



**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM PLATFORM
WEDNESDAY 29th APRIL 2020 AT 7.30 PM.**

PRESENT:

Councillors: R.Smillie: B.Foster: C.Morgan: T.Potter:
D.Packer: D. Martin:

Parish Council Clerk/RFO: Mrs Christine Barlow

Ward Councillors: Councillor Craig Rimmer (Pitsea South East)

Public attendance: 4 identified

131/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None

132/19 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.

None received

133/19 VIRTUAL PUBLIC FORUM: Residents have the opportunity to raise questions of the Parish Council. (The time allowed for this item is a maximum of 15 minutes)

The meeting was held in line with current changes in legislation under the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (coronavirus)(Flexibility of Local Authority and police and Crime Panel Meetings)(England and Wales(Regulation 2020) 4th April 2020. Members of the public who had joined the meeting virtually were given the opportunity to raise issues with Councillors. The public were advised that the meeting was being recorded.

A member of the public asked if a notice could be attached to the gate of Westlake Park requesting users to close the gate of the Park when entering and leaving for the safety of all users. **Action:** The Parish Clerk would make arrangements to put an appropriately worded sign on the gate.

The Chair advised that he has received a request from a resident for an update regarding the repairs to the Church Road underpass which historically had been damaged by a car fire some two years previously and the damage included the

lighting in the underpass. The Parish Clerk advised she had constantly asked for repairs to be carried out and had recently requested an update from Jasmine Wiles,

Essex County Council Local Highways Liaison Officer. Subsequently she had received an email from ECC Structures to advise that the matter was under review with ECC Asset Management. The Parish Clerk stated she had then written to the Structures Team making the point of the length of time it had taken to make the decision and as had been agreed at a previous Parish Council meeting asked under the Freedom of Information Act, as the damage was an act of vandalism was it covered by Essex County Council's own Insurance policy. Although the email had been acknowledged she had received no further reply or information. Action: To continue to pursue the matter on behalf of Parish Council and residents for a repair date.

134/19 WARD COUNCILLOR UPDATE: Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillor/s to address the meeting, if present.

Councillor Craig Rimmer, Pitsea South East Ward Councillor, advised that due the coronavirus lockdown the clearing of the ditches at the end of Pound Lane had been delayed. James Hendry, Basildon Council Cleansing Manager, had confirmed he would engage a Team to clear the ditches as soon as the current situation was eased. In addition, Councillor Rimmer, had discussed the re-auditing of the various waterways in the area, due to concerns regarding flooding again and advised he would continue to press for an update.

Local elections, due to take place on 7th May, had now been postponed until May 2021. The elections not only affected Borough Council elections but also Parish/Town Council elections.

Councillor Rimmer advised he was continuing to look at ways to reduce the parking at school times adjacent to Ilfracombe Avenue and would like to receive any ideas from the public in general on resolving the problems being experienced by residents.

Councillor Rimmer advised that Essex County Council had installed approximately 16,000 new light bulbs across the Borough. As a result, Basildon Council had been informed that some lights had been duplicated or were no longer needed after the upgrade and it was the intention to switch off these lights at night. Seven had been identified in Bowers Gifford. On each in Eric Road, Una Road, Alpha Close, Highlands Crescent, Bowers Court Drive, Westlake Avenue and Kelly Road. Due to the restriction of public movement, as a result of the current lockdown, Councillor Rimmer had enlisted the help of the Parish Clerk to identify the location of the lights whilst on her daily exercise walks. Initial investigation had identified that most the lights were at the end of a "no through road" and only one light in Kelly Road might be an issue. However, without reviewing the affected areas at night any issues could not be physically identified. It was suggested that the switch off should be monitored to assess if there were problems as a result of the lights being switched off or if residents had any concerns.

Councillor Rimmer advised that if residents wanted guidance on the current coronavirus situation they could log-on to the Basildon Council website for more information and advice www.basildon.gov.uk

135/19 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING. The Parish Council to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2020.

Due to pandemic and government guidelines which banned meetings in public the previous Parish Council meeting scheduled for 25th March 2020 had been cancelled.

Parish Councillors **AGREED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2020 were an accurate record of the meeting. Councillor Robert Smillie, Chairman, signed the minutes electronically and would wet sign the documentation as soon as possible.

136/19 PARISH CLERK'S REPORT: An update on Parish Council business and information.

The Parish Clerk advised that Essex County Council closed its essex.info website , used by the Parish Council and many other local councils across Essex , on 31st March 2020. The Parish Council had set up a new website (e-voice.org.uk/bgnb-parishcouncil) before the closure and apart from the inconvenience of having to transfer information over from the old website the Parish Council were unaffected by the closure.

An enquiry had been received from a resident to fill the vacant position on the Parish Council and the Clerk had acknowledged the enquiry and was in the process of contacting the applicant to progress the application.

The issue of the lighting and Elections had been covered by Councillor Rimmer.

The current Covid- 19 restrictions had forced the Parish Council to work in different ways, but it was business as usual and in some ways was much busier. As much information as possible was being included on the Parish Council website and/or links had been included to direct users to other websites who could also provide information.

Leaflets had been printed by the Parish Council just before government restriction can into force providing information to residents and thanks to volunteers, approximately two-thirds of the village had been covered before restrictions came into force. The remainder of the leaflets were put into local shops and a copy could be found on the Parish Council noticeboards and website. An article in the leaflet offered help to residents in the current situation and several residents had contacted to ask for assistance. In addition, a letter had been personally addressed to all residents over seventy-six years old offering help and residents had contacted the Clerk to thank the Council for its consideration.

