

MINUTES of the **ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING** held in the Conference Room, Epping Hall, on **Tuesday 9th December 2025 at 8pm.**

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

IN ATTENDANCE: 1 member of the press

OFFICER: Beverley Rumsey (Town Clerk)

301 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

302 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.

303 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

304 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions or comments.

305 CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the ExtraOrdinary Council Meeting held on 5th November 2025 be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council, subject to the following amendment:

Minute 277 (Attachment A): Should read October not November

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 11th November 2025 be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council.

(*Please note: Attachments A and B should have swapped attachment numbers Attachment B meeting was first.)

306 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS & PLANNING COMMENT

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 11th November 2025(Attachment B)
 Planning & General Purposes Committee 25th November 2025 (Attachment C)

307 COMMUNICATIONS TO NOTE/REQUIRING DECISION

(i) Local Government Reorganisation

Council considered the consultation information on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), as per **Attachment E**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

(i) The Town Clerk would return the following comments:

Town and Parish Councils must be involved in the discussions before decisions are made. Taking on assets come with ongoing running and maintenance costs
 Will funding be transferred with assets? Money needs to be provided to maintain assets. There must be resources for devolved functions.
 Local democracy is very important eg in planning. Voice of local people in an area is vital. Whatever the size of the unitary, the grassroots, local voice is vital.

308 TOWN MAYOR & DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR’S DUTIES

The duties undertaken by the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor since the Ordinary Council meeting on 11th November 2025 were **NOTED**, with the following addition:

Town Mayor: West Essex Inclusion Christmas party 8th December 2025

309 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

Reports from members were received on meetings or visits since the Ordinary Council meeting on 11th November 2025:

Cllr C Burgess	Ace Activities	14 ^h November 2025
	Christmas Market	5 th December 2025
	Christmas Tree Festival	6 th December 2025
Cllr L Burrows	Epping Town Council 50 th tree planting	13 th November 2025
Cllr J Duffell	Helping Christmas Market	6 th December 2025
Cllr M Wright	Horticultural Society quiz	23 rd November 2025
	Christmas Market	6 th December 2025
	Christmas Tree Festival	6 th December 2025
Cllr G Scruton	Epping & Theydon Garnon Joint Charities	18 th November 2025
	Awards for educational placements. Not enough grants come forward.	
	Theydon Trusts meeting	2 nd December 2025
	Simplifying accounts.	
Cllr H Pegrum	Epping & Theydon Garnon Joint Charities	18 th November
	Signed off accounts. Update on properties. Effect of renters reform	bill next April 2026.
	Theydon Trusts meeting	2 nd December 2025
	Christmas Market	6 th December 2025
	Christmas Tree Festival	6 th December 2025
Cllr Jon Whitehouse	Epping Town Council 50 th tree planting	13 th November 2025
	Helping Christmas Market	6 th December 2025

Cllr C McCredie	Epping Society tree planting Lindsey St Grn	12 th November 2025
	Epping Hall tree planting	13 th November 2025
	Ace Activities	14 th November 2025
	Safer Epping	17 th November 2025
	EFDC Plans B meeting	19 th November 2025
	Friends of Swaines Green AGM	19 th November 2025
	Community Safety Partnership	20 th November 2025
	Bulbs. Chrysalis. Market Gdn Epping in Bloom	21 st November 25
	Epping Society social evening	24 th November 2025
	Coopersale Christmas light up and carols	30 th November 2025
	St John’s Christmas Tree festival	5 th December 2025
	Helping Christmas Market	6 th December 2025
	Santa’s Grotto helper Elf	6 th December 2025
	EFDC Carol Service	6 th December 2025
	Epping Society Committee meeting	8 th December 2025

Cllr C McCredie highlighted:

Safer Epping: Essex Police lead Adam Pipe road safety. Raised town issues.
Essex Spartans. Volunteers.

Swaines Green AGM Victoria Robertson Epping in Bloom Community Garden

310 REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK AND COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS

Cllr Jon Whitehouse entered here.

The Town Clerk advised members that the Stonards Hill recreation ground path had been delayed due to the additional topsoil required.

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

311 REPORT FROM EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCILLORS AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Epping Forest District Council

Cllr Janet Whitehouse had attended a waste & recycling briefing about garden waste and a North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) meeting. 2 confidential meetings about The Bell Hotel and budget. Leisure centre visit, awaiting an opening date. Highways training for consultees. Speculative planning applications/traffic effect on forest. Congestion already present, can’t use this a reason for refusal.

312 FINANCIAL REPORT TO 30TH NOVEMBER 2025

Council considered the summary financial report for November 2025, 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.

313 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Council's Key Member for Finance, Cllr G Scruton, presented the payment schedules for November 2025. Payments total **£131,967.35**. Payments from Barclays total £32,863.57 (please note a transfer of £30,000 from Barclays to the Co-operative. Payments from the Co-operative total £98,838.55 (please note a petty cash withdrawal of £300). Payments from the Co-operative Online total £265.23.)

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 November 2024 were **APPROVED** as presented in the schedule.

314 BUDGET 2026/27: FIRST ESTIMATES

Council considered the budget first draft as per **Attachment J**, draft charges as per **Attachment J1** and decisions required as per **Attachment J2**.

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 and the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- (ii) The proposals for professional fees and events budget increases were accepted to be built into the budget 2026/27 second estimates;
- (iii) Talk About Epping would be budgeted as Option 2 (print/distribute 2500 copies approximately to central locations;)
- (iv) A list of potential locations for Talk About Epping formal distribution would be drafted for consideration;
- (v) Second estimates would be drafted once the tax base figure had been received in December 2025.

325 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.

326 PUBLIC TOILETS: POTENTIAL CONTRACTS

Council considered the public toilet information as per **Attachment K**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s19; Public Health Act 1875, s164;
- (ii) A meeting would be requested with the company for all members able to attend.

327 IVY CHIMNEYS RECREATION GROUND LEGAL UPDATE

Council considered the Ivy Chimneys recreation ground legal update, as per **Attachment L**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s111;
- (ii) This would be expedited with a solicitor's letter as to Epping Town Council's intentions.

CLOSURE

The Town Mayor, Cllr Janet Whitehouse, closed the meeting at **9.37pm**.

Signature of Chairman

Date