



**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET  
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY 29<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 7.30 PM.**

**PRESENT:**

**Councillors:** B. Foster: C. Morris: S. Pegg: T.Potter:

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

**Ward Councillor/s:** Councillor Craig Rimmer (Pitsea South-East Ward Councillor)

**Public attendance:** 18

**61/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Parish Councillor Robert Smillie: Essex County Councillor Aidan McGurrian

**62/21 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 Potter declared an interest in Item 68/12 Planning Application 21/01232/FULL - 54 Highlands Road due to the fact that the property was in close proximity to his own.

**63/21 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES:** To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2021 and Chairman to sign.

The minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2021 were approved as an accurate account of the meeting and Councillor Foster , as Chair, signed to confirm.

**64/21 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 had been counting the number of lorries which were considered to have been speeding through Pound Lane and passed her property. Over a period of 600 minutes, taken at various times during the month, there had been 502 lorries of which most were over 7.5 Tonne. Some contained waste not netted which meant earth was dispersed indiscriminately from their load. Many of the lorries were from Neil Sullivan and TML using the village as a cut through. A second resident stated she had pictures of the offending vehicles using Burnt Mills Road , with dates, and she was happy to share these with the Parish

Council. Councillor Pegg offered to collate the information on behalf of the Parish Council in order to create an evidence base. Once collated the Parish Council would be able use the information to present it to Essex County Council Local Highways Panel to demonstrate the need for supporting a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) through Pound Lane.

(ii) At the previous meeting a resident had raised the issue of a light not working opposite her property and the resident had reported the problem to Essex County Council Highways and advised it still had not been repaired. The Parish Clerk informed she believed UK Network contractors had tried to repair the light as she had spoken to them whilst they were on site the previous week, but she had been informed they were unable to trace the fault and further investigation was required. This fact had also been noted on ECC report system.

(iii) A resident asked Councillors if Canvey Road could be made into a one-way system because of the continuous amount cars that are parking on the corner and causing an obstruction and impeding the sightline for drivers moving out into Pound Lane and oncoming traffic not wanting to give-way. Other residents also commented that Canvey Road was a danger spot. Councillor Rimmer suggested the Parish Council put together an evidence base in the first instance and undertake a consultation to obtain residents views on this proposal in order to obtain community support for the suggestion. It might also be possible for the Police to provide statistical evidence of incidents from their own database. The evidence could be then presented to the Local Highways Panel for consideration. It was all suggested that if photo evidence could be provided the Police might agree to assist in taking action to enforce existing restrictions.

As a secondary issue Councillor Foster advised that he had come across evidence that the Canvey Flood Escape Route now finished at Sadlers Farm instead of through Pound Lane. Therefore, in theory Pound Lane could no longer be classed as a link road as it could not be linked to the A13 and could not be the escape road for Canvey Island as this now terminates at Sadlers Farm. It was suggested that this type of statistical evidence would be very useful in the Parish Council making a statement of fact and might strengthen the case for downgrading Pound Lane. A question could then be raised to Essex Highways and the Police through Basildon Council for reducing the number of larger lorries using the village roads and enforcing current restrictions. It was suggested that if this action did not work then the use of a visual evidence base could be used to force a Traffic Regulation Order to be put in place where there currently was not one. Councillor Rimmer advised he would talk with Basildon Council Officers to float the suggestions.

(iv) A resident raised concerns regarding 93 Pound Lane, the removal of the containers from the site, the lack of security as the fencing had been partially removed and the amount of rubbish on the site. The comments were noted and the matter would be investigated.

(v) Councillor Pegg asked Councillor Rimmer if the Public Footpath from Elm Road to Burnt Mills Road could be opened up again so that it could be used by residents as a footpath. It was reported that the Parish Council had tried on

several occasions to liaise with Essex County Council Public Rights of Way Officer to get the obstructions removed with little or no success. Councillor Rimmer agreed to look into the matter.

(vi) A resident asked if there was any information on the work being undertaken by contractors at the end of Pound Lane near the A127. It was suggested that the work might be in relation to water or flooding. It was noted that the work related to work being undertaken by Essex County Council and the Parish Clerk advised she would endeavour to obtain an answer for the next Parish Council meeting in order to update residents.

(vii) Councillors were asked if there was any information regarding the large house being built, without apparent planning permission, at Cranfield Park Caravan Park, Arterial Road. Councillors were unaware of the facts but confirmed they would make enquires and ask Basildon Council Enforcement Officers to look into the matter and take the appropriate action. Councillor Rimmer advised Basildon Council now have a full team of Enforcement Officers which include a barrister who was able to represent the Council at the High Court if necessary, however it does still rely on assistance from the public to monitor breaches. Other issues around planning irregularities were discussed and Councillor Rimmer requested residents to report issues to him if they have already reported them to Basildon Council Enforcement Officers and no action appeared to have been taken. Councillor Rimmer also suggested it would be helpful if an audit could be done in regard to breaches of planning. Councillor Pegg suggested that if residents reported these incidents to her, she would also collate them and forward them to the Parish Clerk and Councillor Rimmer in order that they could be investigated.

