



**MINUTES OF BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27th MARCH 2024.**

PRESENT:

- Councillors:** Sheelagh Pegg: (Chair) Colin Morris: Sue Edmonson:
Susan Moore: Terry Potter: Danny Lewis:
- Ward Councillor/s:** Councillor Craig Rimmer (Pitsea South-East Ward)
Councillor Aiden McGurran (Pitsea Essex County Councillor)
- Invitees:** Representatives from St Modwen Logistics and Icen Products
- Parish Council Clerk/RFO:** Mrs Christine Barlow
- Public attendance:** 47

135/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Sally McCornack

136/23 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.

137/23 MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28th February 2024: To approve the minutes of the previous meeting and Chair to sign.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th February 2024 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed to confirm by Councillor Sheelagh Pegg, Chair

138/23 PRESENTATION BY ST. MODWEN LOGISTICS: St Modwen Logistics to discuss proposals to seek full planning permission for the phased development of land East of Burnt Mills Road, North Benfleet, Basildon, Essex as set out in Item 142/23 – Planning Application 24/00020/OUT

Representatives from St Modwen Logistics and Icen Products were welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves. The representatives advised they had not prepared a presentation but explained the purpose of attending was more of an opportunity to hear residents' views regarding their Planning Application. St Modwen advised the map shown to the meeting identified Unit One (1) in detail and the remainder of the sites as smaller individual units on the site. They confirmed the Parish Clerk had forwarded some questions from the Parish Council prior to the meeting and had included some questions raised by residents in order for the meeting

to be more structured. St Modwen proceeded to answer questions on several matters of concern from those present. Concerns raised were:

- The height of the units, especially Unit 1, 6 & 7, and the location of the three units.
- Interference with the openness of the Green Belt and the perspective, in regard to, the street view.
- Where was the evidence relating to the need for more warehouses in this location?
- The use of various warehouses on the site
- The development would result in increasing traffic on already heavily used village roads.
- Access to the A127 and where a proposed roundabout would be located for access to the site and the effects of traffic on Pound Lane as access.
- Air quality /pollution.
- Impact on wildlife and ecological damage to the environment.
- The need for footpaths and the unnecessary relocation of Public Rights of Way
- The use of Green Belt before using available brownfield sites.
- The current location was not suitable.

Councillor Pegg, Chair, stated the Parish Council shared the views of residents regarding the road network and traffic and that the development should be accessed via the A127 and not the proposed route of the narrow bridge and road along Pound Lane to Harrow Road.

In summing up St Modwen agreed to respond to questions raised and they were unable to answer. They would forward their replies to the Parish Council.

Councillor Pegg (Chair) thanked St. Modwen and Icen Products for attending the meeting. In summing up she advised residents to forward their concerns on the planning application to Basildon Council Planning Officers. In writing they must expand on their reasons for making their comments either for or against the planning application being submitted.

- **PUBLIC FORUM:** Residents have the opportunity to raise questions of a general nature. (The time allowed for this item is 15minutes)
- A resident advised that a large pothole had appeared in the road near 67 Highlands Road and asked how he should report it. The resident was advised to log-on to the Essex County Council website and log the complaint and provide details of problem and the location. Councillor McGurran advised he had noted the issue raised and would report it himself.
- A resident advised that a light turning right from the junction of Burnt Mills Road onto Pound Lane was very bright and bordered on the lines of blinding oncoming traffic and asked if there was anything that could be done as he felt the lamp might need to be realigned. **Action:** The Parish Clerk advised she would investigate the complaint.
- The streetlights at the top of Pound Lane (Nos 1 – 6) were not working.

Action: The Parish Clerk advised she had reported the fault herself on more than one occasion together with the defective lantern to the Zebra Crossing Beacon in Pound Lane. Essex County Council's website identified that the fault at both locations was under investigation. The Clerk also advised that the streetlight (No 25) on the corner of Pound Lane/Page Road was also defective. Councillor McGurran was asked to take up the issue on behalf of the residents and the Parish Council.

- A resident raised the issue of rubbish being deposited where the bottle bank on the London Road, near Ilfracombe Avenue, was installed, and asked if anything could be done to prevent rubbish being dumped in this location. **Action:** Councillor Rimmer advised he would raise the matter with Council Officers in an attempt to make the containers secure.
- The condition of the verge outside Exchange House on Pound Lane was raised and those present asked what action could be taken to remedy the ongoing issues.
- Comments were made regarding recent flooding in Old Church Road on the London Road. The Parish Clerk advised she had raised the issue with the ECC Local Highways Officer and will also be logging the issue on Essex County Council's website.
- A resident thanked all concerned for removing the fly-tipping in Burnt Mills Road.

