



**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 30th JUNE 2021 AT 7.30 PM.**

PRESENT:

- Councillors:** B. Foster: T. Potter: C. Morris
- Parish Council Clerk/RFO:** Mrs Christine Barlow
- Ward Councillor/s:** Councillor Craig Rimmer (Pitsea South-East)
- Public attendance:** 4

19/21 Apologies for absence: Councillor Robert Smillie, Councillor Claire Morgan, Essex County Councillor Luke McKenzie, Essex County Councillor Aidan McGurran and Ward Councillor Gary Cranham.

20/21 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.

Councillor Foster declared a disclosable interest in Planning Application Item 27/12 Mayfield, Osborne Road regarding the fact he was a resident of Osborne Road.

21/21 Public Forum: To enable residents to raise issues of concern with Parish Councillors (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

A resident advised she had contacted Essex County Councillor Mckenzie who in turn referred her to the Parish Clerk.

The resident advised she had moved into the Parish earlier in the year and wished to raise the issue of speeding along Pound Lane. She informed that she decided to monitor the amount of traffic she considered were driving above the 30mph limit in Pound Lane and over a period of 300 minutes and recorded at various times of the day 2,823 cars she considered were speeding and because of the speed of traffic people were unable to move out of their driveway or cross the road safely without difficulty. She had contacted the Police on the matter and had received a mixed response. The resident commented that she had noticed there were camera signs along Pound Lane but no cameras and frequent road users were aware of the fact there were no cameras.

The Parish Clerk advised that having had the Vehicle Activation Sign (VAS) replaced some years earlier , if had then been vandalised twice and the Parish Council had then

been informed by Essex County Council that the cost to repair was too high and ECC would not reinstate it. The Parish Council had subsequently raised the issue with Essex County Councillors on several occasions and since being elected as an Essex County Councillor for the area she had contacted Councillor Luke McKenzie and raised the matter again and he advised he would raise the issue at the Local Highways Panel meetings.

Rachel Newman, Community Safety and Engagement Officer advised that the implementation of highway safety measures was based on the evidence of incidents and use. It was pointed out by the Clerk that she had been advised that the Highway budget for 2020/2021 was £1million underspent. Councillor Rimmer qualified the underspend partly due to being unable to carry out maintenance work as a result of insufficient manpower to do the work due to Covid restrictions and in some cases being unable to secure materials for the work.

Rachel Newman advised she would be able to support the Parish Council with information on the number of accidents that had occurred over a period of time, how many times the police had taken enforcement action and how many times speed cameras had been used. Councillor Rimmer stated this information was always good to be used as an evidence base and advised he would request this information and maybe it could then be passed on to the Parish Clerk to make sure the information is co-ordinated. Councillor Foster considered that the reporting of any incident would be minimal because people just did not report them because of the cost involved. The pros and cons of traffic calming measures were also discussed and the fact there was insufficient signage in Pound Lane to alert drivers of the speed limit. It was agreed to update on any action at future meetings.

A resident asked what action was being undertaken to carry-out repairs to the underpass in Old Church Road. The resident advised he had seen two workmen in Hi-Viz jackets to what appeared to be discussing various aspects of the underpass and measuring the area. The Parish Clerk advised that she had an item in her report that might answer the question.

A resident asked if the grass, bushes and trees at the end of Alpha Road, at the junction of Pound Lane, could be cut back as the vegetation was overhanging her garden. The Parish Clerk advised that the land in question, according to information in previous years, was not in the remit of either Basildon Borough Council or Essex County Council and each year there is a discussion regarding who is going to tidy the area. Councillor Rimmer advised he would investigate and he could get either Basildon Council's Pride Team to undertake the work or the Council had just taken on two Highway Rangers from Essex County Council and Basildon Council were intending to take on more responsibility for what Essex County Council do anyway. The resident was concerned that high winds might result in branches from the trees falling into her garden or the branches falling on a pedestrian in the street and causing injury.

