



IN TOUCH

A DIGITAL NEWSLETTER
FROM EPPING FOREST
CONSERVATIVES

JUNE 2020

COMMUNITY UNITE IN THE BATTLE AGAINST COVID-19

In a matter of months, coronavirus has changed the way we live. As we pass the peak and adapt to the 'new normal' our entire community should be proud of their response to the crisis. Your local Conservative Team continues to work hard to deliver for Epping Forest at this time. The Conservative-led District and County Councils have gone above and beyond in supporting individuals and businesses, providing necessary support to the most vulnerable. This time has also demonstrated the importance of partnership working - with Local Authorities collaborating with organisations including Essex Police, Voluntary Action Epping Forest, the NHS, as well as local businesses. In the coming weeks as we look to the future and work on COVID recovery we must continue this sense of community spirit to ensure we come out the other side stronger than ever.

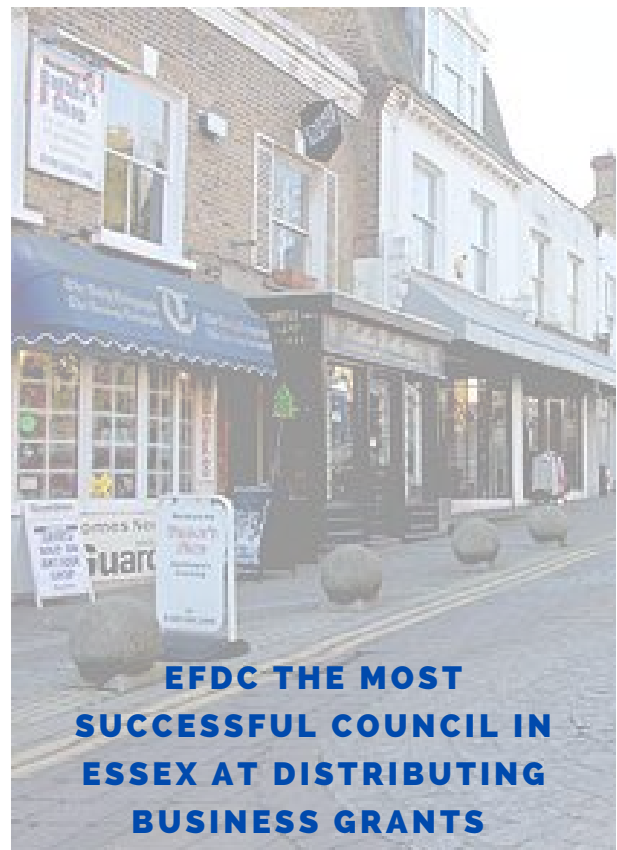
DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS

Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) has distributed **£28 million of business grants, reaching over 96% of eligible businesses**. EFDC has been recognised as the most successful council in Essex in distributing these grants to local businesses at this challenging time.. EFDC made the £10,000 or £25,000 payment to businesses without the requirement of completing a form to ensure a smoother process. The officer team did a brilliant job, working around the clock to distribute these funds.

Thanks to a 5% uplift provided by our Conservative Government in the coming weeks EFDC will be providing a discretionary scheme for local businesses who fell outside the government scheme,

The Government have also put in place a number of other provisions for businesses including the bounce back loan and job retention scheme, find out more information [here](#).



**EFDC THE MOST
SUCCESSFUL COUNCIL IN
ESSEX AT DISTRIBUTING
BUSINESS GRANTS**



PROTECTING THE PUBLIC

During the COVID crisis, the Community Safety Team at EFDC has faced unprecedented challenges ensuring that for the sake of public health that people adhere to social distancing guidance. The Conservative Cabinet at EFDC deployed additional funds during the lock-down period for a temporary contract with Park Guard which provided two additional Officers and an extra vehicle. This proved successful in breaking up gatherings across the district, for example, they addressed an issue in Waltham Abbey and have patrolled streets district-wide. This is in addition to the three Essex Police Officers, tasked exclusively in the district, which EFDC has committed to funding in this year's budget.

Early on in the lockdown one of the key issues was with an extraordinarily high number of visitors coming to the forest, many people were not abiding by the spirit of the Government Guidance. The District Council worked closely with partner agencies, including Essex Police, the Corporation of London and surrounding authorities to address this. The Forest Rangers worked as part of a wider task force to check car movements and ensure visitors were socially distanced. In addition, there were a number of traffic and parking management strategies put into place.

