



**MINUTES OF BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18th DECEMBER 2024.**

PRESENT:

Councillors: Cllr. Sheelagh Pegg (Chair): Cllr. Colin Morris :
Cllr. Susan Moore: Cllr. Sally McCornack:
Cllr: Sue Edmonson.

Ward Councillor/s: None Present

Parish Council Clerk/RFO: Mrs Christine Barlow

Public attendance: 9

MINUTES

79/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Parish Councillor Terry Potter :
Councillor Christopher Hilleard (Pitsea-South East)

80/24 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

81/24 PUBLIC FORUM : Residents have the opportunity to raise questions of a general nature. (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

A member of the public advised that the bins in Westlake Park were still not being emptied on a regular basis. The Parish Clerk informed she had reported this problem on a number of occasions and action had been taken to empty the bins which, it is understood, should be emptied at least once a week unless there are additional issues. **Action:** The Clerk to make further enquiries.

A member of the public asked a question regarding an untidy front garden and shrubs overhanging on a grass verge. The resident was advised that the Parish council would only intervene if the shrubs were obstructing the footpath.

A member of the public raised an issue regarding completing Basildon Council's Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation on their website. They considered that the process was not user friendly, even if the individual was computer literate, and considered this would deter people from completing the consultation. In

addition, information on specific areas was difficult to access and accordingly to make comment. Comments from others also identified the information on maps within in the documents was not clearly identifiable either and there were also spelling mistakes within the document. **Action:** It was suggested that the public should write to Basildon Council and express their dissatisfaction regarding the format of the consultation documents and the manner in which the questions were set out in order for the public to make comment.

Residents raised the issue of the number of cars using Pound Lane as a cut through when there was an accident on any of the main roads and the area became gridlocked. With the amount of housing proposed, road infrastructure needed to be improved before houses or industrial areas were built.

82/24 MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27th NOVEMBER 2024: To approve the minutes of the previous meeting and Chair to sign.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th November 2024 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by Councillor Sheelagh Pegg , Chair.

83/24 WARD/COUNTY COUNCILLOR UPDATE: Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillors to address the meeting.

There were no Basildon Council Ward or Essex County Council Members present.

84/24 PARISH CLERK'S REPORT: To update on business since the last meeting on 27th November 2024

- The Parish Clerk thanked residents for helping to deliver the Winter edition of the Bowers Bugle newsletter before Christmas.
- The Parish Clerk also wished to note her thanks to Councillor Hilleard for his help for arranging the printing of the maps for the display at the Drop-in Local Plan Consultation before the Parish council meeting earlier.
- Defibrillators outside the Benbow Club and Pound Lane mission have been checked. This is done on a monthly basis to insure they are working properly. All checks are then recorded on the Circuit website.
- Grounds Maintenance work is continuing over the winter months.
- Progress was being made to produce a new website and a change of Domain name for all Parish Councillors and the Clerk, in order to meet government suggested guidelines. It had been agreed to engage Abergine262 to build a new website and process a .gov.uk email address.

85/24 FINANCE REPORT: Responsible Finance Officer to provide a summary of the Parish Council's financial position and advise on other relevant finance matters.

- (i) To receive an update on the Parish Council's current financial position.

The Parish Council Responsible Finance Officer provided a summary of account as detailed below:

	£
Balance at Bank as of 27 th November 2024	25,894.10
Balance at Bank as of 18 th December 2024	23,655.13
Expenditure:	2,603.97
Income:	365.00
Expenditure:	
Clerks Net Salary + Office/Tel/BB Allowance (Nov) inc. backdated Pay as a result of NJC Pay settlement	1,363.25
GM Staff Wages (October 2024)	224.00
EALC Training (PROW) for Councillor and Clerk	192.00
Annual CCTV + Monthly Sim Payment	<u>824.72</u>
	2,603.97
Income:	
Fun Walk Trust Bonus Pot	305.00
Clerks training Bursary	<u>60.00</u>
	365.00

Subject to a minor amendment there were no matters arising.

(ii) To agree and set the Precept amount for the financial year 2025/2026 based on the Draft budget presented at the Parish Council meeting on 27th November 2024.

Councillors had been provided with all documentation to enable them to make an informed decision regarding the 2025/2026 Precept at the previous meeting

The Precept represents the amount that is required to be collected from Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet residents to meet the estimated costs of providing Parish Council services in 2025/2026 as part of a Draft Budget and incorporating a prudent contingency sum to cover unexpected costs. The Responsible Finance Officer informed overall costs, which include staff costs, insurance, maintenance, equipment replacement, the Parish Council day-to-day running costs and event costs were increasing year-on-year. Grant applications have been successful in recent years, but external funding has been more difficult to obtain in 2024 and future external funding cannot be relied upon, going forward, to cover rising costs and fund the Neighbourhood Development Order and/or Neighbourhood Plan in order to protect Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet and other projects (e.g. VE/VJ Event in 2025) without an increase in Precept. The Chair asked residents, in the audience, how they felt about increasing the Precept and the response was that the suggested increase, although high in percentage terms, in monetary terms was low and would not make a huge difference to overall expenses. One resident felt that if the general public was informed in plenty of time and provided with the reasons for increasing the Precept they would accept the increase and understand the need to increase the Precept amount. .

