

JANUARY - 2011

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

It is almost a year since I took on the role of Chairman of the Epping Society. And **almost a year** since the Epping Junior School/Centrepoint site was closed in St John's Road and STILL not a single utterance from the EFDC as to what their Consultants (that have been employed to advise them) are proposing for the future of the site. Many informal opinions have been expressed including the idea of re-creating a Community Centre offering Adult Education classes. We believe this would be a very appropriate use of these buildings as not only would it help to create a centre for the community which we currently lack (apart from the Jack Silley pavilion) but it might ensure the preservation and restoration of the old School which is a locally listed building. Do we need more supermarkets or shops or residential accommodation? We would urge members to write to us ([info@eppingsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@eppingsociety.org.uk)) and give us your views on how **you** would like to see the site dealt with.

During most of 2010, there were no major planning or development proposals but we continued to make our objections on applications that we believed would be detrimental to the local environment. However, just recently there has been a controversial planning application for development of Green Belt Land adjacent to Madells Road and Theydon Place abutting Bell Common. (More about this in our Planning section of the newsletter.)

We hope you have had a chance to look at our website which has been developed by one of our Committee members; [www.eppingsociety.org.uk](http://www.eppingsociety.org.uk). It is updated regularly and you will find information on current events and news as well as a selection of historical photos showing Epping through the years and historical points of interest to look out for when wandering around Epping. We are also in the process of drafting a section for the website on 'Planning' to give members as complete a picture as possible on how the planning process works. It would not necessarily guarantee an outcome but knowing the format for objecting and the resources that are available could be helpful.

Finally, I would like to thank the Committee for their help in navigating my way as Chairman of the Epping Society and as a newcomer to Epping.

Sue Allison - Chairman

### Contact Details:-

**Chairman: Sue Allison 01992 561961**

**Email: [info@eppingsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@eppingsociety.org.uk)**

**Editor & Membership: De. Spence 01992**

**577191 Email: [eppsocmembership@live.com](mailto:eppsocmembership@live.com)**



## Same building - 100 years apart!

A 100 years lapse the 2 photographs above, the first a sad example of how we today treat our past. The other, somehow seems full of hope and expectation. The wording on the 2<sup>nd</sup> reads "Epping, N.S.Wales. Presentation Flag: "Old boys Staff" Coronation Day, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1911". The story behind it is that, the people of Epping N.S.Wales, Australia gave the flag to St Johns School to celebrate the coronation of King George V, the "old boys" of the school were asked to contribute towards the cost of the staff, or flagpole. All those who made a donation were given a copy of this photograph as a memento. The building though still clearly recognisable has undergone many changes, it is said to have suffered damage due to wartime bombing. What a sad sight it is today. The site is now guarded 24 hours a day, along with the buildings adjacent to it which are also boarded up. Would it be too much "thinking outside of the box" to ask if the site could perhaps not be put to better use awaiting the decision for the future use of the site. Could some of the playground adjacent and parking spaces behind, be used on a temporary basis to ease the parking problems in the town. It might go in some small way to allay the costs involved by the indecision of E.F.D.C./Essex County Council.

De Spence

Epping Town Council with the Epping Society has formed a small joint working group to consider and report on the potential use of Article Four Directions as they might relate to the new Permitted Development Rights. I am sure most members' immediate reaction to this gobbledegook would be unprintable!

Permitted Development is alterations or additions to a property that is not subject to any Council approval provided that they conform to certain criteria. These developments might include changing an integral garage into a living space or removal of iron railings from the street frontage of a property, or even small extensions.

There are concerns that the new Permitted Development rights may allow unsympathetic changes to our street scene. Article Four is a mechanism that allows the Council to bring certain properties back inside the traditional planning approval system. This would allow the community to object to a proposal and for the final decision to be made by our elected representatives.