ASSISTING THOSE MOST VULNERABLE

During this health crisis, it is vital that the most vulnerable in our community receive the help and provisions which they need. The Community Wellbeing Team has been successfully carrying out 'Operation Shield' which includes getting food packages out to people whilst in self-isolation. Officers have been answering and responding to thousands of calls from residents via our helpline, providing advice and support. In addition, the Housing Team have called hundreds of vulnerable Tenants to ensure they have the help they need and they have provided assistance where required. Officers have gone above and beyond in their support for residents.



EFDC CARRY ON BUSINESS AS USUAL



EFDC has successfully been conducting business as usual during this health crisis, as well as going above and beyond in their support for the community at this time. Officers are adapting to working at home and are more productive than ever. EFDC has continued to operate statutory services. Unlike many Councils, they have managed to deliver an uninterrupted refuse and recycling collection, whilst adhering to social distancing advice. In addition, the council is ahead of the curve with digital democracy, having already run planning meetings, cabinet and full council via zoom.

THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE CIVIC OFFICES WILL BRING IN £23 MILLION WHICH CAN BE INVESTED INTO FRONT-LINE SERVICES



Epping Forest District Council's Cabinet have given the go ahead to exciting plans to redevelop the Civic Offices in Epping.

The investment of £5.6 million will see a return of around £23 million over five years. In addition, to a wider community benefit, by enabling better access to public services, as well as bringing investment and jobs into the local area.

- ✓ It will bring all EFDC staff and services into one building, alongside various local charities, organisations and businesses - creating a Community Hub in the heart of Epping.
- ✓ The Condor Building next to the Civic Offices will be redeveloped into much needed housing. The rent from the new homes will be put back into protecting front-line services whilst keeping tax down.
- ✓ The Civic Offices will be modernised and become more sustainable - increasing the life span of the building and decreasing maintenance costs significantly.

A RESTRUCTURED CABINET AT EFDC

A new-look, smaller Epping Forest District Council cabinet has been appointed for 2020/2021. Cabinet Members will take on larger portfolios and work closely together to ensure the community recovers from the COVID crisis and comes out the other side set for the future. To assist with this work Cllr Aniket Patel will be setting up a Portfolio Holder advisory group on COVID recovery with members across the council.

Nigel Bedford has been appointed as Deputy Leader of EFDC replacing Councillor Stavrou, who held the role for several years and worked closely with Cllr Chris Whitbread as Cabinet Member for Housing and later Finance, to realise the ambition of becoming a low tax authority, which froze council tax for nine out of ten years, whilst protecting front line services. As she steps back from this role, and onto the backbenches, she will be greatly missed.

THE NEW CABINET:

- **Leader** – Councillor Chris Whitbread
- **Planning and Sustainability (and Deputy Leader)** - Councillor Nigel Bedford
- **Finance and Economic Development** - Councillor John Philip
- **Housing and Community** - Councillor Holly Whitbread
- **Environmental and Technical Services** - Councillor Nigel Avey
- **Commercial and Regulatory Services** - Councillor Aniket Patel
- **Customer and Corporate Support Services** - Councillor Sam Kane

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL UPDATE

EPHING FOREST COUNCILLOR CHRIS WHITBREAD BECOMES CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AT ESSEX



Cllr Chris Whitbread who represents Epping and Theydon Bois division is the new Cabinet Member for Finance at Essex County Council (ECC). Chris who previously served as deputy to Cllr John Spence, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care and who has been the Leader of Epping Forest District Council since 2012, takes over from Gagan Mohindra, the former Chigwell and Loughton Broadway County Councillor, who was elected as the Member of Parliament for South West Hertfordshire in December. Chris said, "I am delighted to be joining the Cabinet Team at Essex. The months ahead will be challenging as we work towards COVID recovery. I will work hard to achieve the best possible outcomes for the County. Working to ensure ECC remains efficient and provides the best possible value for residents."

ESSEX TAKES ACTION TO TACKLE THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Essex County Council is taking serious action to help tackle climate change and reduce carbon emissions across Essex.

The cross-party Climate Action Commission is taking shape and is grabbing the imagination of the public – there is a £5m reserve in this year's budget to implement its recommendations.

