

**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE BENBOW CLUB BOWERS GIFFORD
ON WEDNESDAY 25th NOVEMBER 2015 AT 7.30 p.m.**

PRESENT:

Councillors: R.Smillie (Chair): B.Foster: N.Tyler:

In attendance: Christine Barlow (Parish Clerk)

Members of the Public: 9

89/15 Apologies for absence:

Councillor George Guenigault and Councillor Matthew Phillips

90/15 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.

Councillor Bernard Foster in relation to agenda item 89/15 Planning Application-**15/01414/FULL:** Proposed 2 bedroom detached dwelling house (revised proposal) at the Junction of Pound Lane/Osborne Road.

91/15 Public Forum: To enable residents to raise issues of concern with Parish Councillors (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

(i) A resident asked if in view of the football pitches once again being used in Westlake Park and the fact that visitors to matches were not aware of the exact location of the Park a directional sign could be installed in Pound Lane. The Parish Clerk advised that the Parish Council were in the process of completing the appropriate documentation to be submitted for approval to the Local Highways Panel but before this could happen support for the project had to be obtained from Essex County Councillor Bobbin.

(ii) Parking in William Road was continuing to be a problem and there were also vehicles parking on yellow lines on the corner of William Road and Pound Lane. A hole in the road in William Road was getting increasingly larger and although the hole had been identified with paint repairs had not been carried out.

(iii) The pathway outside No 12 Westlake Avenue was in a very poor condition and despite several complaints to Essex County Council Highways via the Essex County Council website no action had been taken to carry out any repairs.

(iv) The traffic lights at the junction of Pound Lane / London Road were out of sequence and the pedestrian crossing from all sides seemed to take a long time

to enable pedestrians leave to cross.

(v) A new road sign had been installed in Pound Lane. However it was reported the sign could not be seen from all directions as it had been erected against a fence. It was suggested that as the original poles were still in place the poles could be re-utilised and the new sign erected in full view in the original location.

Action: The Parish Clerk was asked to forward residents comments to the relevant departments for a response.

92/15 Policing: PCSO Emma Spurr to update on policing matters affecting the Parish.

PCSO Spurr advised that as a result of cuts in Policing across Essex the number of PCSCs would reduce from 250 to 60 Countywide. In Basildon the existing numbers would reduce to 7 across the district and as a result, as she was not one of these, she would be redundant with effect from 31st March 2016. Although Central government had chosen to revise their decision to reduce Police numbers across the country this would not affect the decision to reduce the numbers of PCSOs in the district as far as she was aware. She considered that current policing methods would change in future and there would be more dependency on local Councils and organisations, who worked within the community, to take on the roles currently being carried out by PCSOs.

She also advised on crime figures during the previous month as: - (i) One report of theft (ii) One report of criminal damage and (iii) Two burglaries. She advised that during the previous few weeks Basildon had seen an increase in burglaries and the meeting was reminded of the importance of ensuring that external gates, doors and windows were securely locked. She encouraged all residents to sign up to Essex Police Essex Community Messaging (ECM) Service to receive accurate and up-to-date information on crime prevention advice and policing initiatives from Essex Police and their key partners. The Police were also running a Crime Prevention Initiative Operation and residents were warned about telephone scams and cold calling by rogue traders and if in any doubt to call 101 or trading standards. Emma was thanked for her attendance at the meeting.

93/15 Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 28th October 2015: Council to approve the accuracy and content of the minutes of the previous meeting and the Chair to sign.

Councillors confirmed the accuracy of the previous minutes and Councillor Robert Smillie, Chair, signed the minutes on behalf of the Parish Council.

94/15 Parish Clerk's Report: The Parish Clerk to report and update on Parish Council business.

The Parish Clerk advised that some of her report had already been discussed earlier but informed on the following matters: -

- (i) The Parish Council newsletter had been delivered to 95% of residents to date.
- (ii) Winter Salt was now available for residents to collect from 245 Pound Lane. Each volunteer would receive 2 bags of salt to spread on roads not covered by Council gritters.
- (iii) Pathway resurfacing works were taking place in Highlands Road despite initially no notification to the Parish Council. The Parish Clerk had once again discussed the condition of paths in Pound Lane and London road during her enquires with ECC Highways Officers.
- (iv) No response had been received from ECC Highways Department regarding the works being carried out at Sadlers Farm and the use of the compound despite the Parish Clerk visiting the site office and speaking to the site Officers and also speaking by telephone to John Sacker, Balfour Beatty Project Director, on two occasions and been advised that he had emailed ECC Highways and asked them to respond. To date the Parish Council and Parish Clerk had not had the courtesy of a response.
- (v) An email had been sent to the Traveller and Gypsy Liaison Officer in respect of the condition of the verges in Pound Lane adjacent to Exchange House but no response had been received.
- (vi) Volunteers were still required to help with the Essex County Council Youth Bus drop – in sessions. The sessions had commenced on alternate Thursdays from 26th October. ECC Youth workers and the Parish Clerk had been out on the previous Monday handing out leaflets to young people who lived in the Parish as they returned home after the finish of the school day.
- (vii) Essex County Council had informed regarding the date of the hearing of Planning Application (ESS/31/15/BAS) and as per a request to attend had invited a representative of the Parish Council to speak. However, the invite was received with just a few days' notice and it was not possible for any Councillor to attend due to previous commitments. However, the Parish Council had already responded to the application by email and it had been confirmed their comments would be put to the Chairman of the hearing.

