



**MINUTES OF BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING
HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 31ST MAY 2023.**

PRESENT:

Councillors:	B. Foster: S. Moore: C. Morris
Ward Councillor/s:	Cllr. Aidan McGurran, Pitsea North-West Essex County Councillor
Parish Council Clerk/RFO:	Mrs Christine Barlow
Public attendance:	7

1/23 Introductions: Councillor Bernard Foster welcomed all to the meeting and introduced the various members of the Parish Council along with Essex County Councillor Aidan McGurran.

2/23 Election of Chair:

Councillor Forster advised of his intention to step down as Chair, however, in the absence of any nomination for a new Chair from members present, he agreed to Chair the meeting for the Annual Meeting.

3/23 Declaration of Acceptance - Signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office by elected Chair.

The Declaration of Acceptance was not signed due to the current position of Chair being of a temporary status.

4/23 Election of Vice-Chair:

The Parish Council reserved the right not to elect a vice- Chair.

5/23 **Apologies for absence:** Parish Councillor Sheelagh Pegg: Pitsea-South-East Councillors Craig Rimmer, Luke Makenzie, and Gary Canham, the latter three Councillors were attending a Borough Council Planning Training session and were therefore unable to attend.

6/23 **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 declared.

7/23 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)

A resident requested that when the verges in the Parish were cut, the resulting long grass is blown off the paths to prevent the drains from blocking, especially in Bowers Court Drive, causing flooding during periods of heavy rain. The Parish Clerk advised she had complained about the condition of the verges and would make the request to mitigate any flooding.

A resident thanked the Parish Council for their hard work in connection with the staging of the recent Coronation Event on 8th May and thanked the Parish Clerk for her live radio broadcast to advertise the event and all the people who gave freely of their time at the event. Also, thanked the Parish Council Handyman and the Parish Clerks husband for volunteering for the overnight security to ensure that no harm came to the marquees and gazebos which had been erected the previous day, thus saving the cost of paying a large fee for security.

A request was made, for the vegetation to be cut back from the verge adjacent to the chicane on the opposite side St Andrews Care Home due to it starting to overhang the road and making it difficult for oncoming traffic to have a clear view. The Parish Clerk noted the complaint and said would raise the issue with Essex Highways, but she advised that it might also be the landowner's responsibility to cut back the vegetation and she would ask for the matter to be investigated.

It was reported once again that the road had eroded on the corner of Pound Lane and Burnt Mills Road and a large pothole had appeared.

Pallets and other articles had been dumped in the shrubs alongside the road leading from the small bridge in Pound Lane near to Quirks car sales and the A127. Councillor McGurran suggested the resident raise the report on the Borough website and the Parish Clerk advised she would also report the fly - tipping on the same website.

8/23 Minutes of Parish Council meetings: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2023 and Chair to sign.

The minutes of the previous meeting on 26th April 2023 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by Councillor Foster, as Chair of the meeting.

9/23 Ward/County Councillor update: Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillors to address the meeting.

Essex County Councillor McGurran, apologised for his inability to attend more meetings due to the Essex County Council meeting schedule clashing with those of Parish Council meetings. He advised that if residents had any question or concerns, they could contact him by email (cllr.aidan.mcgurran@essex.gov.uk)

Councillor McGurran advised that Essex County Council had relaunched the Essex Community Initiatives Fund for 2023-24. The fund, administered on behalf of ECC by the Essex Association of Local Councils supports voluntary organisations, community groups and Town and Parish Councils with the funding of grants for community projects. He informed there were two levels of grant funding available : (i) grants of up to £10,000 towards capital or revenue projects that benefit the wider community and (ii) micro grants of up to £1,000 to help reduce social isolation, improve well-being, or help communities connect. He would be happy to support any proposals by the Parish Council if they met the criteria.

Councillor McGurran advised Essex County Council were aware regarding the issues of paths and road defects and Councillor Lee Scott, ECC Cabinet Member for Highways, had visited the Parish to see the problems himself. ECC Administrators claimed that the defects were a priority and has now set aside funding for projects in each area, but it is still extremely limited. He advised to date he has submitted 38 critical potholes repairs across the Pitsea division.

There is also some much needed and long overdue money for roads and highways, but the extent of the problem is huge and the funding does not go far but it is still very welcome. In addition, there is also a small amount of money available for a member-led scheme whereby County Councillors can report potholes and this years' scheme also included pavements. Councillor McGurran is happy to pass on any details to the Local Highways Committee and will advise the Clerk of the details of this scheme.

Councillor McGurran was asked how many new pavement problems had been repaired. He said he did not have the figures for those completed last or this year but advised that one of the problems was that the repairs were only temporary and with the harsh weather over the winter months the repairs often failed. He recognised that a more permanent scheme was required, and Essex County Councillors were pushing for this kind of repair. He considered that as Basildon was no longer a New Town a higher level of repairs was required, and considered the national parties should have a policy in place to deal with this fact.

