



**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE BENBOW CLUB, BOWERS GIFFORD
WEDNESDAY 11th DECEMBER 2019 AT 7.30 PM.**

PRESENT:

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

Parish Council Clerk/RFO: Mrs Christine Barlow

Ward Councillors: Councillor Craig Rimmer (Pitsea South East)

Members of the Public: 13

90/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor David Martin

91/19 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 were received.

92/19 PUBLIC FORUM: An opportunity for residents to raise issues and ask questions of the Parish Council (The time allowed for this item is a maximum of 15 minutes)

Congratulation were passed to Jon Spooner, a resident from Una Road, for his Open Charity Garden the previous week and the splendid display of Christmas lights in aid of raising funds for local charities.

The corner of Pound Lane and Burnt Mills Road had once again eroded and the material on the edge of the road had been washed away by the heavy rains leaving a large hole on the corner of the road. Traffic bollards had been placed at the location to enable traffic to avoid the obstruction.

A resident raised the issue of skip trailers parking on the highway adjacent to the Waste Treatment facility in Courtauld Road and causing an obstruction. Councillor Rimmer advised he would investigate the matter on behalf of residents.

Councillor Rimmer updated the meeting regarding the old Pitsea Bingo Hall site and advised discussions were ongoing between the owners of the site and Basildon Council in order to avoid enforcement notices being served and the options for the site would be discussed by Basildon Council committee meetings in the New Year.

Councillor Rimmer expressed concerns regarding proposals by Basildon Council looking at Parish Councils and Local Councils generally in the Community Governance Review seemed to have a very broad remit and discussed consolidating Parishes and abolishing Parishes and appeared to be devolving responsibility, in the future, for some services away from Basildon Council to Parishes and was sceptical of the reasons behind making the changes. It was noted that the reports seem to state that existing Parishes' would not be merged unless they expressed a wish to do so. Councillor Rimmer advised he had been unsuccessful in asking for an amendment to the proposals. The Parish Council discussed the implications of devolving certain Borough Council services to Parish Councils and the implications it would have in respect of the Precept.

93/19 MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27TH NOVEMBER 2019: To approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

Councillor Smillie was advised, by the Parish Clerk, that although the formal Parish Council meeting had not taken place on 30th October, because it was inquorate the meeting had continued as a general exchange of information and forum discussion and a record of issues discussed were noted. This memorandum was approved by Councillors present at the meeting.

Subsequently the minutes of the meeting on 27th November were also approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Both documents were signed to confirm their accuracy by Councillor Robert Smillie, Chair.

94/19 PARISH CLERK'S REPORT: The Parish Clerk to update on matters and events since the previous meeting.

- i. The Parish Clerk advised she had tried to log the potholes at the junction of Osborne Road and Pound Lane on Essex County Council website but was unable to do so because they are referenced under an unadopted road. However from past experience, ECC have a responsibility to repair this section of the road and the Clerk will endeavour to report directly to ECC Structural Engineers.
- ii. The meeting was advised that at long last the zebra crossing beacon had now been repaired and the pole was now lighted.
- iii. A new tree – an Acer Crimson King – had been purchased to replace the Memorial tree in Westlake Park which had died during the hot summer.
- iv. The vegetation over hanging the footpath on London Road from Pound Lane towards the school has been cut back and pruned by Basildon Council's Pride Team.
- v. A meeting had been arranged for 15th January to enable the Parish Council to update Councillor Gavin Callaghan, the new Leader of Basildon Council, on the progress of the Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Neighbourhood Plan.

- vi. The Police had been contacted to request them to consider issuing penalty tickets to vehicles parking on the grass verge adjacent to Ilfracombe Avenue. The verge was being damaged by persons illegally parking on it at school times. The Local Highways Panel had also been asked to agree to the installation of bollards to prevent vehicles damaging the verge further. Councillor Rimmer advised he would again speak to ECC Councillor Stephen Hillier to raise the matter. As far as he was aware Essex Highways were costing the project for viability. The next Local Highways Panel was on 27th January 2020.
- vii. It was suggested by those present that, once again, restricted parking should be looked at and consulted on with residents.
- viii. Invitation received to attend a Civic Carol Service on 16th December 2019

95/19 FINANCE REPORT: To report on the Parish Council's current financial position.

