



**BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET  
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY 29<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2022 AT 7.30 PM.**

**PRESENT:**

**Councillors:** B. Foster: C. Morris: S. Pegg: K.Hutchison: S.Moore

**Ward Councillor/s:** None

**Parish Council Clerk/RFO:** Mrs Christine Barlow

**Public attendance:** 6

Councillor Sheelagh Pegg chaired the meeting.

**19/22 Apologies for absence:** To record any apologies received

Apologies were received from Councillor Craig Rimmer (canvassing residents as an agent in a Neighbouring Ward due to an impending by-election in the Borough): Councillor Luke Mackenzie (on holiday) : Councillor Aidan McGurran, (at a LGA conference in Harrogate)

**20/22 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.

No interests were declared by those present to items on the agenda.

**21/22 Minutes of Parish Council meetings:** To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Annual Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and Chair to sign.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022 were confirmed as an accurate account of the meeting and signed by Councillor Bernard Foster, Parish Council Chair

**22/22 Parish Councillor Co-option:** To confirm the co-option of new Councillors

As the result of publicity, in regard to Councillor vacancies, two residents had contacted the Parish Clerk and expressed an interest. Both residents had completed and submitted their application form and discussed the role with the Parish Clerk and Councillors. Based on the discussions and information provided Councillors **AGREED** to co-opt both applicants to the role of Parish Councillor. **Proposed** Councillor Pegg: **Seconded:** Councillor Colin Morris.

Karen Hutchison and Susan Moore, were co-opted as a Parish Councillors and duly signed the Member Declaration of Acceptance.

**23/22 Ward/County Councillor update:** Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillors to address the meeting.

There were no Borough Councillors present to provide any update.

**24/22 Parish Clerks Report:** To provide a brief update to Councillors on business since the last meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

**(i) Platinum Jubilee Event:**

It was disappointing that once again Borough Council contractors ID Verdi had not managed to cut the grass in Westlake Park, as requested by the Parish Council, two weeks prior to the event. It was eventually cut on the Monday prior to the event by which time the grass was extremely long and left the Park area in an unusable condition. An email was sent to Basildon Council requesting a second cut to try and improve the condition of the park, but this did not improve the situation. A request was then made on Facebook asking for volunteers to help clear the grass on the surface of the park area. Several residents responded to the request and on Saturday morning, 4<sup>th</sup> June, a working party managed to clear the dead grass from 50% of the Park area to ensure the Platinum Jubilee Event on the 5<sup>th</sup> June could successfully take place. Thanks also go to local farmer, John Lyons, of North Benfleet Hall Farm, who generously offered to take away and dispose of the grass.

Despite the weather the Platinum Jubilee Event was enjoyed by all those who attended, judging by the comments from those who came along. The Circus Workshop by Infinity Circus was very popular giving both children and adults the opportunity to try out some circus skills. Trevor Cline, the Magician, provided balloon modelling and entertained the children with his tricks. Music was provided by Filthy Gorgeous, saxophone player Joe Green and Maddie Keeling-O'Callaghan from the Green Barn shop. There were also Vintage Cars, a variety of stalls run by local businesses and other games to help entertain the community and make the day a success. Local business also generously donated raffle prizes and each child received a memento to commemorate The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

**(ii) Potholes:** The deep potholes had been reported at the corner of Burnt Mills Road/Pound Lane to Essex County Council and the stretch of road from opposite St Andrews Care Home to A127. Councillor Mackenzie advised, by email, that he had also reported the potholes and he was also in the process of endeavouring to obtain an update regarding the traffic survey in Pound Lane he had requested and would provide an update on his return from holiday.

**(iii)** A request had been made to Basildon Council to request their contractors to cut the long grass along the verge on the right side of the road, adjacent to Tiffaynes Farm, Pound Lane. (The Parish Council had cut the grass themselves following a previously ignored request in the interests of safety) The cut had now been carried out by the contractors and there was now a clear view from the corner of Burnt Milles Road along the first 100 yards on near side of Pound Lane.

(iv) A request had been made to Basildon Council for an update of when all the highways' verges on Pound Lane, normally cut twice a year in June and October, would take place. Basildon Council's Technical Services Manager had advised that ID Verde were currently cutting all the verges across the Borough but was unable to provide a timeframe.

## 25/22 Finance Report:

- (i) To receive a summary of the Parish Council's current financial position and update on Jubilee Event income and expenditure.

The following summary was presented to Councillors together with a bank statement for the same period in May-June. Two-thirds of the expenditure incurred was a result of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Event.

