



**MINUTES OF BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25th OCTOBER 2023.**

PRESENT:

Councillors: S. Pegg: C. Morris: T. Potter: S. Moore.

Ward Councillor/s: None

Parish Council Clerk/RFO: Mrs Christine Barlow

Public attendance: 6

70/23 Apologies for absence: Councillor Rimmer (South- East Pitsea Ward) and Councillor Canham (South-East Pitsea Ward) both had Borough Council Committee duties.

71/23 Election of Chair:

Councillor Sheelagh Pegg was nominated as Chair – unopposed.
Proposed: Councillor Colin Morris: Seconded: Councillor Susan Moore:

Councillor Pegg was duly elected to serve as Chair.

72/23 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.

Councillor Morris declared a personal interest regarding Agenda item: 79/23 in respect of Planning Application 23/01262/FULL: - The Cabin, Windsor Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon. Councillor Morris would leave the room whilst the Planning Application was being discussed.

73/23 Public Forum: Residents have the opportunity to raise questions of a general nature. (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

- A resident advised that the trees which were overhanging her property from Westlake Park still had not been pruned. **Action:** The Parish Clerk advised she had reported this to Basildon Council some months ago and she would contact the responsible Officer again.

- A resident asked how long Gas repairs would be continuing in the village. The Parish Clerk advised that information from Cadent, the gas contractors

conducting the work, had informed repairs would be ongoing until the end of 2024.

- A resident reported that the Vehicle Activation Sign (VAS) in Pound Lane did not seem to be working. It was considered that this may be due to the gas works in Pound Lane during ongoing gas repairs and temporary traffic lights which were in place to slow down the traffic. **Action:** The Parish Clerk would monitor and, if necessary, report any apparent fault to Essex Highways for investigation.
- Councillor Pegg asked when the next Bugle would be published, and the Parish Clerk advised that it should be around Christmas time.

74/23 Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 27th September 2023: To approve the minutes of the previous meeting and Chair to sign.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th September 2023 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed to confirm by Councillor Pegg, Chair.

75/23 Ward/County Councillor update: Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillors to address the meeting.

No Borough Councillors were present to give any feedback and none had been received.

76/23 Parish Clerk's Report: To update on business since the last meeting on 27th September 2023.

The Parish Clerk advised on the action taken in response to previous matters and issues raised:

Item 61/23: (i) Pathway Harrow Road to A127: Contact had been made with the Public Right of Way (PROW) Officer, who had advised that this stretch of pathway was the responsibility of ECC Highways and not the PROW Team. In the interest of public access, the pathway has now been cleared, as much as possible to enable safe access, by the Parish Council's own Grounds Maintenance Officer, but there is still the matter of the fallen tree which is currently under discussion. The Parish Clerk is in the process of contacting ECC to obtain more information regarding the maintenance of the pathway.

Item 61/23: (v) Verge pruning London Road: Unfortunately, there has been no feedback on the request to Basildon Council to prune the verges along the London Road or from Councillor Rimmer.

Item 61/23: (vii) Blocked Footpath: The vehicles blocking the path in William Road have been removed as well as another vehicle blocking the footpath in Canvey Road. This was a joint exercise between the Parish Council and the Police.

Item 61/23: (viii) ECC Transport meeting: The meeting on 24th November had been cancelled.

Item 64/23 : Conclusion of Audit: The Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2023 had been concluded. A notice had been placed on the Parish Council website and in the Parish Council noticeboards advising residents could review all documentation in relation Audit from 29th Sept – 1st November by contacting the Parish Clerk.

Land behind 2 – 6 The Cottages, London Road: A telephone call had been received from a resident who was concerned about information he had received in respect of the land behind 2 - 6 The Cottages, London Road, Pitsea which is adjacent to the Florist on the London Road and which was being cleared. The Parish Clerk had contacted Planning and been advised that their records showed that, to date, no planning applications for this land in this location had been submitted. That said, the Parish Council had been reminded the site was part of the area allocated for future development in the now withdrawn Local Plan. As far as the Parish Council is concerned this piece of land forms a strategic gap preventing the Parish coalescing with Pitsea. The resident has been updated on matters and will inform the Clerk if there is any change.

