

**MINUTES of the ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING held in the Conference Room, Epping Hall on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 8pm.**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr C McCredie	(Town Mayor & Chair)	
Cllr Janet Whitehouse	(Deputy Town Mayor)	
Cllr N Avey	Cllr C Burgess	Cllr L Burrows
Cllr J Duffell	Cllr H Pegrum	Cllr G Scruton
Cllr Jon Whitehouse	Cllr M Wright	

**OFFICER:** Beverley Rumsey (Town Clerk)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** 1 member of the press was present.

**450 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R Sharif, Cllr H Whitbread and Cllr Jon Whitehouse for lateness.

**451 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr G Scruton declared a potentially pecuniary interest in agenda item 23 and would leave the meeting and not be involved in the discussions or vote on this item.

All members declared that they knew the tenant relating to agenda item 23.

**452 DISPENSATIONS**

There were no dispensations.

**453 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions or comments.

**454 CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025 be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council, subject to the following amendments:

**Minute #389 of 2024/25: Report of the Town Clerk**

Cllr Hugh Pegrum mentioned the Public Rights of Way Officer at EFDC, not Cllr Jon Whitehouse

**Minute #390 of 2024/25: EFDC Councillors reports**

Cllr Janet Whitehouse: Delete Council tax to use rooms

**455 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, subject to the following amendment:

Cllr Janet Whitehouse to be added to the Market Committee minutes as in attendance

Planning & General Purposes Committee	11 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	<b>(Attachment B)</b>
Market Committee	20 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	<b>(Attachment C)</b>
Planning & General Purposes Committee	25 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	<b>(Attachment D)</b>
Corporate Governance Advisory Committee	25 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	<b>(Attachment E)</b>

**456 COMMUNICATIONS TO NOTE/REQUIRING DECISION****(i) COMMUNICATION RE QUALIS' DEVELOPMENT NAMES**

Council **NOTED** the communications regarding the Qualis' development names.

**(ii) EMERGENCY PLAN VOLUNTEERS**

Council **CONSIDERED** the Emergency Plan volunteers and poster, as per **Attachment F**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The poster would be distributed to attract volunteers.

**(iii) EPPING WEATHER STATION**

Council **CONSIDERED** the information and poster regarding Epping Weather Station, as per **Attachment F1**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The poster would be amended to a wider audience (individuals, U3A, as well as schools and once amended, would be distributed as widely as appropriate.

**457 TOWN MAYOR & DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR'S DUTIES**

The duties undertaken by the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor since the Ordinary Council meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025 were **NOTED**, with the following additions:

**Town Mayor:**

Gymnastics club of Epping, litter pick, Epping Sports Centre	9 <sup>th</sup> March 25
Epping Society AGM	10 <sup>th</sup> March 25

**458 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS**

Reports from members were received on meetings or visits since the Ordinary Council meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025:

Cllr C Burgess	Epping Society AGM	10 <sup>th</sup> March 25
Cllr H Pegrum	Theydon Trusts meeting	4 <sup>th</sup> March 25
Cllr G Scruton	Theydon Trusts meeting	4 <sup>th</sup> March 25
Cllr N Avey	Theydon Trusts meeting	4 <sup>th</sup> March 25
	Epping Society AGM	10 <sup>th</sup> March 25

At the Theydon Trusts meeting, the CAB building flats were mentioned, as was Margaret Road work. The meetings were generally a resume of ongoing business and any projects.

**459 REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK AND COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS**

The Town Clerk advised that details surrounding the Stonards Hill recreation ground land pipes were close to being confirmed and Council would be informed once complete.

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

**460 REPORTS FROM EPPING FOREST DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

**Epping Forest District Council**

**Cllr Janet Whitehouse**

Cllr Whitehouse mentioned she had been to 2 meetings.

20/02/25 EFDC budget meeting.

04/03/25 Communities Select Committee.

Police District Commander (in post since September) advised that crime was down 4%. More public engagement. More visibility. From April, all community police teams nationally will be called Neighbourhood Police.

Community Safety Partnership (CSP): report shows what they are doing.

**Cllr L Burrows**

20/02/25: EFDC budget meeting: 2.99% rise. Budget passed unanimously.

**461 FINANCIAL REPORT TO 28th FEBRUARY 2025**

Council considered the summary financial report for February 2025, 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 and **APPROVED**;
- (ii) No further action was required at the current time.

**462 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

Council's Key Member for Finance, Cllr G Scruton presented the payment schedules for February 2025 totalling £52,664.93 (Barclays: £71.72, The Co-operative £52,403.60 & The Co-operative online £189.61).

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 February 2025 were **APPROVED** as presented in the schedule.

**463 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Cllr Jon Whitehouse entered during this item.

The Corporate Governance Advisory Committee met on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025 (Minutes #414-440 of 2024/25 refer) and made the following **RECOMMENDATIONS**:

- (i) Epping Town Council's Standing Orders should be RE-APPROVED, with no amendments;
- (ii) Epping Town Council's Financial Regulations should be RE-APPROVED, with no amendments;
- (iii) The Internal Risk Register should be amended, reworded and APPROVED by Council; ~~(Attachment D)~~;
- (iv) The Asset Register 2025, ~~Attachment E~~, should be APPROVED as a correct record of Council's assets at this time;
- (v) Council should continue to record assets as individual items with a value equal to or greater than £1000 in the Asset Register;
- (vi) The Complaints Procedure ~~(Attachment F)~~ should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council with one amendment;
- (vii) The Health & Safety Policy, with no amendments ~~(Attachment G)~~ should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (viii) The Media Policy, with no amendments ~~(Attachment H)~~ should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (ix) The Social Media Policy, with amendments ~~(Attachment I)~~ should be APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (x) The Publication Scheme, with no amendments ~~(Attachment J)~~ should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (xi) The Community Engagement Policy, with amendments and revisions ~~(Attachment K)~~ should be APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (xii) Consideration should be given to printing and distributing Talk About Epping across Epping Town/Parish again;
- (xiii) The Data Protection Policy, with no amendments, ~~(Attachment L)~~ should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (xiv) The Compliance Failure Policy, with no amendments, ~~(Attachment M)~~ should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (xv) The Insurance policies & reconciliation would be brought to Council in advance of the July 2025 meeting;