22/21 Minutes of Parish Council meetings: To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish

Council meeting held on 26th May 2021 and Chairman to sign.

Parish Councillors raised no objections or amendments to the minutes of the Parish Council Annual Meeting on 28th May 2021 and Councillor Foster signed to confirm their accuracy.

23/21 Ward/County Councillor update: Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillors to address the meeting.

Councillor Rimmer advised he had quite a few updates on various matters and would share these with the meeting.

He was now the Chair of Basildon's Leisure and Environment Committee and at the Committee meeting the previous week he had the pleasure of approving a £35,000 spending for Westlake Park Play equipment. Basildon Council will now consult with the Parish Council and the young people of Bowers Gifford to see what equipment they would like to have.

He advised he had received complimentary comments regarding the Plants , which were now in place opposite Ilfracombe Avenue with one resident saying they made for a " posher" outlook.

He had been asked by the Chair of the Planning Committee to arrange for the planning application in regard to 93 Pound Lane to be "called in" for discussion at Planning Committee.

Funding in the sum of £100,000 had been passed for a Pitsea Gateway, from the station to the Pitsea Centre, for a general clean-up and landscaping of the area in partnership with London & Cambridge , the Pitsea Centre landlords and other agencies to make the gateway more welcoming and with proposals to improve the lighting along with CCTV.

The Council were also investing £100, 000 in Wat Tyler Park including an assessable toilet for the disabled and new play equipment.

Councillor Rimmer said he considered that the Council were still on track for the opening of Pitsea Swimming Pool in 2022.

As part of its election promises the new administration said they would do something about the council estates in the New Town and intend to invest, over the next four years, £40 Million in regenerating the council estates because many were built over forty years ago and have been crumbling and they need to be brought up to "spec". They are going to look at housing generally as it is hard for young people to stay in Basildon and there are people on the social housing list. So they have an ambition to build 600 new social housing homes in Basildon and looking at what can be done to make to housing generally to make housing more affordable for those who want to buy or those who want to rent in the private market and what can be done to help people get on the housing ladder.

The issue of the condition of the Pitsea Bingo site was also raised and Councillor Rimmer agreed this was an ongoing problem. He also advised that road surfacing works would be taking place on the High Road near Tesco Superstore.

The new administration was proposing to create a Parking Strategy for the whole of the Borough and were launching a consultation to find out where improvements to parking was needed and where “pinch points” such as Ilfracombe Avenue occurred.

24/21 Community Safety and Engagement Officer: Rachel Newman (PC 4207065) to give an overview on her role within Essex Police

Rachel Newman , Essex Police Community Safety and Engagement Officer gave an overview about herself and her background which originally was community policing before going into a role in CID and went on to explain he current role which was to analyse data on a weekly basis and to spot any trends and emerging issues in the district , which included Billericay , Basildon, Laindon and Wickford and Pitsea. That information is referred back to a senior Officer and with that information various operations are put together operational orders , whether it's to do with anti-social behaviour , burglary , car theft, behaviour to target a particular area. Then long and short-term solutions be looked at with other agencies to resolve issues. The other part of her role is Community Engagement and looking a whole raft of community issues and engaging in different ways with the public , working with the various agencies to encourage collaborative working. Currently there she is the only officer doing the work she does but it is hope that another Officer will soon join her.

She was aware of the issues at St Margaret's School with the parking, which had been brought to her attention by the Parish Council, but because other schools have the same issues, they cannot concentrate on one school on a day-to-day basis. However, they have the resources to target a school and she and her colleagues will be looking at this type of action. Various incidents and solutions were discussed and it was agreed to keep the Parish council up to date especially regarding any data that might be collected as a result of any action.

25/21 Parish Clerks Report: To advise Councillors on business undertaken since the last meeting held on 26th May 2021 and any other relevant matters.

The Parish Clerk advised that Sheelagh Pegg could not physically attend the meeting to be co-opted as a Councillor because she was self-isolating with her granddaughter. The Clerk asked Councillors to **AGREE** to co-opt Mrs Pegg in her absence. Councillors raised no objections to the request, under the circumstances, as they had previous **AGREED** to the co-option and the meeting was a procedural matter.

