



**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD REMOTELY
WEDNESDAY 26th August 2020 AT 7.30 PM.**

PRESENT:

Councillors:	B.Foster: T.Potter: D.Packer: C. Morris:
Parish Council Clerk/RFO:	Mrs Christine Barlow
Ward Councillors:	Councillor Craig Rimmer (Pitsea South East Ward)
Public attendance:	2 identified

30/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Robert Smillie, Councillor Clare Morgan and Councillor David Martin.

31/20 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTEREST: To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other pecuniary interests or non-pecuniary interests by members relating to any agenda items.

Councillor Bernard Foster expressed a non-pecuniary interest regarding Item: 37/20 Planning Application: 20/00934/FULL – Cranbrook , Osborne Road.

32/20 VIRTUAL PUBLIC FORUM: Residents have the opportunity to raise questions of the Parish Council which have previously been notified to the Parish Clerk by email at: clerkbgnbparishcouncil@gmail.com (The time allowed for this item is a maximum of 15 minutes)

No enquiries were received from members of the public present.

33/20 WARD COUNCILLOR UPDATE: Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillor/s to address the meeting.

Councillor Craig Rimmer updated on the work of respective Borough Councillors in regard to Pitsea Town Centre. He advised that some financial support had been set aside for improvements to the centre of Pitsea and noticeably the clock in the Town Centre, which had not been working for some years, had been put forward as a project. In discussions with the centre management – London and Cambridge - and Basildon Council it had been agreed to share the cost of repairing the clock. The erection of a Christmas Tree in Pitsea Town Centre was also been discussed.

The Neighbourhood and Communities Committee had looked at funding for the pathways and underpasses in the Town but considered that this work was the responsibility of Essex County Council and any financial support would not be sufficient to make a difference to any maintenance costs on a beneficial scale and could be better used elsewhere.

Councillor Rimmer advised that discussions and investigations were ongoing regarding Exchange House.

The Conservative group were opposing the Masterplan for Basildon Town Centre on the grounds that the amount of housing proposed within the plan and the 5,000 seater arena was considered over development of Basildon Town Centre, together with the lack of infrastructure proposed to accommodate the increased amount of development and the lack of consideration given to existing residents.

When question on the matter Councillor Rimmer informed that the regeneration of the Basildon Town Centre was not part of the Local Plan Examination.

He further advised that the new swimming pool in Pitsea was still going ahead as part of the Pitsea Town Centre Revival Plan despite Covid-19 having stalled progress and he assured the meeting that he would be pressuring the current administration for a more positive response to timescales.

He advised that Basildon Council were also in continuing discussions with the Pitsea Bingo Hall owners despite them making unacceptable financial demands regarding the purchase of the land, in their ownership, by Basildon Council.

He also advised that the new owners of the Barge Public House had withdrawn their recent planning application to build a Youth Club facility on the site.

There were no current updates available on the proposals by Clearway to build an incinerator at Archers Field. Nevertheless, any planning applications put forward would still have to go through the planning process with Essex County council.

The pruning of hedge along Pound Lane to the London Road was again raised but regrettably there was no update.

34/20 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 29th JULY 2020.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th July 2020 were **AGREED** as an accurate and true record of the meeting and signed remotely by Councillor Bernard Foster, Chair

35/20 PARISH CLERK'S REPORT: To update on Parish Council business and information.

Christine Barlow, Parish Clerk, updated the meeting on the following and other matters which had been raised at the previous meeting:

- **Item 19/20:** Overground shrubs/hedging Pound Lane/Kelly Road to London Road – No update

- **Item 19/20 Litter Bins:** The Parish Clerk had spoken to the Convenience Store shop owner regarding using any external bins for excess rubbish. Following the discussion, the Clerk confirm she would send an email to Basildon Council Cleaning Department to request if a temporary bin could be provided for the shop whilst building works were being undertaken.
- **Item 20/20 Item: Little Chalvedon Hall perimeter hedge:** The Clerk had contacted Mr Lambert of Bradfeilds Farm who was responsible for cutting the hedge around Little Chalvedon Hall Farm as part of his lease agreement and she was advise that hedge could not be cut under the Wildlife Act until after 1st September and similarly farmers cannot cut between between 1st March and 31st August. Mr Lambert agreed to cut the hedges as soon as possible after the prescribed timescale.
- **Item 20/20(ii) Church Road underpass:** An email had been sent to Essex County Council engineers on 19th August 2020 asking for an update.
- **Item 27/20 Handyman Service:** An Application for funding had been completed and sent to the Essex Association of Local Council who were administering the fund on behalf of ECC. It was anticipated that a decision would be made at a meeting in October. The application was supported by both Ward and Essex County Councillors.
- **Item 28/20 Parish-in-Bloom:** The event, to be held virtually this year, had been advertised and some entries had been received to date. The closing date for all entries was 7th September.

