

MINUTES of the **ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING** held in the Conference Room, Epping Hall, on **Tuesday 11th June 2024 at 8pm.**

PRESENT:

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

OFFICER: Beverley Rumsey (Town Clerk)

IN ATTENDANCE: 9 members of the public & 1 member of the press

51 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr N Avey and Cllr G Scruton. Apologies for lateness were received from Cllr Jon Whitehouse.

52 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr L Burrows, 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.

Cllr H Whitbread declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 7 (i) as she lives close to the site.

53 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

54 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - QUESTION TIME

There were public questions and comments regarding agenda item 7 (i) Stonards Hill recreation ground car park neighbour requests, which would be dealt with under agenda item 7 (i).

55 CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 9th May 2024 be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council.

Cllr Janet Whitehouse confirmed that she had followed up with the resident who had mentioned the funfair safety, as had the Planning & Events Officer and confirmed that the funfair provided all its safety check paperwork in accordance with Council’s requirements and proper practice.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 14th May 2024 be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council, subject to the following amendment:

Representative on United Charities should be Cllr Janet Whitehouse, not Cllr M Wright.

56 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	14 rd May 2024	(Attachment C)
Planning & General Purposes Committee	28 th May 2024	(Attachment D)

57 COMMUNICATIONS TO NOTE/REQUIRING DECISION

(i) Stonards Hill recreation ground car park neighbour requests

Cllr Jon Whitehouse entered here.

Residents presented their concerns and requests regarding Stonards Hill recreation ground car park, as per **Attachment F**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, ss 59(3), 35 (1); Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s19;
- (ii) Council would shorten the tall sign posts that didn't need to be as high;
- (iii) Council would paint the back of the entrance sign that backs onto Stonards Hill to camouflage it;
- (iv) The central hedge would be allowed to grow taller to obscure the sign;
- (v) The Town Clerk would confirm the tree replacement limitations;
- (vi) The car park management system and any overnight antisocial behaviour would be monitored and recorded and brought back to Epping Town Council in 2 months (August 2024) for review, with any available supporting information and/or data.

(ii) Epping Town Council's 50th anniversary

Council considered Epping Town Council's 50th anniversary in 2023/24.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s19;
- (ii) A tree would be planted to commemorate this (possibly a silver birch at Epping Hall if suitable).

(iii) Staff thank you

Council **NOTED** the thank you card from our retired groundsman Martin Patience.

(iv) Former Mayor's charity donations

Council **NOTED** the £2240 raised by former Town Mayor Cllr C Burgess at her Civic Reception for Voluntary Action Epping Forest and Marie Curie.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s145, s111.

58 TOWN MAYOR & DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR'S DUTIES

The duties undertaken by the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor since the Annual Council meeting on 14th May 2024 were **NOTED**, with the following amendments:

Deputy Town Mayor	United Charities meeting	21 st May 2024 (not 20 th)
Essex County Council draft transport strategy meeting	6 th June 2024 (didn't take place, to be rescheduled)	

59 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

Reports from members were received on meetings or visits since the Annual Council meeting on 14th May 2024:

Cllr H Pegrum	Theydon Trusts meeting	20 th May 2024
	Open Gardens Epping	1 st June 2024
	D Day beacon lighting event	6 th June 2024
Cllr H Whitbread	Ride London	26 th May 2024
	Open Gardens Epping	1 st June 2024
	D Day beacon lighting event	6 th June 2024
Cllr L Burrows	Ride London	26 th May 2024
	Open Gardens Epping	1 st June 2024
Cllr J Duffell	Ride London	26 th May 2024
	Royal British Legion meeting	2 nd June 2024
	D Day beacon lighting event	6 th June 2024
Cllr M Wright	Chess table unveiling Stonards Hill	17 th May 2024
	Epping Horticultural Society meeting	18 th May 2024
	D Day beacon lighting event	6 th June 2024
	Old Laundry site planning consultation	10 th June 2024
Cllr Jon Whitehouse	Chess table unveiling Stonards Hill	17 th May 2024
	D Day beacon lighting event	6 th June 2024
	Old Laundry site planning consultation	10 th June 2024
Cllr C Burgess	Ashlar House event (invited as former Mayor)	10 th May 2024
	Chess table unveiling Stonards Hill	17 th May 2024
	Open Gardens Epping	1 st June 2024
	D Day beacon lighting event	6 th June 2024
	Cllr R Sharif Chess table unveiling Stonards Hill	17 th May 2024
	Epping Horticultural Society meeting	18 th May 2024

Homefield Close residents meeting	21 st May 2024
Meeting with residents regarding Town	3 rd June 2024
D Day beacon lighting event	6 th June 2024

60 REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK AND COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS

The Town Clerk highlighted the staff recruitment that was underway for an Assistant Groundsperson and the new recruitment for Council's Planning & Events Officer.

The Town Clerk highlighted the legalities that had delayed the skate park which were progressing.

The Town Mayor requested help at the Town Show on Sunday 7th July 2024.

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

61 REPORT FROM EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCILLORS AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr H Whitbread:

EFDC: New EFDC Cabinet and Chairman, Finance and Economic Review, Investment from Google, Opportunity for education/skills/bring tax down, D-Day, North Weald Airfield/planes

ECC: Cllr John Spence – reshuffle, Social Care – Children and Adult Social Care

Cllr Janet Whitehouse: Planning Services report, very important for others to read Planning report 1 or 2 – planning comms 19/6

Cllr L Burrows: Planning Services report, very important for others to read Parish tier

Cllr Jon Whitehouse: Old laundry site, plans on website

S Epping Masterplan consultation going live

62 FINANCIAL REPORT TO 1ST APRIL TO 31ST MAY 2024

Council considered the summary financial report for April and May 2024, presented by the Town Clerk, in the absence of 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.