The Clerk advised that she had now passed the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) Examination. Once a Council has a Clerk with this qualification it can apply for the Local Council Award Scheme.

Work on the Neighbourhood Plan is continuing and the Parish Council's consultants O'Neil Homer are working on the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Assessment Reports. These documents would normally have been prepared by Basildon Council but due to timescales regarding the Local Plan examination, which were yet unknown, it had been agreed for the Parish Council to undertake this work far more quickly. A grant in the sum of £9,120.00 had been received from Basildon Council to enable this work to be carried out the work.

Currently the Picnic -in-the-Park event scheduled for 5th July, like all other events at the present time as a result of Covid - 19, had been cancelled and rescheduled for 13th September but this date would be dependent on future government guidelines regarding large gatherings.

137/19 FINANCE REPORT: Report to include:

- (i) To report on the Parish Councils current financial position. Parish Councillors were provided with the following financial update summary.

	£
Balance at Bank 26 th February 2020	13,668.51
Balance at Bank 31 st March 2020	11,389.65
Balance at Bank 29 th April 2020	28,388.07
Expenditure:	
26.3.20 - 31.3.20	2,278.86
01.4.20 – 29.4.20	<u>496.67</u>
	2,775.53
Expenditure Summary:	
(516) Clerks net salary Feb (inc. Tel/BB/Office use)	874.32
(517) RCCE Annual Membership	40.00
(518) BBC Lottery Permit	20.00
(520) Clerks net salary March (inc.Tel/BB/Office use)	874.12
(521) HMRC Clerks Tax and Employers NI	470.42
(524) EALC/NALC Affiliation 2020/2021	<u>496.67</u>
	2,775.53
Income Summary	
(01.04.20) BBC ½ year Precept	8,375.09
(28.04.20) BBC NP Grant – Preparation of SEA/SA	<u>9,120.00</u>
	17,495.09

(ii) Annual Audit 2019/2020 process:

Information regarding the Annual Audit had been received from PKF Littlejohn the Governments External Auditors. As the Parish Council income for 2019/2020 exceeded £25,000 they were required to have an internal and external Audit and submission of these documents was by set timescales. However due to the current pandemic several of the submission timescales had been amended. The submission

deadline for the receipt of the approved Annual Governance and Accountability Return is 31st July 2020 and completion is now November 2020.

The internal audit had been booked for 7th May but arrangements for carrying out this audit may need to be changed.

(iii) To confirm the delegation of Parish Council business to the Clerk in an emergency.

Having discussed the matter and noted that under the Local Government Act 1972 individual Councillors cannot have delegated rights. Decisions must be made by the Council as a whole. However, delegation can be given to the Parish Council Clerk to act in an emergency in consultation with the Chairman. It was **AGREED** in order to protect the interests of the community and ensure the continuity of Parish Council business during the current period of the Coronavirus pandemic, that the Parish Council delegates authority to the Parish Clerk to act on behalf of the Council in cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services.

138/19 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT: To confirm that there is a sound system of internal control in place regarding the business of the Parish Council

This item was deferred until the meeting on 27th May 2020

139/19 PLANNING: Councillors to review and comment on Planning Application/s under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

139/19/1 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 20/00406/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.

Parish Councillors raised no objections to the planning application as presented.

139/19/2 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 20/00361/OUT

Outline application for self- build residential development of up to 7 dwellings, with all matters reserved - Land North of Clifton Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex

Parish Councillors had been made aware of the proposals within the application and it was noted that the planning application presented was not the application that had been previously discussed with Parish Councillors to obtain their views before being submitted for approval to Basildon Council. Councillor Martin advised that the planning application that was now on Basildon Council Planning Portal , as of the date of the meeting, was the correct planning application was submitted. It was understood that as the application was for outline permission any further discussion on the detail would be discussed when the full application for development was

submitted. Councillors considered that if the correct outline planning application was submitted the Parish Council would have no objections.

140/19 PLANNING DECISIONS: To receive updates regarding Planning Applications discussed at previous meetings and other relevant applications:

(i) Planning Application: 20/00269/PDPA: Notification for a larger home extension comprising the construction of a single storey rear extension projecting 6.0 metres from the rear wall of the original dwelling with a maximum height of 3.55 metres and eaves of 2.55 metres - 21 Kelly Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon Essex SS13 2HL - Refused

(ii) Planning Application: 20/00075/FULL: Conversion of bungalow to chalet, with raised extended gabled pitched roof, side cat-slide dormer, balcony, and replacement porch - 281, Pound Lane Bowers Gifford Basildon Essex SS13 2LN - Granted

141/19 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW 2020 – BASILDON BOROUGH COUNCIL: To receive Councillor comments regarding the review.

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

142/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: To confirm the date of the next Parish Council Meeting.

Councillors **AGREED** to hold a meeting on 6th May to discuss the outstanding agenda items.

The date of the next full Parish Council meeting was confirmed as 27th May 2020 and unless current government lockdown restrictions changed it would again be held virtually via Zoom. Details of this meeting would be published on the Parish Council website and on the Parish Council noticeboards if safe to do so.

Signed:



Councillor Robert Smillie, Chairman

Dated: 27th May 2020