The following additional items were reported:

- Councillor Morris had attended a Councillor Training session for new Councillors
- Complaints had been received from residents on 17th August concerning noise during the night from workman carrying out maintenance work on Sadlers Farm and an email reply had been received from Balfour Beatty on 20th August apologising for any inconvenience but stating that residents had been warned there would be some element of unavoidable disruption at times in order to complete the bridge and road works.
- The Parish Clerk had met with BBC Parks Officers and they had agreed to fit the new rubber spacers, which the Parish Council had purchased to replace those that had perished, on the Green Gym apparatus. The Clerk had also brought to their attention of officers the large cracks which had appeared as a result of the dry weather in some areas of the path around the park and especially leading to the play area and asked if Basildon Council could assist with carrying out any repairs. The request was noted and subsequently BBC had engaged contractors to fill in some of the worst cracks.
- Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) Annual General Meeting (AGM) was noted as 24th September 2020

- A new Planning White Paper - "Planning for the Future" - is now out to consultation and the information had been circulated to councillors.

36/20 FINANCE REPORT: To update Councillors on financial matters since the last Parish Council meeting on 29th July 2020

(i) Christine Barlow, Responsible Finance Officer, provided Councillors with a summary report concerning the Parish Council finances as follows:

	£
Balance of Bank Account 29 th July 2020	26,093.72
Balance of Bank Account 24 th August 2020	22,059.47
Expenditure:	4,034.25
Income:	Nil
Expenditure Summary:	
(533) Clerks Net Salary July Plus Tel/BB/Office Use.	779.85
(534) EALC New Councillor Training - Councillor Morris	48.00
(536) RCCE Membership Annual Fee (Renewal)	72.60
(537) Wicksteed Leisure – Green Gym Parts	310.80
(538) HMRC Clerks Tax (April/May/June)	303.00
(539) ONeill Homer – Consultancy Fee	<u>2,520.00</u>
	4,034.25

(ii) **Annual Governance and Accountability Return:** All statements in respect of the Annual Return had been sent to PKF Littlejohn for ratification and acknowledged as received to enable an external Audit to be carried out for the 2019/2020 Parish Council year.

All related documentation has been posted on the Parish Council website and in the noticeboards , together with a Notice of Public Rights enabling anyone to inspect the accounts, by prior appointment, from 4th August – 16th September.

(iii) **Parish Council Bank account signatories:** It was noted that the Parish Council currently only have two signatories and it was recognised as good practice to have a minimum of three (The Parish Clerk, by choice, is not a signatory) Councillor Morgan and Councillor Packer both voiced an interest. Councillor Morgan was not present and Councillor Packer was proposed and seconded, but Councillor Morgan could be added at a later date. The appropriate documentation would be completed and sent to the Parish Council Bank for authorisation.

37/20 PLANNING: Councillors to review and comment on Planning Application/s under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 20/00934/FULL

Conversion of existing roof space into habitable accommodation, incorporating 6no roof lights – Cranbrook, Osborne Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon

Councillors discussed the application and raised no objections to the application.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 20/01001/FULL

Proposed two storey rear extension – Charlot, Lower Avenue, Bowers Gifford Basildon.

Councillors discussed the above application and considered the property is currently in the Green Belt and as such is governed by policy BAS GB4 and exceeds the size permitted under the policy.

