

**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE BENBOW CLUB BOWERS GIFFORD
ON WEDNESDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2017 AT 7.30 p.m.**

PRESENT:

Councillors: R.Smillie: B. Foster: T. Potter: S. Pegg

Parish Council Clerk: Mrs Christine Barlow

Residents present: 11

124/16 Apologies for absence: Councillor Nigel Tyler

125/16 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 declarations of interest were received.

126/16 Public Forum: To enable residents to raise issues of concern with Parish Councillors (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

(i) It was reported that the pothole between Cat Tree Lane and Smillers Farm had been repaired.

(ii) A resident asked if the signage could be improved in Westlake Park informing dog owners regarding the penalties which could be incurred as a result of not clearing up after their dogs. **Action:** The Parish Clerk said she would contact Basildon Council and request for some signs to be displayed in the Park alerting dog owners to the penalties they could incur under the Control of Dogs Act 2010.

(iii) Residents remarked that parking in William Road was still causing a problem and cars were also parking indiscriminately outside the Convenience Store on the corner of Canvey Road and Pound Lane. **Action:** The Clerk advised she had emailed South Essex Parking Partnership asking them to investigate the complaints but had received no response. Councillor Potter pointed out that the yellow lines at each junction needed to be repainted and the Clerk was asked to make a request to Essex County Council to repaint the yellow lines at the junction of both roads.

(iv) A resident asked why the underpass at Old Church Road being closed and when it would be opened up again as the details on the signage were out of date. Councillors advised that the underpass was closed for safety reasons to carry out repairs as a result of fire damage and that it would be closed until the repairs could be completed. Information received from Essex County Council suggested it would be closed for approximately six months.

(v) A resident stated she had narrowly missed colliding with a lorry parking on the

blind bend on the approach to the Sadlers Farm traveller site. The incident had reported to Basildon Council and a reply had still to be received. It was reported that the type of incident described was a regular occurrence and the lorries appeared to be bringing building materials on to the site and depositing them on the illegal side of the encampment. The Parish Clerk informed she had requested an update regarding the encroachment on the site nearest the roundabout but Enforcement Officers had not yet replied to her numerous requests.

(vi) A resident advised she had reported the dangerous condition of footpaths in Kelly Road via the Essex County Council website with pictures and obtained a reference number for the report but to date it appeared no action had been taken. The Parish Clerk informed she had also reported the condition of the paths following a previous Parish Council meeting but, as was often the case, it was often a long time before any action was taken in regard to this type of reported repairs. The resident was asked to provide the Clerk with the report number obtained and informed the resident could also track the report herself by logging onto Essex County Council website using the number to track information and find out if any action had been taken to progress the report.

(vii) Residents complained about litter outside the shop in Pound Lane and the fact that the little bin by the bus stop was being used by the shop for commercial waste. The Parish Clerk advised following a previous report of fly-tipping (CAS-127064-Z1Z2T3) black sacks had been removed by Basildon Council

Action: The Parish Clerk said she would report the latest account of fly-tipping and ask if any evidence had been found regarding the origin of the fly-tipped material.

127/16 Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 25th January 2017: Council to approve the accuracy and content of the minutes of the previous meeting and the Chair to sign.

The Parish Council were in acceptance of the minutes of 25th January 2017 and Councillor Robert Smillie, Chair, signed to confirm their content and accuracy.

128/16 Parish Clerk's Report: The Parish Clerk to report and update on Parish Council business since the last meeting.

(a) **Item 106/16 - Talking Bench:** The base of the Bench had been installed and the bench itself will be installed nearer to the time of the unveiling. The Parish Clerk advised she is currently liaising with Basildon Heritage and the Records Office regarding arrangements for the event and that the date was expected to be the end of March.

(b) **Item 108/16:** The Parish Council's comments on Basildon Council's New and Alternative Sites consultation had been sent to Basildon Council Policy and Strategy Officers.

(c) **Little Chalvedon Hall Farm Perimeter hedge:** A partial cut had been carried out by the farmer but the work currently was unfinished.

(d) **Westlake Park:** The Parish Clerk had discussed the condition of the car park, its usage and park entrance with Basildon Council Parks Supervisor. A request had been made to sweep and clean the entrance path and clear away leaves. Also proposals had been discussed to improve the surface of the car park and entrance to the field.

(e) **Item 108/16 - Lighting in Osborne Road and Elm Road:** The process for reported defective lights was discussed. The lighting reported at the previous meeting had been repaired but a further light in Elm Road was now out and one of the repaired lights in Osborne Road had been damaged again. Councillor Pegg she now advised she had the sequence of numbers in Elm Road and was asked to report the faulty light and the Clerk would do the same.

