



**MINUTES OF BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET  
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26<sup>th</sup> JULY 2023.**

**PRESENT:**

<b>Councillors:</b>	B. Foster: S. Moore: C. Morris
<b>Ward Councillor/s:</b>	Cllr. Gary Canham (Pitsea South - East Ward)
<b>Parish Council Clerk/RFO:</b>	Mrs Christine Barlow
<b>Public attendance:</b>	4

- 34/23 Apologies for absence:** Parish Councillor Sheelagh Pegg and Pitsea South - East Ward Councillor Craig Rimmer.

Councillor Canham experienced traffic problems and was not present at the start of the meeting but arrived during the Public Forum.

- 35/23 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.

None received for items of planning on the agenda. The Parish Clerk advised, with reference to the planning items at the previous meeting where an interest was declared and deem any vote inquorate. Councillor comments were sent to Planning Officers independently and not from the Parish Council as a whole.

- 36/23 Public Forum:** Residents have the opportunity to raise questions of a general nature not discussed during the meeting. (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

(i) A resident raised the question of access to the various activities which were proposed to be relocating to Wat Tyler Park during the building of the new Diagnostic Centre at the Place in Pitsea. Concerns were raised that many of those currently attending the activities at The Place were using public transport to attend, but there were currently no transport links to Wat Tyler Park. The Parish Clerk advised she would contact Councillor Rimmer for more information.

(ii) A resident asked if a hedge on the perimeter of a property was untidy and full of brambles could it be replaced with a hedge which was more aesthetically pleasing to the eye. The resident was advised that if the location

of the hedge was on the edge of private land this might be permissible. If this was not the case, then the matter would need further discussion and investigation.

There being no further question the meeting continued.

**37/23 Minutes of Parish Council meetings:** To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and Chairman to sign.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and signed to confirm by Councillor Bernard Foster, Chair.

**38/23 Ward/County Councillor update:** Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillors to address the meeting.

Councillor Canham, having arrived, advised that Basildon Council had launched a consultation survey to obtain the views of residents in order to prepare a Budget for 2024/2025. Residents could log-on to the Basildon Council website to give their views on how the Borough Council should spend its money and how it might raise more money to pay for services and initiatives. The information gathered from the survey will be used to set the budget and Council tax for 2024/25.

He advised that lots of complaints had been received regarding landscaping and grass cutting in recent months. Contractors, when cutting grass , had been cutting certain areas and not everything, and then piling the grass cuttings up in random places in an attempt to create bio-diverse habitats and encourage wild-life. Officers had decided to experiment without consulting Borough Councillors and this had resulted in the large number of complaints. What is now going to happen, is for Officers to draw up a plan of open spaces and green areas and present this plan to Borough Councillors for approval. Once the new scheduling has been agreed signage would be displayed informing the community of the reasons for an area being left in a certain condition. Councillor Canham also advised that prior to the current administration taking Office the grass cutting schedule was reduced from 10 cuts a year to 8 cuts a year and £100,000 was removed from the Council budget for grass cutting. The present administration is intending to look at this moving forward and try to put the money back into the budget to get back to the original number of ten cuts. Also, where the grass cutting started later this year it resulted in the grass looking unkempt everywhere the contractors had to go back and recut to get the grass looking acceptable. This is again being looked at by Officers. As an aside the current contract was being advertised for re-tendering in October/November.

Councillor Kevin Blake , Deputy Leader of the Borough Council, had held a meeting the previous evening ( 25<sup>th</sup> July) and residents who attended were very vocal on the issue of grass cutting. The issue of the new Diagnostic Centre hub to replace The Place in Northlands Pavement, Pitsea was also a concern. The project is to be delivered by the NHS. Basildon Council's involvement is to provide the land for the project. The Place Community Centre in Pitsea will be knocked down and a new Centre, fit for purpose will be built. Existing services will be re-provided in the new building but the facility

will no longer have a bar. The catchment area will be South Essex and will provide for MRI, CT scans etc. and all the diagnostic treatment residents would receive at a hospital, and will be available locally and hopefully residents will be treated more quickly. Planning permission will need to be submitted and once approved the Centre should be built within 18 months.

