



**BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 22nd FEBRUARY 2023 AT 7.30 PM.**

PRESENT:

Councillors:	B. Foster: S. Moore: S. Pegg: C. Morris
Ward Councillor/s:	Councillor Craig Rimmer (Pitsea South-East)
Parish Council Clerk/RFO:	Mrs Christine Barlow
Public attendance:	11

96/22 Apologies for absence: Essex County Councillor Aidan McGurran

97/22 Declarations of Member's interest: To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other pecuniary interests or non-pecuniary interests from members relating to any agenda items.

None declared.

98/22 Minutes of Parish Council meetings: To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 25th January 2023 and Chair to sign.

Councillor Pegg took the Chair for the meeting.

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting held on 25th January 2023 and were signed to approve by Councillor Sheelagh Pegg, Acting Chair.

99/22 Public Forum: Public participation session to provide residents with the opportunity to raise questions of a general nature. (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

(i) Residents raised concerns again regarding potholes and the condition of footpaths across the Parish. They considered the pavements in the Parish were in a poor and dangerous condition, especially those along Pound Lane. It was explained that footpaths were the responsibility of Essex County Council and that the condition of roads and pavements had been raised with them. The Parish Clerk urged residents to log complaints regarding paths and potholes on the ECC website and to write to Essex County Councillor Lee Scott, Cabinet Member for

Highways and Infrastructure. Councillor Rimmer advised he had met with Councillor Scott in January and walked the pavements and looked at the condition of the roads in the Parish. Councillor Scott had considered that on the matter of roads those in Bowers Gifford were in a better condition than others in some parts of the County. Councillor Pegg disagreed and commented that in her opinion cars were being damaged because roads like Burnt Mills Road were falling away at the edges and repairs needed to be carried out urgently. Councillor Scott had commented to Councillor Rimmer during the visit that what residents determined as potholes were, in fact, defined as areas of delamination by ECC and these did not meet the dimension criteria set by the County Council for repairing potholes. Councillor Rimmer stated he was continuing to lobby for action to undertake necessary repairs to the roads and potholes.

On the matter of the pavements Councillor Scott agreed with Councillor Rimmer that these were in a poor condition and advised that, as part of the ECC budget for 2023/2024, Essex County Council had allocated more funding for pavements. Councillor Rimmer informed the meeting he would continue to press hard for pavements in the village to be resurfaced. On the matter of reporting potholes each Essex County Councillor was able to report a certain number of potholes for their Ward. Residents at the meeting asked if the potholes at the junction of Bowers Court Drive and Kelly Road were included. The Parish Clerk advised that she had reported these two roads on the ECC website and she would check with Essex County Councillor Mackenzie for an update.

Parking on pavement was also raised by residents and Councillor Rimmer suggested that yellow lines might be a solution in some places if residents agreed to completing a petition and for this purpose there was a form which could be downloaded from the Internet and he would send the link to the Parish Clerk. The point was made that with yellow lines there was no apparent enforcement and residents had to agree 100% to take this cause of action. It was suggested another restriction was installing bollards at different locations to prevent parking and the benefits of a Resident Permit Scheme.

(ii) Residents asked regarding the large building being erected on Sadlers Park Traveller site. The Parish Clerk advised that a Planning Contravention Notice (PCN) had been issued by Basildon Council Enforcement Officers and the matter was currently under investigation by the Borough Council's Planning Enforcement Team. Other sites were also being investigated for infringements of planning laws.

(iii) A resident commented that the new play equipment in Westlake Park looked very good. The Parish Clerk advised that the equipment should be available to be used in early March after safety checks had been completed and the Heras fencing removed. In addition to the new Zip Wire, Pirates Lair Climber, a junior Trampoline had been added to the junior play area and the Basket Swing seat, previously damaged by vandals, would also be replaced. Consideration was being given to arranging an official opening.

(iv) A resident stated that he had reported fly-tipping near to St Margarets Church repeatedly to Basildon Council and it still had not been cleared.

The Parish Clerk stated she had received a report of the fly-tipping the previous day and had reported the same issue on the Basildon Council website herself.

The Clerk advised that according to the information she had received the fly-tipped material contained asbestos which may mean the material would need to be removed by a specialist team but she assured the resident she would follow up the complaint. Residents also stated there was fly-tipped material in Courtauld Road and Burnt Mills Road and the Parish Clerk advised again she had also reported the fly-tipping herself.

100/22 Ward/County Councillor update: Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillors to address the meeting.

Having responded to questions relating to potholes, pavements and parking earlier in the Public Forum, Councillor Rimmer further advised the Pitsea Bingo Hall was now to be demolished following Basildon Borough Council issuing a Demolition Order against the owners, which was supported by the High Court. Following some minor setbacks, the demolition work was now underway.

The construction of the new Pitsea Swimming Pool at the Eversley Centre, Crest Avenue, Pitsea was now also underway and should be ready for use in November 2023. The Pool would be heated by solar panels and heat pumps and would also include a Pool Pod for disabled users.

