



THE EPPING SOCIETY - NEWSLETTER

ETERNAL VIGILANCE IS THE PRICE OF CONSERVATION

August 2011

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

We were delighted with the turnout (90 members) for our open meeting in April prompted not only by having an excellent guest speaker, Tricia Moxey, from CPREssex, but also because it gave us an opportunity to voice our concerns on possible lack of consultation on the future development of the large 7 acre site in St John's Road. This site will have a significant long term impact on the economic and social wellbeing of our town. Sadly we have to report that still no further news or dates for consultation have come out but we are aware that the long awaited traffic analysis was recently undertaken as observed by members. It is apparent from the Town Centres Study that a 'major' retailer may be encouraged to develop the site. We will obviously inform you our members as soon as any information becomes available!

Now, what puts conservation areas like Epping at Risk?

Obviously unsympathetic new development is of major concern but more frequently it is an accumulation of small changes to established buildings that collectively begin to erode the character of the area. And despite planning controls, these do not always manage to control the appearance of shop fronts. In the EFDC's 'Epping Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan dated November 2009', they state that the "High Street has potential for improvement". They also declare "that the Council will explore the possibility of running a shopfront enhancement scheme as an incentive for shopowners to upgrade and improve their shopfronts." As part of our work with the Epping Town Council on Article 4 directions, we believe if we can provide the EFDC with examples, both from our members and the community as a whole, as to what changes are desirable, it might enable them to take steps in achieving their goal. Despite the fact that we have 28 statutory listed and 4 locally listed buildings in the High Street, there is still much room for improvement in our view.

This is where you, our members, come in! We want you to use your observation skills and intimate knowledge of the area to help us put forward a sound evidence base to the EFDC for improving the retail area. We want you to cast your eagle eyes on individual buildings in the High Street and let us have your comments. The type of examples may be inappropriate windows, excess advertising and unnecessary signs, external surfaces such as paintwork/rendering out of keeping, roofs in disrepair, etc. as well as, of course, any positive comments. Your observations can be sent or given to any one of the Committee members listed. To assist with this 'awareness campaign' and 'information gathering', we are also planning to have a **Photographic Display at St Johns Church from 10th September - 24th September 2011** where we will display individual photographs of all the buildings in the High Street as this may be an easier way for you to examine all the buildings in 'one go' and make your observations. Please bring as many friends and family as you can muster.

And for those of you familiar with using and accessing our website www.eppingsociety.org.uk you can find the photographs under the heading 'High Street'.

We have promised the Epping Town Council that we will report back to them by October with our members' observations therefore the deadline for comments is 30th September 2011.

We do hope you will support this initiative in our endeavours to 'Conserve and Improve' Epping and its environment. As you read our Vice Chairman's report on the latest legislation on Planning, it will become apparent that we must take a stand for Epping's sake. Despite all the government's talk on community involvement, I fear that it will be less not more and that we will have little say in our future so let's do so now and see if we can make a difference!

Our Social Meeting to be held on **21st September** will see someone very familiar with managing large green spaces: Mark Wasilewski, Royal Parks of London Manager, talking about the Royal Parks. Did you know that in 1851, the Crown Lands Act transferred management of the Royal Parks to the Government. This meant that the public was freely able to enjoy access to all of London's Royal Parks for the first time. Can you imagine what London would be like today without those parks? Do join us for what I am sure will be a very interesting talk.

Sue Allison - Chairman

Thank you Amy Louise!

Have you noticed the three window boxes outside the "old, original" post office building, the ones supplied by the Society for the enjoyment of the people of Epping? They have been looking splendid this year.

These boxes are now being maintained and watered regularly by the nearby florist/gift shop Amy Louise. We would like to thank Roy and his staff for their support in keeping them looking fresh and cared for. We also take this opportunity of thanking committee member Doreen Tarling and her husband Jim who plant them up twice a year with appropriate flowering plants, refreshing the compost and Jim gives them a coat of paint when he thinks they need it. This team effort is a credit to the Society, so a big thank you from us to all concerned.