- (xvi) The insurance renewal 2025 should be undertaken by the Town Clerk/RFO, Key Member for Finance **and one additional member (to be decided)** due to the renewal timings (short notice quotations/continuous cover required);
- (xvii) The situation regarding a Data Protection Officer should be monitored and someone engaged at point of need ~~(Attachment Q)~~.
- (xiv) Staff terms should be **APPROVED** ~~(Attachment Q)~~ (please note: these will be reported under agenda item 24 – Exclusion of press and public).

**Please note:** following advice from the auditor regarding the frequency of policy document reviews (Minute #420(i) of 2024/25), the **RECOMMENDATION** is as follows:

- (xv) The Town Clerk would issue the list of policy documents to Council annually (at the Annual Council meeting), so all members have a summary of the policies in place and their review dates (Policy and Governance Document Review March 2025).
- (xvi) The policies would be reviewed at Corporate Governance or the Annual Council meeting (as appropriate) in the first Civic year of each Council, unless legislation requires sooner. **Please note:** some policies are more appropriately reviewed at Annual Council eg Code of Conduct and others through Corporate Governance.

**Please note:** documents or excerpts from the documents where changes have been made were included as per **Attachment K**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) **The statutory basis for this item be NOTED as the** Local Government Act 1972, sch 12, para 42; Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014, Local Government Act 1972, s111, Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members & Officers) order 2004, Local Government Act 1972, s112, Local Government Act 1972, s101
- (ii) All **RECOMMENDATIONS** of the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee meeting, as detailed above, were **APPROVED** by Council.

#### 464 **TALK ABOUT EPPING MAGAZINE**

Council **CONSIDERED** whether to return to printing and distributing 5500-6000 copies of Talk About Epping magazine to residences and businesses in Epping Parish as had been the case until 2023/24.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, S142;
- (ii) Talk About Epping would not return to widespread distribution and printing as previously, but would remain as is at the current time;
- (iii) This would be reconsidered during the budget setting process for 2026/27.

**465 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: 2<sup>ND</sup> INTERIM**

Council internal auditor undertook their second auditing work for the 2024/25 financial year on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and their report was provided as per **Attachment L**. There were no recommendations.

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.

**466 EPPING TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS**

Council **CONSIDERED** the information and suggestion about a possible start up grant scheme, as per **Attachment M**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government 1972, s133;
- (ii) Council would return to offering their former grant scheme for 2025/26, whereby grant applications would be requested for consideration in September 2025 and March 2026, as previously (total budget £2000, including any Remembrance grants);
- (iii) Council would implement as new start up grant scheme for those requiring some support setting up new classes at Epping Hall or the Jack Silley Pavilion;
- (iv) A 50% discount for six weeks of bookings would be offered on a discretionary basis;
- (v) Cllr H Pegrum would authorise the grants in conjunction with the Town Clerk, up to the available budget for this cost centre (grants budget 2025/26 £2000 – for both the traditional grant (including Remembrance) and the new start up grant scheme.

**467 CHRISTMAS MARKET 2025**

Council **CONSIDERED** the information about Epping Christmas Market 2025, as per **Attachment N**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s145;
- (ii) The Christmas Market would be held on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2025, from 12 noon to 7pm;
- (iii) Traders would be advised to bring battery operated lights for their gazebos.

**468 DEVOLUTION CONSULTATION**

Council **CONSIDERED** the Devolution Consultation as per the link provided and **Attachment O**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the English Devolution White Paper, 2024;
- (ii) Councillors would respond individually to the consultation;
- (iii) The Town Clerk would assist Cllr McCredie with her response.

**469 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.

**470 COMMUNITY AWARD**

Council **CONSIDERED** the Community Award information and potential candidates, 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) The Community Award was chosen and this would be awarded at the Mayor's Civic Reception 2025.

**471 CIVIC AWARD SCHEME**

Council **CONSIDERED** the Civic Award Scheme information as per **Attachment Q**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s145;
- (ii) The Civic Award scheme would be changed to an open ended process, whereby nominations would be considered when received, rather than annually.

**472 CAFÉ AT STONARDS HILL RECREATION GROUND**

Cllr G Scruton left the meeting at this point, as he is related to the tenant.

Council **CONSIDERED** the information regarding Julie's café at Stonards Hill recreation ground, as per **Attachment R**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s19;
- (ii) The Town Clerk would go through the café lease itemize the responsibilities in relation to Attachment R;
- (iii) Costed proposals would be brought to Council for consideration.

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**473 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Cllr G Scruton returned to the meeting for this item.

The Town Clerk left the meeting for this item.

Council **CONSIDERED** the RECOMMENDATIONS of the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee relating to staff (confidential), as per **Attachment S**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s112;
- (ii) All **RECOMMENDATIONS** in **Attachment S** were **APPROVED**.

**CLOSURE**

The Town Mayor, Cllr C McCredie, closed the meeting at **10.13pm**.

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**Signature of Chairman**

**Date**