Mrs Sheelagh Pegg was duly proposed and seconded to be co-opted to the Parish Council as a Councillor until the May elections in 2022.

Proposed: Councillor Foster **Seconded:** Councillor Morris

The Parish Clerk advised on the following areas from the previous minutes:

Item 10/21(i): Church Road Underpass: A reply had been received from Essex County Council Councillor Bentley, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, on 15th June 2021 stating that works on Old Church Road underpass had been delayed until a decision could be made to establish if structural repair work was required. He had advised a report had been received from ECC Structural Engineers in April 2020 which concluded that the underpass structure was still capable of sustaining a full highway load. Subsequently work to allow reopening the underpass had been programmed into the 2020/21 programme of works. The Parish Clerk had responded and asked if any definite timeframe could be provided but as yet had not received a reply to the email.

Item 10/21(ii): No update received regarding repair of lighting unit adjacent The Willows, Windsor Road.

Item 10/21(iii): Planters: The planters had been delivered on 3rd June and installed in position on the verge at London Road, adjacent to Ilfracombe Avenue. Plants and compost had been sponsored by Manor Garden Centre, soil to fill supplied by Basildon Council and aggregate supplied by Balfour Beatty.

Item 10/21 (iv): Budget for Neighbourhood Plan: A funding letter sent to Basildon Council Officers on 8th June provided additional information as required but a reply advising that the Council was only prepared at this stage to provide a grant of £5,000 had not been received until 29th June 2021. The Parish Council intended to meet with Borough Councillors to discuss the content of the letter and the funding.

Item 10/21 (v): Councillor Vacancies: Ex-Councillor Sheelagh Pegg had put her name forward to re-join the Parish Council and the co-option had been covered under the agenda already.

Item 10/21 (vi): Memorial Tree , Westlake Park: The plastic netting had been removed around tree in Westlake Park and tree was now encased with a metal cage for protection. Tree bark had been laid around the base of the tree.

Item 10/21(vii): Junior swing, Westlake Park: Broken swing in the junior play area replaced by Basildon Council.

Item 10/21(viii): Handyman/woman vacancy: Advert closed on 30th June 2021 and currently looking through applications.

UK Power Networks are currently working in Highlands Road and the side roads off upgrading the Parish's telegraph poles where required. There has been very good feedback regarding their work and responses to resident's requests. Some of the old poles have been given to the Parish Council for their planter project.

As part of the Boroughs Play Review improvements to Westlake Park play equipment are being considered and a meeting has been arranged for 19th July 2021 to discuss with Parish Councillors.

A further request for funding for an additional four more planters has been sent to Essex County Councillor Luke Mackenzie.

The grass has now been cut in Westlake Park but the Clerk has spoken to Basildon Council regarding the condition of the Park and asked for improvements to be made to the grass cutting pruning and maintenance of the Park. .

The Parish Clerk requested agreement from Councillors to make an application for funding, from the EALC Community Initiative Fund (CIF), to purchase two defibrillators for the Parish, equipment for the new Handy Person post and funding to proceed with a Circular Walk. Councillors raised no objections and **AGREED** for the Clerk to go ahead and apply for funding.

26/21 FINANCE REPORT: To receive a summary of the Parish Council's current financial position.

(i) To receive a summary statement of the Parish Council's Bank account.

A summary of account was presented as follows:

	£
Balance at Bank 26 th May 2021	20,289.91
Balance at Bank 30 th June 2021	20,428.17
Expenditure:	5,702.85
Income:	5,841.11
Expenditure:	
(587) Clerks Net Salary (May)	752.85
(586) Groundworks UK- Repayment of AHS Grant	<u>4,950.00</u>
	5,702.85
Income:	
HMRC VAT	5,841.11

The HMRC VAT credit was for the eighteen months prior 30th March 2020.

