

**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE BENBOW CLUB BOWERS GIFFORD
ON WEDNESDAY 30 APRIL 2014 AT 7.30 PM.**

PRESENT:

Councillors: R.Smillie (Chair)
B.Wall: B Foster

In attendance: Christine Barlow (Parish Clerk)

Members of the Public: 15

155/14 APOLOGIES: Councillors Rose Griffin and Nigel Tyler – both sent apologies before meeting.

156/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: To receive any declarations of interest to any agenda items in accordance with Part 2, Paragraph 9 of the Members 'Code of Conduct.

None Received

157/14 MINUTES: Confirmation of minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2014.

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed as such by Councillor Robert Smillie, Chair.

158/14 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Public participation session.

As the Parish council meeting followed on from the Parish Annual meeting a comprehensive public participation had been addressed previously and no further questions were raised by the public present.

159/14 POLICING: Local Police Officers to attend and inform of policing activities for Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet.

PCSO Emma Spurr warned regarding bogus builders cold calling on vulnerable residents and extorting money for repairs to roofs that were not required. She urged residents to check that the builders were genuine before getting any work carried out.

“ Operation Seaford” had been set up to apprehend bogus callers as a number of residents had received phone calls from individuals purporting to be Police Officers and requesting bank details, which would never be the case. Residents were urged to be cautious when dealing with cold callers.

PCSO Spurr advised an individual had been apprehended following reports of drug activities.

The Police had taken action in respect of Parking at Ilfracombe School and had sent letters to parents of the children at the school and Councillor Smillie advised the Parish Council had been investigating ways to help reduce the problems.

Councillor Smillie and Ward Councillor Mo Larkin, Mayor of Basildon, who was present at the meeting, advised that between them they were trying to find a solution to resolve the problem of parking at the school but as with many schools in the district facing the same problem, there was not a quick fix solution as some parents will always abuse the measures put in place.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Larkin to the meeting and invited her to speak. Councillor Larkin advised that Basildon Council were fighting to get Essex County Council to reconsider their decision to turn off Basildon street lights at night, especially in rural communities and were investigating the merits of LED street lighting. She stated that Basildon opposed any building on green belt land and believed that Basildon would be better off as a unitary authority.

160/14 PARISH CLERK'S REPORT: To update on relevant business since the last meeting.

Action on previous minutes by Clerk

Page 1- 141/14/2 – The Highways issues had been taken up by Councillor Bobbin and the Parish Clerk had provided addition information to Highways regarding the various issues.

Page 4- 145/14/1 - More information and guidance of enforcement had been requested regarding the planning application. Councillors' comments had been sent by email to Basildon Council Officers but as yet no response on the matter had been received.

Page 4 - 147/14 - A copy of the letter in response to the Local Plan Core Strategy had been attached to the minutes of the previous meeting.

Page 5 – 149/14 - Outdoor Gym locations obtained and Councillors had visited sites to look at the various installations.

Page 6 – 153/14 – As agreed at the meeting on 26th March the Parish Clerk's hours had been increased to 15 hours per week from 1st April 2014

Additional information on other topics:

- i. Bowers Bugle, spring edition, had been delivered to properties in the Parish and also local businesses but more volunteer delivers were needed for some roads to make delivery easier.
- ii. Parish highways verges – Basildon Council Officers have agreed to cut back the long grass at the junction of Pound Lane and Burnt Mills Road to improve sight line for vehicles turning out of the junction. The remainder of the highways verges will be cut in June.
- iii. The National Grid had advised that work to upgrade overhead power lines was to continue over the summer and request had been made to attend a Parish Council meeting in May or June.

161/14 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS: To discuss any amendments to the Parish Council's Financial Regulations previously advised to the Parish Clerk and to agree that the existing system of internal financial control effectively meets the needs of the Parish Council.

No amendments to the Parish Council Financial Regulations had been received and Councillors considered that a sound system of internal controls were currently in place, including the preparation of accounting statements and the appropriate data having been provided by the Responsible Finance Officer in order to make informed financial decisions throughout the year. However, as it was election year the new Council membership might consider reviewing the regulations in the future.

162/14 FINANCE REPORT: The Responsible Finance Officer to advise Councillors on:

- (i) Financial matters since the last meeting on 26th March 2014

Balance at bank as of 26 th March 2014	£65,152.56
Balance as bank as of end of year 30 th April 2014	£64,741.59

Payments made:	
Clerks Salary	£410.97
Materials – Computer Battery	£ 56.40
HMRC Clerks Tax	<u>£294.00</u>
	£761.37
Payments received:	
1/2 Year Precept	£6,941.86
Came & Company (Ins.Claim)	£1,744.00
Grant Basildon Council	<u>£17,000.00</u>
	£25,685.86

- (ii) To present for approval the Annual Statement of Account for 2013/14

The Annual Statement of Account was presented and approved by all Councillors present.