139/23 WARD/COUNTY COUNCILLOR UPDATE: Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillors to address the meeting.

▪ **Councillor Rimmer (Pitsea South-East Ward):**

Councillor Rimmer advised the new Swimming Pool at Crest Avenue, Pitsea was proving a success and was well used. A resident commented that his wife uses the new Swimming pool in Pitsea and considered it was fantastic and the staff were extremely helpful too. Councillor Rimmer was asked to pass on a vote of thanks to all who were involved in the Project, including Councillor Rimmer himself.

Planning has been granted for the new Clinical Diagnostic Centre in Pitsea. A submission has been made to Cabinet for additional funding from the NHS in terms of their contribution to the project. It was anticipated, once up and running, the new facility would cut the waiting times for scans by 85% and it is anticipated will improve health outcomes for people living in the Borough.

The Cinema in Basildon Town Centre has new operators, Vue, who have signed the lease and now have the keys. A couple of businesses who were preparing to vacate the site are now staying and Wetherspoons have committed to coming back into Eastgate. Councillor Rimmer was also looking for commercial sponsorship from the new businesses that were looking to come into the Town Centre.

• **Councillor McGurran (Essex County Councillor for Pitsea).**

Councillor McGurran agreed the new Diagnostic Centre would make a

significant difference to the area when it opened. He understood Essex County Council had not yet made their committed financial contribution, although he believed it was getting closer to doing so. One of the reasons, he believed, was the cost which had soared, but he informed he had been pushing for them to commit because of the benefits it would bring. He advised he had no issues with the Diagnostic Centre in Basildon Town Centre.

Councillor McGurran confirmed he was at the Development and Regulation Committee meeting in County Hall with Councillor Rimmer and along with others voiced his opinion against the Waste Facility being located in Archers Fields in Pitsea. As a result of the Committee being unable to agree on a number of points the planning application had been deferred for further clarifications. It is believed Essex County Councillors have a site visit on 7th May 2024 to consider the height of the proposed stack (50 meters) which are to be erected at the location and the manner of the consultation process.

Parish Councillor Morris advised he had also attended the meeting at County Hall and was amazed how ill-informed the Councillors were regarding the location being proposed for the Waste Facility and how biased the Planning Officer was when responding to questions, from the Members of the Development and Regulation Committee, on the Officers report regarding the afore mentioned Planning Application in Archers Fields.

Councillor Rimmer commented that unusually all parties from the Borough Council were united in their views that the facility should **not** be placed in Archers Field and all five spoke with one voice to reject the planning application.

Both Councillor Rimmer and Councillor McGurran suggested residents should write/email to the Development and Regulation Committee and express objections to building the facility.

On another matter Councillor McGurran informed a fact had emerged regarding children with special education needs and the time (i.e., 20 weeks) Essex County Council took to make an assessment. He considered that this was unacceptable when dealing with vulnerable children. He had expressed his concerns at County level and considered more should be done to improve the system and the times of responding to applications.

140/23 PARISH CLERK'S REPORT: To update on business since the last meeting on 28th February 2024.

The items already covered were Old Church Road flooding, streetlights, and dumped rubbish so the Clerk advised she would not repeat these.

The Clerk advised she had held two separate meetings on behalf of the Parish Council with Basildon Council's Waste and Recycling Managers. The meetings discussed the issues of rubbish/recycling and fly-tipping and viable solutions and how the solutions could be implemented. As a result of the meeting the rubbish in Burnt Mills Road was removed and other

issues which were raised have are in the process of being dealt with. Some residents who had asked for extra or new bins at the meeting had now received them. Improvements to the cyclical grass cutting arrangements were also discussed.

The results of a traffic survey in Pound Lane have been received from Essex County Council and these were disappointing. The survey incorporated old data from 2021 to reach the conclusions made, which were that the traffic levels of speed were only 31.5 mph. The Parish Clerk intended to question the validity of the report with the Highways Officer and had sent an email asking for an explanation. Councillor McGurran commented that he felt the way ECC conducted their surveys was a pointless exercise. Councillor McGurran said he would take the comments made back to Essex County Council.

141/23 FINANCE REPORT: Responsible Finance Officer to provide a summary of the Parish Council's financial position and advise on other relevant financial matters.