38/20 PLANNING DECISIONS: To receive updates regarding Planning Applications discussed at previous meetings and other relevant applications:

Planning Application 20/01010/CC: Details pursuant to Condition 17 - Landscape Scheme for planning application ref CC/BAS/28/19 (Upgrade works to the A127/A130 Fairglen Interchange including the creatin of a new link road between A130 and A127) - CC/BAS/28/19/17/1

Fairglen Interchange Arterial Road Benfleet Benfleet Essex – **No objection**

Planning Application 20/00834/CC: Details pursuant to Condition 20 (Ground Investigation and Geo-Environmental Risk Assessment) of Planning consent CC/BAS/28/19/20/1 - Upgrade works to the A127/A130 Fairglen Interchange including the creation of a new link road between A130 and A127 Fairglen Interchange Arterial Road Benfleet Benfleet Essex – **No objection**

Planning Application 20/00718/FULL: Proposed loft conversion incorporating a hip to gable end roof alteration, 2no. bonnet front dormers and a rear box dormer and a single-storey rear extension - 96 Pound Lane Bowers Gifford Basildon Essex SS13 2HW – **Refused**

39/20 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE: To update on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan and future consultation events.

Significant steps had been made in progressing the Neighbourhood Plan and the Plan Steering Group had met to discuss the documents that had been prepared in order to progress to the Regulation 14 consultation stage when the community would be able to give their comments on the proposals. Plans were in the process of being drawn up to decide the best way to consult with residents on the Neighbourhood Plan in the current climate and restrictions.

The Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) still has to be carried out by Basildon Council but to date the Parish Council has been unable to obtain a timetable from the authority to carry out this work. A statement of Common Ground still has to be agreed with Basildon Council but to date the Parish Council had been unable to arrange this meeting. Parish Council are also still waiting for Essex Highways planners to publish their proposals to improve the infrastructure in the area.

The Parish Council's consultant has been working on behalf of the Parish Council with developers to obtain their site proposals and some meetings have

also been held with Members of the Parish Council. It was proposed to consult with the various land interests and statutory consultees on the specific policies which were relevant to each site in the Neighbourhood Plan by the end of August. Some work still has to be undertaken on the Neighbourhood Development Order and Pre-Submission document.

**40/20 ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF USE)
ORDER:** Temporarily closure of Footpath 156, Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet.

A temporary closure notice in relation to Footpath 156 , Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet had been received. The location of the footpath was described as where it meets Church Road and proceeds north – west for 221 metres. The meeting was advised that the footpath runs beside the railway lines from St Margaret’s Church on northern side of the railway to near Pitsea Mount. The footpath will be closed from 20th October to 23rd December 2020. If required, the order may remain in force for six- months until work is finished. The order is required for the safety of the public and workforce while works to clear and improve the existing culvert tie into the gully are undertaken.

41/20 UNSIGHTLY PREMISES: To discuss what action can be taken by the Parish Council in respect of dealing with unsightly premises in the Parish.

There were several unsightly areas in the village and the Parish Council discussed ways on how these areas could be improved and what action was available to encourage owners to have an acceptable standard of tidiness to the front of their properties and respect their surroundings and not cause any unnecessary aggravation. It was considered that if the issue was an environmental hazard or a nuisance action could be taken but similarly there was no quick fix in these circumstances.

42/20 THE FUTURE SHAPE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ESSEX AND THE IMPACT ON LOCAL COUNCILS: To note early discussions on proposals to change the system of local government in future years.

The Government is expected to bring forward a white paper, which will begin the process of reforming local councils in ‘two-tier’ County Council areas and is proposing to change the current system of local government. The Government appears to view the current system of county and district councils as not fit for purpose and that unitary authorities, which are responsible for all council services in a defined area, are seen as a better option for delivering services. In Essex this might lead to between two and four new unitary councils.

The Minister for Local Government, Simon Clarke MP, pointed to the importance of the future role of town and parish councils and the potential to devolve more decision-making to local level. There were several conflicting messages that were being floated in relation to how any new system would work, and it was understood Basildon Council were working on the assumption of a combined authority to form unitary groups. The pros and cons of the changes were discussed briefly, and it was considered that further discussion would be beneficial on the position of parish councils in any new system when more information was available.

43/20 BASILDON BOROUGH COUNCIL REMOTE CIVIC SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE AND RECOGNITION ON MONDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER 2020:

The Parish Council had received an invitation to attend a remote Civic Service of Remembrance on Monday 7th September and Councillors were asked to inform separately if they wish to attend - Invitation noted.

44/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: To confirm the date of the next Parish Council Meeting as 30th September 2020

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 30th September at 7.30 p.m. and unless current restrictions changed this meeting would again be held virtually.

Signed:Councillor Bernard Foster, Chair.

Dated: 30th September 2020