

**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE BENBOW CLUB BOWERS GIFFORD
ON WEDNESDAY 29 MARCH 2017 AT 7.30 p.m.**

PRESENT:

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

Parish Council Clerk: Mrs Christine Barlow

Residents present: 9

142/16 Apologies for absence: Councillor Nigel Tyler and Cllr Terry Potter

143/16 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 in respect of the agenda.

144/16 Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 22nd February 2017: Council to approve the accuracy and content of the minutes of the previous meeting and the Chair to sign.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd February 2017 were **AGREED** as an accurate record of the meeting and signed as such by Councillor Smillie, Chair.

145/16 Policing: PCSO Darren Weeks to update on changes to policing in the borough and discuss with Councillors specific issues of concern

The Chair closed the meeting to enable residents to ask questions on policing and raise questions as part of the Public Forum.

PCSO Darren Weeks gave an update on the cuts in Police numbers and changes in policing within the borough during the previous twelve months.

He advised that the number of Support Officers had been cut from thirty to eight in terms of local policing over the past year and these eight Officers covered the whole of the district. In terms of local policing covering community meetings and patrolling the streets was a luxury no longer available to residents due to these cuts. Officers did not have a dedicated patch anymore but he did often cover Pitsea and this included the Parish. A copy of recent crime figures was distributed to those present (Attached Appendix A) The meeting was advised that in comparison to Pitsea crime in Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet was relatively low.

Councillor Smillie considered that despite the level of crime presented in the figures there was a great deal of crime that went unreported in the Parish and

possibly one factor was the time it took to get through to the Police Control Operator by dialling 101 and this might contribute to low crime reporting because residents just gave up trying to make contact after a prolonged period or trying several times to report the same incident. PCSO Weeks urged residents to report all crime however small or insignificant the incident seemed to be as this enabled crime hotspots areas to be identified and without this information crime figures would be distorted. He advised that reporting non-emergency crime could be accomplished quicker by recording incidents on the Essex Police website rather than on the telephone using the 101 number. General issues around the increase of crime were discussed with all present and the need for residents to make sure their doors and windows were locked when going out or at night to deter burglars.

During the discussion residents raised issues in relation to: (i) Nitros Oxide canisters and drug dealing in various locations in the village (ii) Motorbikes racing around in fields around the Parish and in Westlake Park (iii) Cannabis smoking in Westlake Park (vi) Youngsters using catapults to cause damage in Osborne Road and Harrow Road. (v) Vehicle theft.

PCSO Weeks stated he was unaware of some of the reported incidents and would look further into the matters raised and where possible contact the Parish Clerk with information or an update.

Councillor Smillie raised the issues regarding the funding of a part-time Officer to patrol in the Parish. He advised that the Parish Council had previously sent an enquiry to Police Inspector Shaun Kane without reply and asked if this request could be relayed back to Senior Officers again. PCSO Weeks said he would make enquires in relation to the request.

A resident asked if the Police could add their support to removing the bus lane at Sadlers Farm roundabout on the London Road B1464 as drivers had to break the law because of traffic congestion and when trying to cross lanes on the roundabout had no choice but to enter the hatchings to get through the traffic. He advised that unless traffic accidents had occurred the police would not normally get involved but he would make enquiries to see what could be done.

The issue of fly tipping was also raised but the meeting was advised that fly-tipping came under the responsibility of Basildon Council and unless there were other major issues the Police would not become involved.

There being no other questions of PCSO Weeks was thanked for taking time out on his day off to attend the meeting.

Public Forum:

(i) A resident asked why there were so many cables across roads in several locations around the village. Councillors advised that Essex County Council Highways were undertaking traffic surveys to access the amount of vehicles used on the roads in and around the area. The results of the surveys provided information for analysis by the Highways Agency.

(ii) Resident stated that the hedges on the stretch of road from the A127 slip road into Pound Lane were becoming overgrown and there was a lot of litter along this stretch of road and asked where this issue could be reported. The resident was advised to make a report on the Essex County Council website. **Action:** The Parish Clerk advised she had reported the litter in this location but a request could be made via the Local Highways Panel to engage Essex County Council Rangers to carry out pruning works to cut back the vegetation and litter pick.

(iii) A resident raised concerns regarding a large pothole on the corner of the junction of Pound Lane and Burnt Mills Road and also about 200 yards from "Tiffanys" Burnt Mills Road on the left hand **Action:** The Parish Clerk said she would report the matter on the Highways website and ask the resident to do the same.

(iv) A resident asked when the underpass at Church Road would be opened. Councillors stated the date they had been given was the end of March 2017 but there may be a delay due to the need to carry out water pipe repairs in the London Road adjacent to the By-Way.

(v) A resident asked if the grassed edges could be cleared back from the pavements along the London Road so enable the original width of the paths to be revealed. **Action:** To investigate using the ECC Rangers to carry out this work.

146/16 Parish Clerk's Report: The Parish Clerk to report and update on Parish Council business since the last meeting.

(i) A report back was given regarding items raised at the meeting on 22nd February 2017.