	£
Balance at Bank 18 <sup>th</sup> May 2022	113,507.92
Balance at Bank 22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2022	108,163.10
Expenditure:	5,344.82
Income:	Nil

### Expenditure:

(665) PDS Digital – Jubilee Flyers	165.00
(669) Gala Tents x 2 (inc. VAT) – (Gazebos for Jubilee Event )	1109.94
(670) Zoom Annual Fee ( inc.VAT)	143.88
(671) South Essex Topsoil (Planters)	300.00
(673) Clerks Net Salary (May) Inc Tel/BB/Office	774.00
(674) Handyperson Net Wages (May 2022)	224.00
(675) Infinity Circus Workshop (Jubilee Event)	535.00
(676) VIP Security (inc.VAT) (Jubilee Event)	378.00
(677) Fanta Fazes (Face Painter- Jubilee Event)	150.00
(679) Joe Green (Saxophone) (Jubilee Event)	350.00
(680) Trevor Cline ( Magician/Balloon Modelling) (Jubilee Event)	250.00
(681) Filthy Gorgeous (Jubilee Event)	400.00
(682) Laindon Leisure (Table & Chairs – Jubilee Event)	215.00
(684) Eduard Pisteu (Photographer) Jubilee Event	<u>350.00</u>
	5,344.82

A full breakdown of income and expenditure of the Platinum Jubilee Event would be provided at the July meeting. To date the amount of income on the various Parish Council activities had generated a total of £1322. Grant funding in the sum of £3,840 was used to facilitate the event and the purchase of two new gazebos along with an agreed budget from the Precept of £1,500 .

- (ii) To advise Councillors of the completion of the Internal Audit and any matters arising from the report.

The Internal audit was carried-out on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022, and it was confirmed

effective budgetary procedures and income controls were in place across all required procedures.

It was noted that the Council had a separate GDPR Risk Assessment, however, it was also noted that a review of the General Risk Assessment Schedule had not taken place during 2021/22 although this was scheduled for an imminent meeting in the new financial year. The Internal Auditor recommended that as the Risk Assessment had not been reviewed during this period the Annual Governance Statement section 1, Box 5 should be changed from Yes to No. The Responsible Finance Officer, had noted the comment of the Internal Auditor, and acknowledged the oversight considered that Councillors, having assessed all risk factors based on Risk Assessment Schedule approved on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019 at the time of Annual Governance Statement declaration (Recorded in the minutes as of 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022 ( Min 145/21) that a note of explanation should be sent to PKF LittleJohn, the Governments appointed External Auditors instead, giving the reason why the Box 5 to the question in the document had been ticked to indicate Yes. Councillors **AGREED** to the suggestion from the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO). **Proposed:** Councillor Foster: **Seconded:** Councillor Pegg.

The Internal Auditor also commented that the Council's general reserves were on the low side and recommended that this needed to be monitored closely and increased by 50-100% of the precept or six months running costs. A larger increase in the Precept had also been recommended by the RFO at the time of setting the budget in October 2021 but it was decided by the Parish Council ,at that time, it was not conducive to the current climate and a smaller increase only was proposed.

(iii)To confirm the date of submission of Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) to the Governments external Auditors.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) documents were provided to Councillors and were to be sent to PKF LittleJohn, the Governments appointed external Auditor, by 1 July 2022.

Copies of the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights had been displayed on the Parish Council website and in the Parish Council noticeboards from 17<sup>th</sup> June until 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022. The notification gave the community the opportunity to inspect the Parish Council accounts, by appointment during this period.

(vi) **Risk Assessment:** To amend/approve as presented the current Parish Council's Risk Assessment.

Having reviewed the Risk Assessment Schedule approved on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019 (Minute REF: 99/19) it was **AGREED** no changes were required to the policies and procedures. However, it was suggested that the abbreviated wording AGAR on Page 6 should be reworded for clarity to read Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

**26/22 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:  
22/00697/OUT**

The proposed erection of 4 No. 3 Bed Bungalows (Land to the rear of Colorado/Seattle/Nevada and Arizona) (Outline Application) - Claremont Burnt Mills Road, North Benfleet, Basildon - To confirm the Parish Council's comments to Planning Officers.

The Parish Council had discussed the planning application and due to the timing of a reply had sent their comments to Planning Officers thus:

The recommendation was to refuse on the following grounds:

(i) The application is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and there are no special circumstances to disregard this in this precise location.

(ii) The plans are considered to be of a poor design and out of character with the surrounding environment.

(iii) The original ditches, adjacent to nearby properties, have been filled in and any new development will raise the already notable risk of flooding to both new and existing properties. Any potential flooding should be addressed before any development is considered.

(iv) It was considered that as the result of a previous build-up of ground levels, using materials hitherto unknown, the ground could be contaminated and further surveys of the soil to determine non-contamination should be carried out.