Charlie Geddes

## Committee Updates

### Vice Chairman

Our Chairman, Susan Alison or Madam Chairman has been out of this country for the past month or so, which has catapulted me into the hot seat. Fortunately the Society has a committee of dedicated members who diligently pursue their specialist causes in the interest of Epping Town. Planning issues, CPRE (Essex) matters, Green Belt Council problems, involvement with the Town Council, membership matters, local historic houses, publicity and events, show how involved the Society is with discussions and resultant actions, which are as varied and as complex as the Town itself.

As well as the many concerns discussed, as an example at our January committee meeting, three specific issues stretched our expertise. The first issue spearheaded by Iain Wallace was the Town Planning application known to us as the Madells site, where green belt land is involved. The second issue was the revisions proposed by this government's Communities Secretary to revise the general Town Planning procedures.

The third issue was the proposed future prospects of the Epping Junior School/Centrepoint site and collection of buildings.

Arthur Walker & Trevor Roberts have mobilised the CPRE and the Green Belt Council to act with our Society on the green belt issues besetting the Madells site.

Revisions proposed under Article 4 to the Town Planning procedures has brought together the Town Council and 4 members of the Epping Society to act jointly as a representative body, to examine development projects that in our opinion may adversely affect our town.

The fate of St John's Junior School site epitomises today's throw-away society, where the sites cash value may well become more important than the building being a potential asset to the Epping community. Who knows, we could end up with another supermarket with car park?

As you can imagine, our conservation area protected Georgian town is under constant threat to change shop by shop into a commonplace High Street every standardised multiple store would like it to be. There are also the pressures from building developers to exploit every green grass area in and around our town.

This ancient market town has much to offer residents and visitors as a traditional place to shop and live. The alternative is five miles along the road - Harlow. The Committee and our 700 members want to keep the Town's individuality and so we constantly examine and comment on the issues submitted to the District Council, good, bad and indifferent!

The Committee now await the next set of issues which I know include the development proposals for Thornwood Common. Has this government let the developer Genie out of the bag? We shall see.

Ken Miller

### Treasurer's Corner

In the Annual Accounts of the Epping Society there is an expenditure item labelled "Projects" which covers all those costs where the Epping Society has been busy out-and-about in Epping. One of these items is the expense of the flower boxes outside the old Post Office in Epping High Street which the Epping Society has been maintaining for many years. Not many people know this!

John Hill

### Planning Appraisals

Your Committee continue to monitor all the planning applications submitted to Epping Forest District Council for building works in our area and to submit objections to those which we consider to be inappropriate, particularly those affecting the Green Belt. During the whole of 2010 this has amounted to less than a dozen, a further indication of the low level of larger applications, due no doubt to the current economic climate.

One of the most important of these is the Madells or Theydon Place application where the applicants are seeking to erect 60 houses in the Green Belt, the largest intrusion onto Green Belt land since the site adjoining St Margaret's Hospital and the housing development associated with the new St John's school application.

Once again we have submitted an objection and offered our assistance to the objectors, as we did with both the earlier applications. With regard to the school application, we were not against a new school but were more concerned with the associated housing on green belt land and also had reservations on the siting of the school on the playing fields with the consequent loss of sports facilities for the pupils.

Another recent application which will partially affect Green Belt land and to which we are objecting, is that for the demolition of the "Spotted Dog" public house in Ivy Chimneys and replacement with nine houses.

Although the green belt issue only affects the rear of the site, we feel that any intrusion sets a precedent.

Further, the development would see nine vehicles parked in the front gardens and exiting into what is a narrow and very busy road, causing a significant traffic hazard. Also, although not listed, the pub is an attractive and historic building and its loss and replacement with a terrace of houses would be detrimental to the local street scene and loss of the pub facility a detriment to the local community. Managed properly, it could still be an attractive local venue.