101/22 Parish Clerks Report: To provide Councillors with an update on business since the meeting on 25th January 2023 to include:

Much of the Parish Clerks report had also been covered via questions raised in the Public Forum including the new play equipment in Westlake Park.

- (i) The Clerk advised that work on the Church Road underpass should start around 1st March and during the work the underpass and Old Church Road would not be accessible to the public for approximately five weeks. New lighting will be installed and there will be a complete overhaul of the underpass. It has been a long journey since 2017 by the Parish Council to get the underpass refurbished and it was hoped that the measures being taken will not result in any further damage.
- (ii) Further discussions have been held with Essex County Council's Public Right of Way Officer regarding PROW 143 and some progress has been made. PROW (Private Right of Way) 150 at Harrow Road was also being investigated following a request by a member of the public to remove a tree trunk blocking part of the path and the possibility of an improved access.
- (iii) Barrier to the entrance of the PROW on the A127. However, the request for a new barrier may need to go to ECC Local Highways Panel for consideration.
- (iv) The Clerk advised she intended to ask Essex County Councillors for their

support to install a directional sign on Pound Lane to identify the entrance to Westlake Park.

(v) The damaged road sign at Elm Road had been reported to Basildon Council Highway Officer and a replacement was pending. In addition, the Carlton Road

sign, which was leaning over, was to be re-installed as was a sign on the verge at the junction of Burnt Mills Road and Pound Lane.

Following a complaint from residents an email had been sent to the owner of the flats at 118, Pound Lane drawing to his attention a potential hazard regarding dumped rubbish at the rear of the flat block and also parking issues in Cornwall Road, beside the flat block, which affected residents and was waiting for a response.

(vii) The Pathways leading to Westlake Park had also been recorded as dangerous due to large lorries parking over a section of the path causing the path to crumble because of the heat from the lorry's engines.

(viii) A funding application in the sum of £4000 had been sent to the National Lottery Awards for All Community Fund to apply for a grant to cover the cost of Grounds Maintenance Officer.

With effect from the May elections anyone wishing to vote in person will need to provide photo ID or obtain confirmation from Basildon Council that they are eligible to vote. The Clerk would include this information in the noticeboards and on the Parish Council website.

102/22 Finance Report: To receive a summary of the Parish Council's current financial position.

The Responsible Finance Officer provided a summary of the Parish Council's income and expenditure since the last meeting on 25th January 2023.

The RFO pointed out the balance in the report included a balance of £65,724.00 from the grant of £96,500 obtained from the Locality to prepare the Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) Feasibility Study for the Parish. This remaining Grant amount was ring-fenced in the account solely for the NDO Feasibility Study and could not be spent on any other project.

Regrettably due to being unsuccessful in obtaining further funding to support the Handy Person Service the Parish Council were unable to continue with the Service and therefore, was unable to continue employing the member of staff in this capacity. (The summary included his final payment). The Handy Person Service had been a success and the member of staff employed to carry out the service was to be congratulated for doing an excellent job in this role.

	£
Balance at Bank 25 th January 2023	69,620.62
Balance at Bank 22 nd February 2023	68,506.70

Expenditure:	1,113.92
Income:	Nil

Expenditure:

BT (30.01.23) Handy Person Service Wages (Dec)	224.00
BT (30.01.23) Clerks Net Salary (Jan) Plus Tel/BB/Office Use	826.20
BT (30.01.23) Elan Fire & Security – Monthly Sim Payment	47.76
CP (711) EALC – Being a Good Councillor x 4 (Stationary)	<u>15.96</u>
	1113.92

The information presented by the RFO was accepted, by all present, as a true record of the income and expenditure for the month.

Councillor Pegg asked about the increase in the Precept amount. The RFO advised that as discussed and agreed on 14th December 2022 the increase was needed to the Precept to cover anticipated increased costs for 2023/2024. The overall increase for a Band D property was relatively small, being £3.78 per annum per household and for the top band (Band H) this increase would be £7.56 per annum per household.

103/22 Planning: Councillors to comment on Planning Application/s received under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended):

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO:
22/01606/FULL**

Change of use of dwellinghouse (Class C3) to children's or young persons' home (Class C2) and repair and convert existing outbuilding into staff sleeping room for on call staff - 205 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford, Basildon Essex

Councillors discussed the above application and their comments had been sent to Basildon Council Planning Officers prior to the meeting due to the response deadline.

A synopsis of the response was reported to the meeting and advised Parish Councillors had raised a number of concerns in respect of the application which included: (i) the suitability of the layout of the property and outbuildings for the purpose intended (ii) the general location for a children's and young persons' home was felt inappropriate given the lack of facilities in the village (iii) safeguarding issues surrounding care (iv) Insufficient explanations for background information. There were also considered to be several questions within the application that remained unanswered. It was considered that due to the complexities of the application a request would be submitted to Basildon Council for the application to be discussed fully at a Planning Committee meeting.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO:
23/00201/FULL**

Single storey rear extension and roof alterations – Charlot, Lower Avenue,

Bowers Gifford, Basildon

Councillors discussed the above application and felt the extension and alterations did not impact on any neighbouring property and raised no objections.