(v) The exit and ingress of the site on Burnt Mills Road is on a dangerous bend with sight lines obscured and will create a potential hazard for vehicles travelling into and out of the site onto this busy narrow lane.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO:  
22/00848/FULL**

Construction of 2no single-storey dwellings – Mascot, Windsor Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex

Further discussion was required regarding this application in view of the fact that Basildon Council were reviewing their Local Plan and the Parish Council were in the process of conducting a Feasibility Study on sites within the Parish, including the plotlands, to establish if the overall sites which had come forward as part of the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan were suitable for a Neighbourhood Development Order and if they would fit into the Parish Council's long term strategy in regard to any development in the Parish. It was **AGREED** to submit any comments by 8<sup>th</sup> July and record these at the next Parish Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022

**27/22 Planning updates and comments:** To receive updates and comments on planning applications discussed at previous meetings.

None were available

**28/22 Neighbourhood Development Order Update:** To update on progress

Councillor Foster confirmed the Parish Council had held a brief meeting with its consultants ONiell Homer to outline the work required for the NDO Feasibility Study and discussed the requirements of the initial work which was to be carried out to provide the basis of the Site Assessment work. There were two elements initially which were being reviewed again (i) the Green Belt and (ii) the Travel Plan. Sites previously considered for development now needed to be reassessed and the numbers reduced due to the changes in policy by Basildon Council as the result of reviewing their Local Plan and building less on Green Belt. It is anticipated that once the report was provided to the Parish Council it would be ready to discuss with the BGNB Steering Group sometime in mid - August.

**29/22 Parish-in-Bloom 2022:** To discuss holding the Annual Parish-in-Bloom Event in 2022 and, if confirmed, setting the entry criteria.

Councillors discussed holding the Parish-in-Bloom event and all were in **AGREEMENT** with holding the event once again in 2022 as in previous years. Judging would be early August with three categories (i) Best Front Garden (ii) Best Back Garden and (iii) Baskets and Containers. A Parish newsletter would be put together providing information and the event would be advertised in a variety of media. It was suggested that to simplify matters entrants would be asked to provide a picture of their respective entry and send this also by email, post or hand delivered. Any newsletter published would include pictures of the Platinum Jubilee Event.

**30/22 Rubbish & Recycling Collections:** To inform of changes to the Boroughs Rubbish Collection & Recycling Collections from Autumn 2022.

Councillor Moore informed the meeting that there would be separate food and garden collections starting from October. Households will be provided with a 23-litre outdoor caddy and a 5-litre kitchen caddy for indoor use, and fifty compostable kitchen caddy liners supplied annually to each property. Food waste would be collected weekly as it is now. However, Green Waste would be collected fortnightly via the current 240 litre green wheelie bins.

Concerns were raised that the fortnightly green waste collections might be suitable for properties with small gardens but for larger gardens and in rural areas the fortnightly collections might be a problem. It was anticipated that if a second green bin was required this could also be put out for collections. Residents would be notified as soon as more information was available.

**31/22 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)

- A resident asked what had happened to the CRUNCH Service. The meeting was advised that this service had been suspended by Basildon Council during Covid and currently has not been reinstated. Basildon Council is currently reviewing the way in which bulky wastes are collected and managed across the Borough and will be consulting with residents on this in the Summer of 2022.

- A resident asked if there was any information regarding the progress of proposals to build a Care Home on land beside Ilfracombe Avenue. The meeting was advised that the Parish Council was not aware of any update. The withdrawal of Basildon Council’s Local Plan meant that the local authority was reviewing all the information which they had gather for their draft Local Plan and following this review they would publish a new version of the Local Plan, with less development on Green Belt. Basildon Council would then go out to consult on their revised Local Plan once again. It was expected that not further information would be published until October.
- Councillors Pegg raised the issue again of the Public Right of Way which was still blocked from Elm Road through to Burnt Mills Road. **Action:** The Parish Clerk advised she would contact Essex County Council PROW Officer and raise the issue again.
- A resident informed that three gardens in the village would be open to the public as part of the district wide Open Garden Trail on 3<sup>rd</sup> July from 2 p.m. – 6pm in aide of St Luke’s Hospice. These were 13 & 14 Una Road and 32 Kelly Road. The cost for entry was £5.00 per person to view all three gardens. The Parish Clerk advised she had put a poster in each of the Parish Council noticeboards and on the Parish Council website and Facebook.

**32/22 Date of next meeting:** To confirm the date of the next meeting as 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022

The date of the meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> July at 7.30 p.m. in the Benbow Club , 77 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford.

Signed: .....Councillor Bernard Foster, Chair    Date: 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022