(viii) A resident asked if there was any feedback from St Modwen regarding the questions raised at the public meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September. Residents were informed that the Parish Council had not yet received any information from the developers as yet. It was explained that if a Planning Application was submitted there was a process by which residents had the opportunity to raise their objections formally either by letter or verbally at a Planning Committee meeting. In addition, a consultation would also be carried out with external consultees including the Parish Council and they would also keep residents informed of any meeting information.

(ix) A resident asked if the shrubs along the footpath from Kelly Road to the traffic lights could be pruned. The Parish Clerk advised that although it was the responsibility of the landowner to prune the shrubs Basildon Council's Pride Team assisted each year with the cut. The Parish Clerk advised she would contact Basildon Council and make the request but advised there might be a delay in any action as the Pride Team was overwhelmed at the moment because of the nature of the wet weather in August which had increased the growth in vegetation.

(x) A resident also raised the issue of parking at the school. It was explained that this was a constant source of irritation to the Parish Council over many years and despite engaging with organisations to resolve and taking preventative

measures the difficulties remained. The situation was not isolated to the Parish but the same situation occurred outside many schools in the Borough. The Parish Council did recognise the problem and was continually looking for answers to the problem.

**65/21 WARD/COUNTY COUNCILLOR UPDATE:** Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillors to address the meeting.

Having covered a great deal of informing in the Public Forum to answer resident questions Councillor Rimmer added that Basildon Council were taking proactive steps to seriously tackle climate change. The consultation carried out recently by Basildon Council on Garden/Food Waste and Recycling had received 7,000 responses and based on what residents had said it was to be recommended to Full Council proposals to (i) issue new 23ltr bins and free compostable liners for weekly food collection using electric vehicles (ii) **free** fortnightly green waste collections, with the service continuing all year round and (iii) no limit to the number of bins each household could have. By bringing in electric vehicles this will also help the environment.

The reason for a separate food and green waste containers was that Central Government required the two commodities be collected separately in the future. Recycling sites have stopped taking the two commodities together and in the future there will not be any sites left to take the non-separated waste so from a practical point of view Basildon Council they needed to separate it. The Council's fleet of vehicles, overtime, will be replaced with new electric vehicles and local authorities are also collectively looking at the use of green hydrogen technology. There are also grants which Basildon Council can obtain from Central Government to progress the changes being made in regard to Green Energy. Councillor Rimmer advised that for those residents who used Northlands Park the Skateboard Park was to be replaced with a concrete one.

**66/21 PARISH CLERK'S REPORT:** The Parish Clerk to advise Councillors on business undertaken since the last meeting and any other relevant matters.

The Parish Clerk advised that feedback on the consultation regarding new play equipment in Westlake Park was on the agenda.

**Item 52/21 Handy Person Service:** This is working very well and residents have commented they are very pleased with the work being done by the member of staff who has been employed. The downside is that the grant obtained to employ the member of staff is for a limited period only and another grant would need to be found to continue with the service as the current precept would not cover the cost. At the moment the Parish Council is also applying for a grant to purchase their own equipment for the service (The equipment currently being used has been loaned to the Council by a resident). The Parish Council is liaising with Basildon Council Officers to remove any Green Waste. If residents would like to suggest any area that they feel would benefit from the Handyman Service, they were asked to make the request to the Parish Clerk. However, the areas to be considered should not be covered under an existing contract by any organisation e.g. Essex County Council or Basildon Council.

**Verge cutting:** The Parish Clerk considered that the recent grass cutting to the verges by ID Verde, Basildon Council contractors was an abomination. No action had been taken to cut the long grass on the junction of Burnt Mills Road and Pound Lane, which had been reported by the Clerk on more than two occasions as dangerous because the growth obscured the sightline. Councillor Rimmer advised he had also received complaints and pictures about the condition of the verges in housing areas after the grass had been cut by contractors. The Parish Clerk informed she had raised the same complaint with Basildon Council's Technical Manager.

A resident asked if an overhanging branch at the entrance to Westlake Park could be removed. The Parish Clerk advised this had already been reported to Basildon Council.

**Oil Spillage Burnt Mills Road:** A resident had reported an oil spillage in Burnt Mills Road and on investigation with Basildon Council the Parish Clerk had been advised the container that caused the spillage had been removed. She had contacted the Environment Agency Officer who agreed to look into the matter further to assess if any contamination had occurred to any water supply as a result of the spillage seeping into the ditch at the side of the road.