Councillors were provided with a summary financial report together with a copy of all bank transactions since the previous meeting.

	£
Balance at Bank as of 27 th November 2019	17,918.93
Balance at bank 11 th December 2019	16,355.63
Income:	
Expenditure:	
(503) HP Printer & Toner Cartridges inc VAT	223.96
(504) N. Atkins (Bus Shelter Cleaning)	100.00
(505) 3 x Benbow Club Hall Bookings inc VAT	72.00
(506) Clerks Salary net November Plus Subsistence	874.32
(507) Clerks Expenses- Sundry Items	43.02
(508) Petty Cash	<u>250.00</u>
	1,563.30

There were no matters arising.

96/19 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: 19/01530/FULL

Proposed two storey side extension, first floor rear extension, extend dormers and replace roof on existing single storey rear extension - 86 Pound Lane Bowers Gifford Basildon SS13 2HW

Councillors recommended refusal of the application on the following grounds:

- (i) Over development of a corner plot .
- (ii) Parking obstruction: Issues already in respect of parking by customers vehicles using the shop and large lorries delivering to the shop throughout the day, especially at peak times, obstructing the road exiting onto Pound Lane and the view of traffic towards the Canvey Road Bus Stop, which is adjacent to the corner of Canvey Road/Pound Lane and the pedestrian path.
- (iii) No additional off-street parking within the application.
- (iv) Loss of amenity value and Health & Safety issues as a result of increased traffic using side roads.

97/19 PLANNING DECISIONS: To receive updates regarding Planning Applications discussed at previous meetings and other relevant applications:

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO:
19/01455/OUT**

Outline application for the erection of 5 dwelling houses at Burwood Works and Winifred Cottage (access, layout and scale only). - Burwood Works, Windsor Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex – **Refused**

All information regarding Planning Applications and decisions could be found on the Basildon Borough Council website Planning Portal.

98/19 BUDGET AND PRECEPT: To agree the budget and set the Parish Precept amount for the financial year 2020/21

Councillors had been provided with a draft budget and financial reports at the October meeting and in addition a report and recommendations had been provided by the Responsible Finance Officer based on future expected income and expenditure (Appendix A). Having deferred the decision regarding agreeing the Precept at the November meeting, due to that meeting being inquorate, Parish Councillors now confirmed an increase of £1.08 per household for residents in a Band D property, equating to 4.84 % an increase on the Precept set in 2019/2020 of £707.91. It was considered that this amount was the minimum amount needed to cover basic costs in the financial year 2020/2021 e.g. Additional Insurance Premiums, Staff salaries, Employers National Insurance and basic overheads.

The current Precept amount of £22.32 would therefore increase to £23.40 (on a Band D property). Properties in Band E- H would pay slightly more and in Band C slightly less. The overall Annual Precept which the Parish Council would receive would increase from £16,042.28 to £16,750.19. Councillors **AGREED** the increase by a show of hands.

It was noted that this did not concur with the recommendations of the RFO.

99/19 POLICY AND PROCEDURES: To approve, review or amend the following policies and procedures:

- (i) Training and Development Policy
- (ii) Publication Policy

(iii) Risk Assessment Policy

The above policies were amended and approved as presented. The Parish Clerk suggested that when able to do so it would be beneficial for all Councillors to undertake training which could be provided to all Councillors as part of their role.

100/19 WEBSITE CHANGES: To discuss changing the Parish Council domain name in view of the need to host a new website in 2020.

In view of the fact the Parish Council were having to agree a new website provider from April 2020 as a result of essex.info closing it might be beneficial to set up a new domain name. However, discussions were still on going and any decision was deferred to the next Parish Council meeting on 29th January.

101/19 COMMUNITY EVENT 2019: To discuss a date for the Annual Parish Council Community Event 2020 and the type of event to be held.