104/22 Planning updates: To receive updates on Planning Applications discussed at previous meetings and other planning information.

Planning Application 23/00044/FULL: Single storey rear extension - 7 Ilfracombe Avenue Bowers Gifford Basildon Essex SS13 2DR - Granted.

Planning Application 22/01359/FULL: Change of Use of Units 13 and 15 to office use (Class E) Rear Of 245 Pound Lane Bowers Gifford Basildon Essex SS13 2LB – Granted.

Planning Application 22/01352/FULL: Change of Use of Units 5, 6 and 7 from retail (Class E) to storage (Class B8) 245 Pound Lane Bowers Gifford Basildon Essex SS13 2LB - Granted.

105/22 Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) update: To discuss the current position of the Neighbourhood Development Feasibility Study.

Councillor Foster advised that the month had been a very busy one for the Parish Council and along with their consultants O'Neill Homer, who were engaged to progress the Neighbourhood Development Order Feasibility Study on behalf of the Parish Council they were progressing the required NDO framework. The purpose of the exercise was to try and prevent the Parish being subsumed by new development as a result of Basildon Council's delay in publishing a new Local Plan. Parish Councillors had met with Basildon Council Officers to discuss its progress and had also met with Essex County Council Highways and Transport Officers to discuss highway and infrastructure issues in the North Benfleet Plotland areas.

Consultants continue with their work on the Feasibility Study and the reports required to discuss further with the Parish Council Steering Group members and once agreed to consult with residents. An application for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) had been made to Locality as part of the required evidence work. The application had been successful and the work will be carried out by AECOM, a world-renowned infrastructure consultancy company, who will provide **free** Technical Support to the Parish Council for the NDO.

Basildon Council have also suggested discussing a Technical Support Package known as a PPA (Planning Performance Agreement) with the Parish Council. A PPA is a project management tool to agree timescale, actions and resources for handling particular planning applications but the cost for this service is not affordable for the Parish Council and given the Technical Support already being engaged may not be necessary or achievable within the timeframe provided for the Feasibility Study Project. However, this may be a consideration in the future and if the financial element can be removed. More information on progress will be

provided at future meetings.

106/22 Coronation Event 8th May 2023: To provide an update on preparations for the event.

Despite the very short notification of the date to celebrate King Charles III Coronation plans were underway for the Parish Council's Event on Monday 8th May 2023 and the event would run from 12.00 – 16.00. This would take the form of the annual Picnic-in-the-Park and residents would be notified of the plans for the event and also asking for volunteers to lend a hand with the activities.

An application has been made to the National Lottery Community Fund for a grant in the sum of £4,700 to fund activities. Councillor Rimmer advised that Basildon Council also may be providing some support for community activities.

Councillor Pegg and Councillor Moore were helping with the organisation and residents had offered to help on the day. Filthy Gorgeous were returning and by popular request the Circus Workshop and Trevor Cline, the magician and balloon modeling entertainer, had agreed to take part. It was also hoped that members of the community would join in to provide additional entertainment. Permission to use Westlake Park had been obtained from Basildon Council and the St Johns Ambulance Service had been approached to provide for First-Aid cover. There would be the usual BBQ, tea stall and ice cream and an added attraction of a Candy Floss stall. A request was made for any unused gifts for the tombola stall. Activities for the children to make something were also suggested or fancy dress. A newsletter advertising the event would be distributed to residents and anyone who wanted to volunteer their help on the day or have a stall was encouraged to contact the Parish Clerk.

107/22 Consultation on proposals for non-recyclable waste collections: To discuss Basildon Council's consultation regarding changes to black sack collections – Consultation closing date Sunday 26th February 2023.

Councillor Rimmer advised that all different types of waste now have to be collected separately. All residents should now using the new containers to recycle their food waste and early signs seem to show the new system was proving very successful. The problems were now with residual waste i.e. waste that could not be recycled and Basildon Borough Council were now looking to consult on how non-recyclable waste could be collected. The purpose of the consultation, which would run until 26th February, was to ask residents views on how changes could be made to the current service and the type of receptacle that could be used to collect the residual waste.

Councillor Rimmer stated Basildon Council would be introducing a charge to collect garden waste in 2023/2024. The Borough Council was not alone in placing a charge for the collection of Green Waste, other Councils in Essex were also making a charge for the same type of collection. The initial charges would be £25 per annum for the first bin , with each additional bin costing £15 per annum. It was proposed to increase this charge in 2024/2025 to £50 per bin and £25 for a second

bin but Councillor Rimmer stated he was lobbying to get this increase reduced. The service would also be reverting back to weekly collections during the majority of the year.

108/22 Date of next meeting: The date of the next Parish Council Meeting is 29th March 2023 at the Benbow Club, Bowers Gifford, commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Signed..... Chair/Acting Chair

Date: 29th March 2023