**Item 51/21 Weight restriction signs:** The 7.5 tonne weight restriction signs obscured by trees in Burnt Mills Road had been reported to Essex County Council on their website.

**Streetlight:** A faulty streetlight outside Susan Cottage in Osborne Road had been reported to Basildon Council Officers who were responsible for repairing streetlighting in the plotland areas.

**Item 52/21 Grant Applications:** Grant Applications for (i) two defibrillators (ii) Maintenance equipment and (iii) the creation of a Circular Walk had been submitted to the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) who were administering the grants on behalf of Essex County Council.

**Item 56/21 Fun Walk:** A sponsored 5K Walk in connection with the John Baron Fun Walk Trust took place on 4<sup>th</sup> September in Westlake Park with the aim of raising funds for two Defibrillators for the village. Councillor Bernard Foster, Councillor Colin Morris and Andrew Rickard (a resident) joined Christine Barlow, the Parish Clerk on the walk.

**John Cole Memorial:** The work to repair the John Cole Memorial stone at All Saints Church was progressing. There had been a slight delay in the delivery of the stone which had been shipped from abroad and in receiving confirmation of the emblem to be inscribed on the stone from the Grenadier Guards.

A resident asked the Parish Clerk if there was any update on replacing the streetlight opposite his property in Burnt Mills Road. The Parish Clerk advised that had left this matter with Councillor Mackenzie to deal with but would make further enquires on his behalf.

**67/21 FINANCE REPORT:**

(i) To receive a summary of the Parish Council's current financial position. The Responsible Finance Officer provided the following financial summary to the meeting:

	£
Balance at Bank as of 25 <sup>th</sup> August 2021	15,968.55
Balance at Bank as of 22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2021	14,383.60
Expenditure:	1,584.95
Income:	Nil
<b>Expenditure:</b>	
(595) Triple L insurance for PIP	99.00
(598) ICO Data Protection Fee	40.00
(601) RCCE Annual Subscription	72.60
(603) Filthy Gorgeous PIP	400.00
(606) Net Handyperson Payment (20 hours per month)	208.00
(607) Clerks Net Salary (August) Plus BB/Tel/ Office Use	<u>765.35</u>
	1,584.95

The summary was accepted, by all present, as presented. The Responsible Officer advised that there were approximately £3,000 for transactions not yet recorded and which would be included in the next Parish Council Meeting Statement.

(ii) To confirm completion of the External Audit for 2021, External Auditors Report and the publishing of the Notice of Conclusion of Audit.

PKF Little John, the Governments appointed external Auditors, had completed their review of the Annual Accountability and Governance Return (AGAR) for 2020/2021. PKF Little John confirmed, in their opinion, the information which had been prepared in accordance with proper practices. The Auditors did draw to Parish Council's attention the fact that there was an error on the Accounting Statement and it had not been accurately completed before submitting for review. The RFO explained that after submitting the relevant documentation it had been noted that NI contributions had been entered into the wrong box on the Accounting Statement and after transposing the figures to the relevant boxes the amended Accounting Statement had been resubmitted to the PKF LittleJohn, the Governments' External Auditors

(iii) To update on the amount raised, to date, in regard to sponsorship for the Defibrillator Fund Project.

The Responsible Finance Officer advised that to date £1,120 of sponsorship money pledged had been collected for the Defibrillator Project. A resident informed the meeting that a local businessperson had text her to pledge an

undisclosed sum towards the project and she would forward the details to the Parish Clerk.

(iv) To discuss the renewal of the Parish Council Insurance.

The Parish Council Annual Insurance was due for renewal on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2021, however, the renewal premium had not as yet been provided by our current Insurers Came and Company but based on 2020/2021 figures the amount was in the region of £722. The RFO was also looking at other quotations before renewal. The Responsible Finance Officer proposed to submit a claim for the damaged Net Swing in Westlake Park and the current quotation which had been obtained from Wickstead Play was for £1090.00. Councillors AGREED with this action and were also asked to AGREE to the Responsible Finance Officer negotiating with the current Insurers to secure an acceptable renewal premium. Proposed: Councillor Bernard Foster: Seconded: Councillor Terry Potter.

All Councillors **AGREED** to the proposal and the Responsible Finance Officer would advise Councillors of the premium for 2021/2022 after speaking with the Insurers.

**68/21 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:**

**21/01344/FULL:** Proposed front porch with gable and lean roof over, single storey rear extension with flat roof and three skylights, and changes to external finish of dwelling from brick/grey render to cream render. - St Brelades, London Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon.

The Planning Application was discussed by the Parish Councillors and considered that the comments made in respect of the previous Planning Application ( 21/00785/FULL) which had been refused by Basildon Council, remained unchanged. Councillors commented that, despite the previous planning application being modified in the new application, the proposed front extension would still protrude beyond the existing building line on the north side of the London Road and would over-dominate and have a detrimental effect on the adjoining properties and surrounding street scene.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO:**

**21/01232/FULL:** Single-storey rear extension and increase the width of existing front facing dormer - 54 Highlands Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex.