Iain Wallace

## Publicity

The web site is now seven months old. In December it had 169 visits from separate individuals and the average time spent browsing our site was three minutes. Please visit it on [www.eppingsociety.org.uk](http://www.eppingsociety.org.uk) - any contributions would be most appreciated. I am particularly interested in expanding the section entitled 'did you know?' I have assembled some interesting facts from the history of our town. However, I am sure you can help it expand! Please call or email me on [webmaster@eppingsociety.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@eppingsociety.org.uk) The Epping Society web site will post updates on the 'Meadow Watch - Save Green Belt' campaign. To join please email [protectgreenbelt@hotmail.com](mailto:protectgreenbelt@hotmail.com) or call Andrew Smith on 07779 145579

Charlie Geddes 01992 573706

## Walks

On the last Sunday of each month the Society shares a walk with The West Essex Ramblers. The walk starts from Epping Station at 10.00am. The routes are all circular and vary from month to month. The finishing time back in Epping is usually around 2pm. An average distance is 10 miles, covered at a brisk pace. There is also a stop for drinks only at a public house. Boots or strong shoes are recommended. The leaders are volunteers with experience of rambling. The walks planned for the coming months are as follows:-

27.02	Abridge -	Leader Rodney Want	9 miles
27.03	Theydon Bois -	Leader Linda Harris	9 miles
24.04	Loughton -	Leader Ray Latham	10 miles
29.05	Uphire -	Leader Cecilia Gonzales	9 miles

## London Green Belt Council

I attend meetings of the LGBC on behalf of Epping Society and at a recent meeting I raised the proposal to build 60 houses on the designated Green Belt site at Madells/Theydon Place and sought their help in objecting to the development. Under existing Planning Guidelines building on Green Belt land is only allowed in exceptional circumstances. I sent all the relevant documents to the Secretary of LGBC who does not think that the developer has made that case; The LGBC has now formally objected to the proposal which should reinforce Epping Society objections.

Arthur Walker

## Campaign for the Protection of Rural England

### CPREssex OBJECTS TO THE MADELLS/THEYDON PLACE DEVELOPMENT

The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Essex (CPREssex) has lodged a formal objection to the above proposed development in a letter from Patricia Moxey, the Chairman of the Epping Forest Branch of CPREssex to the Epping Forest District Council. The outline proposal in EPF 2040 10 relates to the residential development of 60 two - story houses (45 affordable)

plus ancillary works at Theydon Place in an attractive and undeveloped area at the eastern edge of Epping. This development is yet another which would increase both the Town's population and its traffic density and, most important violate the green belt. The arguments against the development are considerable and particular details contained in the letter of objection, are as follows:

The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and such development is contrary to PPG2. Such development would set a precedent for the development of undeveloped land adjacent to part of Epping Forest, Shepherd's Meadows, noted for its biodiversity. Much of Epping Forest has SAC and SSSI designations.

1. The site is close to the conservation area of Bell Common.
2. Hemnall Street, which provides access to the site, is a residential road with parking restrictions. Further traffic movement here will generate traffic congestion at the Hemnall Street junction with the High Road, and also in the busy High Road itself.
3. CPREssex has serious concerns that the existing local amenities and services, schools, hospital facilities etc in addition to water supply and sewage will not be adequate to serve these further dwellings.

Trevor Roberts

## Social Events

### Christmas 2010

We were invited to join in with the Festival of Christmas Trees at St John's Church and as usual we were pleased to accept. Our theme "Creatures of Epping Forest". We do enjoy being able to join in with the fun of it all, the work involved is worthwhile when we see the faces of the children, when we visit the event. It is a wonderful opportunity for the local community to pull together and take part in an event organised by a local church for the benefit of the town. As a Society we appreciate the work involved in the organisation of the event and thank everyone involved.

### Annual Christmas Lunch

As usual our Christmas lunch was held at Pelly Court on 5<sup>th</sup> December. We had 68 people sitting down to a 5 course meal, the hall was decorated and the caterers as usual were excellent. The Mayor was presented with a cheque for £100 for the charities she has chosen to support during her year in office. The occasion ended with Mr Norman Lansdown Davis and his songsters who gave us a most enjoyable sing song, that had everyone laughing (you had to be there!). It was a great beginning to the festive season. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Lansdown Davis for all his work in making the event go with a swing.

