

# **EPPING FOREST LOCAL COUNCILS' LIAISON COMMITTEE**

## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

**Place:** Civic Offices, High Street,  
Epping

**Date:** Wednesday, 8th November,  
2006

**Room:** Council Chamber

**Time:** 7.00 pm

**Democratic Services Officer:** Gary Woodhall (tel: 01992 564470)  
Email: gwoodhall@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

### **Members:**

#### **District Council Representatives:**

Councillors Mrs A Haigh (Chairman), R Morgan, Mrs C Pond, B Sandler and Mrs J H Whitehouse

#### **Local Council Representatives:**

Clerks and Chairmen/Members of Parish and Town Councils

#### **County Council Representatives:**

Members for the following wards:

North Weald and Nazeing:	Councillor A Jackson
Loughton Central:	Councillor C Pond
Ongar and Rural:	Councillor G McEwen
Epping and Theydon Bois:	Councillor T Spencer
Buckhurst Hill and Loughton South:	Councillor C Finn
Chigwell and Loughton Broadway:	Councillor M Tomkins
Waltham Abbey:	Councillor Mrs E Webster

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**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE MEETING WILL COMMENCE AT 7.00PM.**

**A BRIEF LOCAL COUNCILS MEETING WILL FOLLOW TO DISCUSS AND RATIFY THE CIF GRANT COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS.**

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

### **2. MINUTES**

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 21 June 2006 (previously circulated) and matters arising.

### **3. DISTRICT, TOWN AND PARISH CHARTER REVIEW**

The District Town and Parish Charter Review has almost finished reviewing and updating the District and Local Council Charter. They have asked that an extra Local

Council's Liaisons Committee meeting be set up in December 2006, to consider the final version of the revised Charter and agree it.

The following dates are available:

- 30th November;
- 6th December;
- 11th December; or
- 21st December 2006.

The meeting is asked to choose an appropriate date.

**4. PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2007**

To consider publicity measures to encourage more local residents to get involved with Parish and Town Councils, including The Forrester and the District Council website. The Essex Association of Local Councils has indicated that limited grant aid may be available for this purpose, for which a combined approach should be considered.

**5. PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEES RESTRUCTURE (Pages 5 - 6)**

To consider the views of the Local Councils, as attached.

**6. EXPANSION OF INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL USES IN FARM BUILDINGS**

Under Government guidance there has been a series of planning consents for the conversion of agricultural and horticultural buildings to other uses to help farmers, which has resulted in a series of rural industrial sites producing unanticipated traffic volumes on inadequate roads. To consider the approval of a policy of not permitting any further new building to take place at such application sites in the green belt.

**7. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT**

To provide an update on the present position in respect of the number of cases completed and presently outstanding, and possibly the current capacity of the relevant officers.

**8. TENANT PARTICIPATION IN RURAL AREAS (Pages 7 - 12)**

To consider the attached report.

**9. SUMMARY OF THE GREEN ARC PROJECT (Pages 13 - 14)**

To consider the attached report. It is suggested that the committee decide whether they would wish a report, or a detailed presentation, including the likely impacts of the Green Arc on protection of the Green Belt within Epping Forest District, at the next meeting.

**10. WEST ESSEX AREA FORUM - JANUARY MEETING (Pages 15 - 16)**

To note the attached letter.

**11. FIFTY FAVOURITE TREES PROJECT**

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

To consider any other urgent business.

**13. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for 28 March 2007 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber.

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## **Changes to the Planning Committee meeting structures and frequency**

As always there is a lot of concern about planning matters with a widespread view that the emphasis on decisions within eight weeks is compromising their quality. The point was made that there was evidently a financial inducement to meet the eight-week target but the question was then raised as to the significance of the sum involved. Maybe this could be explained?