Councillors discussed the above planning application but raised no objections.

**69/21 PLANNING UPDATES AND COMMENTS:** To receive updates and comments on planning applications discussed at previous meetings.

**PLANNING APPLICATION NO 21/01048/FULL:** Single storey rear extension with a flat roof and lantern over - 60 Highlands Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon Essex - Granted

**70/21 BOWERS GIFFORD & NORTH BENFLEET NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:**

To update on recent meetings in connection with the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan progress.

Councillor Foster advised that a meeting had been held recently with two Borough Councillors and Planning Officers to discuss with all parties the areas of difference within the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan. A number of areas were identified but limited progress was made. It had been agreed to set up a timetable to resolve these outstanding issues. The Parish Council was provided at the meeting with information regarding highway remodelling assessments and a further update on the documentation provided was due in October 2021. It was considered by Councillor Foster that some of the highway assessments were completed at a time when either it was school holiday or during Covid-19 restrictions when traffic would be lighter than at normal times and Councillor Foster considered that the figures might have a greater bearing on the need for improved highway infrastructure in Pound Lane. It was suggested that Basildon Council Officers might be in a position to highlight the information which was specifically relevant to the Parish. Borough Planners had a different agenda in their Local Plan to that of the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan but in order to support both Plans at Examination these must first be resolved.

As previously mentioned, a public meeting was held at the Gun Public House on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021 to discuss St Modwen's proposed development in Burnt Mills Road and residents were given the opportunity to ask questions of the Developers, Ward Councillors and Parish Councillors. Councillor Foster advised he would contact St Modwen to obtain feedback on the questions asked by residents.

The Neighbourhood Plan required to be updated in preparation for the Local Plan examination due to the fact that the Local Plan had taken so long in its preparation stages that changes in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) meant that the Neighbourhood Plan also needed to be updated but without further financial support, promised by Basildon Council some eighteen months previously, the Parish Council were unable at present to move forward and this matter was still waiting to be resolved. The Local Plan Inspector is currently in the process of raising a number of questions with the Borough Council on its Plan and the Inspector was now suggesting that the Borough Council carry out another consultation with residents of the Borough concentrating on the issues he had raised.

**71/21 THE QUEENS PLATINUM CELEBRATIONS 2022:** To discuss celebrating Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

Celebrations to commemorate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 70 years reign were due to take place over the Bank Holiday weekend in 2022 from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> June. Councillor discussed celebrating the event and to include a Children's Tea Party, entertainer and bring the Picnic -in – the- Park Event forward to the Bank Holiday weekend. It was **AGREED** to hold the event and the date was set as



Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022. **Proposed** : Councillor Colin Morris. **Seconded**: Councillor Bernard Foster. The proposal was carried.

**72/21 WESTLAKE PARK PLAY CONSULTATION:** To discuss and consider the results of the consultation regarding adding new play equipment in Westlake Park.

The Parish Clerk informed that the consultation confirmed a 71% support for the double zip-wire and 60% for the trampoline in the Junior play area. The next most popular was a Multi-Use Sports Area, Skateboard and BMX Area, a Climbing Wall, Football and Musical equipment in the Junior Play Area. However, the Parish Council considered that the proposed £35K would not be sufficient to cover the cost of robust equipment and installation and asked Councillor Rimmer, who was also Chair of Basildon Council's Leisure Committee, for an increase in funding. Councillor Rimmer considered that this would be sufficient and that there is an intention to renew play equipment in Westlake Park, under Basildon Council's Play Programme, in four years. The results would be passed on to Basildon Council and further discussions held.

**73/21 COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH:** To discuss the current position and restarting the Community Speed Watch Project.

Councillor Potter advised that the Community Speed Watch Project commenced two years previously with a number of volunteers completing training on the use of equipment. The winter of 2019 and the Pandemic then prevented the project moving forward and the current position was that the Parish Council needed to re-establish the Speed Watch Project, recruit more volunteers and then all volunteers would need to undertake a refresher training course. Each Speed Watch session would need a team of four people to complete the necessary tasks. A residents asked what the time span was for volunteers taking part and it was considered that each session would last no more than an hour in different locations, after more than an hour the impact of the session would be lost. Several residents indicated they were happy to volunteer. It was suggested that publicising the project in the local newspaper would generate more interest and the Police might then take more action in regard to vehicles speeding through the village and larger vehicles using Pound Lane and other feeder roads in the Parish more seriously.

**74/21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** To confirm the date of the next Parish Council meeting as 27<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 27<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30 p.m. in the Benbow Club 77, Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford.

Signed ..... Councillor Bernard Foster, Chair

Date: 27<sup>TH</sup> October 2021

TO BE APPROVED