Contact Details:-

Chairman: Sue Allison 01992 561961

Email: info@eppingsociety.org.uk

Editor & Membership:

De. Spence 01992 577191

Email: eppsocmembership@live.com

WEBSITE: www.eppingsociety.org.uk

Committee Updates Vice Chairman

Concern for Epping Town & the Green Belt

Reading the Government proposals for changing the Town Planning laws could mean that we in Epping are in for a worrying "Double Whammy"

Whammy 1 - the relaxation of the existing Town Planning requirements which will encourage our Town Centre to expand and include major alterations without due regard for the historic value of the "street scene"

Whammy 2 - the relaxation of Green Belt areas for development.

The Sunday telegraph (issue No 2617) has researched the new (and reduced) 52 page Town Planning document, which is to replace the 1,300 page existing document and has highlighted the issues which have mobilised both The National Trust and C.P.R.E. (Rural England) to fight against the government's relaxation of the existing Town Planning laws.

The new document rethinks the existing Green Belt policies which will be dependent upon the "Impact Assessment" report of the Government. Although there is a three month Government consultation period, it is reported that the Town Planning Inspectorate, who decide Planning appeals, are now using new guidance based on the '**presumption in favour of developers**'

Reading the Sunday Telegraph report, really depressed me, as it would appear that the prime mover for relaxing the existing laws is to open the building flood gates to provide more employment, to erect houses and factories, to provide mortgages, to encourage people to buy more goods, all in an effort to end this recession.

Griff Rhys Jones the last Chairman of the Civic Trust concluded his article in The Times (13th August) with these words:- "It is the authoritative voice of the bully. We are going to hit you, it says. We will have lots more development. You decide where. Do you want us to desecrate your parks, your terraces, your high street, your suburbs or your green belt? If you can't make up your mind, we will go ahead anyway without consulting you at all." He continues "With a presumption in favour of development" the Government is opening the way for anybody to trash the country. Any lawyer could drive a bulldozer through the filmic codicils put up to defend "quality" in the draft. None of us can afford to cross over and ignore this outbreak of vandalism."

Relaxing the Town Planning laws may well end the recession but might well cause devastation to our landscape and our townscape. 'They know not what they do!'

All our members are aware that the Epping Society is an environmental watchdog which gives its opinions, good or bad, to our Local Authority. These are the considered opinions on behalf of our 720 members and hinge about the need to keep the obvious historic qualities of our town, because Epping is interesting and special.

With the school site in St Johns Rd being considered for redevelopment, the Madells housing proposals awaiting an appeal decision and now the prospects of every developer 'clearing his decks' ready for the Green Belt development around the edges of the town, **this Society needs all the help that we can muster.** Please spread the word to your neighbours and friends and ask that they too join the Epping Society now.

Ken Miller

Planning Appraisals

In the six months since the last News Letter your committee have considered approaching one hundred new planning applications, both large and small. Of these, we have registered our objections to seven on varying grounds, from "green belt" to over-development (where we consider the site to be too small for the proposed use) inadequate car parking provision, insufficient amenity space, and even the overprovision of restaurant space resulting in a loss of retail space in the High Street.

Of these, we have been notified of two refusals of planning permission to date, the first, on green belt grounds, being the "Madells" / Theydon Place site where the applicant wished to erect 60 houses. Of these, 48 were to be supposed "affordable" homes and while we are aware of the need for these and in different circumstances would welcome them, we considered that there having been three recent approvals for homes in the green belt in the district, yet another one would set too much of a precedent. The second was the application for a restaurant and flats on the old Pearce's Bakery site (208-212 High Street). Here we were concerned at the loss of the façade of the building which, although not being a thing of beauty in its present state, is part of the historic street scene of the High Street and in a conservation area. We further considered there were sufficient eating premises in the High Street and that we should not lose two further retail outlets; we were also concerned at the lack of visitor parking for the flats and difficult access for large delivery vehicles at the rear. EFDC's reasons for refusal were similar to our first two objections. These refusals may not be the end of the matter however as these schemes often go to appeal or are submitted in a revised form. (e.g. The Wintry Park Services development, Thornwood Road, application for a block of flats having been refused earlier in the year, have put in a revised application). Under the coming new planning regulations the end story may be different. We will therefore be "watching this space" to see what transpires. These new planning regulations are something that we are watching closely, together with the Article 4 direction and the St John's Road area redevelopment, but more of these matters elsewhere in the news letter.