There was no consensus amongst representatives present as to what the best arrangement of area and committee should be but there was almost universal agreement that the apparent focus on three committees was wrong. Rather than a concentration on speed of decision there ought to be an emphasis on a balanced result that was good for the District. Although the discussion about future arrangements is taking place in another committee in the same week and some local councils have submitted comments and may attend, it was felt that a proper debate should take place. This important matter will obviously have to be settled by the full Council of EFDC but it is surely right that the widest discussion should be sought.

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## Tenant Participation in Rural Areas

### **Report to Local Councils Liaison Committee – 8 November 2006.**

As part of the District Council's Tenant Participation Strategy, the Tenant Participation Officer has been looking at ways of involving tenants in rural parts of the district and giving them a greater say in how their homes and neighbourhoods are managed.

To help facilitate this, a Rural Tenant Participation Focus Group, comprising District Councillors and Council officers was set up and met on 12 December 2005 to look at ways of encouraging tenant participation in the rural parts of Epping Forest. At this meeting, it was agreed that the Tenant Participation Officer would liaise with Parish Councils to explain the reason for encouraging tenant participation, outline the various ways in which tenants could get involved and to request the assistance of the Parish Councils in either setting up new tenants associations or encouraging representation through a Rural Tenants Forum.

The Tenant Participation Officer has written to all Parish Councils and has now attended meetings of Sheering; Abbess, Beauchamp and Berners Roding; and Roydon Parish Councils; and was due to attend a meeting of Fyfield Parish Council on 2 November 2006.

In addition to this, a joint Housing/Leisure Services Community Consultation day is being held in Sheering on 5 December 2006.

Attached as part of this report are a summary of the reasons for encouraging tenant participation in rural areas; a précis of the main ways to get involved; and a 'family tree' of the tenant participation in Epping Forest.

The Tenant Participation Officer is in the process of setting up the Rural Tenants Forum and has established a database of interested tenants. Tenants representing Abbess Roding, Matching Tye, Moreton, Roydon and Sheering have agreed to attend the first meeting of the Forum, which will be held towards the end of November. He is also introducing a Rural Tenant Participation Strategy to help facilitate this process.

It is hoped that, through further liaison with Parish Councils and the implementation of the Rural Tenant Participation Strategy, the Rural Tenants Forum can quickly become established with Council tenant representation from all rural parts of Epping Forest district.

The Council's Housing Resources Manager Sandy Lindsay and Tenant Participation Officer, Richard Jones, will be in attendance at this meeting to explain further how local Council's can assist in the process.

# **Tenant Participation in Rural Areas**

## **What is Tenant Participation?**

**A two-way process involving sharing of information and ideas, where tenants are able to influence decisions and take part in what is happening**

## **Rural Tenant Participation**

### **Reasons:**

- **Government requirement to consult with residents**
- **Council concerns that residents in rural areas do not have a say in how services are managed**
- **No rural representation on EFDC Tenants & Leaseholders Federation**
- **Different types of properties & issues**
- **Lack of feedback from residents**
- **One-way communication**
- **Difficulty in reaching residents due to location, etc**



