge outside No 11.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Epping Town Council would support the planting of the two new trees on the verges outside 1 and 11 Theydon Place, Epping, subject to the permission required from Essex County Council.

Cllr H Whitbread and Cllr L Burrows left the meeting here.

Cllr J Whitehouse entered the meeting here.

(iii) Qualis consultation

The Town Mayor reminded members about a public comment for agenda item 7 (iii) Qualis consultation, which they considered as part of this item.

Epping Town Council **CONSIDERED** the proposals for Qualis’ meanwhile space at Cottis Lane car park.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Epping Town Council would return the following comments/suggestions:

For comments: please see Appendix 1.

(iv) Electoral boundaries for Epping

Epping Town Council **NOTED** the final recommendations for the parish ward arrangements/boundaries for Epping, as per **Attachment F3**.

(Please note there was no item (v) on the agenda, therefore no item (v) on the minutes.

(vi) Ride London community market

Epping Town Council **CONSIDERED** the Ride London/Epping Forest District Council community market on Sunday 28th May 2023.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Epping Town Council **APPROVED** the holding of this market, on this date, for this purpose.

(vii) The late Cllr Brian Rolfe

Epping Town Council **NOTED** the thanks from the late Cllr Brian Rolfe’s wife Una and family for their tributes and support.

490 TOWN MAYOR’S & DEPUTY MAYOR’S DUTIES

The duties undertaken by the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor since the Ordinary Council meeting on 7th March 2023 were **NOTED**.

491 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

Reports from members were received on meetings or visits since the Ordinary Council meeting on 7th March 2022:

Cllr S Baker	Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal dinner	18 th March 2023
	Public transport meeting	29 th March 2023

Where issues discussed included: Single fare caps, extending some routes, National Bus strategy, a passenger survey and Journey Planner apps.

Cllr C McCredie	Friends of Swaines Green Committee meeting	29 th March 23
	Discussions on the May Fayre	

Cllr G Scruton	Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal dinner	18 th March 2023
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492 REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK AND COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS

The Town Clerk thanked the current Council for their hard work and support over the past four years.

The Town Clerk listed Council's achievements over the last four years.

The Town Mayor thanked Epping Town Council for their hard work over the last four years. Please see Appendix 2 for further comments.

Members **NOTED** the report of the Town Clerk.

493 **FINANCIAL REPORT TO 31st MARCH 2023**

Council considered the summary financial report for March 2023, presented by Council's Key Member for Finance, Cllr G Scruton.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- (ii) No further action was required at the current time.

494 **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

Council's Key Member for Finance, Cllr G Scruton presented the payment schedules for March 2023 totalling **£52,805.56**. (Payments from Barclays total £47.85, the Cooperative £52,705.55, the Co-operative Online total £52.16.)

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- (ii) The list of payments for March 2022 were **APPROVED** as presented in the schedule.

495 **FINANCIAL SUMMARY POSITION, YEAR END CLOSE DOWN & BAD DEBTS**

(i) Financial Summary Position and Year End Close Down

The formal RBS close down of the Year End Accounts will take place on 23rd May 2023 and this will be done remotely. Transfers between funds will take place at this point. An early projected out-turn figure has been provided as per **Attachment K**; more detailed information and funds movements will be presented once available. A full financial position will be provided when all the year-end adjustments have been made.

Council **NOTED** this information.

(ii) Bad debts

(a) 2022/23

At the current time, the bad debts for 2022/23 are listed as per **Attachment L**. These will continue to be chased and consideration may be given to further action should they not be recovered.

The Town Clerk advised that since the agenda was presented, the recreation debt of £200 had been recovered.

Council **NOTED** this information.

(b) 2021/22

The bad debtors from 2021/22 are nil.

The Clerk has authority to write off debts under Financial Regulation 9.4 and it is essential this is done to ensure the statements of income at year end are accurate. Members are requested to **NOTE** the write offs for the 2021-22 financial year are nil.

Council **NOTED** this information.

496 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Council **NOTED** the internal audit report following the auditor's third visit for the 2022/23 financial year on 28th March 2023, as per **Attachment M**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

497 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2023

Council considered the agenda for Epping Town Council's Annual Town Meeting, as per **Attachment N**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s9;
- (ii) The agenda was **APPROVED** for Thursday 20th April 2023.

498 EPPING WAR MEMORIAL

Council considered the information regarding Epping War Memorial, as per **Attachment O**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the War Memorials (Local Authorities' Powers) Act 1923, s1;
- (ii) The work would be progressed in consultation with the Conservation Officer, once permissions have been received;

- (iii) The Town Clerk would request a condition report survey from the War Memorials Trust.

499 KING'S CORONATION EVENTS MAY 2023

Council considered the King's Coronation events, as per **Attachment P**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s145;
- (ii) The live streaming of the King's Coronation from St John's Church would be highlighted;
- (iii) If Epping Forest Band were unable to take part in the picnic at Stonards Hill recreation ground on Sunday 7th May 2023, the Town Clerk would request alternative suggestions after Friday 14th May 2023.

500 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** 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.

501 STAFF PENSIONS

Council considered the suite of documents relating to staff pensions, as per **Attachment Q & Appendices 2 & 3**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s112;
- (ii) The Flexible Retirement Policy as per **Attachment Q, Appendix 2** was **APPROVED** as the retirement policy for Epping Town Council with the following amendments:

- Addition of: consider any request from and discretionary case by case basis
 - Self financing, no hidden cost to Council
 - Pension benefits term to be used/death lump sums term to be used
- (In accordance with further pension advice.)

502 STAFF PENSION ARRANGEMENTS

Council discussed the Staff Pension arrangements, as per **Attachment R**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s112;

- (ii) The request was **APPROVED** with no change in working circumstances being preferred by Council, subject to the final agreement and details with the member of staff;
- (iii) Staff would be recommended to obtain independent financial advice in accordance with Council's policies.

503 KING'S CORONATION BUNTING TENDERS

Council discussed the King's Coronation bunting tenders, as per **Attachment S**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s145;
- (ii) Bunting would be installed and Quotation 2 would be chosen, as marked on **Attachment S**;
- (iii) This would be financed from the kind donation of £1000 from the Epping Town Partnership and the remainder financed by Epping Town Council's unspent grant budget 2022/23.

504 STAFFING MATTERS

Council discussed the Staffing Matters RECOMMENDATIONS, as per **Attachment T**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s145;
- (ii) Both RECOMMENDATIONS as per **Attachment T** were **APPROVED** by Council.

505 JACK SILLEY PAVILION CAFÉ LEASE/RENT

Council discussed the Jack Silley Pavilion café lease and rent, as per **Attachment U**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s111;
- (ii) Suggestion/recommendation 1 be **APPROVED** as per **Attachment U**;
- (iii) This would be reviewed in one calendar year in April 2024.

506 YOUNG TOWNSPERSON OF THE YEAR

Council considered the nominations for Young Townsperson of the Year, as per **Attachment V**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s111;
- (ii) Young Townsperson of the Year 2022 would be awarded at the Civic Reception on Friday 28th April 2023.

507 TELEPHONY CONTRACT

Council discussed the telephony contract continuation, as per **Attachment W**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s111;
- (ii) The new continuation contract was **APPROVED**, as per the **RECOMMENDATION** in **Attachment W**.

CLOSURE

The Town Mayor, Cllr B Scruton, closed the meeting at **10pm**.

Signature of Chairman

Date