



# NEWSLETTER

## Annual General Meeting

EPPING HALL on Monday 3 March at 7 for 7:30 pm

Light refreshments will be served. We invite nominations for the committee. We will welcome hard working people with a commitment to the town and good ideas for promoting the Society's aims.

After the AGM we will be pleased to welcome Epping Forest Museum Officer, Tony O'Connor. He will tell us about the work of the museum and the changes and improvements taking place.

All members of the public are welcome to attend this open meeting of the Society which will follow the AGM.

### Other events:

#### Tour of the new St Johns School site

1<sup>st</sup> May 7pm - date to be confirmed – watch our website: [members only](#)

#### Epping Town Show

Sunday 6 July – subject to confirmation

#### Epping Town Centre Festival

Saturday 26 July

## Communication with members

### 2013 in brief:

Nearly 300 planning applications reviewed

Constant vigilance on Council planning policy

Close touch with London Green Belt Council

Support for beneficial development

Two new events supported to engage with public and members

Updated website and electronic media

Your committee have thought long and hard about how to communicate with members and the wider public and our new electronic media communications are a part of the result. Towards the end of 2013 we relaunched our website which has been re-built using new technologies. See us at [www.eppingsociety.org.uk](http://www.eppingsociety.org.uk). This will make it easier to maintain and easier for users to navigate. What better time to thank those who managed the old site: Charlie and his son James. Thanks also go to Adam Long for his work on the new design and with new media technology for the Society.

The new website will also enable us to offer members and the public the ability to upload photographs and other documentary material which is of interest to the town and nearby areas. This can develop into a valuable resource for the public and for specialist research too. Further announcements will be made at our public meetings and on the website in coming months.

We have reluctantly come to the view that hand-delivered newsletters are no longer always feasible. The organisation required and time taken to print and deliver to each member is no longer viable for the Society. Instead we will use the internet which allows us to let you know more quickly when threats arise and we need your support to resist the serial threats to our town.

We will maintain a newsletter distribution where possible and for members without an email account we will use post more often, especially for the less central addresses. Clearly that will cost the Society more to do. If you are a life member, please will you dig deep again and renew your membership as if a normal member. We thank you heartily for your long term commitment but the value of the original life subscription was consumed long ago.

The development of issues affecting the town, especially the big issues such as St Johns Road and the District Development Plan, will mean we need to get information to you very quickly if we are to affect the decisions. That means we need email addresses for the bulk of members. (Consultation on the EFDC draft plan is currently expected soon after the local elections in May this year. St Johns scheme seems confused with ideas for building on Town Council land that EFDC does not own).

**Please send us your email address to our email address at the bottom of page two.**

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# Our key messages for members and friends

## CPR Essex

Campaign for the Protection of Rural England

We continue to receive reports and publications from CPRE which is very active in making the case for conservation and protection of the countryside.

You can find a lot of interesting material on the CPRE website at <http://www.cpressex.org.uk/>.

CPRE events are worth watching out for, such as the talk by their President and former Poet Laureate Sir Andrew Motion in Colchester last year. He spoke about his upbringing in the Essex countryside and the importance of preserving the local landscape he loves.

Sir Andrew succeeded popular author Bill Bryson as CPRE President in 2012, has a deep affection for Essex and encouraged everyone who cares about protecting rural England to take action.

"It's absolutely vital we engage a new generation', he said, 'This is partly so that we can look ahead and feel the defence of the countryside is in good hands, and partly so we can encourage as many people as possible to enjoy and understand our beautiful landscapes."

Like us, CPRE supports the Green Belt. "The effects of current policies on the countryside are devastating, with the Green Belt, protected areas and, above all, our 'ordinary' but hugely valued countryside threatened with destruction. Once it's gone, it's gone forever. Destruction of the countryside is totally unnecessary when there are enough suitable brownfield sites for around 1.5 million homes."

**Trevor Roberts**

## Planning

Last year the committee carefully reviewed 269 local planning and tree applications, notifications and appeals. We actively supported one and objected to 34 others. Applications can be viewed on the EFDC website (search EFDC planning portal).

All our responses are made after consultation among the committee and, when time permits, these are also reviewed at full committee meetings.

We had a lively debate in the year over the vegetation which Marks & Spencer have added to their premises. Some members were worried about its possible deterioration if maintenance was not done well, and its impact on the High Street. In the end we supported this.

We are in touch with Marks and Spencer about the plaque to Sir Winston Churchill. We would like to see it more prominently on the High Street frontage.

We objected to the new Tesco signage which we felt was too dominant in what is a market town, but our views have not yet prevailed. Tesco have gone to appeal against a refusal of permission.

Your committee is developing general policies to reflect the sort of developments we like and those we do not support. We have no general design view for development, but we do want good quality which suits the market town image of Epping.

**Charlie Geddes**

## Your committee

We have one of the hardest working committees we have ever had in the Epping Society. Unfortunately most of that work is our paid employment which does often get in the way of our voluntary work for the town!

Partly through the younger age of many committee members than in the past and a change in working patterns, fewer of our committee can spend as much time during the day as they would wish on promoting our objectives. These days we exploit electronic communications (emails, etc) to run the Society (as does our Life President – seniority is no bar!) and in that way we can liaise and debate problems, often without even meeting in person.