In the meantime, although we have our own Epping Forest, the Council is promising to plant 375,000 more trees to create an Essex Forest and also to create nearly 40 miles of wild roadside verges.

There are many other measures planned which include a plan to replace all streetlights with LEDs and supporting residents to purchase solar panels, saving 300 tonnes of carbon in year one alone. Single-use plastic will be removed from across the council and more electric vehicle charging points will be installed.

Also, as part of Essex County Council's developing Green Infrastructure Strategy, 90% of materials linked to our highways' works are being recycled!



HIGHWAYS WORK CONTINUES DESPITE COVID CRISIS



The Highways Team have continued to work, whilst adhering to social distancing, throughout the COVID crisis. Significant works have been undertaken in recent weeks including Epping High Road. You can report any issues with your local roads and pavements [here](#).

The County Council has put another £5 million into the Highways budget this year to enable further investment in improving the condition of roads and pavements.

RECYCLING CENTRES REOPEN

Recycling centres across Essex have now reopened for waste and recycling. The centres will now take waste, which, if stored at home, poses a risk of injury or is harmful to health. Residents are urged to make a common-sense decision and only visit if absolutely necessary. Social distancing measures and new site restrictions will be in place to ensure the safety of residents and site staff.



VE DAY AT A SOCIAL DISTANCE

On Friday 8th May the UK had a Bank Holiday to mark the 75th Anniversary of VE Day. 'Victory in Europe Day' was the day the nation came together to mark the end of the Second World War and celebrate victory - defending the freedom of the allied forces. There were numerous plans in place to mark this occasion before lockdown. However, unfortunately, many public celebrations had to be postponed due to COVID-19.

Nevertheless, VE Day was marked throughout the UK, subject to strict social distancing. In Epping Forest, many streets were adorned in red, white and blue. There were impressive decorations across the District. Many residents held socially distanced street parties with neighbours raising a glass to those who fought for our freedom.

Epping Forest MP, Dame Eleanor Laing said, "I was proud to put up a flag to remember my Dad and his generation. Many of them gave their lives and all of them gave their youth to fight for our freedom."

Pictured: Councillor Nigel Avey with his dog and an original flag from VE Day, 75 years ago.



COVID-19 ADVICE AND SUPPORT

GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

- Find up to date Government guidance on a wide range of issues including: protecting yourself and others, employment and business support, benefits and travel at: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

HEALTH GUIDANCE

- If you are exhibiting symptoms of Coronavirus (a temperature and dry cough) DO NOT visit a GP or hospital. You should self isolate immediately and call 111.
- To protect yourself and others from the virus it is vital that you **WASH YOUR HANDS** regularly and thoroughly.
- Find out more at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

LOCAL SUPPORT

- **Epping Forest District Council** have established a COVID helpline to provide support and advice to residents. Call **01992 564088** or visit eppingforestdc.gov.uk/coronavirus/
- **Voluntary Action Epping Forest** can support residents with food deliveries, dog walking, collecting prescriptions, telephone befriending, lifts to medical appointments ..etc. Contact: covidresponse@vaef.org.uk
- **Essex Welfare Service** has been set up to support the most vulnerable in our community. You can call Essex Welfare Service on 0300 303988 or visit www.essexwelfareservice.org.uk

VOLUNTEERING

- You can volunteer locally through **Essex Welfare Services**, visit: [facebook.com/essexcoronavirusaction](https://www.facebook.com/essexcoronavirusaction) or contact **Voluntary Action Epping Forest** via covidresponse@vaef.org.uk.
- You can also sign up to be an **NHS Volunteer** for a number of roles at www.goodsam.org/NHS.

OTHER USEFUL HELPLINES

- **For the elderly** - @TheSilverlineUK - 0800 470 8090/ @Age_uk - 0800 678 1602
- **For Mental Health support:** - @MindCharity - 0300 123 3393/ Visit: <https://bit.ly/2YnHNRp>

GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR LOCAL CONSERVATIVE TEAM



Website - www.eppingforestconservatives.org.uk

Social Media - Facebook: [@eppingforestconservatives/](https://www.facebook.com/eppingforestconservatives/) Twitter: [@efconservatives/](https://twitter.com/efconservatives/)
Instagram: [@efconservatives](https://www.instagram.com/efconservatives/)

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STAY ALERT 

CONTROL THE VIRUS

 **SAVE LIVES**