- **Grounds Maintenance:** The Parish Council's own Grounds Maintenance member of staff was continuing to cut, mow and prune in various locations of the village not covered by any local authority Grounds Maintenance contract. As part of this work, winter plants (wallflowers) donated by a resident, had replaced summer bedding in the planters on the London Road.
- **Zebra Crossing:** The beacon on the zebra crossing in Pound Lane, which was not working, had been reported to Highways.
- **Domain name change:** Research was ongoing and an update will be given at future meeting.

The Parish Clerk advised that the work of the Parish Council is to represent the interests of the whole community and due to Councillor Foster stepping down, due to ill-health, the Parish Council needed to more Councillors were need to bring up the required allocated numbers. If new Councillors could not be recruited there may be issues of being inquorate at meeting in the future, which would impede the work of a very successful Parish Council to date.. Several suggestions were put forward by all present, one of which was a single flyer, printed and delivered to households separately to the newsletter, another was changing the name from "Parish Council" to "Village Council" **Action:** To consider all suggestions.

- Councillor Pegg asked if a letter could be drawn up asking people not to put their bins out before the day of collection. **Action:** The Parish Clerk confirmed she would draft a letter which could be delivered to properties which left their bins out all week.

77/23 Finance Report: Responsible Finance Officer to provide a summary of the Parish Council's financial position and advise on other relevant finance matters.

The Responsible Finance Officer provided a summary as follows:

	£
Balance at Bank 22 nd September 2023	39,924.05
Balance at Bank 20 th October 2023	48,051.18
Expenditure:	2,856.16
Income:	10,983.29
Expenditure:	
BT – GM Staff Net Wages – September	224.00
BT - PDS Digital – Sept Newsletter Printing	395.00
BT - PKF LittleJohn LLP – EX0029 AGAR External Audit	504.00
BT - Parish Clerks Net Salary – August inc. Office/BB/Tel	845.70
CHQ: 722 HMRC Staff Tax + Emprs. NI (July/ Aug/ Sept)	887.46
Income:	
BBC 2 nd Half Year Precept	10,983.29

Councillors were reminded that the bank balance included a portion of the balance of the NDO grant from Locality for work being undertaken on the Neighbourhood Development Order and after this had been spent the balance was not as healthy as it looked.

The Responsible Finance Officer confirmed the audit of accounts for 2022-2023 had been completed and advised the external Auditors PKF Littlejohn, appointed by Government, had confirmed that, in accordance with Proper Practices, no matters had come to their attention or given cause for concern and that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had been met. As stated in the Parish Clerks report a notice of the Conclusion of Audit was now on the Parish Council website and in Parish Council noticeboards. The Annual Accounts & Governance Return (AGAR) was now available for inspection by local government electors between the 29th September and 1st November 2023.

79/23 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: 23/01262/FULL: Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling - The Cabin, Windsor Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon

Councillors considered the application which was an update on the previous grant of application for a two- bed single storey bungalow. Whilst the footprint was slightly larger than previously agreed, Councillors considered they had no objection to the changes as presented.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO:

23/01203/FULL: Single storey rear extension, replacing existing conservatory - 78 Highlands Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex SS13 2JA.

Councillors discussed the above application and raised no objections.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO:

23/00999/FULL - Retrospective Application for Retention of Stables at Land Adjacent to Allotment Gardens, Bowers Gifford - Land East of Allotment Gardens, London Road, Pitsea, Essex

Councillors felt that insufficient information was available for them to make informed comments on several unclear matters and would contact Officers for clarification. The following comments were however made, and these would be forwarded to Basildon Council Planning Officers for clarification and consideration by the Planning Committee:

- (i) main drainage should be installed for the collection of both sewage and wastewater.
- (ii) suitable hygiene facilities (i.e. toilets and washing facilities) should be installed on site for the use of all users including visitors to the site and any persons involved on site looking after the horses and cleaning out the stables.
- (iii) safety measures should be considered for the movement of vehicles entering and exiting the site onto the London Road.
- (iv) It was considered that a request be made to the users of the site concerning the exercising of the horses through the underpass at Old Church Road/Church Road, and ask them to collect and clear all deposits of excrement from the footway as other members of the public also use the underpass and the waste deposits were considered unacceptable.