(i)To provide a summary of income and expenditure since the last meeting on 28th February 2024.

A summary report was provided to Councillors as set out below in regard to income and expenditure since the previous meeting on 28th February. It was noted that although the balance looked quite healthy a further amount of £6,000 (inclusive of VAT) was to be paid for Consultant's fees in March for the NDO and a further payment of approximately £8000 was still to be invoiced for work undertaken.

	£
Balance at the Bank as of 22 nd February 2024	18,538.82
Balance at the Bank as of 27 th March 2024	17,353.79
Expenditure:	1,185.03
Income:	Nil
Expenditure:	
Staff Wages GMO (February 2024)	224.00
Clerks Net Salary + Office/Tel/BB (February 2024)	897.25
Clerks Expenses: HP Toner Cartridge x 2	<u>63.78</u>
	1,184.03

It is anticipated that at the end of the financial year on 31st March, the final figure (without the NDO expenses, which are ringfenced) would be in the region of £4000 - £5000.

A quotation from Wicksteed Leisure has been received to carry out some repairs to the Junior play equipment in Westlake Park for safety reasons.

Councillor Morris asked the Parish Clerk to relay to Councillors regarding comments made by a certain Borough Councillor, at a Cabinet meeting on 21st April 2024, who stated that because Local Councils had not always had contested elections, Councillors were unaccountable. Councillor Rimmer stated he was in discord with his fellow Borough Members and considered that an example of accountability was, a meeting such as being held, whereby members of the public attended, discussed issues, and asked questions of their Councillors and were being listened to. He considered that contested elections were not always required, providing the process for holding elections was followed and residents were notified of the facts. He considered the Parish Council being non-political was beneficial and that party politics did not “muddy the waters.” Parish Councillors were residents dealing with resident issues. The same Borough Councillor also made derogatory and demeaning comments in respect of payments to Parish Clerks and the fact wage bills are increasing and they are too highly paid. This comment was vehemently defended by those present at the meeting. Councillor Morris thanked Councillor Rimmer for his support.

(i) To approve or amend the Parish Council’s current Financial Regulations.

The Parish Council’s Financial Regulations are required to be approved or amended annually and the document had been presented to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting for consideration. There being no amendments, the Financial Regulations were approved as presented.

Proposed: Councillor Pegg: Seconded: Councilor Morris.

(ii) To advise of the date for carrying-out the Parish Council’s Internal Audit for 2023-2024 and the External Audit Process for completing the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023-2024

The above item was deferred until the April meeting due to lack of time.

142/23 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: 24/00020/OUT: Land East of Burnt Mills Road, North Benfleet, Basildon, Essex - (This planning application was deferred at the meeting Parish Council Meeting on 28th February 2024 for further discussion)

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.

The above application was discussed at the start of the meeting and the Councillors advised, due to the volume of documents to look through, they would forward their comments on the proposals in the planning application in due course.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 24/00220/FULL: Land West of Sadlers Hall Farmhouse London Road, Bowers Gifford - Erection of agricultural barn for storage of farm equipment including tractor, maintenance/hay machinery, hay storage and erection of stables.

The Parish Council will be seeking clarification on a couple of points before submitting their decision to Basildon Council Planning Officers.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 24/00234/FULL: 3 Westlake Avenue, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex SS13JJ - Demolition of Conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension with roof lantern.

No objections were raised in respect of the above application.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 24/00268/FULL: Log Cabin, 245 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex SS13 2LB - Change of use of timber cabin from beauty salon (Sui Generis) to a flexible dual use of beauty salon (Sui Generis) and office (Class E)

The Parish Council considered comments made in respect of the site by them regarding conditions should be reiterated to ensure that neighbouring properties were not subjected to light pollution, nuisance or excessive hours of opening and the conditions proposed in the previous planning application consent should be retained.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 24/00228/FULL: 1 Lawrence Road, Bowers Gifford , Essex SS13 2NB - Single storey rear extension, replacement roof to form first floor bedroom space and enlarged front porch. Raised roof form to provide first floor accommodation including two storey front extension and single storey rear extension.

Councillors considered the design of the front elevation panel, being of glass, was not conducive with the street scene and would overlook

neighbouring properties.

143/23 PLANNING UPDATES AND COMMENTS: To receive updates and comments on planning applications discussed at previous meetings.

Councillors were provided with a copy of the results of the planning application discussed at previous meetings.