10/23 Appointment of Representatives: To confirm the appointments of Parish Councillors to the following areas of interest:

- **Association of Basildon Local Councils (ABLC):** Councillor Morris
Proposed: Councillor Foster: Seconded: Councillor Moore
- **Basildon Council Liaison Group:** To be agreed meeting by meeting.

11/23 Parish Clerk's Report: To update on business since the last meeting on 26th April 2023

Coronation Event 8th May: The Parish Clerk started her report by thanking all the volunteers who had helped with the arrangements for the Coronation Event on 8th June before the event and on the day. She commented that

without the help of volunteers it would not be possible to put on such a large and successful event each year. As always one of the difficulties was putting up the marquees and this was done, this year again, the afternoon before the event with the help of two ex-Parish Councillors and other volunteers. Due to the inflated cost of employing a company for security overnight during the bank holiday weekend and hygiene facilities, the overall cost being around £700, the Parish Council's Handyperson and the husband of the Clerk volunteered to do the job. A special thanks went to the grandson of one of the Councillors who helped on both days and took charge of the football game at the event and raised over £170. It was suggested to attract the interest of young people the Council set up a Youth Council and this might be the way forward in the future to give younger members of the Parish a voice. It was agreed to pursue this possibility.

Church Road Underpass: The Clerk had been advised that work on the underpass should be completed soon and work on the installation of the lights would not be delayed much longer. The Clerk advised that she had emailed the Project Officer at Essex County Council for an exact completion date.

Councillor vacancies: The Parish Council had three Parish Councillor vacancies and despite extensive advertising they were still unable to fill the positions. The situation was getting critical and beginning to hamper what projects the Parish Council could undertake.

Essex County Council Winter Salt Bag Scheme: It was the intension to join the scheme once again for 2023. The scheme provided Rock Salt during the winter months, free of charge, for areas not covered by the Borough Council gritters.

St Luke's Hospice Open Gardens: During the summer of 2023 residents across Basildon and Thurrock were opening their gardens to raise funds for St Luke's Hospice. On 11th June three of Bowers Gifford's own residents are inviting the public to visit their gardens. Two are in Una Road and one is in Kelly Road.

Illegal development: Over the bank holiday weekend individuals moved onto land in Osborne Road and cleared the land without planning permission and installed a caravan on site and a camper van. The matter was now under investigation by Enforcement Officers and it was anticipated action would be taken to prevent further infringement.

Residents were asked to report any incidents of illegal trespass by completing a form on the Basildon Council planning website and logging any infringement.

Neighbourhood Development Orders Drop-In: Two public consultation Drop-in sessions were held in April 2023. One on the evening of 27th April and the other during the day on 29th April, the purpose of the sessions was to discuss proposals to improve the plotlands areas. The sessions were very constructive and successful in obtaining the public's views on the exercise.

12/23 Finance Report:

(i) To receive a summary of the Parish Council's current financial position

The report detailed below was presented to the meeting:

	£
Balance at Bank 21st April 2023	61,340.26
Balance at Bank 22 nd May 2023	57,187.19
	£
Expenditure:	4,153.07
Income:	Nil
Expenditure:	
Paper	29.79
Ink Cartridges	56.98
PIP Event	65.52
HP Toner Black /Yellow	81.57
Hall Hire – Benbow Club	84.00
Signs Express Banners – PIP	144.00
Petty Cash Day2Day	200.00
GMO Wages (April)	224.00
Clerks Net Salary Plus Tel/BB/Office	826.20
PIP Float	300.00
PDS Printing	436.00
EALC/NALC Affiliation	526.01
Laindon Leisure Tables & Chairs- PIP	104.00
Trevor Cline – Magician - PIP	275.00
Infinity Circus - PIP	400.00
Filthy Gorgeous (PIP Entertainment)	<u>400.00</u>
	4153.07

It was noted that approximately £40K of the money in the Bank is set aside to complete the Feasibility Study for the NDO project. A budget of £2,000 was set for Picnic in- the- Park and the income and expenditure equated to a little under the amount set. A total of £ 1003.49 was taken on the day from the various Parish Council activities and this included a £20 donation from the Candy Floss Man. The Parish Clerk also thanked the ladies who organized the Tea Stall and donated all their takings on the day. A finalised account will be presented to the Councillors as soon as all outstanding expenses have been paid.