Iain Wallace

Publicity and Website

The Epping Society was quoted in articles by the Epping Forest Guardian on the former St. Johns Primary School proposals, Wintry Park and the proposed development at 208-212 High Street, formally Pearce's Bakers and the High Street public telephone kiosks. The Guardian archive can be accessed on www.guardian-series.co.uk/edition/. Our web site is now a year old. In July it had 169 visits from separate individuals. These include visits from USA, Brazil, Canada and Australia. Please visit it on www.eppingsociety.org.uk. Any contributions would be most appreciated. I am particularly interested in expanding the section entitled 'did you know?' where I have assembled some interesting facts from the history of our town. However, I am sure you can help it expand! The Society stand at the Town Show was visited by several people who offered photographs for inclusion on our web site. Charlie Geddes 01992 573706 webmaster@eppingsociety.org.uk

Campaign for the Protection of Rural England

CPREssex CURRENT POLICIES AND CONCERNS

The Campaign to Protect Rural Essex (CPREssex), of which the Epping Society is a member, recently reiterated its commitment to protect the beauty and tranquility of the countryside, and to continue its support for thriving and sustainable rural communities. CPREssex will also particularly campaign against:

- 1: Unconstrained Greenfield housing development and airport expansion.
- 2: Spending on road building at the expense of investing in public transport.
- 3: Abuses of the planning system.
- 4: Fly tipping and litter.
- 5: Pylons.
- 6: Invasive onshore wind turbines and wind farms.
7. Inappropriate mineral extraction and waste disposal.

A recent example in policy 1. is where CPREssex worked with the "Stop Stansted Expansion" organisation in the recent successful battle against the second runway at Stansted Airport. A further example, and closer to home, is where both the Epping Society and CPREssex objected to the proposed housing development on Green Belt land at Theydon Grove/Madells, Epping. This was rejected at the recent LDC Planning Meeting but, although voting against the development, several councilors expressed concern at the lack of new housing in the District and this could lead to further pressures on the local Green Belt in the future. Of greater concern is the pending Government proposed revision of the Planning System which, although at the consultation stage, is already affecting plans for development. Shaun Spiers, the Chief Executive of the CPRE governing body, warned, in the Daily Telegraph, that the emphasis on the new policy, which is the biggest change in planning law since the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, would be on economic growth rather than protecting the countryside. The new policy would encourage decision takers at every level to assume that the default answer to development proposals is "yes". The Green Belt would be threatened by a new "community right to build" that would allow local referendum to overrule protection of the countryside. It seems it is "open season" for the development of the countryside, including some of our finest agricultural land. What is proposed will weaken Green Belt protection.

Trevor Roberts - CPREssex Representative

London Green Belt Council

At the recent Meeting of the LGBC there was considerable discussion on the Government's proposals to 'deregulate' the planning procedures. It is felt that this will lead to further pressure for loss of the Green Belt. The President of the LGBC, Mr G. Thomas MP raised this in the House and in reply the Minister said that it was the intention of the Government to continue the present policy on Green Belt. However other messages from the Government suggest otherwise. The LGBC will be keeping a close watch on the situation.

Arthur Walker

Social Events

Town Show

We once again congratulate and thank the Town Council for organising the annual show at Stonards on the 19th June, a lot of hard work and hours of preparation go into it, they are also there on the day to help, so a big thank you to everyone involved. The Society gained 4 new members on the day, and we saw a lot of interest in the photographs we displayed of Epping from times gone by.

The 3 games we put on the children were bagatelle (courtesy of The Friends of Swaines Green), pick up sticks and of course our usual fishing game, always popular with the younger children - due no doubt to the attraction of the water. As usual this was manned by Geoff Walton (a member of long standing) and his grandson Fred. Geoff provided both the game and a prize for each child taking part. We the Society take this opportunity to thank him for his generosity.

Members Christmas Lunch 4th Dec 2011

Owing to the earliness of this newsletter, may I remind you of our members Christmas lunch which as usual will be held on the first Sunday in December. It is always an enjoyable event and is the start of the Christmas festivities, I feel. **Price Held at last years rate!** How often do you see that today? The Society has decided to hold the price of the Christmas lunch at the same charged last year, as it was felt that costs are rising all around us and we didn't want to discourage any member from attending due to the cost of the lunch which is a social event enjoyed by many.