126/16: (ii) Control of Dog signs: Basildon Council had agreed to display additional Dog signs in the Park as soon as available from supplier.

126/16: (iii) Yellow lines at corners of William Road and Canvey Road: Request to repaint had already been sent to Essex County Council Highways.

126/16: Damaged Path in Kelly Road: Reported to Essex County Council Highways. Parish Clerk would report again with a picture of the damage outside No 6 Kelly Road.

126/16: Complaint regarding fly-tipping in connection with the Convenience Shop, Canvey Road: Following investigation in respect of fly-tipping a Section 34 Notice had been served on the shop by Basildon Council and a trade Agreement had been set up between Basildon Council and the shop owners in regard to the removal of waste.

128/16 Perimeter hedge of Little Chalvedon Hall Farm: The hedge around the perimeter had been fully pruned.

(ii) A request for information regarding unauthorised development in various areas

of the Parish had been sent to Basildon Council’s Planning Enforcement Officers for an update but to date no response had been received.

(iii)A request for information on flooding to properties in the Parish would be included in the next edition of the Parish newsletter.

(iv)The Clerk advised she had attended Red Nose Day activities at St Margaret’s School on 24th March on behalf of the Parish Council. Along with the school children, parents and volunteers she had helped to make a continuous paper chain to help in the schools attempt to break the Guinness Book of Records for the longest paper chain. The record attempt had been successful.

(v)Following previous discussions on the matter the Parish Clerk asked again for the Council to review engaging a contractor to clean the four village bus shelters in the absence of Essex County Council having set up a contract to carry out this work. **Action:** Councillors **AGREED** to the request and the Parish Clerk confirmed she would obtain suitable quotations for consideration.

147/16 Finance Report: To update on the Parish council finance position and other related matters

Christine Barlow, Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer, presented Councillors with a monthly financial summary report, as follows and an End-of-Year Cash Reconciliation summarising expenditure and income for 2016/2017 (Attached Appendix B).

	£
Balance at Bank 22 nd February 2017	10,857.52
Balance at Bank 29 th March 2017	9,429.80
Expenditure:	
Parish Clerks Salary – February (inc. Office Allow.)	- 621.48
Parish Clerks Salary – March (inc. Office Allow)	-621.68
BBC Lottery Permit -	-20.00
Stationary	-22.00
Parish Council Printer Cartridges 50% of cost	<u>-142.56</u>
	-1427.72
Income	Nil
Uncashed as of 29 th March :	268.84
HMRC Clerks Tax & Empr. NI (Jan/Feb/Mar)	
Balance at end of Financial Year 2016/2017	9,160.96

(i) **Purchase of new computer:** A grant had been obtained in February 2016 via the Governments’ Transparency Code Fund to purchase a new computer for the Parish Council due to the fact the existing laptop was no longer fit for purpose. The laptop was now seven years old and the Responsible Finance Officer requested permission to purchase the new laptop.. **Action:** Councillors **AGREED** to the request and considered that an Apple Mac might be a

consideration. The Parish Clerk confirmed she would obtain costs and look at different makes for their suitability.

(ii) **Clerks Salary Increase:** The Parish Clerk advised that as part of a two year agreement in 2016 by the National Joint Council (NJC) there would be an automatic increase in the Clerks Salary for 2017/2018. In addition to this the Parish Clerk asked for an increment rise to take her on to the next salary bracket (Spinal Column 23 – 28). At the inception of the Parish Council in 2010 the starting salary for a Clerk had been set at the lowest level (Spinal Column 19 - 22). The Parish Clerk had reached the top of this level set in 2013 and no increment had been received since. The overall increase in wages would be £20.00 per month. **Action:** In recognition of the work carried out by the Parish Clerk / Responsible Finance Officer Councillors **AGREED** to the request.

(iii) The Parish Council was asked to consider making a contribution to the Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer telephone and broadband expenses in respect of Parish Council business. No contributions had been made for this element of the Parish Clerk's duties during her current employment. **Action:** Councillors to consider the request once they had had the opportunity to discuss the matter as a group.

148/16 Talking Bench: To advise on arrangements for unveiling the "Talking Bench " in Westlake Park and the planting of a tree to commemorate William Gallant , a soldier and resident of Bowers Gifford who died at the Somme in WW1.

The unveiling of the bench would take place on Friday 31st March at 11.00 in Westlake Park and at the same time a tree would be planted in memory of William Gallant, who had lived in the village and died at the Somme in 1916. The location of the bench and tree would be in the far right hand corner of the Park adjacent to the footpath. The Parish Council had been working with Basildon Heritage and the Essex Records Office on the arrangements. Arrangements had also been made with the Benbow Club to use the Club after the ceremony in order to provide light refreshments for those attending.

