

MINUTES of the ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING held in the Conference Room, Epping Hall, on Tuesday 14th November 2023 at 8pm.

PRESENT:

Cllr C Burgess	(Town Mayor & Chair)	
Cllr C McCredie	(Deputy Mayor)	
Cllr L Burrows	Cllr H Pegrum	Cllr G Scruton
Cllr R Sharif	Cllr H Whitbread	Cllr Janet Whitehouse
Cllr Jon Whitehouse	Cllr M Wright	

OFFICER: Beverley Rumsey (Town Clerk)

PRESENT: 2 members of the public were present

267 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Cllr N Avey and Cllr J Duffell. Apologies for lateness were received from Cllr J Whitehouse and Cllr H Pegrum.

268 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

269 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

270 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - QUESTION TIME

There was no public participation.

271 CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 14th November 2023 be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council, with the following amendment:

In Minute 226: Cllr Janet Whitehouse (not Cllr J Whitehouse, for clarity)

272 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.

Planning & General Purposes Committee	10 th October 2023 (Attachment B)
Planning & General Purposes Committee	24 th October 2023 (Attachment C)
Corporate Governance Advisory Committee	24 th October 2023 (Attachment D)

273 COMMUNICATIONS TO NOTE/REQUIRING DECISION

(i) RideLondon-Essex

The Town Clerk advised members that London Marathon Events (LME) had offered to attend an Epping Town Council meeting and she was trying to get that meeting diarised.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

(i) No further action would be taken until LME had attended a meeting.

(ii) **Bell Common and the City of London communication**

Epping Town Council discussed the City of London Corporation's invitation for them to join the City of London Corporation's Local Authority Liaison Group for Epping Forest.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

(i) The Town Mayor (each Town Mayor) would represent Epping Town Council on the City of London Corporation's Local Authority Liaison Group for Epping Forest.

(ii) **Epping Forest District Council, Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) Consultation**

Council discussed EFDC's Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) consultation.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

(i) The following response would be submitted:

Epping Town Council welcome measures to ensure dogs are well behaved. Members had concerns about restrictions on the numbers of dogs that can be taken out together but are comfortable that four dogs per person was reasonable. Members questioned how this would be policed? Will there be enforcement officers again? There have been noticeable increases in irresponsible dog waste being left in recreation grounds and Council would welcome measures to address such issues.

One member who is also an EFDC councillor requested that consultees, especially Town and Parish Councils, should be given the full report that went to EFDC to accompany this consultation, as the community partners and consultees are given very little information, when a report has been written and has been made available to EFDC councillors.

274 TOWN MAYOR & DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR'S DUTIES

The duties undertaken by the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor since the Ordinary Council meeting on 10th October 2023 were **NOTED**, with the following addition:

Deputy Mayor BMX event Stonards Hill recreation ground 26th October 2023

275 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

Reports from members were received on meetings or visits since the Ordinary Council meeting on 10th October 2023:

Cllr R Sharif	Christmas Market meeting Funky Monk	2 nd November 2023
	Site visits for residents CL car park	November 2023
	Remembrance events	12 th November 2023
Cllr G Scruton	Budget training	5 th November 2023
	Remembrance events	12 th November 2023
	Bakers Lane public toilets meeting/Qualis	13 th November 2023
Cllr H Pegrum	Epping & Theydon Garnon Joint Charities meeting	Nov 2023
	Epping & Theydon Garnon Joint Charities meeting	Nov 2023
Cllr H Pegrum spoke about proactive damp treatment in the almshouses (ventilation system), tenancies at Stonards Farm being renewed (no change), Christmas lunches in Epping Upland for the elderly and locals		
Cllr H Whitbread	Remembrance events	12 th November 2023
Cllr Jon Whitehouse	Remembrance events	10 th November 2023
	Remembrance events	10 th November 2023
	Citizens Advice AGM	19 th October 2023
Cllr Janet Whitehouse	Remembrance events	12 th November 2023
	Horticultural Society meeting	8 th November 2023
	Remembrance events	10 th November 2023
Cllr M Wright	Remembrance events	12 th November 2023

276 REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK AND COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS

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

277 REPORTS FROM EPPING FOREST DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr Jon Whitehouse: EFDC working on budget. Also inflationary pressures. Fewer planning applications which will be likely to affect the tax base.

Cllr Janet Whitehouse: Drop in meeting with the emergency response officer on 9th November. Would be beneficial for ETC to meet with them.

Cllr H Whitbread:

EFDC Apprenticeship scheme. Housing apprentice won a star award. Work on rough sleeping and homelessness strategy.

Work starting on swimming pool at Bakers Lane. Winter warm spaces in EFDC community hub.

ECC: Budget consultation on what people's priorities are.

278 FINANCIAL REPORT TO 31ST OCTOBER 2023

Council considered the summary financial report for October 2023, presented by the 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.