63 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

In the absence of Council's Key Member for Finance, Cllr G Scruton, the Town Clerk presented the payment schedules for April and May 2024. Council **APPROVED** the payment of accounts for April and May 2024.

For April, payments total: **£62,473.18**. (Payments from Barclays total £54.03 (please note a transfer from Barclays to the Co-operative of £30,000). Payments from the Cooperative total £60,730.11 (please note transfers of £1200 from the Co-operative to the Co-operative online). Payments from the Co-operative Online total £1,689.04.)

For May, payments total: **£131,856.64** (Payments from Barclays total £57,118.52 (please note transfers from Barclays to the Co-operative of £60,000). Payments from the Cooperative total

£74,316.88 (please note transfers of £1000 from the Co-operative to the Co-operative online. Payments from the Co-operative Online total £421.24.)

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 April and May 2024 were **APPROVED** as presented in the schedule.

64 **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT (FINAL)**

The internal audit report (final) was presented as per **Attachment K**, following the auditor's work at the end of May 2024.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Audit Commission Act 1998 s9 to 11; the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011; the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015;
- (ii) The report was **NOTED** with no further action at the current time;
- (iii) The Town Clerk thanked her team for the work that goes into the audit and receiving a positive report.

65 **ANNUAL RETURN 2023-24 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

Council is required by law to complete an Annual Return for each financial year which is sent to the external auditor for approval. The requirements of the Annual Return are very rigid and include the Annual Governance Statement, the Accounting Statements and the exercise of public rights (a pre-arranged period of 30 days when electors can inspect the accounts).

During the remote visits of the internal auditor, any comments or actions have been detailed, as per **Attachment L1**. The Town Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, considers that Council can answer 'yes' to the items in Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), Annual Governance Statement 2023/24.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Audit Commission Act 1998 s9 to 11; the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011; the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015;
- (ii) The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 of the Annual Return), as per **Attachment L**, was **APPROVED** (by answering yes to each question in turn) and the Town Mayor was **AUTHORISED** to sign the statements on behalf of the Town Council.

66 **ANNUAL RETURN 2023-24 ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS**

Once the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) of the Annual Return has been APPROVED, Council must **APPROVE** the Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the Annual Return).

Council was requested to **APPROVE** the Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the Annual Return), as per **Attachment L**, and **AUTHORISE** the Town Mayor to sign the statements on behalf of the Town Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as Audit Commission Act 1998 s9 to 11; the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011; the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015;
- (ii) The Accounting Statements were **APPROVED** (Section 2 of the Annual Return) and the Town Mayor **AUTHORISED** to sign the statements on behalf of the Town Council.

67 **ANNUAL RETURN 2023-24 EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS**

Council as a corporate body with transactions in the financial year, is required to make arrangements for the exercising of public rights; a period of 30 days when electors can inspect the accounts. These must fall within certain dates, which usually, must include the first ten working days of July, ie 3rd-14th July inclusive.

Council was requested to **APPROVE** the dates of the exercise of public rights as Monday 17th June 2024 until Friday 26th July 2024, in accordance with the requirements, as recommended by the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Audit Commission Act 1998 s9 to 11; the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011; the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015
- (ii) Council **APPROVED** the dates of the exercise of public rights as Monday 17th June 2024 until Friday 26th July 2024, in accordance with the requirements, as recommended by the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

68 **FINANCIAL YEAR END POSITION 2023/24**

A summary of Epping Town Council's final 2023/24 year end position, following the closedown of the 2023/24 financial year by Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd on 7th May 2024, was provided as per **Attachment M**. Please note Council's year end date is 31st March 2024 (31st March each year).

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

69 **PLAYGROUND INSPECTION REPORTS**

Council considered the tree inspection report information, as per **Attachment N**, with the works to be undertaken as follows:

- 1) **Parklands, Coopersale – (New playground 2017)** No additional work required.
- 2) **Lower Swaines – (New playground 2022)** No additional work required.
- 3) **Frampton Road – (New playground 2017)** No additional work required.
- 4) **Stonards Hill playground & Skate Park – (Playground 2010 approx. New works 2022)**
Swings are being monitored and worked on. Basketball goal being monitored. Skate park being monitored (due to be replaced this year). Any trips sand back filled (weather affects this).
- 5) **Ivy Chimneys – (Playground 2015).**
Wood being monitored, natural cracking. Flooring being repaired and monitored where able to be. Infinity bowl (monitor, same as previous years. This is not repairable.)

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, s111;
- (ii) The concept of planned artistic graffiti on the skate park would be looked at with the skate park provider when things progressed.

70 **MAYOR’S GAMES AND MAYOR’S BADGE**

Council discussed the potential Mayor’s Games and Mayor’s Badge, as per **Attachment O**.

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, s111;
- (ii) Cllr C Burgess would pursue the games idea with the cadet leaders to ensure it could be delivered by them and this would be brought back to Council if needed;
- (iii) Council supported the Mayor’s badge and the Town Clerk would pursue costs and getting one made.

71 **EXCLUSION OF 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.

72 **TENNIS CONTRACTS**

Council discussed the tennis contract information, as per **Attachment P**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s19;

- (ii) Epping Town Council would work with J W Tennis as the coaching partner at Stonards Hill recreation ground tennis courts moving forwards, as per the details in **Attachment P**.

CLOSURE

The Town Mayor, Cllr C McCredie, closed the meeting at **9.45pm**.

Signature of Chairman

Date