



**MINUTES OF BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET  
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2024.**

**PRESENT:**

**Councillors:** Sheelagh Pegg: (Chair) Colin Morris: Sue Edmonson:  
Sally McCornack: Susan Moore: Terry Potter: Danny Lewis:

**Ward Councillor/s:** None

**Parish Council Clerk/RFO:** Mrs Christine Barlow

**Public attendance:** 4

**MINUTES**

- 147/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Essex County Councillor Aidan McGurran: Ward Councillor Gary Canham: Ward Councillor Craig Rimmer.
- 148/23 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 received.
- 149/23 MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024:** To approve the minutes of the previous meeting and Chair to sign.
- The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed to confirm by Councillor Sheelagh Pegg, Chair.
- 150/23 PUBLIC FORUM:** Residents have the opportunity to raise questions of a general nature. (The time allowed for this item is 15minutes)
- **Potholes:** The issue of potholes in general was raised and the lack of repairs being carried out by Essex Highways. Specific areas mentioned were the junction of Canvey Road, Kelly Road, Osborne Road, and Burnt Mills Road. The condition of the footpaths, in general, was also raised as a concern. The matter of potholes and footpaths was raised at the previous meeting and Councillor McGurran advised he would raise with ECC Highways on behalf of the Parish. **Action:** The Parish Clerk will

contact Essex County Councillor Aidan McGurran again to ask him to expediate the repairs to potholes as a matter of urgency.

It was suggested that residents could also become involved by identifying the location of potholes throughout the village and either reporting them to Essex County Council on their website or to the Parish Council to enable a list to be created in this respect.

- **Land East of Burnt Mills Road Planning Application:** Councillors were asked if there was any information about the scheduling for the hearing of the Land East of Burnt Mills Road Planning Application. The meeting was informed that no date had been set, as far as known, yet.

- **Speed Sign in Pound Lane:** Residents advised the Vehicle Activation Sign, near the chicane, in Pound Lane was not working. **Action:** the Parish Clerk to report to Essex County Council on their website and email Essex County Council Local Highways Officer in order to arrange for any necessary repairs to be undertaken or referred to the Local Highways Panel.

- **Neighborhood Development Order:** A resident, who had not previously attended a meeting asked about the NDO. Councillor Pegg briefly explained the reasons for undertaking the NDO and a copy of the latest Parish Council newsletter, which explained the NDO project and gave an overview of its progress, was given to the resident. The resident was advised more information was available on the Parish Council website but if he had any further questions after reviewing the information he could contact the Parish Councillors, or the Parish Clerk and they would be happy to answer them.

**151/23 WARD/COUNTY COUNCILLOR UPDATE:** Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillors to address the meeting.

No Ward Councillors were present.

**152/23 PARISH CLERK'S REPORT:** To update on business since the last meeting on 27<sup>TH</sup> March 2024.

The Parish Clerk updated the meeting on the following issues:

- **Potholes:** The pothole near 67 Highlands Road, reported at the previous meeting, had been reported on Essex County Council website.

- **Streetlights:** Lights not working at the top of Pound Lane and the Zebra Crossing Beacon have been reported again to Essex County Council and the Clerk has also asked Essex County Councillor McGurran to intervene in the matter. Investigations regarding the light on the corner of Burnt Mills Road /Pound Lane were ongoing.

- **Traffic Survey:** A report has been received from Essex County Council Local Highway Officer, advising that the recent Traffic Survey undertaken in Pound Lane identified that the overall speed had been calculated as only 31.5 mph. This survey had incorporated figures based

on a survey carried out in 2021 and not current information. The results of the survey were currently being challenged.

- **Picnic-in-the Park:** Basildon Council has been advised of the change of date for the Picnic-in-the-Park event. This will now take place on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September and not the 7<sup>th</sup> July.

- **D-Day Lighting of the Beacon:** The event to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day, on the evening of 6<sup>th</sup> June, will be a joint event with The Benbow Club. The Parish Clerk has asked Ward Councillor Gary Canham if there is any funding available from the Borough Council to support the event. The Parish Council is also looking for funding from other sources.

- **Neighbourhood Development Order update:** The Parish Council has sent a letter to the Department of Leveling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for a Screening Direction to be made in respect of the NDO Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in response to comments made by Basildon Council that an Environmental Impact Assessment was necessary to progress the NDO, in contradiction to the Parish Council's own advisors, AECOM, a government funded organisation, who considered an EIA was not required. The Parish Council had been notified that a Case Officer has been appointed to look into the difference of opinion and provide an update once investigations have been completed.

- **St Modwen:** No further response had been received from St Modwen relating to questions their representatives were unable to answer at the Parish Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> March in respect to the proposed development of Land East of Burnt Mills Road.

- **PROW 143:** Public Right of Way (PROW) 143 from Burnt Mills Road to Upper Avenue continues to be blocked with barriers. This infringement has been reported to Essex County Council PROW Officer.

- **Police Reports:** Police reports regarding incidents in the Parish have been received which identify (i) The theft of fuel from a lorry in North Benfleet Hall Road (ii) Damage to a car in Cornwall Road (iii) Damage to a gate lock to gain access to the RSPB Marsh Car Park in order to race cars on a weekend (iv) Damage to cars parked at property in London Road.