279 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The payment schedules for October 2023 totalling £53,658.76 were **APPROVED** as per **Attachment I**. Payments from Barclays total £50.01. Payments from the Cooperative total £52,954.32 (please note a transfer to the Co-operative online of £300). Payments from the Co-operative Online total £404.44.

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 October 2023 were **APPROVED** as presented in the schedule.

280 BUDGETS 2024/25 FIRST ESTIMATES

Council previously considered its first budget estimates at the full meeting of Council in October each year. This proved too early, as the crucial tax base figure is not known until mid November each year. In November 2021, it was **APPROVED** that the budget setting process, first estimates, be moved to full Council in November each year. This is particularly important in the ongoing difficult financial climate. This is still early for the tax base figure, which is usually received towards the end of November each year. The precept demand must be issued to EFDC in January each year.

The Town Clerk has been requested to prepare a draft budget showing Council's predicted spend for 2024/25, but as the tax base figure is not yet known, using the precept figure for 2023/24. Please note: this will not be an accurate income figure for this year, only a projected expenditure figure.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 and the Audit Commission Act 1998 s44; Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- (ii) Council **NOTED** the information and the budget would be revisited in December 2023 when the crucial tax base figure should have been provided from EFDC.

281 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Corporate Governance Advisory Committee met on 24th October 2023 (Minutes #253-269 of 2023/24) and make the following **RECOMMENDATIONS**:

- (i) The revised Statement on Internal Control should be **APPROVED** ~~as per Attachment L;~~
- (ii) The revised Risk Management Statement should be **APPROVED** ~~as per Attachment L;~~
- (iii) The Employee Handbook with no amendments should be **APPROVED**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item would be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s101 & S111;

- (ii) The **RECOMMENDATIONS** above were all **APPROVED** by Council.

282 WAYFINDING SIGN FROM EPPING STATION

Council considered the wayfinding sign from Epping Station to the High Street and Forest, as per **Attachment M**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, S19; Local Government Act 1972, s145.

283 PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD LOANS

Council considered the public works loan board loans, as per **Attachment N**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

284 EPPING TOWN COUNCIL'S ACTION PLAN 2023-2027

Council considered Council's Action Plan 2023-27 as per **Attachment O** and Appendices 1 and 2.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item would be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s111;
 (ii) The Action Plan 2023-27 be **APPROVED** as Council's Action Plan 2023-27 as per **Attachment O** as a working draft that would be developed over the coming months/years as projects were developed/changed and priorities confirmed and costed.

Abstentions: Cllr H Whitbread, Cllr L Burrows.

285 EPPING CHRISTMAS LIGHTS WORKING PARTY

Council discussed the need for a Christmas Lights working party as the current 3 year contract ends this year (Christmas 2023).

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (iii) The statutory basis for this item would be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s145;
 (iv) A Christmas Lights Working Party would be established in January 2024;
 (v) Cllr H Whitbread, Cllr R Sharif, Cllr M Wright and Cllr C Burgess would be on the Christmas Lights Working Party.

286 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.

287 **MAYOR'S CHAIN**

Council discussed the backing of the Mayor's Chain, as per **Attachment P**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s111;
- (ii) Frattorini as the chain maker, should undertake the backing work, as long as the costs were as detailed and related to Epping Town Council's particular chain. This would be financed from the Mayor's Allowance as currently **RESOLVED**. (Should the quotation not be as needed, Vaughton's should undertake the backing, at the costs detailed.)
- (iii) It should be requested that the current box be modified for the backed chain if possible, rather than a new box provided. The costs for the modified/new box should be financed from Council's service and committee support budget (not the Mayor's Allowance).

288 **EPHING TOWN COUNCIL HONOURS BOARD**

Council discussed the new honours board information, as per **Attachment Q**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s111;
- (ii) The Town Clerk would provide the quoter that had provided a design with a revised design and request costings;
- (iii) Once provided, alternative quotations would be requested for this design;
- (iv) This would be brought back to Council in December 2023 for consideration and hopefully approval.

289 **EPHING TOWN COUNCIL APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME**

Council considered the groundsperson apprenticeship scheme with Writtle College, 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) A groundsperson apprenticeship scheme with Writtle College be **APPROVED** and the Town Clerk would begin the process of pursuing a new groundsperson apprentice.

290 **BAKERS LANE PUBLIC TOILETS**

Council considered the written information about Bakers Lane public toilets, as per **Attachment S** and the verbal update following the meeting with Qualis.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Public Health Act 1936, s87;
- (ii) The Town Clerk and Epping Town Council would continue to work with partners Qualis and Epping Forest District Council on a solution for the public toilets with the aim of getting them open/reprovision as soon as possible.

CLOSURE

The Town Mayor, Cllr C Burgess, closed the meeting at **9.47pm**.

Signature of Chairman

Date