Planning Application: 24/00006/FULL: 231 Pound Lane: Two storey rear extension – Granted.

Planning Application: 23/01562/LDCE: The Lees, Upper Avenue: To establish the lawfulness of the existing use of outbuildings for B2, B8 and E(c) (iii) Commercial – Granted.

Planning Application: 23/01508/LDCE: Sunnyview, Lower Avenue To establish the lawfulness of a detached residential ancillary building - Refused.

Planning Application: 23/01455/LDCE: Badgers Lodge, Grange Road: To establish the lawfulness of the use of a former workshop building as a residential dwelling- Granted.

Planning Application: 23/01424/FULL: 34 Westlake Avenue: Attached garage – Granted.

Planning Application: 23/00790/FULL: 62 Pound Lane: Conversion of existing bungalow to form chalet style dwelling with side dormer windows – Refused.

Planning Application: 24/00057/FULL: Winifred Cottage, Windsor Road: First floor rear extension over existing ground floor extension; enlarge rear dormer, enlarge central dormer and form covered area over front door – Granted.

144/23 PARISH COUNCIL EVENTS FOR 2024:

(i) To decide on holding an event to commemorate 80th D-Day celebrations on the evening of 6th June 2024 and the lighting of a Beacon:

Following previous discussions Westlake Park had been provisionally booked for the event. Councillors discussed the matter further and agreed to go ahead with the D-D 80th celebrations, subject to sufficient funds being available and/or a grant being obtained. A provisional budget of £1000 was set aside for the event. It was also agreed to approach the Benbow Club to ask if they would like to undertake a joint venture with the Parish Council. The lighting of the Beacon would take place at 9.15 a.m. simultaneously with others across the whole of the country. **Action:** The Parish Clerk will contact the Benbow Club Secretary to discuss a joint venture, to plan the event and seek funding opportunities for the Beacon and the event.

(ii) To update on arrangements for holding the Annual Picnic-in-the-Park Event:

It was felt that having the event on 7th July so near to the D-D Event in June was not practical and it was **AGREED** by all present to move the event to Sunday 8th September instead. A budget of £2,000 was set aside to cover potential costs.

Action: To inform Basildon Council of the change of the date of the event in Westlake Park, to advertise the change of date and to begin the process planning the Event.

145/23 NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT ORDER: To update on the progress of the Neighbourhood Development Order.

The Parish Council reported at their meeting on 27th February the Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) Regulation 19 Consultation was very well received, and the proposals being suggested were met with general agreement by those who attended the face-to-face discussions, two drop-in sessions in January and those residents who took part in the on-line survey. As required statutory consultees were also invited to comment on the proposal and subsequently responded by email.

As part of the consultation Basildon Council had been asked to adopt a formal Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion on 4th January, in relation to the proposed Neighbourhood Development Order. Basildon Council Planning Officers had failed to do this themselves but had directed the Borough Councils consultants, LUC, to provide a report without being given the full facts of the NDO and who subsequently provided a negative response stating an EIA **was** required before formal adoption.

The Parish Council's Steering Group met on 12th March 2024 with our own consultants to discuss the results of the consultation and the response by Basildon Council Planning in regard Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) response. Basildon Council's response conflicted with the report formulated by AECOM, a global infrastructure consulting firm who is providing specialist technical to the Parish Council, appointed on behalf of Locality, the body in turn appointed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), to provide financial and technical support for Neighbourhood Development Plans and Development Orders.

AECOM considered a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report was **not** required.

In order to obtain clarification, the Parish Council Steering Group, made up of Councillors and residents, agreed to request the Parish Council, as the corporate body, to write to the DLUHC (Department of Levelling UP Housing and Communities) to request a Screening Direction in regard to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

It was then the responsibility of the Parish Council to agree or decline this

request.

The proposal was then put forward by Parish Councillors to write to the Officer of Levelling-UP and request clarification for a Screening Direction by the Secretary of State under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (EIA) regulations 2017 (“the 2017 regulations”)

Proposal: Councillor Colin Morris: Seconded: Councillor Susan Moore.

The proposal was carried without exception.

Action: The Parish Clerk to email the Department of Leveling-UP, on behalf of the Parish Council, for clarification as proposed

146/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: To confirm the date of the next meeting.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 24th April 2024 at The Benbow Club, 77 Pound Lane at 7.30 p.m.

Signed Chair, Councillor Sheelagh Pegg

Date: 24th April 2024