



**MINUTES OF BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30th AUGUST 2023.**

PRESENT:

Councillors:	B. Foster: S. Moore: C. Morris: T. Potter:
Ward Councillor/s:	Cllr. Craig Rimmer (Pitsea South - East Ward)
Parish Council Clerk/RFO:	Mrs Christine Barlow
Public attendance:	9

45/23 Apologies for absence: Parish Councillor Sheelagh Pegg: Essex County Councillor Aidan McGurran: Essex County Councillor /Pitsea South-East Ward Councillor Luke Mackenzie: Pitsea South-East Ward Councillor Gary Cranham

46/23 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.

None received.

47/23 Co-Option: To agree and confirm the co-option of a new Parish Council

Mr. Terence Potter was co-opted as a Parish Councillor unopposed and duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance.

48/23 Public Forum: Residents have the opportunity to raise questions of a general nature not discussed during the meeting. (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

(i) A resident advised that the zebra crossing beacons and adjacent lights in Pound Lane were not working.

(ii) A resident asked regarding a water leak outside Bowers Gifford Care Home. Although no information was available It was considered that the issue was related to the water leak which had occurred recently in the London Road and may have been the result of a larger leak in the London Road which is currently under investigation by Anglia Water company.

49/23 Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 26th July 2023: To approve the minutes of the previous meeting and Chair to sign.

Matters arising: Councillor Rimmer requested an amendment to be made to the minutes of the previous meeting in regard to Councillor Canham's report (Item 33/23) He advised that Councillor Blake, Deputy Leader, had attended the public meeting on 26th July and not Councillor Baggot. The Parish Clerk to amend the aforementioned minute to reflect.

Subject to the above amendment the Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting held on 26th July and Councillor Foster, Chair, signed to confirm.

50/23 Ward/County Councillor update: Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillors to address the meeting.

Councillor Rimmer confirmed that the Pitsea Swimming Pool was on course to open earlier than anticipated and possibly by November 2023

Work was due to commence on the proposed Diagnostic Centre in Pitsea in late Autumn. The advised it in the previous minutes the Centre is a joint venture between Basildon Council and the NHS and will be built on the old Pitsea Leisure site (latterly known as The Place) which is no longer fit for purpose. It is hoped that the new facility will reduce NHS waiting times. In addition, the newly proposed Diagnostic Centre in Basildon Town Centre, which will be built with private funding, and it was understood they were proposing to retain as much retail within the Eastgate Centre as possible in order to fuel the economy of the Town Centre.

Empire Cinema consortium have now handed over the keys of the new Cinema to Basildon Council and the Council is now responsible for the building as a whole.

Councillor Foster asked Councillor Rimmer if it was possible to obtain an approximate time when the new building would be opened fully once again. Councillor Rimmer advised an approximate date for starting the work is expected to be November, although this date might change due to unforeseen circumstances. It was expected the duration of the new build would take approximately 18 months to complete.

It was also expected that Essex Council would extend the library services to other Libraries in the area. Councillor Rimmer had also suggested book boxes which might fill the gap for a temporary period and the Parish Clerk suggested that the current mobile service could be extended.

Councillor McGurran, although unable to attend the meeting, advised by email that he fully supported the new Diagnostic Centre in Pitsea but was concerned regarding the relocation of the various activities, including Pitsea Library, during the rebuild. He advised he had arranged a meeting with the Essex County Council Cabinet Member, Cllr Mark Durham, who was responsible for Libraries, to discuss this matter. In his email he advised if residents had any concerns, they could contact him via email: aidanmcgurran@hotmail.co.uk

51/23 Parish Clerk's Report: To update on business since the last meeting on 26th July 2023

Cadent Gas works: The Clerk advised that Cadent, who were carrying out the laying of new gas pipes, had informed that Page Road would be shut for at least another three weeks for the safety of the public and workforce. The large hole outside 143 Pound Lane is a large excavation hole to service the main valves which service other supplies. The work will then move towards William Road, with two-way traffic lights. The plan is then to open Page Road and shut Canvey Road and for work to continue along Pound Lane to Kelly Road.