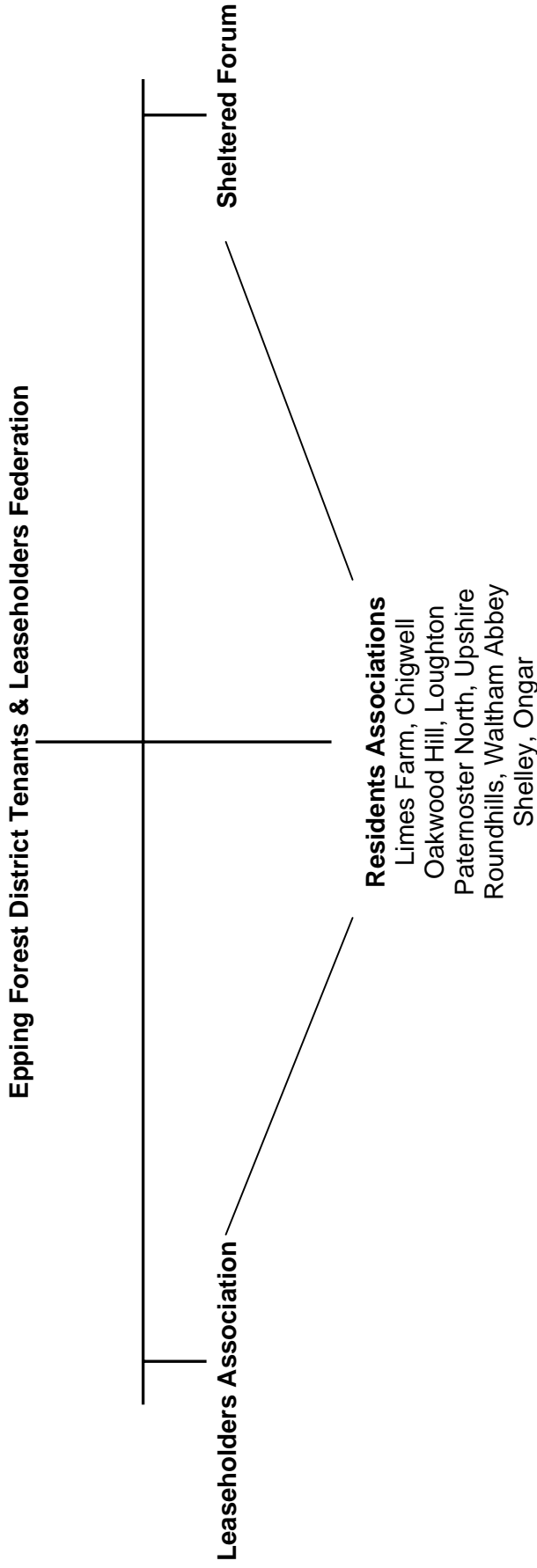
## Ways to get involved

- **Residents Association**  
Focused on specific area or estate. Open to all residents. Run by committee with formal constitution and financial & administrative backing from the Council. Two representatives on EFDC Tenants & Leaseholders Federation. Regular committee meetings & open meetings.
- **Rural Forum**  
Forum to represent views of residents in locations out of the main towns, ie Chigwell, Epping, Loughton, Ongar, Waltham Abbey. Made up of village or area representatives. Meet every 6 – 8 weeks? Meetings attended by Council officers, local councillors, police, etc. Travel expenses & hall hire paid for by EFDC.
- **Village Voice/Street Rep**  
Individuals, representing the views of residents. Would need to speak regularly with neighbours and be involved in local issues to ensure that views were representative and not individual.

**If you would like to get involved or would like to have an informal chat, please call Epping Forest District Council's Tenant Participation Officer Richard Jones on 01992 564524**

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## Tenant Participation in Epping Forest



Tenants & Leaseholders Federation meets with the Council every 6 weeks to be consulted and informed about issues affecting the residents of Epping Forest. The Federation represents all tenants & leaseholders of EFDC and the executive committee is made up of 2 representatives from each of the Council's recognised residents associations, the Leaseholders Association and the Sheltered Forum.

The Leaseholders Association represents the Council's leaseholders and meets with the Council every 10 weeks to discuss issues affecting leaseholders and leasehold services.

The Sheltered Forum is made up of representatives from the Council's sheltered housing and group-dwelling schemes. The Forum is held every 7-8 weeks and is attended by a number of Council officers. Issues affecting residents living in accommodation with a scheme manager are discussed.

EFDC currently has 5 recognised residents associations. Limes Farm Community Association, Chigwell; Oakwood Hill Residents Association, Loughton; Paternoster North Residents Association, Upshire; Roundhills Residents Association, Waltham Abbey and Shelley Residents Association, Ongar

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## **Green Arc: Summary**

### **What is the Green Arc?**

The strap line for the project is 'bringing the great outdoors closer to people'. In general terms it is about making the countryside more accessible and improving its quality. In this instance quality is defined as its usability and interest for people, but also its viability as farmland and for traditional management, including grasslands, hedgerows and woodland; and for wildlife.