Various dates were discussed and eventually the date to hold the Annual Parish Council Event was proposed as 12th July 2020 and it was agreed to set up a small Steering Group to organise the event.

In addition, although a Christmas Event which a resident had tried to organise did not proceed this year, having discussed the event with the resident the Parish Council thought it was a very good idea for the Parish Council to be the driving force with the resident alongside and would take on the responsibility of organising a Christmas Event for 2020.

Both events and dates were **AGREED** by all present.

102/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: To confirm the date of the next meeting as 29th January 2020

The date of the meeting was confirmed as 29th January 2020 and all present were wished a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Signed:



Councillor R. Smillie, Chair

Dated: 29th January 2020

APPENDIX A

**APPROVAL OF BOWERS GIFFORD & NORTH BENFLEET PARISH COUNCIL
PRECEPT 2020/201****AGENDA ITEM NO: 98/19 (Deferred item from 27.11.19)**

MEETING: PARISH COUNCIL

DATE: 11th DECEMBER 2019

REPORT BY: RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Council for the setting of the Council's 2020/21 Precept thereby allowing the submission of the Precept Request Form to Basildon Borough Council and the setting of the Parish Council proportion of the Council Tax.

2.0 Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Council is required to set its Precept each year in accordance with statutory requirements and the local timetable set by the council tax billing authority Basildon Borough Council.
- 2.2 An email was received from Basildon Borough Council Finance Officer 28th October 2019 formally requesting notification of the Council's Precept for the 2020/2021 financial year. This information was provided to Parish councillors on 30th October 2019. Together with a draft budget forecast to 31st March 2019 and Income and Expenditure as of 30th October 2019.
- 2.3 This report requests the Council to formally set the Precept and therefore the Parish Council proportion of the Council Tax for 2020/2021, and, in accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, provides assurance to the Council in doing so, regarding the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of the Council's balances and reserves.

2.4 Once the Precept is agreed the Clerk to the Parish Council will sign the required documentation which will be forward to Basildon Borough Council Finance Officer by email to confirm the amount of Precept agreed by the Parish Council and which will be payable by “chargeable” Council Tax households within the Parish of Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet with effect from 1st April 2020

3.0 2020/21 Precept

3.1 The Council Precept represents the amount that is required to be raised from council taxpayers in Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet to meet the estimated gross cost of providing Parish Council services in 2020/2021, after deducting the income expected to be received and incorporating a prudent contingency sum to cover unexpected costs.

4.0 2020/2021 Parish Council Tax

4.1 Basildon Borough Council has confirmed that the Council Tax Base for the Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Parish will be 715.82 properties, a reduction of 3 properties on the 2019/20 Tax Base of 718.74.

4.2 The Council Tax Base is the statutory calculation of the number of ‘chargeable’ households for each parish in the county and is used by Basildon Borough Council to calculate the council tax in each area.

4.3 The total number of properties is adjusted to take account of the number of households in receipt of council tax benefits, discounts and exemptions, as well as any empty properties, and the council tax collection rate.

4.4 The Parish Council Tax is calculated by dividing the Council Precept by the Tax Base figure. This provides the Band D Council Tax figure.

4.6 The draft budget as presented and attached takes into account, where possible to predict, the income and expenditure expected in 2020/2021 but in the light of costs to be incurred in respect of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan care should be taken in respect that consultancy cost have not been calculated.

5.0 Recommendation:

5.1 In order to meet estimated costs for the financial year 2020/21 it is recommended that the Precept amount for a Band D property is increased by £1.89 from £22.32 to £24.21 per annum an overall increase of 8.47%. and which will yield a total of £17,330.00 per annum an increase of £1287.72 per annum in order to retain the level of finances currently received.

5.2 The rationale behind the proposals is that 2020/2021 is that overall costs which include staff costs, insurance, maintenance, equipment replacement, day to day running costs

and events is increasing year on year. Grant application have been successful over the years, but the success of future application cannot be guaranteed.