(f) **Item 116/16:** Senior Basildon Council Managers Neil Costen and Phil Eastal had again been emailed on several occasions and latterly on 8th February with a follow up on the day of the meeting (22nd February) but no direct reply had been received by the Parish Council.

(g) **Item 117/16:** There had been no response from Basildon Council regarding timescales which constituted the temporary tethering of horses on grass verges.

(h) **John Barons Fun Walk:** This would take place on 21st May 2017 at Barleylands Farm, Billericay.

The Parish Council had received notification from Essex County Council advising that "Storm Doris" would hit the area on 23rd February and might cause extensive damage.

129/16 Policing: To update on policing matters in regard to information received.

Chris Barlow, Parish Clerk, advised she had now made contact with the Barbara Holmes, Neighbourhood Watch Co-Ordinator for South East Pitsea, and received crime figures from her and in looking at the figures provided reported crime in the Parish was very low with only three incidents of crime recorded (i) an assault in North Benfleet (ii) theft of a motor vehicle in the London Road (iii) theft from a motor vehicle. Residents were urged to report all crime as without information on where crime is being committed the Police cannot direct resources to where it is needed.

Councillor Foster reported that he recently had reason to report damage to his property and instead of contacting 101 he logged on to the Essex Police website and when he had finished reporting the details was given a temporary incident number. He then received a phone call the following day from the Police updating the incident number to be used for future reference. The process was quick and simple. Many residents do not report crime but unless they do a crime profile of the area cannot be built-up and the resources of the Police directed to where they were most needed.

Neighbourhood Watch volunteers were also needed in the area and an article would be placed on the Parish Council website and in the Parish newsletter.

The Clerk advised that the Police and Crime Commissioner, Roger Hurst, has developed a "Case For Change" in the way Essex Police and Essex Fire Service was governed and was asking residents and business for their views. Information could be found on the Police and Crime Commissioner website and comment could be made (i) by letter to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) 3 Hoffmans Way, Chelmsford CM1 1GU (ii) by completing a short questionnaire on www.essex.pcc.police.uk/LocalCaseForChange (iii) by email consultation@essex.pnn.police.uk. The consultation closes on 10th May 2017.

130/16 Finance Report: To report on the Parish Council's current financial position.

Chris Barlow, Responsible Finance Officer, provided Councillors with a report as detailed below.

	£
Balance at Bank 20 th January 2017	11,748.04
Balance at Bank 22 nd February 2017	10,857.52
Expenditure:	
Parish Clerks Salary – January (inc. Office Use)	- 621.48
HMRC Clerks Tax & Employers NI	<u>-269.04</u>
	910.52
Income:	Nil

A balance sheet was also provided to Councillors showing a summary of the overall expenditure for the financial year 2016/2017. Councillors were advised that within the summary £788.00 had been ring fenced to pay for the replacement of the Net Swing in Westlake Park which had been damaged as a result of vandalism and a claim made under the Council's Insurance Policy to cover the cost of replacement.

Also included within the breakdown was a grant obtained to cover new equipment, overheads and additional time incurred by the Parish Clerk in updating Parish Council business on the website and other requirements under Government's Transparency Code Regulations 2015.

Councillors raised no questions in relation to the report.

131/16 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: 17/00150/FULL

Erection of new stable block together with associated hard standing area - Land

Adjacent St Heliers, London Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon

Councillors considered that the application was in essence no different to the previous application which had been refused by Basildon Council although the front entrance leading onto the London Road had been removed leaving just one entrance adjacent to Old Church Road (B1464) which would also prove equally problematical. The stable block and hard standing positioned in front of the stable block had remained the same as in the previous drawing. The information provided appeared to be inaccurate and inconsistent and the drawing showed five stables but described only three.

The area of the stable block at 21.5m X 3.38m was larger than what would normally be expected, as was the height of each stable (i.e. 4 meters) without explanation as to why this increased would be needed or the use of such a large building for stables.

The area is currently Green Belt, on a busy road and a Transport Statement has not been submitted by the applicant. Adjacent properties are very close to the site and the application would constitute inappropriate development in this location and affect meaningful enjoyment of neighbouring properties.