Meanwhile, the Treasurer and other committee members have been helping create a complete and integrated membership list.

We urge all local residents to join us and support our work to make Epping a better place to live, work and shop. See the back page for a membership renewal form.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the committee for their contribution without which we could have no impact on local policy making.

**Andrew Smith - Chairman**

## Ramblers

Epping Society shares walks with The West Essex Ramblers. See [www.westessexramblers.org.uk](http://www.westessexramblers.org.uk) for further details.

23rd February	Toot Hill	9 miles	leader Mara
30th March	Loughton	10 miles	leaders Hazel & George



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E-mail us at [info@eppingsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@eppingsociety.org.uk)

The committee will finalise a statement on development policies which we will share with you soon. Among them we propose general design guidelines which should be used, especially for large developments (certainly the St Johns Road site), and for prominent or sensitive areas such as conservation areas and the High Street.

- High quality architectural design – establish a residents panel to advise the Council on specific planning applications
- Sympathetic scale, design and materials to traditional Epping structures – need to avoid excessive density (such as the Half Moon site which has been allowed)
- Protect historic buildings and those of established merit and familiarity (such as Epping town centre)
- We will resist overbearing additions which are harmful to the amenity of neighbouring properties and which tend to establish a terrace-like street scene where currently there is clear separation between buildings.

“Development on Green Belt land on the Epping and Harlow border would be a disgrace, according to a residents' group” (reference to Latton Priory site).

Among the contributions to the debate about development was an interview with Steven Harding (Vice Chairman) in the Epping Guardian (10 September 2013)

[http://www.guardian-series.co.uk/news/efnews/10666108.Potential\\_housing\\_hit\\_shameful\\_says\\_society/](http://www.guardian-series.co.uk/news/efnews/10666108.Potential_housing_hit_shameful_says_society/)

Among other robust statements Steven was quoted as saying, “The Epping Society, which represents hundreds of residents, has accused the Council of being reckless; and described the news as ‘shameful’.”

“The simple answer is that not enough work has been done to identify appropriate sites for development, such as brownfield sites.”

## Green Belt

For some the mention of Green Belt brings to their mind a bunch of NIMBIES who don't want development in their back yard. But the idea was not designed to cosset the few but to ensure that everyone could have open space as an amenity. Green Belt does not even have to be particularly attractive because its purpose is to prevent the merging of existing communities through further expansion.

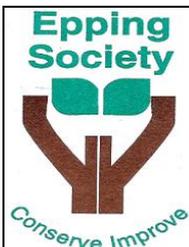
Because of its size, the first formal Green Belt was established around London. As early as 1593, Queen Elizabeth I established a band three miles deep around the Cities of London and Westminster to prevent their growing sprawl.

Modern legislation started with the Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act 1938 which allowed local authorities to buy land to prevent development. After the Second World War there was recognition of the need for society to control the development of land, resulting in the Town and Country Planning Act 1947. This Act laid the foundation of the modern planning system but left the 1938 Act unaltered. It was realised that local authorities could not purchase all the land needed to maintain a proper Green Belt.

What was needed was a way of controlling development without interfering with the ownership and existing use of land. Green Belt and other protected areas (SSI, etc) are a form of zoning control over the use of land.

Despite these best intentions, hardly a day goes by without further reports of plans by central and local government (including here in Epping Forest) to allow building on protected land. The argument is made that “people have got to live somewhere” but, as CPRE noted (page 2), there is enough brownfield (previously developed) land for 1.5 million new homes.

In response to a recent survey by the London Green Belt Council, EFDC stated that “releases” (ie destruction) of Green Belt was “very likely”.



**Application for membership and renewals**

Please will all members try to recruit at least one additional member for the Society.

Membership Fees due by 31<sup>st</sup> March each year  
 Registered Charity No: 263649  
 Membership Secretary  
 Epping Society  
 c/o Epping Town Council, Epping Hall, St John's Road, Epping CM16 5JU

Title: ..... Name(s): ..... Signed: .....

Home address : .....

Postcode: ..... Tel No: ..... Mobile: .....

Email address please: .....

Please provide your email address so we can keep you up to date with local planning issues

Cheque payable to The Epping Society  Standing order below (preferred)

**Gift Aid declaration** – for past, present & future donations to The Epping Society

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made today  in the past 4 years  in the future

Please tick all boxes you wish to apply.

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 28p of tax on every £1 that I gave up to 5 April 2008 and will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.

Donor's details as above Signed: .....

*Please notify the charity or CASC if you: Want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.*

**Standing Order Mandate** to be completed by the Epping Society member and sent to his/her Bank

To: Bank Name: ..... A/c Name: .....

Branch / Address: .....

A/c Sort Code: ..... A/c No: .....

Please set up the following standing order and debit my/our account accordingly.

**Organisation to be paid:** The Epping Society

A/c Name: The Epping Society Bank Name: Barclays Bank Plc Sort Code: 20-29-86 A/c No: 63141691

<b>Amount to be paid:</b>	£5.00	Subsequent Payments	1 <sup>st</sup> January
First payment:	Now	Payment frequency	yearly

Your Name: *(in block capitals)*.....

**Please ask your bank to use your first surname and either first name or initials as reference for the payment to avoid confusion**

Signature ..... Date of signature.....