(ii) To confirm the Parish Council's bank account signatories for 2023/2024:

It was confirmed there would currently be no change to the bank account signatories. These were to remain as: Councillor Foster, Councillor Morris and Councillor Pegg

(iii) To advise regarding the Internal Audit Report for 2022/2023:

The Parish Council's Internal Audit for 2022/2023 was carried out on 10th May 2023 and was completed satisfactorily by Hellis & Lodge, appointed Internal Auditors, in accordance with proper practices and the Audit met the Parish Council's needs and planned coverage. (Copy of Internal Audit Report attached)

A Notice of Public Rights was to be posted on the Parish Council website and in the Parish Council noticeboards informing that the accounts would be available for inspection as required under the notice from Monday 5th June 2023 until Friday 14th July 2023, thus providing any interested persons the right to inspect the accounting records for the financial year 2022/2023 to which the Audit related, by prior appointment.

(iv) To confirm the incremental increase of the Parish Council Clerk/RFO:

The incremental increase of the Parish Clerk/RFO to scale 23 (within the National Joint Council (NJC) Parameters of Scale 18 – 23) was approved by Councillors present.

Proposed: Councillor Foster: Seconded: Councillor Moore and Councillor Morris

13/23 Planning - Councillors to review and comment on Planning Application/s under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended):

PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 23/00492/FULL - Retention of existing one-bedroom bungalow - Gladwinds, London Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex

In summary, Councillors having discussed the application, considered:

- (i) to be overdevelopment of the site having had permitted development rights withdrawn following the build of two flats on the site and
- (ii) the site was in the Green Belt.
- (iii) the burden of proof regarding occupation was in the hands of the Planning Enforcement team to investigate.

PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 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 Basildon.

Councillors objected to the removal of Condition 7 in respect of the fencing and did not concur with the arguments within the report. However, although it objected to the condition being removed, it did not object to the height of the fencing being reduced as this would still afford protection of the boundary line.

PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 23/00687/LDCE: To establish the lawfulness of land and buildings for commercial (Class E(g), B2 and B8) - Sadlers Hall Farm London Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex, SS13 2HD

Councillors objected to the planning application on the grounds there was no agreed activity of the site and there was insufficient information regarding future use of the site in line with s911 of the Town and County Planning Act. They considered that assurances were required regarding any future use to protect the Grade II listed building on the site and ensure that there was no interfere with the peaceful living for residents (i.e. noise and movement on the site)

PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 23/00590/FULL: Retrospective change of use of garages to offices - use Class E, storage and distribution use - Class B8 - 311 Pound Lane Bowers Gifford Basildon Essex

The Parish Council object to the planning application and considered that the continued use of Lawrence Road as an access point was unacceptable and that if the application was granted access to the site should only be gained via Cat Tree Lane which was the second access site.

It considered the Planning Statement Item 1.4 “the use has been occurring for 7 years without any complaints.” was incorrect due to the Parish Council forwarding complaints about nuisance and noise and resident/s having also reported complaints to Environmental and Enforcement Officers.

Councillors further considered the applicant was endeavouring to establish a commercial environment rather than maintaining it and felt that by granting the application under Class B8 a larger business could be created and developed in an already established business area and this would have a detrimental impact on the access in Lawrence Road and an already busy Pound Lane.

PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 23/00602/LDCE: To establish the lawfulness of the occupation of an existing building as a dwellinghouse. Carpenters Farm, Harrow Road, North Benfleet, Basildon Essex SS12 9JJ

Councillors raised objections to a Certificate being granted, due to complaints lodged with Enforcement Officers regarding a breach of planning regulations taking place in 2020/21. It was however not known if any action was taken and it was considered that before any Certificate was granted or refused this should be investigated for clarity.

PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 23/00655/FULL: Proposed 3 detached dwellings - Land West of Elm End, Elm Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon

Councillors objected to the application on the grounds that:

- (i) Inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- (ii) There was no special circumstance demonstrated to justify any departure from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

(iii) There is no Ecological, Biological, Environmental or Energy Efficiency information and evidence provided to support the Planning Application.

14/23 Planning updates and comments: To receive updates and comments on planning applications discussed at previous meetings.

There were no planning applications decisions currently to report.

15/23 Neighbourhood Development Order: To update on the progress of the Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) Feasibility Study

The Parish Council was still waiting for the completion of the first draft of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report from AECOM Technical Support. The Parish Council consultants had updated the Borough Council on the current position to bring Officers up to date.

It was expected that the referendum vote on the Neighbourhood Development Order proposals would be in 2024.

Some landowners have been contacted and proposals for a loop road in the plotlands area have been discussed. As confirmed in the Parish Clerk's report the two Drop-in sessions held on 27th & 29th April had proved beneficial.

16/23 Date of next meeting: To confirm the date of the next meeting.

The date of the next meeting on 28th June 2023 at 7.30 p.m. in the Benbow Centre, 77 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford.

Subsequent meetings were also provided to March 2024. The full list would be placed on the Parish Council website for information.

2023: 26th July: 30th August: 27th September: 25th October: 29th November: 13th December

2024: 31st January: 28th February: 27th March:

Signed



Councillor Bernard Foster, Chair

Date: 28th June 2023