

**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET  
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT THE BENBOW CLUB BOWERS GIFFORD  
ON WEDNESDAY 14<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2016 AT 7.30 p.m.**

**PRESENT:**

**Councillors:** R.Smillie: B. Foster: T. Potter

**Parish Council Clerk:** Mrs Christine Barlow

**Residents present:** 9

**104/16 Apologies for absence:** Councillor Sheelagh Pegg and Councillor Nigel Tyler

**105/16 Declarations of member's interest –** To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other pecuniary interests or non-pecuniary interests by members relating to any agenda items.

None received

**106/16 Public Forum:** To enable residents to raise issues of concern with Parish Councillors (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

(i) A resident reported that a large pothole had appeared in the middle of Pound Lane coming from Burnt Mills Road towards the chicane. The Clerk was asked to report to Essex County Council.

(ii) It was reported that some street lights were not working in Pound Lane, North Benfleet or in Osborne Road. Residents were asked if they could identify the street lights which were not operational via the number on the post and the exact location and either report the defective lights to Essex County Council or to the Parish Clerk who would then report them.

(iii) A resident asked if the chicane was a permanent fixture in Pound Lane as he considered it needed either to be removed or improved. Councillor Foster explained that currently there were no plans to remove it. When the Neighbourhood Plan was in place the Parish Council would be in a better position to bring pressure to Essex County Council to make changes to alter the layout of Pound Lane. Residents raised concerns regarding the speed of traffic in Pound Lane and measures to reduce the speed of traffic were discussed. Councillors explained the Parish Council were endeavouring to set up a Community Speed Watch Scheme in an attempt to catch speeding motorists.

(iv) A resident raised the issue of constant piles of back sacks deposited before collection day at Cat Tree Lane, Smilers Farm and noise from groundworks operations on land owned by Smilers Farm. The Clerk advised she had reported

similar instances in regard to this location previously and urged residents to report further occurrences to Basildon Council.

(v) A resident raised the issue of HGV Lorries parking on the bend in Courtauld Road outside Yodel and asked if the Parish Council could do anything. Councillor Foster advised he had repeatedly brought the matter of parking in this location to the attention of the Local Highways Panel and asked for traffic conditions to be placed on the bend but as yet had been unable to secure a successful outcome.

**107/16 Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016:** Council to approve the accuracy and content of the minutes of the previous meeting and the Chair to sign.

Councillors confirmed the accuracy and content of the minutes of the previous meeting and Councillor Smillie, as Chair, signed the minutes as required.

**108/16 Basildon Council's New and Alternative Sites Consultation:** To consider the Parish Council's response to the Consultation.

The Parish Council had been made aware that some leaflets distributed by Orbit Homes in connection with the Benfleet Hall Site proposals had not been delivered to residents for information and the Parish Clerk had raised the delivery of these leaflets with the Orbit Homes consultants. Steps had been taken to redeliver the areas which had been reported as not receiving leaflets. The meeting was advised that information regarding the New and Alternative sites could be viewed on the Parish Council and Basildon Council websites.

Councillor Smillie explained the rationale behind the different proposed sites for the benefit of the meeting. It was explained that the Parish had to accept that some development was going to take place within its Green Belt and therefore there was a need to identify which development would be best placed within the village. The Parish Council had met with Orbit Homes regarding their proposals but had not had an opportunity to meet with the consultants who were proposing to build on the Bradfields Farm site.

The Parish Council, from the information they had to hand, accepted in principle, that the best site would be at Benfleet Hall Farm as (i) it did not join the village to Pitsea and Basildon (ii) it would help prevent development on H13 – Little Chalvedon Farm (iii) when joined with proposals for Hovefields and Honiley, to the north of the A127 in Wickford, it met the cumulative numbers for building dwellings as identified by Basildon Councils Draft Local Plan.

The aim of the Parish Council was to help build an environment that could be enjoyed by all ages and control where development took place.

The meeting was opened up for residents to discuss their concerns regarding the proposals, the effects on infrastructure within the Parish and the imbalance of the various sites across the district. The purpose of this discussion was to enable residents to complete the New/Alternative consultation in an informed way. The Parish Council was itself in the process of preparing their response, based on the information they had, in a fair and constructive way. This response would be placed on the Parish Council website. Responses from the public needed to be

made by 23.59 on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016 and must be completed on-line or sent by email on the form provided.

**109/16 Policing:** To discuss recent incidents of anti-social behaviour and Police response.

The Parish Clerk had managed, after several attempts, to contact PC Paul Downs, Essex Police Traveller and Gypsy Liaison Officer and arranged a meeting with him and Basildon Police to discuss issues regarding recent anti-social behaviour in some parts of the village. The topic of conversation would include incidents of drug use, damage to property and vehicle theft. The Clerk asked residents to report any incidents which had occurred in the last few months to her or a Councillor to enable as much intelligence as possible to be discussed with the Police when she met them.

**110/16 Parish Clerk's Report:** The Parish Clerk to report and update on Parish Council business since the last meeting.

(i) A response had been sent to Basildon Council regarding the Waste & Recycling Services Consultation and the letter would be placed on the Parish Council website.

(ii) Responses to Planning Applications discussed at the meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> November had been sent to Basildon Council Planning Officers.