- (iii) To advise on arrangements for auditing the Parish Council Accounts for 2013/2014

The Internal audit had been arranged for 22nd May 2014 and would be carried out by Heelis & Lodge Accountants. Following receiving the results of the Audit all appropriate documents would be sent to PKFLittleJohn, the appointed external Auditors by 9th June 2014 for ratification and to be signed off as a true record of accounts.

- 163/14 PLANNING APPLICATIONS:** 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: 14/00464/FULL

Retrospective application for loft conversion incorporating Velux windows to the south and north roof planes - 4 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, SS13 2HF

Councillors raised the fact that the plans presented had very little information and A9 Architecture, who has produced drawings for a number of applications seen recently, seems only to provide a minimum of information.

This area of Bowers Gifford is covered by Saved Policy BAS BE15 (Area of Special Development Control) which, it is understood, specifies that the maximum permitted ridge height for a chalet bungalow is 7 meters which would seem to be confirmed by the scale on the drawing.

There are no details of the internal measurements but it is estimated that the height of the Velux roof windows would be between 1.75 & 2.75 meters above floor level making it more of a skylight than a window. At such a height it would not encroach on the privacy of neighbours although they may well feel that they are being overlooked.

The constraint put on the extension when granting the previous application (13/00157/FULL) prohibited the adding of windows to the rear but not the side flanks. The property does however stand out when being approached from Pound Lane and appears considerably larger than the general run of adjacent bungalows.

On balance, as the retrospective application is presented, the Parish Council find no reason to raise an objection although raise the issue as to the reason why the changes were omitted to such an extent from the original application.

- 165/14 PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS:** To confirm receipt of nominations in respect of the Parish Council elections on 22nd May 2014 and arrangements to elect the nominees to the Parish Council for a four year period at the Annual Parish Council meeting on 28th May 2014.

The date, 24th April 2014, for receipt of Councillor nomination forms by Basildon Council in respect of elections to sit as a Councillor on the Parish Council had now passed. Six (6) nominations had been received and a statement of the names of these nominees had been displayed, as required under the 1972 Local Government Act, in the Parish Council noticeboards and website. As the number of nominations fell short of the required amount of seven (7) all persons nominated would automatically be elected and the election would be deemed uncontested. The new Parish Council would sit for a period of four years and the vacancy would be advertised and filled by co-option.

- 166/14 PARISH COUNCIL FETE:** To receive a report and update on arrangements for the Parish Council Fete on Sunday 17th August 2014 and agree an expenditure cap for the event.

Although Councillor Griffin was unable to attend the meeting she had provided an update of progress to date. To summarise:

- Eleven (11) stallholders had confirmed attendance and some had agreed to dress up in costume.
- The Benbow Club had confirmed their support.
- Haart Estate Agents (previously McColls) had agreed, once again, to support the event with advertising boards.
- Arena events were in the process of being organised and Kayzar Dance Troupe and a local Majorettes group had agreed to take part.
- There would be a tea tent for refreshments and BBQ
- A kiddies corner was being discussed
- A Risk Assessment had yet to be carried out and sent to Basildon Council in respect of the event.
- The Council are to refurbish the games they have in storage.
- RSBP have confirmed St Johns Ambulance, Police and Fire Brigade have yet to confirm.

- 167/14 WESTLAKE PARK IMPROVEMENT WORKS:** To update on the progress of improvement works and confirm the contractor to install the Outdoor Gym equipment.

The work to install the path around Westlake Park had been completed satisfactorily by Nelson Anderson & Sons. Wicksteed Playscapes and Caloo had also been

shortlisted to install the Outdoor Gym but having visited sites where both contractors had installed equipment it was considered that Wicksteed Playscapes was the preferred contractor as the materials used were more robust and of better quality. It was considered that more negotiation needed to be undertaken to reduce costs as Wicksteed were much higher than Calloo. However, if an improved quotation could be achieved then it was agreed to go ahead with Wicksteed Playscapes.

Proposed: Councillor Wall. **Seconded:** Councillor Foster.

The Parish Clerk was asked to further negotiate the reduction of the quotation with Wicksteed Playscapes.

Residents living next to the Park raised concerns that any improvements would not see the Park car park, once resurfaced, more frequently used and that the gates would remain closed for the majority of the time as they are at present.

In response Councillor Smillie stated that it was not the intention of the Parish Council to change the way this area of the park was currently used.

168/14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be the Annual Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 28th May 2014 at the Benbow Club, Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford at 7.30 p.m.