95/15 Finance Report: The Responsible Finance Officer to advise on the Council's current financial position.

Chris Barlow, Responsible Finance Officer, presented a finance report on the current position as detailed below:

	£
Balance at bank as of 22.10.15	10,467.45
Balance at bank as of 20.11.15	8,630.85
Summary	
Expenditure	1,986.60
Income	150.00

	£
<u>Expenditure</u>	
Clerks Salary (Net) plus Office Allowance (September)	535.19
Internet Security package	52.99
Petty Cash	150.00
Parish Council Insurance Renewal	581.22
Commemorative Plaque	<u>187.20</u>
	1,986.60
<u>Income</u>	
Fun Walk Sponsorship	£150.00

There were no matters arising from the report.

95/15/2 Precept for 2016/17: To discuss the Parish Council budget for 2016/17 and consider a net precept figure for 2016/2017 as required under the Local Government Act 1972.

The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (“the 1992 Act”) Section 41 prescribed that for each financial year a local precepting authority (the Parish Council) must issue a precept to the billing authority for next financial year in accordance to the Act. The Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer had provided Councillors with the estimated budget figures for 2016/2017 based on current spending levels prior to the meeting for information and consideration (as attached Appendix A). Councillors were asked to consider the following when agreeing the Precept figure:-

- Any possible decrease in the 2016/2017 Local Council Tax Scheme (LCTS) grant by Basildon Borough Council due to Government cuts.
- Take account of increased costs to be incurred as a result of the governments’ Workplace Pension Scheme and the Parish Council’s automatic enrolment in the scheme and any payments under the Scheme which would need to be set aside for Parish council employees.
- The fact that any agreement on grants for 2016/2017 had not, as yet, been factored into the figures provided.
- The cost of projects had not been factored in as it was anticipated that the costs of each project would attract external funding. However, there may be some match funding required by the Parish Council in respect of such projects.
- Any unexpected increases in current costs or estimated future costs.

Councillors were advised that in order to maintain an effective working balance and reserves there was a need to increase the precept amount.

Councillors having considered the figures presented by Basildon Council against

the estimated figures provided **AGREED** that an increase would be necessary. The current Precept element of the Basildon Council Tax was £17.91 for a Band D property and it was **AGREED** that this amount would increase to £18.90 with effect for the financial year 2016/2017. The amount was based on calculations provided by Basildon Council and this would effectively give the Parish Council an additional income of approximately £715 above the 2015/2016 amount. The Tax Base, as required, was calculated on a Band D property and therefore the Precept would be marginally higher for any property above Band D or lower for any property below Band D. The Local Council Tax Scheme (LCTS) grant amount would not be known until after Basildon Council's Cabinet meeting on 3rd December 2015 and may effectively be reduced due to the overall grant cuts in income to local authorities.

Proposed: Councillor Foster: **Seconded:** Councillor Tyler

96/15 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:
15/01414/FULL**

Proposed 2 bedroom detached dwelling house (revised proposal) at the Junction of Pound Lane/Osborne Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon.

Councillor Foster had declared an interest in the Planning Application and took no part in the discussions.

In considering the application, and the reasons for refusing the previous plans, Councillors considered that the revised plans were still too large for the overall area of the plot and would impact on the amenity space of the site and neighbouring properties. Concerns were raised regarding the location of the access to the property adjacent to the junction of Osborne Road and Pound Lane. The issue of vehicles pulling out from the proposed site onto the steep camber of the road, especially in icy conditions, would obscure the sight line for vehicles descending from Pound Lane and ascending from the property and this might have an impact on safety. It was considered that any parking area might be better placed to the rear of the plot. Councillors were in **AGREEMENT** in suggesting the refusal of the revised application in its present form.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO:
NO: 15/01425/FULL**

Two storey extension (& basement) to the existing care home (Use Class C2) together with new landscaping and additional car parking provision. - Gifford House Care Home, London Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon.