(iii) Fly tipped material on Sadlers Farm roundabout had been reported on the Basildon Council website - Ref: CAS - 120248-S5Z6J6. It was reported by a resident that this had now been removed.

(iv) A resident had contacted the Clerk and discussed concerns regarding (i) the condition of pavements in Ilfracombe Avenue (ii) parking at St Margaret's School and (iii) damage to the verge alongside London Road/Ilfracombe Avenue. All had been confirmed by email. **Action:** Many of the issues had been previously reported by the Parish Council but the Clerk would again report matters to the relevant organisations.

(v) The local Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator in Pitsea had contacted the Parish Clerk and would be undertaking publicity for a Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator in Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet after Christmas. In the meantime the Parish Clerk would be sent Neighbourhood Watch information to be published on the Parish Council website.

**111/16 Finance Report:** To report on the Parish Council's current financial position and other applicable financial matters.

A summary of account was provided by the Responsible Finance Officer as detailed below:

Balance at bank 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2016	£12,019.20
Balance at Bank 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2016	£11,515.72

**Payments**

McAfee Internet Security 50% package	-£20.00
Clerks Net Salary (inc. Office use)	<u>-£621.48</u>
	-£641.48

**Income:**

Fun Walk Sponsorship	£138.00
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**103/16 Planning** - Councillors to review and comment on Planning Application/s under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

There were no planning applications to review.

**104/16 Planning decisions and comments:** To receive updates and comments regarding Planning Applications.

The following applications had been decided by Basildon Council's Planning Committee:

- (i) Planning Application: 16/01329/FULL - 299 Pound Lane - Granted
- (ii) Planning Application: 16/00198/FULL - Bonviles Farm House - Granted.

**105/16 Parish Council Budget 2017/18:** To consider the Parish Council's Budget for 2017/2018 and set the Precept amount accordingly for 2017/2018.

Estimated budget figures for 2017/2018 and precept calculation figures showing the various scenarios for setting the Precept for 2017/2018, as provided by Basildon Council, had been provided to Councillors before the meeting for information and consideration (as attached Appendix A).

The Local Government Finance Act 1992 ("the 1992 Act") Section 41 prescribes that for each financial year a local precepting authority (the Parish Council ) must issue a precept to the billing authority for the next financial year in accordance with the Act. Councillors were asked to consider the following when agreeing the Precept figure taking into account the following issues:-

- The Local Council Tax Scheme Grant for 2017/2018, which was a subsidy given to Borough/ District Councils and passed on to Local Councils and currently year on year, was being reduced.
- Increased costs would be incurred as a result of the introduction of the Governments' Workplace Pension Scheme and the Parish Council's automatic enrolment in the scheme. Any payments under the Scheme would need to be set aside for Parish Council employees between the ages of 18 years and 68 years.
- General increases in overall costs.
- Reserves needed to be maintained to take into account any additional costs i.e. election costs
- The cost of projects had not been factored into the finances as it was anticipated that the costs of each project would attract external funding but

what needed to be factored in was, as with any grant, an element of match funding by the Parish Council in respect of these projects.

Councillors were advised that in order to maintain an effective working balance and reserves an increase in the Annual Precept would be required.

**Action:** Councillors considered the figures presented by Basildon Council against the estimated figures provided by the Parish Clerk and **AGREED** that an increase would be necessary. The current Precept element of the Council Tax was £18.90 based on the calculations for a Band D property (The formula for calculating the precept was based on the number of Band D properties in the Parish). The precept for 2016/2017 had been £13,688.48. If the Precept for 2017/18 remained the same the amount would reduce to £13,632.57 and the grant would be reduced from £1081.71 to £907.58.

**Action:** Having discussed the draft budget and Parish Council finances and the fact that the Local Council Tax Scheme grant may be withdrawn in future years it was **AGREED**, based on the figures provided in Basildon Council's Precept calculations, to increase the Precept for 2017/2018 by £0.99. In monetary terms from £18.90 per annum to £19.89 per annum for a Band D property. This would amount to an increase of 5.4%. The increase would be marginally higher for any property above a Band D and lower for any property below a Band D. The increase would give an overall annual Precept figure of £14,346.66 and a Local Council Tax Scheme Grant of £958.12 and effectively give the Parish Council an additional income of £761.62 above the 2016/2017 amount.

Proposed: Councillor R. Smillie: Seconded: Councillor Terry Potter.

**106/16 Talking Bench:** To update on discussions with Basildon Heritage.

Councillors were advised that, in consultation with Basildon Heritage and Basildon Council Parks Department, three estimates to carry out work to lay a base for the Talking Bench had been obtained. The estimates ranged from £800 to £360. The lower estimate, from a contractor used by the Parish Council on previous projects, had been accepted and it was anticipated to undertake the work before Christmas, dependent on the weather. All costs for the work would be covered by the Essex Records Office. The audio speaker on the bench was solar powered and related stories from local people about village life during the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. The Clerk informed she had listened to the stories and found them very interesting. A tree to commemorate soldiers who died at the Somme would also be planted in Westlake Park. The site location for the bench had been agreed, with all parties concerned, in the far right hand side of the Park.

**107/16 Date of next meeting -** To confirm the date of the next Parish Council meeting.

The date of the next Parish Council meeting was confirmed at 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017 in the Benbow Club, Pound Lane commencing at 7.30 p.m. All present were wished a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.