Councillor Foster suggested that as soon as the work by Cadent was completed the Pound Lane needed to be resurfaced in its entirety. It was suggested that these comments should be made to Lee Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways. Repairing the pavements was, as far as the Parish Council understood, had already been discussed.

The Vehicle Activation Sign: After five year of requesting the Vehicle Activation Sign in Pound Lane to be repaired it is now working thanks to Councillor Luke Mackenzie have secured a grant of £6,800 from the Local Highways Panel budget. A speed survey was also being proposed for Pound Lane and the Parish Clerk was meeting with the Local Highways Officer responsible for submitting the various projects to the Local Highways Panel, the following morning (31st August) to discuss the location for the speed strips along Pound Lane. The proposal would then be put forward to the LHP Members at their next meeting. However, whilst the ongoing gas repairs were in progress it was suggested it might be prudent to delay undertaking the speed survey for a short period.

Item 43/22: Grass cutting: Extensive conversations had been held with both the Grounds Maintenance Manager and Grounds Maintenance/Arboricultural Officer regarding the poor standard of work by ID Verdi, Basildon Council's main contractor, The Clerk had been advised that the scheduled grass verges in the housing areas in the Parish were due to be cut imminently. Matters relating to the cutting-back of the vegetation on the London Road which was overgrowing onto the footpath were laborious and ongoing. The Clerk had requested that the Pride Team cut the hedge alongside the metal fencing, opposite the school, and adjacent to the traffic lights and crossing for safety reasons before the children returned to school after the holidays.

Overhanging shrubs and branches: The Parish Council's Grounds Maintenance member of staff has cut the overhanging shrubs from Kelly Road to London Road for pedestrian safety and some shrubs overhanging the pavement in Kelly Road. He has also strimmed the long grass around several posts on the verges of North Benfleet due to ID Verde, the Borough Council contractors, not completing this task sufficiently. The Parish Clerk had also reported overhanging tree branches in several parts of the Parish to Basildon Council's Arboricultural Officer.

Parking: Contact has been made with Charlotte Green - Smith, Essex Police

regarding parking issues at the school and parking on the pavement. Also, parking outside the shop and in William Road was a problem which needed to be addressed by South Essex Parking Partnership. Councillor Rimmer asked Councillor Moore what the parking was like in Ilfracombe Avenue and was advised that due to the school holidays it was currently not a problem.

Westlake Park Gates: Due to finding, on inspection, that the two large gates at the entrance to Westlake Park were not able to be locked a contractor was engaged to repair the gates as a matter of security. The Parish Clerk is to discuss the cost of the repair with Basildon Council when the invoice is received.

Councillor Rimmer commented that the planter on the London Road looked very good and colourful and suggested that maybe more were needed.

It was proposed to deliver a Bowers Bugle newsletter to residents in September and an article on the need to recruit Parish Councillors, to fill the two vacant posts, would be included.

52/23 Finance Report: Responsible Finance Officer to provide a summary of the Parish Council's financial position and advise on other relevant finance matters.

Christine Barlow, Responsible Finance Officer, provided a summary account, as stated below, in respect of bank transactions since the previous meeting:

	£
Balance at Bank 26 th July 2023	54,209.35
Balance at Bank 29 th August 2023	42,688.90
Expenditure:	11,520.45
Income:	Nil
Expenditure:	
BT- Benbow Hall Hire	80.00
BT- Consultation Fee – NDO Feasibility Study	10,130.64
BT- Staff Net Wages – July	224.00
BT- Parish Clerks Net Salary - July (inc. Office Use/BB/Tel)	845.70
BT- Clerks Expenses (Stationary & Materials for Equipment)	81.79
BT- HP Toner Cartridges Multi - Pack + VAT	118.32
(Chq. 721) ICO – Data Protection Fee	<u>40.00</u>
	11,520.48
Income:	Nil

Councillor Foster advised that in addition to the costs which were visible and had been incurred for work being carried out by our consultants in respect of the Neighbourhood Development Order, the Parish Council had also managed to secure other free Technical support from Locality to assist in the preparation of the Feasibility Study.