Councillor Foster asked if the Medical Centre proposed for Eastgate will conflict with the centre in Pitsea. Councillor Canham explained that this centre was a private provision with a small amount of NHS support. The centre would be built by Galliard Homes who had been given Planning permission on appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, to build flats in the Town Centre. The new Centre in Eastgate will have both private and NHS provision and is a separate identity to the facility in Pitsea.

The Parish Clerk, in response to a question in the Public Forum, asked Councillor Canham what provision would be put in place to transport existing users from Watt Tyler Park and Tyfeilds, where their activities were to be temporarily located during the building work at the new centre. Councillor Canham advised that provision will be made for existing activities to be reprovided at other facilities during the rebuild. It is proposed that a bus shuttle service or community bus service from The Place to each of the temporary locations would be provided.

Councillor Canham was asked if the bus service in Pitsea and to the Parish could be improved. Councillor Canham advised he would ask the respective Ward Councillors who sat on the Bus Transport Committee to ask if there are any plans to expand the current service.

**39/23 Basildon Council black sack collections:** To update on plans by Basildon Council to introduce new methods for collecting black sacks.

Unfortunately, it had not been possible for an Officer from Basildon Council to attend the meeting as planned but was willing to attend a future meeting. The Parish Clerk gave a brief update on information she had obtained regarding the changes. The new system was due to start in the Autumn and was required to meet the Environment Act to reduce waste going into landfill and to help Basildon Council improve its recycling target. Residual waste (i.e. non-recyclable waste) would be collected via black bins and would replace the black plastic sacks and reusable water-proof sacks would replace the plastic pink sacks. It is understood the black bins would be provided free of charge and collected fortnightly.

**40/23 Parish Clerk's Report:** To update on business since the last meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023

The Parish Clerk advised she has had a number of conversations and a meeting with Basildon Council Officers, concerning the poor standard of grass cutting within the Parish, raising the issue of poor workmanship by contractors and the fact that highway verges in North Benfleet which were contracted by Essex County Council to be cut twice a year, half a cut in June and a full cut in October, to date remained uncut and impassable. Councillor Canham was under the impression the rural verges were cut more frequently and was informed that his information was incorrect. The fact there was no

paths along these verges in North Benfleet made it difficult to walk safely along Pound Lane through the long grass. The Parish Council had cut the corner of Burnt Mills Road and Pound Lane as a safety measure to prevent the sight line being impaired in this location. She would continue to pressure Basildon Council Officers to cut the rural verges in North Benfleet.

Following the concerns of the dangers of driving ponies and traps along Pound Lane his issue was raised with the Police Community Engagement Team. Who advised there was no law to prevent this activity on the highway as it was not a traffic offence. However, as referred to by Councillor Canham at the previous meeting, it might come under a breach of public order and considered to be classed as anti-social behaviour and residents were urged to report any such incident to the Police.

In reference to Government funding for community assets, as discussed at the previous meeting, Basildon Council will be writing to those eligible within the Parish to pull together a plan and bid for funding. Community groups who have active committees are most likely to be contacted first.

The Clerk had emailed PCO Charlotte Smith regarding the parking at the school but had received no update.

The lights in the underpass are now working and the Clerk has asked Essex County Council to reinstate the bollard at the junction of Old Church Road and London Road to prevent unauthorised access which would in turn deter fly tipping.

A response to the Castle Point Stakeholder Survey has been completed on behalf of the Parish Council.

Essex County Council Local Government Boundary Commission Consultation response was pending.

Once again, the Parish Council has signed up to take part in Essex County Council's Winter Salt Partnership Scheme. The Green Barn, off the A130, will again be the central point for residents to collect the bags of salt during the winter months.

