

Love Epping Forest Manifesto 2026



**Epping Forest
Heritage Trust**

Sign up to the Love Epping Forest Manifesto

With local elections in London and Essex coming round on 7th May 2026, we are launching our Love Epping Forest manifesto to put Epping Forest on the agenda.

Why are local elections important to Epping Forest?

The Forest, 6,000 acres of ancient woodland, heathland and lakes linking London and Essex, is owned and managed by the City of London Corporation.

But local councils can still play a significant role in protecting and enhancing the Forest for the benefits of their residents; pollution, climate change, health and wellbeing, planning, transport and accessibility all fall within their remit.

This May, elections are taking place in Epping Forest District, Essex County, Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest, while the Forest continues to face significant challenges – climate change, the biodiversity crisis, adjacent development, pollution, increased footfall, weakening of planning protections. Despite research demonstrating the profound positive effects of nature, exercise and heritage on people's mental and physical well-being, the Forest is under threat like never before.

In this critical moment, a Forest-minded local authority has the opportunity to make a lasting mark on the natural world and the communities it supports by working with the City of London Corporation, EFHT and other local community organisations, to help to protect the Forest for generations to come.

What are we asking for?

We are asking candidates to **commit to delivering nine pledges** over the next four years. The nine pledges have come out of our research and extensive engagement work with the Forest's local communities.

They are all deliverable by local councillors, and they centre around three key themes:

- **Protecting Nature and Wildlife**
- **Working Together for the Forest**, and
- **Keeping the Forest Safe and Accessible.**



To find out more about our #LoveEppingForest campaign, sign up to the pledges electronically, or other ways you can help, please scan the QR code, or visit: tinyurl.com/loveeppingforest2026

If you are a candidate in Epping Forest District, or Essex County, please sign up to these pledges.

(If you are a local resident Essex, please ask your candidates to sign up to these pledges.)

If elected I will put my love for the Forest at the heart of my work as a local Councillor. Through my work and decision-making, I will...

Protect nature and wildlife

1. Put the Forest's wildlife, culture and heritage at the heart of planning policies and decisions
2. Create and strengthen wildlife corridors to the Forest, while protecting Green Belt and resisting "grey belt" designations near the Forest
3. Reduce pollution in and around the Forest to protect the Forest and public health

Work together for the Forest

4. Work with government, business and civil society to tackle climate change, and promote the vital role of the Forest in absorbing CO2, heat and rainwater – protecting against flooding and reducing temperatures
5. Work closely with the City of London Corporation and other relevant organisations to tackle fly-tipping, littering and anti-social behaviour in the Forest
6. Support the City of London Corporation to improve Forest paths, to ensure visitor accessibility to the Forest all year round, and to manage increased visitor numbers effectively

Keep the Forest safe and accessible

7. Keep Forest visitors safe and welcome by lowering speed limits for all roads within and around the Forest to 30mph
8. Promote greater access to the Forest for all residents in my local area through a range of accessible, safe and sustainable transport modes – walking, cycling and public transport
9. Ensure a greater diversity of people can enjoy the health and well-being benefits of the Forest through initiatives such as proactive community engagement and social prescribing.

I am a candidate for _____ ward

in _____ Council

Signature: _____ Date: _____