(ii) An application had been submitted to reclaim VAT for 2022/2023.

(iii) Despite the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) being submitted to PKF LITTLEJOHN, the Government's External auditors for consideration in June. Once again, they were proving very difficult despite having been provided with all the information and calculations. The external auditors use junior account staff to review all documentation and other Clerks were experiencing the same problem.

A quotation for costs to carry out the Highways Assessment and Transportation Statement, by TPC consultants, had been received. The cost was in the region of £9,500 (ex. Vat) but this cost had fortunately been included in the original costs for the grant funding of £96,500 for the NDO Feasibility Study from Locality

The Parish Council Insurance is due for renewal on 5th November and the Insurance Brokers have requested an update regarding any changes in cover required. A questionnaire is required to be completed and returned, in due course, to the Brokers to advise of any changes in cover to ensure the Parish Council was adequately covered under the insurance.

53/23 Planning: Councillors to review and comment on Planning Application/s under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

To discuss, where applicable, Planning Applications submitted to the Parish Council for comment since the previous meeting.

No planning applications had come to the Parish Council's attention for consideration since the previous meeting held on 25th July 2023.

54/23 Planning updates and comments: To receive updates and comments on planning applications discussed at previous meetings.

- (i) **Planning Application Ref: 23/00825/FULL** - Single storey front porch and front dormer extension - Elm End, Elm Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex SS13 2LY – Refused.
- (ii) **Planning Application Ref: 23/00827/FULL** - Proposed demolition of existing approved dwelling and the erection of a replacement dwelling - Elm Trees, 2, Elm Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex SS13 2LY - Granted.
- (iii) **Planning Application Ref: 23/00737/FULL** - 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 - Land East of The Firs, Osborne Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex – Refused.
- (iv) **Planning Application Ref: 23/00492/FULL** - Retention of existing one-bedroom bungalow and outbuilding - Gladwinds, London Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex SS13 2HE - Refused.
- (v) **Planning Application Ref: 23/00602/LDCE** - To establish the lawfulness of the occupation of an existing building as a dwellinghouse - Carpenters Farm, Harrow Road North Benfleet, Basildon Essex SS12 9JJ - Refused.

(vi) Planning Application Ref: 23/00687/LDCE - To establish the lawfulness of land for uses falling within Classes B2 and B8 - Sadlers Hall Farm, London Road, Bowers Gifford, Essex SS13 2HD - Granted.

55/23 Neighbourhood Development Order: To update on the progress of the Feasibility Study.

Councillor Foster advised that the NDO Feasibility Study was progressing, and AECOM Consultants have been engaged to provide technical support, as mentioned above, in completing parts of the Feasibility Study at no cost to the Parish Council. Our consultants have been working on providing a new road within the plotland area to support any future development. The Neighbourhood Development Order will grant outline planning permission in the Green Belt for development in the plotlands areas and a Design Code will be used to set out a criteria to ensure that any development meets a certain standard. The aim of the NDO is to improve the plotland areas by using derelict land and vacant plots for new homes. It is proposed to produce a draft copy of the Neighbourhood Development Order Feasibility Study before the end of 2023. A referendum will take place in the New Year to obtain approval from the residents of Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet regarding the implementation of the Order. If the order is approved it will then be up to each individual owner to decide if they want to develop their own land.

56/23 Date of next meeting: To confirm the date of the next meeting as 27th September 2023

The date of the next meeting is confirmed as above in the Benbow Club, 77 Pound Lane.

Signed Councillor Bernard Foster, Chair

Date: 27th September 2023