Date: Sunday December 4th 2011
Venue: Pelly Court, Hemnall St., Epping
Time: 12.30 for 1pm lunch
Cost: £18.50
Contact: Doreen Tarling, 8 Lynceley Grange, Epping CM16 6RA Tel: 01992 574754

I shall be pleased to reserve tickets for you and closer to the date I will contact you to remind you of your booking. Payment is by cheque only. The Committee look forward to seeing you there.

Christmas Tree Festival

We are hoping to be invited to take part once again in the Christmas Tree Festival held at St John's Church.

We are looking out for ideas as to the theme we can use this year to decorate a Christmas tree. So, if you feel inspired and can think of something original we could use, we would love to hear from you. (Contact details above). Otherwise, just look out for the Society's tree and hopefully you will feel able to give your vote to our endeavour. It is a pleasure to support such a worthwhile local cause and the festival is enjoyed by all who visit.

Outings

As a result of the answers to the questionnaire it has been decided that there is not the interest in the coach outings as we have had in the past. This could be due to the expected costs, but there is also the consideration that the town is well served by others offering days out by coach. On the strength of the support received when we arranged a visit to Hill Hall last year, we have decided to arrange outings to places of interest in the locality. So as to give all our members the opportunity of being able to partake, for those without cars a car sharing scheme will be arranged. We are thinking of making our first venture for next year a visit to the Gibberd Garden in Old Harlow, perhaps at Snowdrop time (they open especially for this). Yes, we appreciate the weather may be against us, but it would be something to look forward to in the dark days of winter after Christmas - look out for further details in our next newsletter.

Doreen Tarling

Membership News

Questionnaire Results

Thank you all who completed the questionnaire included in the last newsletter. We had over a 10% response, with many good and useable ideas. We are using the information gained to take the Society forward. We feel there is a need to encourage "younger" members to join. With this in mind we have planned a "postal drop". Your postman/lady has been asked to distribute some copies of this newsletter and a membership form to some 20 houses on his/her round in the hope that this newsletter will encourage others to become involved. If you the members could spread the word about the benefits of belonging to the Society this would probably have far more effect than a piece of unsolicited mail. As the contents of the newsletter show there are many changes coming our way in the forthcoming planning legislation and our residents will have to live with the consequences. We need to know the opinions of all ages as we all have different needs and requirements and with age one finds it increasingly difficult to embrace change. If you have received this copy of our newsletter along with a membership form we hope you will be encouraged to join us in having an input into the way our town looks and develops in the years ahead.

Perhaps, you might like to see and meet the Society's committee and members at our Social meeting on 21st September when we have a very interesting speaker.

Help! - Do you live in North Weald?

Can you help the Society in maintaining its contact with its members, by helping out just twice a year. We have a need for a "postman/lady" to deliver our newsletters to 8 or so members in North Weald. 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

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:-

25.9 Apologies - there is no planned walk.

30.10. Upshire Leader - Cecilia Gonzalez - 9 miles.

27.11 Loughton-Leader- Bola Baruwa -10 miles

18.12 Theydon Bois-Leader Ray Latham - 10 miles

For further details: www.westessexramblers.org.uk

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Open Days - Photographic exhibition

Venue: St Johns Church

Dates: 10th Sept - 24th Sept 2011

Social Meeting

Open to non-members

Date: **Wednesday 21st September 2011**

Speaker: Mark Wasilewski on

The Royal Parks of London.

Venue: Pelly court, Hemnall Street, Epping

Time: 7.30 for 8pm

Admission: free, donation requested for refreshments.

Members Christmas Lunch

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Venue: Pelly Court, Hemnall St., Epping

Time: 12.30 for 1pm lunch

Cost: £18.50

Contact: Doreen Tarling, 8 Lynceley Grange, Epping
CM16 6RA Tel: 01992 574754

Christmas Tree Festival

Date: **2nd Dec - 5th December 2011**

Venue: St Johns Church

Historic Houses

Copped Hall Open Day

Date: **28th August 2011**

40th Anniversary Celebration 2012

Early Notice - Keep the date free!

Date: **Saturday 7th July 2012 - event now in planning stage!**

Newsletters via 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 appsocmembership@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.