**41/23 Finance Report:** Responsible Finance Officer to provide a summary of the Parish Council's financial position and advise on other relevant finance matters.

A summary of income and expenditure since the previous meeting were provided to Councillors as follows:

	£
Balance at Bank 22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2023	55,659.67
Balance at Bank	54,209.35
Expenditure:	2,200.32
Income:	750.00

<b>Expenditure:</b>	
BT- Dulux (Wood Paint Planter)	35.56
BT- WD Smith & Sons (Summer Bedding) inc. VAT	165.60
BT- Staff Net Wages - June	224.00
BT- Parish Clerks Net Salary - June (inc. Office Use/BB/Tel	845.70
(Cheque No 719) HMRC Staff Tax/ EMPRS NI (A/M/J)	<u>929.46</u>
	2,200.32
<b>Income: Coronation Event</b>	750.00

No questions were raised by Councillors regarding the report as presented.

The Responsible Finance Officer advised that the overall amount collected from the various activities at the Coronation Event was £1023.00 but some expenses for prizes and other payments on the stalls had to be deducted from this amount.

**42/23 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: 21/01452/FULL- Land to the South of Marsh Farm, Vange By-Pass, Vange, Essex**

Installation of renewable led energy generation station, comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays and battery-based electricity storage containers together with substation, inverter/transformers stations, site access, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure, grid connection cable, landscaping, and biodiversity enhancements.

Councillors considered that Thurrock Council had refused the Planning Application due to the fact the applicant had not justified the reason for establishing a Solar Farm in the Thurrock area, similarly the Parish Council consider the applicant had not demonstrated any evidence to justify taking the cable along the route suggested and through the village of Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet to link up at the Rayleigh National Grid Substation in the Rochford area. It was considered that conclusive evidence had not been demonstrated to justify the disruption it would cause to the residents of Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet during the work of laying the cable through Pound Lane , the main artery road through the village, which at certain times of the , is heavily congested. In addition, the disruption to the road network, along the B4164 London Road through Pitsea from Vange Marshes whilst work is undertaken would also be problematical.

Prolonged experience of the areas main roads being cut off by major repair works had caused untold havoc, delays, and diversions for long periods of time and the project itself would have limited benefits to the Basildon district and would have no benefit for the community of Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet. Councillors considered that due to the distance the cable has to travel it would be better situated nearer to the main energy source in Thurrock

where, the report stated, the Thames Gateway and the Coryton Industrial Centre will dominate consumption.

It was also considered Borough-wide projects that benefit the Basildon area and community should be given priority to the limited grid access currently available and any new access, if created by external sources, should be situated nearer to the areas which benefit from their usage. It was further considered future projects of this magnitude should be part of an Essex-wide consortium of interested parties in order to manage and co-ordinate such plans effectively. The Parish Council would send their objections to Planning Officers for consideration.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 23/00827/FULL - Elm Trees, 2 Elm Road, Bowers Gifford Basildon**

Proposed demolition of existing approved dwelling and the erection of a replacement dwelling

Councillors raised no objections to the application to replace the existing property and replace with a new dwelling. However, it was considered a condition should be placed on the replacement dwelling, if granted, that it should be upgraded to mains sewage thus resolving a long-standing issue of sewage leaking from the existing plot.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 23/00833/FULL - Hebe Cottage Clifton Road Bowers Gifford Basildon**

Hard Standing (Retrospective)

Councillors considered they were unable to support the planning application. Previous applications had been refused due to having exceeded the maximum for development on the plot. The applicant had given no justification or reason for building the hard standing and the hard standing itself was open to farmland and any structure placed on it would be clearly visible across the landscape.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 23/00895/AGBAS - North Benfleet Hall Farm, North Benfleet Hall Road, North Benfleet Basildon**

Prior approval application for the proposed erection of a purpose-built hay and straw, open sided agricultural building under Schedule 2, Part 6 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 (as amended)

Councillors raised no objections to the application.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO 23/00835/LBBAS - Horseshoe Cottage, Harrow Road, North Benfleet, Basildon, Essex SS12 9JW**

Like-for-like repair of existing structure following vehicle impact, comprising reinstatement of the front elevation including the timber framed window,

feather-edge boarding and rain-water goods. Minor internal repairs including reinstatement of damaged flooring as well as the repair of internal partitions.