**153/23 FINANCE REPORT:** Responsible Finance Officer to provide a summary of the Parish Council's financial position and advise on other relevant financial matters.

(i) To provide a summary of income and expenditure since the last meeting on 27<sup>TH</sup> March 2024: A summary of income and expenditure was provided to Councillors as detailed below:

	£
Balance at the Bank as of 27 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	17,353.79
Balance at Bank 24 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	22,162.82

Expenditure:	8,197.59
Income:	13,006.62

**Expenditure:**

Clerks Net Salary + Office/Tel/BB Allowance (March 2024)	897.25
Clerks Expenses HP-Toner Cartridges	103.88
BBC Lottery Fee Renewal	20.00
GMO Staff Wages (March 2024)	224.00
RCOH Ltd Consultancy Fee - NDO (inc. VAT)	6,000.00
Cheque No: 724 - HMRC Staff Tax and Emprs.NI	<u>952.46</u>
	8197.59

- The amount of £ 8,000, part of existing NDO funding, has been ringfenced as reserves for 2024/2025, in order to cover outstanding consultancy fees required to complete work on the Neighbourhood Development Order.
- An application for a refund of VAT for the financial year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 is in the process of being completed.
- Funding for the Parish Councils Grounds Maintenance/Handyman Project is being explored along with funding streams for other projects.
- **Parish Precept:** The Parish Precept for 2024/2025 is £26,013.24. This is paid in two halves in April and October

(ii) To present to Councillors the End-of-Year Income and Expenditure sheet and other relevant information.

Councillors were presented with a hard copy of the Parish Council's Income and Expenditure for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and a copy of the Bank Ledger for the same period. The balance of account at the end of the financial year was £10,108.46 with a cheque payment of £952.76 still to be presented by HMRC for Staff Tax and Employers NI for the March 2024 period. It is anticipated that when all outstanding bills are paid, and necessary reserves are identified that a balance of approximately £4,000 will be carried forward to 2024/2025.

**(iii) To advise the date for carrying-out the Parish Council's Internal Audit for 2023-2024 and the External Audit process for completing the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) (Item deferred from previous meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024)**

The Parish Clerk/ RFO confirmed the Parish Council's Internal Audit has been arranged for 22<sup>nd</sup> May and asked Parish Councillors to approve engaging Heelis & Heelis (Accountants) to carry out the required Internal Audit and complete the Annual Internal Audit Report.

**Proposed: Councillor Morris: Seconded: Councillor Moore.**

The Parish Council **APPROVED** the appointment of Heelis & Heelis to carry out the Internal Audit and the date on which the Internal Audit is to be carried out.

- 154/23 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/2024:** To confirm that all internal controls are in place and have been achieved in respect of the Parish Council finances during the year.

The Parish Council are responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control in place throughout the year in respect of Parish Council finances. Councillors were asked, as part of the requirements of Annual Governance and Accountability Return Annual Audit, to confirm that all proper controls, to the best of their knowledge, had been carried out regarding all financial transactions for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and to approve the Annual Accounting Statement.

The Annual Governance Statement was approved, without exception, by all present.

- 155/23 Annual Accountancy Statement:** To approve the Annual Accountancy Statement for the 2023/2024 financial year.

With reference to the Income and Expenditure Statement and Bank Ledger previously discussed in Item 153/23ii and presented to Parish Councillors, the Responsible Finance Officer certified that the Annual Accountancy Statement for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 had been prepared on an income and expenditure basis and asked Councillors to approve.

Parish Councillors **APPROVED** the Annual Accountancy Statement without exception and the statement was signed by Councillor Pegg, Parish Council Chair.

- 156/23 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: 24/00400/FULL** - Majola, Clarence Road, Bowers Gifford,  
Alterations to roof including increase to the ridge height to create first floor and with roof window to side elevation.

Councillors raised no objections to the proposed changes and fully concurred with the reasons for the alterations.

- 157/23 PLANNING UPDATES AND COMMENTS:** To receive updates and comments on planning applications discussed at previous meetings.

(i) Responses in respect of planning applications discussed at the previous Parish Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> March have been sent to Basildon Council Planning Officers.

(ii) In addition, following the meeting, a response to Planning Application 24/00020/OUT: Land East of Burnt Mills Road was also sent to Planning Offices opposing the proposals siting a number of key points.

(iii) The Parish Council had also responded to the Planning Inspector concerning an appeal in respect of Land East of Allotment Gardens, London Road.

(iv) A Planning Enforcement Notice has been served on Land South of Clissold, Lower Avenue, in respect of a breach of planning control.

(v) Planning permission has been granted in respect of a retrospective Planning Application (23/01267/FULL) for the subdivision of an existing traveller site to provide a pitch for the stationing of up to 4 static caravans at The Paddocks, Grange Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex SS13 2LW.

**158/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 7.30 p.m. at The Benbow Club, 77, Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford. This meeting will be the Parish Council Annual Meeting.

Signed ..... Chair, Councillor Sheelagh Pegg

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024