Councillors were in **AGREEMENT** that the Planning Application should be refused.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 17/00170/FULL

Various alterations including a part single, part two-storey side/rear extension and first floor rear extension 86 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex SS13 2HW

In considering the Planning Application Councillors commented that whilst they supported local business Enterprise the proposals failed on many levels in their current form and they raised the following objections on the grounds that:

(i) The design of the application was poor. The proposals were over dominant for the site with the cross hip style roof and side extension filling the plot resulting on the fact that 90% of the plot will be built on. The application provided no solutions to the current issues of customers indiscriminately parking outside the shop, in the bus stop and on the corner of the junction of Pound Lane and Canvey Road causing danger and congestion for other vehicles using adjacent roads. If the application was granted and use of the shop increased due to expansion the issues regarding parking and litter would exacerbate the situation. Although the application does comply with standards as set out in BASBE12 & BASBE15 it failed to comply with many others including DC29, DC30 & DC40.

Councillors were in **AGREEMENT** that the application should be refused.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO:

17/00087/FULL

Proposed demolition of existing bungalows, and erection of a detached chalet – 8 Eric Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex.

Councillors having discussed the application before the meeting confirmed that they considered the proposed rebuild would not be dissimilar to some existing properties in the area and was of a much better design than the existing property. Constraint had also been used to ensure that the new build fitted within most of the adopted building polices.

The only suggestions Councillors made was that the property footprint should be built further back on the plot to allow for improved off - road parking options. The Parish Council offered no objections to the planning application.

The Parish Clerk was asked to pass the Parish Council's comments to both planning applications to Planning Officers.

132/16 Planning decisions and comments: To receive updates and comments regarding Planning Applications.

APPLICATION NO: 16/01780/FULL - 218 Pound Lane: Refused.

It would appear the Parish Councillors comments had been taken into account in respect of refusing the above application.

133/16 Unauthorised development: To discuss concerns regarding the rise of unauthorised development in the Parish.

Some issues regarding unauthorised development had been covered during the Public Forum session.

Councillors had raised this issue for discussion as the Parish Council had been unable to obtain updates from Basildon Council Enforcement Officers as a result of several enquiries. Councillor Pegg informed she had come across a letter in correspondence received from a resident dated 2000 and addressed to the then Ward Councillor Kevin Blake. Councillor Blake was still a serving Basildon Ward Councillor albeit no longer representing the Parish. In the letter he had stated that as early as 1992 he had been receiving complaints about unlawful development in the plotland areas and had asked Basildon Council, at the time, to hold a public meeting to discuss the issues. It was not known if the meeting had taken place but the same problems were still evident and were getting worse. The Clerk advised she had continued to email Planning Enforcement Officers regarding outstanding issues without any response.

Action: Following discussion it was suggested that in view of the lack of response from Basildon Council that an email was sent to Ward Councillors and the Chair of Planning explaining the lack of response to communications and for Councillor Pegg to contact Stephen Metcalfe (MP) to ask for his help.

134/16 Street lighting: To discuss street lighting in the plotlands and areas of responsibility for reporting street lights and the process.

This matter of lighting had been discussed in the Clerks Report and in the Public Forum. Basildon Council had for decades been responsible for carrying out the repairs to the streetlights in the plotlands but Councillor Pegg stated she had been informed, when reporting a repair to the Council, that there was no intention by Basildon Council to cease this practice. Concerns were raised on a matter of residents' safety if the roads became unlit. The Parish Clerk had already sent an email to Basildon Council asking for clarification and was waiting for a reply.

135/16 Surface Water Flooding: To update on progress

Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet had been identified as a Critical Drainage Area by Essex County Council. The "Where Water Goes Project" undertaken in the Summer of 2016 had identified the location of ditches and streams across the Parish and the findings of the project team had been forwarded to Essex County Council Flood Management Team for analyse and plotting on a map. The Parish Computerised map of the areas identified. Councillor Pegg having taken the lead role on flooding considered that there were two streams of work currently which were a priority.

Stream 1: (i) Identifying the areas of historical and current flooding to properties both internally and externally, flooding to roads and flooding caused by blocked ditches and streams with supporting evidence in the form of photographs, press cuttings and reports. (ii) Identifying the responsibility of each organisation for clearing the various ditches and streams to reduce flooding and other issues in connection with drainage. (iii) Responding to Essex County Council Flood Management Team with the information gathered.

Stream 2: Setting up a meeting with key organisations including Basildon Council, Essex County Council, Anglian Water and the Parish Council to resolve current flooding issues.

Action: An article would be placed in the Parish newsletter asking residents to provide any information on flooding anywhere both internally and externally within the Parish and the Parish Clerk would pass this information on to Councillor Pegg together with any photographs currently on file.

136/16 Neighbourhood Plan: To update on progress

The Parish Clerk was in the process of contacting various consultants to obtain quotations to assist the Parish Council in putting together the required elements of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Once a suitable quotation had been received an application for funding would be need to be completed in order to progress the work and the Clerk was in the process of gathering information in order to complete the respective paperwork. Once the consultant was appointed the work to progress the Neighbourhood Development Plan would start in earnest.