Doreen Tarling

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES 2011

### Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February

#### AGM

Pelly Court, Hemnall Street, Epping  
8pm – doors open from 7.30

The AGM of the Society, followed by a social event – to discuss the questionnaires, your thoughts and ideas and comments on the society, and how the committee can best reflect you the members concerns. Refreshments for this event are **FREE**. This meeting is a member's only event.

### Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April

Pelly Court, Hemnall Street, Epping 8pm – doors open from 7,30

#### CPREssex & Epping District

A talk by Trica Moxey (Chairman of Epping Forest Branch CPREssex) – on the work of this organisation and our district.

### Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September

Pelly Court, Hemnall Street, Epping  
8pm – doors open from 7.30

**To be announced**

## Membership News

The committee are questioning the profile that the Epping Society has in the town, and we do wonder what impact we have. It was interesting to learn that since the proposal for development of the Madells/Theydon Place area, we have gained 6 new members from Theydon Place. Hopefully, residents in the area are of the opinion that membership of the Society can be helpful in such circumstances.

Our membership numbers have risen to the 700 mark, much of this increase is due to word of mouth. If you have found the newsletter of interest why not spread the word to friends and neighbours. The greater our membership the more impact we may have in the town and the decisions taken on the residents behalf by those who govern us, be at a local or county level.

## Walk with a purpose!

Have you made a New Year Resolution? Does it involve getting more exercise? Can you help the Society in maintaining its contact with its members, by helping out just twice a year. We have vacancies as a couple of our "postmen/ladies" have left the district. It is not an onerous task and it can be enjoyable meeting people and getting to walk down a few front gardens that you might not have the opportunity to do otherwise! If the idea appeals to you, please contact me:

De Spence contact details on Page 1

## Letters to the Editor

In the last newsletter we asked for your comments and views and below are printed the replies we received, we welcome you to reply to this and/or other considerations you may have on the Society, its interests and concerns.

#### Members Meetings

Having attended most the meetings since joining the Epping Society may I congratulate your Committee on the work that they do on behalf of several hundred members. I also thank them for organising the very interesting meetings which apart from discussing local issues, also provides a very interesting speaker on a variety of subjects. And as a bonus, tea, coffee and biscuits are also available for a small cost. In view of all of this, may I say how disappointed, even disgusted, I feel at the lack of support from those several hundred members. Surely they can spare just one evening occasionally to come along and support the Society in person.

Des. Slade.

#### Meadow Watch-Save Green Belt-via email

A planning application for 60 houses on Metropolitan Green Belt land off Madells/Theydon Place has been made despite a previous emphatic refusal by EFDC. Nothing has since changed to make the site more suitable for development and the EFDC policies have not been relaxed. We ought to be able to rely on the planning authorities to refuse this application, not least because:

1. EFDC and national policy to protect the Metropolitan Green Belt;
2. The site adjoins Bell Common Conservation Area so any development would have significant adverse impact;
3. Local services are over-stretched, including highways, primary schools, tube trains and health facilities;
4. Bellway has not completed its development at St Margaret's, so shortage of supply is not proven;
5. The proposals would destroy a valuable vista from Epping to the City of London.

Please write to Graham Courtney at EFDC quoting reference:

2040/10 or email: [gcourtney@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:gcourtney@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

Or contact: Andrew Smith (Meadow Watch campaign leader) on 01992-572983 or 07779-145579

Andrew Smith

## Newsletters via email

This issue is the second that has been available by email. We are hoping that many life members will take the decision to receive future copies in this way. Should you decide to receive your copy by email, please contact me at [eppsocmembership@live.co.uk](mailto:eppsocmembership@live.co.uk). I will send an email in reply, testing the address, so please look out for it. Remember though, that should you change your email address unless you advise us, future newsletters will not get through.