149/16 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: 17/00268/FULL

Detached outbuilding in the rear garden incorporating a garage and garden room and new driveway – Colarado, Burnt Mills Road, North Benfleet, Basildon, Essex

Councillors discuss the application and considered that as the previous planning application for Colarado was granted the new additions to the property, being at the rear of the property, will be virtually unseen from the road and out of direct view. The Council felt that it was unclear why a garage with a flat roof needed to be the height indicated (2.7 metres/9ft) and therefore could be considered to be excessively high with no explanation given. It was also considered that the large detached outbuilding could constitute to being inappropriate building in the Green

Belt because of its bulk. However, subject to considerations being given to the aforementioned comments the Parish Council raised no further objections.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 17/00311/FULL

Proposed ground floor 'infill' extension, and raising of roof, creating first floor and including front and rear dormers. - 23 Westlake Avenue, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex SS13 2JJ

The basic numeric dimensions within the application were not clearly defined making it more difficult in determining ridge heights etc. In creating the increased accommodation there appeared to be no information regarding the eventual new ridge height and the dormers did not appear to be below the existing ridge height as suggested. Parking in William Road was already a problem and whilst many properties in Westlake Avenue had made significant changes to their properties and incorporated additional parking within the cartilage of their property there was no suggestion within the application design to incorporate any additional off road parking and in the absence of this by increasing the accommodation from three to four bedrooms this would further restrict parking options in the street. **Action:** In principle, subject to the above comments, the Parish Council had no objections to the application.

150/16 Planning decisions and comments: To receive updates and comments regarding Planning Applications.

Bonville Farm House extension had been refused.

151/16 Neighbourhood Plan: To update on recent progress.

A consultant has been engaged to assist the Parish Council in putting together many of the technical elements required to submit the Neighbourhood Plan to The Examiner. Currently a Government grant of £9,000-£15,000 was in the process of being applied for. Several volunteers had offered to help with the process and it was planned for consultants to meet with Members and those residents who had offered their help on 5th April 2017 to discuss future work progress of the Project.

152/16 Basildon Council's Housing Strategy Consultation 2017 – 2022: To advise on Parish Council's response to the consultation.

In respect of the consultation the Parish Council had been unable to fully discuss the document as a group within the short timescales given and a request to submit comments after the deadline of 27th March 2017, as a Statutory Consultee, had been refused by Basildon Council. Councillors felt that insufficient notice of the consultation has been given to enable the Parish Council to make comment and the consultation period had been too short and they considered this would possibly reflect in the responses which would be received. Councillor Pegg commented that they were unaware of the consultation until being notified by the Clerk and Councillor Foster stated that although the consultation was advertised

in the Borough News this publication reached residents in the Parish three days after the closing date. Councillors felt the consultation had been badly managed, the consultation period was too short and the process was therefore flawed. **Action:** The Parish Clerk was asked to pass Councillor comments on to the relevant Officer at Basildon Council.

- 153/16 Feedback on meetings attended by Councillors:** Councillors to provide a brief update on meetings attended as representatives of the Parish Council.

Deferred to the next meeting.

- 154/16 Annual Parish Meeting:** The Chair to discuss with Councillors agenda items and guest speakers for the meeting.

The Annual Parish Meeting on 26th April was discussed and it was considered that an item on Neighborhood Watch might be beneficial considering there had been an increase in the Parish regarding burglaries and theft of motor vehicles in recent months.

Action: The Parish Clerk to contact Barbara Holmes, The Pitsea South East Watch Co-ordinator with a view to her attending the Annual Parish meeting as guest speaker.

- 155/16 Date of next Parish Council Meeting:** To confirm date and time of the meeting.

The Annual Parish Meeting would be held on Wednesday 26th April at 7.30 pm and this would be followed directly after by the Parish Council Meeting. Both meetings would be held at the Benbow Club, 77 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford.

TO BE APPROVED

APPENDIX A



	Sep 2015 - Feb 2016	Sep 2016 - Feb 2017	No. Difference	% difference
B127A Crime				
Dwelling Burglary	21	55	34	162%
Other Burglary	41	15	-26	-63%
Vehicle Crime	69	54	-15	-22%
Criminal Damage	74	79	5	7%
ASB	291	413	122	42%

Pitsea South East

	Sep 2015 - Feb 2016	Sep 2016 - Feb 2017	No. Difference	% difference
B128A Crime				
Dwelling Burglary	33	66	33	100%
Other Burglary	36	6	-30	-83%
Vehicle Crime	119	79	-40	-34%
Criminal Damage	50	40	-10	-20%
ASB	247	192	-55	-22%

Pitsea North West

	Sep 2015 - Feb 2016	Sep 2016 - Feb 2017	No. Difference	% difference
B129A Crime				
Dwelling Burglary	51	33	-18	-35%
Other Burglary	44	24	-20	-45%
Vehicle Crime	91	94	3	3%
Criminal Damage	59	50	-9	-15%
ASB	349	340	-9	-3%

Fryerns

	Sep 2015 - Feb 2016	Sep 2016 - Feb 2017	No. Difference	% difference
B130A Crime				
Dwelling Burglary	42	53	11	26%
Other Burglary	13	5	-8	-62%
Vehicle Crime	43	53	10	23%
Criminal Damage	58	49	-9	-16%
ASB	167	196	29	17%

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TO BE APPROVED