The Parish Council would need to meet with the interested parties who had

volunteered their services to support the Parish Council and this would need to be followed by a Project inception meeting with the appointed consultant. A simple flow chart was provided to Councillors by the Clerk showing the suggested timescales for accomplishing each activity. Further updates on progress would be provided at future Parish Council meetings.

137/16 Community Event: To update on arrangements for holding the Picnic-in-the-Park Summer Event

Having discussed possible dates for holding the Picnic-In-the Park event later in the year at the January Parish Council meeting (25th January 2017) the Parish Clerk advised she had contacted the duo “Simply Gorgeous” who had performed at the Picnic-In-the-Park in June 2016 and discussed availability with them and the date of 3rd September was provisionally agreed. Councillors AGREED that this date was acceptable and the Parish Clerk asked for permission to set up a small working party to plan the event. Councillors agreed to this request and the Parish Clerk confirmed a progress report would be provided at future Council meetings.

138/16 Local List of Validation Requirements for Planning Applications – Public Consultation: To comment on improving on information required by the public when making a planning application.

Basildon Council was in the process of making changes to the Local List of Validation Requirements for Planning Applications but before they could make the changes they had to obtain the views of Local Councils and interested parties. Most local authorities had a standard list of validation requirements and Basildon were now following this pattern and it was hoped that the changes made would result in a more consistent approach which would make it easier for Planners to validate the plans and for Local Councils to facilitate the process. In addition Basildon Council would be encouraging electronic applications which would help to make applications easier to read. The consultation was due for completion on 28th February 2017.

Councillor Foster suggested that all applications should (i) include all measurements to be written in clearly in numerals, as scale bars were not accurate when scanned and difficult to read off a screen (ii) all floor plans sizes, existing and proposed should also written in numerals (iii) all plans should be clearly written to enable a readable copy to be viewed on screen when scanned to a computer. Councillors were requested to send any further comments to the Parish Clerk as soon as possible before the closing date of 28th February 2017.

139/16 Waste and Recycling Services Consultation: To update on any proposals as a result of the consultation by Basildon Council.

Councillors were advised that no decision had as yet been taken regarding changes to Basildon Council’s Waste and Recycling Services. All the comments received in respect of the consultation were still being processed. Information had been received that eluded to the fact that in view that Basildon Council’s Cabinet system was to be abolished after the elections in May any decision on changes would then be the responsibility of a Committee process instead. No further

information was currently available.

140/16 Feedback on meetings attended by Councillors: Councillors to provide a brief update on meetings attended as representatives of the Parish Council.

Councillor Foster and the Parish Clerk had attended the Basildon Liaison Meeting on 15th February 2017. At the meeting Members were advised that as a result of the Grazing of Houses Act 2015 they were in the process of implementing action to remove horses from Council land or land the Council was responsible for maintaining under the new legislation.

Councillor Foster advised that the Local Highways Panel had also met on 30th January and confirmed that:

- (i) Work to restrict access by motor vehicles along the length of Old Church Road should be completed by 31st March 2017.
- (ii) The installation of bollards to a path leading from Bowers Gifford to Rushbottom Lane under the A130 to prevent anti-social behaviour was due for delivery in the financial year 2017/2018

Both schemes had been approved by the Local Highways Panel as a result of nearly two years of pressure from the Parish Council, Councillor Foster as the ABLC Representative and Parish Councillor on the Panel and Essex County Councillor Bobbin.

Councillor Foster also advised that two Section 106 (S106) Schemes were also being processed.

The first of the two schemes (i) traffic calming in Pound Lane, North Benfleet, to install a chicane near to St Andrews Care Home just above Burnt Mills Road in order to reduce access to heavy vehicles through Pound Lane and Burnt Mills Road had been identified to Parish Councillors two years previously and Councillors and the Parish Clerk had met with Essex County Council Officers and been advised of proposals at the time. A consultation with residents in North Benfleet and the Parish Council had taken place and the scheme had since been revised and given the go ahead.

The second scheme was in regard to improvements to signage and weight restrictions signs along Pound Lane, Burnt Mills Road and Courtauld but no firm details were as yet available for this scheme. Although it would also appear that this scheme was also to go ahead. A proposal to install a footpath from St Andrews Care Home to bus stop opposite Burnt Mills Road however, due to a reduction in budgets, would not now go ahead.

141/16 Date of next meeting: The next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 29th March 2017 in the Benbow Club, 77 Pound Lane , Bowers Gifford at 7.30 p.m.