Councillors considered that the repairs were necessary due to the property being a Grade II listed building and as such were required to meet listed building regulations and raised no objections to the application.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 23/00891/FULL - 47 Highlands Road Bowers Gifford Basildon Essex**

Demolition of the existing rear conservatory and extensions. Erection of part single part double side and rear extension/loft conversion into habitable space incorporating front and rear dormers, change front windows.

Councillors disagreed with the application as presented. They considered that the plot was already overdeveloped and the design of dormers (Shed dormers) to the front of the property were over-bearing and added no amenity value to the character of the area. It was suggested the design of the dormer should be changed to a less aggressive Gable or Bonnet dormer. There were also concerns that the application, which extended the full width of the rear of the property and approximately 50% beyond that of neighbouring properties, would constitute overlooking neighbouring properties either side. Councillors considered a closer inspection by Planning Officers was required before any decision on the application was made.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 23/00936/OUT - Land Adjacent St Heliers, London Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex.**

Residential proposal for 34 dwellings ranging from 1 - bedroom apartments to detached 4-bedroom houses incorporating 35% social homes, services, access and landscaping.

Information had been received by the Parish Council, after publication of the meeting agenda, that although the planning application had been submitted to Basildon Council Planning department all required reports had not been received and it could not be currently validated by Planning and as such Councillors were unable to discuss the application at the meeting.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 23/00936/OUT - Land Rear Of 311 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford, Basildon Essex** - Residential proposal of 31 dwellings, vehicular access and services included.

Again, information received by the Parish Council, after publication of the meeting agenda, advised that although the planning application had been submitted to Basildon Council Planning department all required reports had not been received and it could currently not be validated by the Planning Department and as such Councillors were unable to discuss the application at the meeting. Any discussion was deferred to a future meeting.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO:23/00790/FULL - 62 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex SS13 2HW** - Conversion of existing bungalow to form chalet style dwelling with side

dormer windows.

Councillors considered the orientation of the property had contributed to the difficulties of previous applications in as much that it conflicts with adjacent properties. Having objected to the previous application which had been refused on the grounds of the visual impact of the design of the dormers, they felt the change to bonnet dormers no longer over dominated and was more acceptable and improved the visual character and appearance of the property. Councillors felt the drawing of the dormer did not give a true reflection of the improved changes in design. Councillors raised no objections to the current planning application.

**43/23 Planning updates and comments:** To receive updates and comments on planning applications discussed at previous meetings.

**Planning Application 23/00724/FULL :** Proposed 1.5 storey 3 bed detached dwelling - Sperryville Upper Avenue Bowers Gifford Basildon Essex SS13 2LR – **Refused.**

**Planning Application 23/00655/FULL:** Proposed 3 detached dwellings - Land West of Elm End, Elm Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon Essex **Refused.**

**Planning Application 23/00590/FULL:** Retrospective change of use of garages to offices - use Class E, and to storage and distribution - use Class B8 - 311 Pound Lane Bowers Gifford Basildon Essex SS13 2NA - **Granted with conditions.**

**Planning Application 23/00538/VAR :** Removal of Condition 7 (The fences enclosing units 13 and 15 as indicated on Location Plan shall be removed within 2 months from the date of this permission) of consent reference 22/01359/FULL (Change of Use of Units 13 and 15 to office use (Class E)) - Rear Of 245 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford - **Granted**

**44/23 Date of next meeting:** The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 30<sup>th</sup> August 2023 at 7.30 p.m. in The Benbow Club, 77 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford.

Signed ..... Councillor Bernard Foster, Chair

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> August 2023