Councillors and the Parish Clerk had been invited to and had attended the consultation at Gifford House Care Home prior to the application being submitted.

They had discussed with the architects and owner of the Care Home several aspects of the proposal to increase the size of the building and also the proposals with some of the residents of the Care Home. Taking into account the responses received from both architects and residents it was felt that although there was an increasing need for such facilities, it was considered the plans did not give sufficient emphasis on amenity and recreational space. The enclosure of the area on all four sides around a courtyard area would be beneficial but the increase in size (60 rooms) might have a detrimental impact on the well-being of clients. It was considered that the amount of parking spaces within the design was also insufficient. The effects on traffic during the construction if granted was also a material consideration and would cause congestion especially on already busy and congested roads especially at school times. A further factor was the impact on the Green Belt and it was considered the application was in contravention of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Action: The Parish Clerk was asked to forward the Parish Council's comments to Planning Officers.

- 97/15 Planning decisions and comments:** To receive updates on decisions in respect of planning applications discussed at previous meetings.

The Bull Public House had been granted permission by Basildon Council to demolish the property to pave the way for the development of a 26 apartment flat block.

- 98/15 Essex Fire and Rescue Service and Essex Police Parish Volunteering Scheme for Essex Parishes:** To discuss and consider taking part in a new volunteer scheme to recruit two Parish Safety Volunteers tasked with arranging and conducting home safety visits.

The Parish Council had been advised by Essex County Fire & Rescue Service (ECFRS) and Essex Police (EP) of proposals to enlist volunteers to take on a volunteer role and visit homes in the Parish and carry out Home Safety checks on their behalf. The role of volunteers would be to install smoke detectors, devising an escape plan and giving advice on property and personal security and safety to residents. All volunteers would be given training and practical skills and support to carry out the tasks to be undertaken. The purpose of the initiative was to make local communities safer, more resilient and better protected against fire and crime. Parish Council had been asked to advertise the Initiative which would be managed by the services who would then keep the Parish Council updated on the PSV Scheme.

Action: The Parish Clerk was asked to advertise the Initiative on the website and as and when space allowed on the Parish Council noticeboards.

- 99/15 Essex Rural Strategy:** To receive Councillor comments on this questionnaire and to agree the Parish Council's response.

The Parish Council to forward their comments to the Parish Clerk to enable her to

complete the online questionnaire.

- 100/15 Christmas Carol Theatrical Production:** To update on arrangements for the Christmas Carol Theatre Performance on 16th December 2015 at St Margaret's School.

The Parish Clerk had met with Emma Wigmore, Head Teacher of St Margaret's Primary School. The school had agreed to help sell tickets for the performance of A Christmas Carol on 16th December 2015. The performance was aimed at children over 5 years of age and their families to give all who attended a flavour of theatre. By coincidence the school were reading the Charles Dickens classic novel of the same name in their classes. Tickets had gone on sale and would be available from the school reception and also via the Parish Clerk. The cost of tickets was £2.00 for a single adult and £5.00 for an Adult family with no charge for children. The performance was by a theatre group based in Norwich called The Keepers Daughter Theatrical Company and the performance would start at 6.15 p.m. The event had been advertised in the Parish newsletter, website and the Parish noticeboards.

- 101/15 Feedback on meetings attended by Councillors:** Councillors to provide a brief update on meetings they have attended.

Councillor Foster and Chris Barlow the Parish Clerk had attended the Basildon Liaison Group meeting on 12th November. Nick Binder, Manager of the South Essex Parking gave a briefing on the work of the South Essex Parking Partnership and answered questions on the work of the department. Basildon Council gave an update on arrangements for council elections in 2016 and answered a number of questions raised by the Association of Basildon Local Councils in respect of:-

- (i) Basildon Council view on the number of planning applications being made to Essex County Council for the development of waste recycling processing plants. Councillor Foster raised the specific objection to the multiple handing of asbestos at the proposed TML site in Courtauld Road and requested a proper Waste Management Plan be developed.
- (ii) The long term plans by Basildon Council for parks and open spaces.
- (iii) Staffing levels in respect of Basildon Council Enforcement Officers.
- (iv) The upkeep of pavements and pathways by Essex Highways across the district and in the Parish.

Neither a representative from Essex County Council Highways or Basildon Council Planning Enforcement Team were able to attend the meeting to respond to items (iii) and (iv) and comments were noted for a response from them at a later date.

Councillor Foster and the Parish Clerk had also attended the Association of Local Councils bi-monthly meeting on 19th November 2015.

102/15 Date of next meeting - To confirm the date of the next Parish Council meeting as 9th December 2015.

The date of the next meeting, due to the Christmas holidays, would be held on the earlier date of Wednesday 9th December 2015.