Unfortunately, the Parish Council, due to the fact they had been unable to complete some of the Locality Affordable Housing for Sale Grant (AHS) before 31st March 2021 had, under the grant terms and conditions, to return the unspent element of £4,900. The Clerk was in the process of reapplying for the grant.

(ii) To receive the Internal Auditors Report for 2020/22021

The internal Auditors Report had been circulated to Parish Councillors and the report concluded that the Audit had been completed satisfactorily with no action required in respect of Parish Council accounts for 2020/2021 and procedures. All documentation in connection with the accounts had been sent to the external auditors PKF Littlejohn to confirm all had been completed in line with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2020/2021. All information could be found published on the Parish Council website <https://e-voice.org.uk> as it became available.

(iii) To confirm the publication of the unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return and Notice of Public Rights.

As the Internal Audit had been complete a Notice of Public Rights, to enable any resident to inspect the accounts, by appointment, had been published on the Parish Council website and in the Parish Council noticeboards with effect from 25th June – 5th August 2021. The notice would be displayed for 30 days from the date of publication.

27/21 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: 21/00826/FULL: Proposed L shaped dormer to chalet bungalow - Elm Lodge, Elm Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex

Parish Councillors having discussed the application raised no objections

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 – APPEAL REFERENCE NO: APP/V1505/C/19/3224862: Land at the Eastern End of Cornwall Road, Cornwall Road, North Benfleet, Essex (Ref: Planning Application No: 17/00348/UCO)

This appeal had been withdrawn.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 21/00899/FULL Single storey side extension – Mayfield, Osborne Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon

Having discussed the application Parish Councillors raised no objections to the proposal.

28/21 Planning updates and comments: To receive updates and comments on planning applications discussed at previous meetings.

APP/V1505/C/19/3224862: Planning Appeal - Land at the Eastern End of Cornwall Road, North Benfleet - withdrawn for the present.

PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 21/00785/FULL- St Brelades London Road Bowers Gifford Basildon - Proposed part single, part two-storey front extension, single storey rear extension and external alterations - Refused.

29/21 Neighbourhood Plan Update: To update on the current situation in regard to the BGNB Neighbourhood Plan and Basildon Council's Local Plan Examination.

Councillor Foster asked Councillor Rimmer what he considered was a suitable timeframe for the Local Plan Examination to take place.

Councillor Rimmer advised he considered the Examination would take place within the next 12 months and the Summer would be used to get the Local Plan back on track. Councillor Foster advised that the Parish Council had arranged a meeting with Councillor Baggott, Leader of the Council to discuss a number of issues and options available to the Parish Council regarding the way forward in respect of the Neighbourhood Plan.

As stated previously in the meeting the Parish Council had applied for financial assistance to complete their Neighbourhood Plan, funding which had been set aside for this purpose and agreed by the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee to enable all three Neighbourhood Plan to apply for. The Parish Council wished Councillor Rimmer to note that they were unhappy with the tone of the letter received in this respect and the matter would be raised when they met with Senior Borough Councillors.

30/21 Parish Council Events: To reconfirm the dates of Parish Council events to September and agree the budget for each event.

(i) **Parish-in-Bloom:** The event had been advertised with a closing date provisionally of 21st July. There were currently four entry categories. A resident asked if residents were able to nominate a neighbour and it was confirmed they could subject to making an approach to the neighbour to ask if they had any objections.

(ii) **Picnic-in-the Park:** The date for the event was confirmed as 15th August from 12.00 – 16.00 in Westlake Park. The entertainment had been booked and would consist of a return engagement of the duo last seen in 2019 and also a Blues singer. More information would be available at the next Parish Council meeting in July.

31/21 Date of next meeting: To confirm the date of the next Parish Council meeting as 28th July 2021

The date of the next Parish Council meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 28th July at 7.30 pm at the Benbow Club , 77 Pound Lane.

Signed Councillor Bernard Foster, Chair.

Date: 28th July 2021