There was a split in the suggested percentage of increase with the lowest being (a) the amount of inflation (B) a figure of 9% and (c) the recommendation in the

Responsible Finance Officers (RFO) Report. The following proposal was put forward.

Proposal: To increase the Precept from £26,013.24 per annum (2024/2025) to £ 29,969.87 per annum (2025/2026). This overall increase per household residing in a Band D property would be and additional £5.40 per annum and calculation increase is 15%. A point was made that this was lower than the percentage increase in 2024/25.

Proposed: Councillor Pegg **Seconded:** Councillor Colin Morris.

86/24 PLANNING: To receive comments on Planning Applications under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended):

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 24/01358/FULL

Proposed single storey rear extension, front entrance porch addition and exterior material alterations – Summerhouse, Cornwall Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon.

The previous history for planning applications on the site was discussed but it was concluded that the current application in respect of the extension would contribute to a disproportionate increase in the building and would constitute to over development of the character of the area.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 24/00020/OUT (AMENDMENTS)

Hybrid application seeking full planning permission for phased development of the site for 50,237sqm (GIA) floorspace for industrial (Use Class B2), storage or distribution (Use Class B8), research and development (Use Class E(g)(ii)), and/or industrial processes (Use Class E(g)(iii)) with ancillary offices; new link road between Courtauld Road and Pound Lane and associated junctions; site-wide infrastructure including earthworks, structural landscaping, drainage, diversion of existing watercourse, pumping station, electricity substation, and access; landscaping, parking, servicing, and other associated works; and outline planning permission, with all matters reserved except for access, for demolition of existing buildings and structures, and phased development of site for up to 72,000 sqm (GIA) floorspace for industrial (Use Class B2), storage or distribution (Use Class B8), research and development (Use Class E(g)(ii)), and/or industrial processes (Use Class E(g)(iii)) with ancillary offices; supporting infrastructure including earthworks, drainage, landscaping, parking, servicing, and other associated works. (Revised drawings and documents received, including Environmental Statement Addendum) - Land East of Burnt Mills, Burnt Mills Road, North Benfleet

The application was as previously discussed to build warehouses of various types on Land East of Burnt Road but the amendment referred to was in respect of a change of developer from St Modwen to Strategic Land Limited. Following a discussion the Parish Council **AGREED**, without exception, to reinforce their previous objections of inappropriate development in the Green Belt and review their comments in the light of current amendments to the information and plans presented by the applicant Strategic Land Limited. They would also link the

Traveller Show People site (**24/00507/FULL**) with any comments. It was noted that the Farmhouse and Farm Shop would remain.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 24/00507/FULL (AMENDMENTS)

Use of site for three Travelling Showpeople plots, with associated access, supporting infrastructure and other associated works. (Revised drawings and documents received) - Land East of Burnt Mills, Burnt Mills Road, North Benfleet

The Parish Council discussed the above Planning Application and considered their position remained unchanged and relevant from their position in regard to the previous planning application with the same planning application reference. It was **AGREED** to re-send their previous comments on the proposed site expanding on the comments made (i) inappropriate development in the Green Belt within the Parish of Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet. (ii) unsuitability of location of the site (iii) Access (iv) The effects on historical buildings.

87/24 BASILDON BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION (REGULATION 18): To comment on the proposals in the Emerging Local Plan which impinge on the Parish area.

Basildon Council's Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation had been published and the Parish Council held a Drop-In Session on prior to the Parish Council Meeting to enable residents to ask questions about the Local Plan and how proposals would affect the area. The session proved very popular with over residents attending in the short hour and a half period. Overall comments were that the village could not sustain the amount of development proposed without improvements to infrastructure throughout the Parish. Attendees also found that the consultation on the Basildon Council website was very difficult to navigate. The Parish Council also intended to send in their views by the closing date of 12th January 2025 and encouraged residents to respond also.

88/24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: To confirm the date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 29th January 2025 at 7.30 p.m. in the Benbow Club, 77 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford

89/24 (Discussion to exclude members of the public):

Local Government Pay Award 2024-2025: To confirm an increase of remuneration for the Parish Councils' Grounds Maintenance Operative in line with National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) pay agreement for employees for 2024/2025 and increase hourly pay in-line with relevant pay scales from 1st April 2025.

Councillors present **AGREED** to backdate payment as per NJC Agreement and to pay an incremental hourly rate within the accepted parameter to the Ground Maintenance staff member from 1st January 2025.

Signed , Chair. Date: 29th January 2025