NOAK BRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA PRE-SUBMISSION NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN CONSULTATION – To consider the pre-submission and content of the document.

Councillors agreed to support the Noak Bridge pre-submission of the Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Plan.

80/23 Planning updates and comments: To receive updates and comments on Planning matters discussed at previous meetings.

The following Appeals have been received by the Parish Council:

APPEAL UNDER SECTION 78 & SECTION 174 SITE ADDRESS: ALLEGED BREACH(ES):	Land East of The Firs, Osborne Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:	Without planning permission, the material change in use of the Land for the stationing of caravans for residential occupation.
	Proposed change of use of land for the creation of 2no. Gypsy/Traveller pitches comprising the siting of 1 static caravan and 1 touring caravan per pitch

APPELLANT(S)**NAME(S):****APPEAL REFERENCE:** APP/V1505/C/23/3326276 (and linked appeals)

(i) Whilst the Parish Council sympathised with the applicant, they had objected to the planning application on the grounds of it being unauthorised development in the Green Belt without justification. Basildon Council had subsequently refused the application and the interested party had now appealed to the Planning Inspector challenging the terms of the refusal. The Parish Council will write to the Planning Inspectorate and confirm they supported the action taken in the issuing of Enforcement Notices.

REF: APP/VI505/C/23/3329101 (and linked appeals)**Site Address:** Land Between the Whisperings and Celandine, Osborne Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex, SS13 2LG**Alleged Breaches:****Notice One:** Without planning permission, the material change in use of the Land for the stationing of caravans for residential occupation.**Notice Two:** Without planning permission, the material change in use of the Land for the storage of caravans.

The Parish Council fully supported the comments of alleged breaches and the notices issued by Enforcement Officers and will sending a letter to the Planning Inspectorate to confirm their comments.

Other decisions in respect of Planning Applications:

Planning Application No: 23/01126/FULL: Proposed alteration and enlargement of existing front dormers to form single dormer - 118 Pound Lane Bowers Gifford Basildon Essex SS13 2HW – Refused.**Planning Application Ref. No: 23/00833/FULL:** Hard Standing (Retrospective) - Hebe Cottage, Clifton Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon Essex SS13 2LF – Refused.**81/23 Neighbourhood Development Order:** To provide a brief update on the next steps.

The Parish Council met with Basildon Council Planning Policy Officers and Borough Councillors on 5th October 2023 to update them on the progress of the NDO.

The overall reaction from Basildon Councillors to the NDO Project was positive and confirmed their support for the work undertaken to date on the Project. The Parish Council's consultants are now in the final stages of preparing the required documentation and are waiting for further reports from external consultants in respect of Travel Reports and the final stages of the Feasibility Study. Once the draft reports are completed, they will be sent to Basildon Council Planning Policy for consideration and comment.

The Steering Group also met on 20th October for an update on the NDO proposals and conclusions and to review the various documents which consultants are preparing for discussion. Their next meeting will be to agree a date to carry out a Reg 21 consultation with residents and others interested parties and will be of approximately 6 – 8 weeks duration. (The Regulation 21 consultation explains what the NDO is aiming to achieve and will ask residents to comment on the work being published)

82/23 Parish Council Event 2024: To discuss setting a date for the 2024 Event:

It was agreed to hold the Parish Council Annual Event on 7th July 2024 in Westlake Park Bowers Gifford. **Action:** Advise Basildon Council of the date to secure the Park availability for the event.

83/23 Remembrance Sunday 12th November: To discuss jointly laying a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council at the Memorial in Howards Park on Remembrance Sunday 12th November 2023

Councillors agreed to represent the Parish Council at the Remembrance Sunday Service on 12th November 2023 and to lay a wreath at the War Memorial in the Park.

Action: The Parish Clerk to obtain a wreath from RBL and to confirm any details of times etc. with St. Gabriel Church, Rectory Road

84/23 Climate and Ecology Bill: To register the Parish Council's support.

The Parish Councillors deferred any decision to enable Councillors more time to read the report. It was confirmed that any decision would be ratified at the next meeting.

85/23 Date of next meeting: To confirm the date of the next meeting.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 29th November 2023 in the Benbow Club, Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford. The meeting closed at 8.50 p.m.

Signed Chair.....Councillor Sheelagh Pegg

Date: 29th November 2023