### **What is the project designed to achieve?**

To a great extent within the broad aim exactly what is done can be influenced by local communities. One immediate effect is to add another reason for safeguarding the Green Belt in that it gives the Green Belt a positive function in addition to the stated purpose of openness.

Other direct improvements may include improvements to footpaths and footpath signage, improvements in land management and projects designed to improve the understanding of the countryside.

### **How will these objectives be achieved?**

A project team has been established, led by Mary Parodi, Project Director, currently hosted by Essex County Council. There is a steering group comprising national bodies, principally natural England (the Countryside Agency as was), the Forestry Commission etc, the Corporation of London, the Mayor of London's Office, the Woodland Trust and Thames Chase Community Forest. Essex County Council is a steering group member. Epping Forest District Council is also a steering group member; Epping Forest District Council is the only District Council or local body represented.

The principal role of Epping Forest District Council on the steering group has been to contribute local knowledge and expertise, and to try to ensure that the project takes proper account of local feelings and concerns, and will properly engage the community.

Significant funding has been available for land purchase by steering group members for land dedicated to the Green Arc. The majority has been spent within, or immediately adjacent to the district, including an extension to Hainault Forest and land in Theydon Bois and Matching Green. Other projects will include physical access improvement; prioritisation of grant aiding for projects and land management that support the Green Arc objectives and projects designed to increase understanding, such as Outreach via a dedicated website.

Funding is relatively short term, however, a principal job of the Project Director is to secure funding to maintain the project in the longer term.

Current work includes a communication strategy, the aim of which is to actively engage the community at all levels, but principally including the political, landowners and young people.

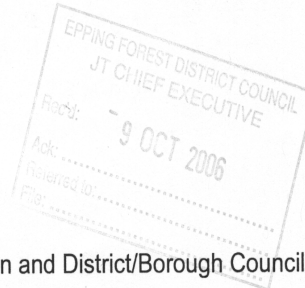
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Cllr John Roberts BSc, AKC, MIBiol  
**Member for Brentwood Hutton**

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21 September 2006



To all Parish Clerks on behalf of Parish Chairmen and District/Borough Council Leaders and Chief Executives

### **West Essex Area Forum – January meeting**

The West Essex Area Forum meeting on 22 November 2006 will be held in the Council Chamber at the Brentwood Borough Council offices.

At the September meeting I proposed that the meeting on 29 January 2007 will be in a different format. Instead of the usual agenda setting by the County Council, with officer presentations, I am hoping that this meeting will be driven by you in the Parishes and districts.

I would like to invite you to think about items you might wish the Forum to consider. Clearly these should be items of wider interest than your own Parish. By way of example, there is to be a pilot study to reduce energy consumption and hence CO2 emissions by shutting off street lights between midnight and 5am in Uttlesford, apart from in selected areas. While Uttlesford may wish to debate this pilot, if it is successful, it could be introduced throughout Essex and would therefore be of interest to other Parishes and districts. Alternatively you may wish to talk about rail services in West Essex, as affects your area. Any topic which you feel is an important issue for you.

Please write to me with any item you would like on the agenda, so that we can discuss how to take it forward at the meeting. Clearly issues such as the rail service would warrant the presence of a representative from the rail operators and would need to be contacted well in advance to ensure staff availability. Please submit your ideas for discussion by **Friday 1 December 2006**, so we can ensure the successful planning of the item for the meeting itself and attendance by the relevant representatives.

I must stress that the County Council will not be putting any items on the agenda for the January meeting. If you do not wish to discuss any issues then it will be a very short meeting. It is your opportunity to air your views and concerns.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Roberts".

John Roberts  
West Essex Area Forum Chairman

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