



**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD REMOTELY
WEDNESDAY 28TH APRIL 2021 AT 8.15 PM.**

PRESENT:

- Councillors:** B. Foster: C. Morris: T. Potter
- Parish Council Clerk/RFO:** Mrs Christine Barlow
- Ward Councillors:** Councillor C. Rimmer (Pitsea South East)
- Public attendance:** 5 identified.

117/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor R Smillie: Councillor C. Morgan

118/20 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTEREST: To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other pecuniary interests or non-pecuniary interests by members relating to any agenda items.

Councillor C. Morris declared an interest in Item 124/20 - Planning Application 21/00452/FULL relating to 101 Pound Lane and would take no part in the discussions and would remove himself from the meeting.

119/20 VIRTUAL PUBLIC FORUM: Residents have the opportunity to raise issues and ask questions of the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk to identify any questions which have been sent to her, by email, from the public. The time allowed for this item is a maximum of 15 minutes)

No questions were raised by those present.

120/20 MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 31st March 2021

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 31st March 2021 were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by Councillor Bernard Foster, Chairman.

121/20 WARD/COUNTY COUNCILLOR UPDATE: Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillors, if present, to address the meeting.

Councillor Rimmer advised that, as recorded in the minutes of the previous meeting, he intended to arrange a meeting to discuss the flooding in the Parish. This meeting had taken place earlier than expected on 26th April 2021 and those present were himself, Councillor Foster, on behalf of the Parish Council, Stephen Metcalf, MP for Thurrock and East Basildon, Kevin Bentley, Deputy Leader of ECC and Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure and several Officers from Essex County Council who dealt with Environmental issues. Progress had

been made and areas identified where potential problems might be and those present agreed to go away and come up with solutions within the next few months. The meeting had looked at historical maps to locate the original locations of the ditches in Burnt Mills Road and it was identified a number of these had been filled in over the years and it was resolved to find an amicable solution which worked for all parties (i.e. the village and property owners). Councillor Foster advised that as the Local Plan progresses there may be an opportunity to resolve the issues on the Bradfield Farm side of the road, needed to be addressed as a whole, not just part of the problem. The Parish Clerk asked, if having discussed the problem of flooding in the north of the village, if there had been any discussion regarding the issues of flooding and effluent which had occurred in the south of the village, and which residents in these areas were also subject to. Councillor Foster advised that the meeting had been held to specifically discuss the Burnt Mills Road/Pound Lane area regarding the flooding issues in this location, but Councillor Rimmer advised he would raise the matter and ask Officers to look at this issue.

Councillor Rimmer alluded to the recent planning meetings regarding Basildon Town Centre and a recent Planning Application in connection with high rise blocks in the centre which had been brought back to the Planning Committee due to the fact Essex County Council felt their views had been misrepresented in the planning discussions and they were not happy with funding being cut or other elements of the application.

A request had also been made to Councillor Rimmer, by a resident, to look into the fact that Enforcement Officers were slow to act in regard to some cases. Councillor Rimmer had taken this up with the relevant department.

Councillor Rimmer added that some potholes had been repaired on Pitsea High Road and resurfacing works were to be carried out on the High Road near Pitsea School in late summer.

122/20 PARISH CLERK'S REPORT: The Parish Clerk to report on matters since the previous meeting on 31st March 2021.

Christine Barlow, the Parish Clerk, reported on the following:

(i) **Agenda Item 107/20 (Minutes 31st March 2021) : Protective netting around the Crimson Acer sapling tree in Westlake Park:** Basildon Council have agreed to provide a metal cage to protect the tree at which point the protective netting will be removed.

(ii) **Agenda item 107/20 (Minutes 31st March 2021): Flooding Old Church Road:** Councillor Foster and the Parish Clerk met with a local resident on 9th April. It was considered that the flooding in Old Church Road had occurred due an outlet pipe, located within the ditch beside the road, reportedly being covered up by contractors working on behalf of Essex & Suffolk Water. The Parish Clerk had made telephone contact with ESW in order to resolve the issue and been informed that contractors would be on site on Monday 26th April to investigate. However, when attending the site to carry-out the work, had been looking for a different problem other than the one described and had attempted to lift a manhole cover instead of locating the pipe in the ditch. They were unable to dislodge the cover and would have to return to the site on another occasion. On

receiving the information, the Parish Clerk had questioned the reasons for the action taken due to the fact that the problem was in the ditch and there was a need to remove the soil to expose the pipe externally . The Parish Clerk was waiting for a further reply, on what action would now be taken, from ESW.

(iii) **Church Road underpass:** The Parish Clerk had sent an email to Essex County Councillor Kevin Bentley, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure on 26th April 2020 and she was waiting for Councillor Bentley to update a previous email received, from him, in June 2020 stating that underpass repairs would be carried out in the financial year 2020/2021. Essex County Council financial year is now 2021/2022 and the repairs still had not been carried out. The Clerk had drawn the Parish Council's concern that the repairs remained outstanding to Essex County Council.

(iv) **Lighting repairs Windsor Road:** The lighting contractor had returned to the site and reported that the lighting unit had multiple issues and UK Power Networks would need to be contacted in order for them to supply the necessary parts to carry-out the repairs.

(v) **Countywide Spring Clean Project :** The Parish Clerk had contacted Basildon Borough Council and they had confirmed they would be able to provide Hi-Viz jackets, litter pickers, rubbish sacks and the rubbish collected. A suitable date between 28th May – 13th June, to undertake the Spring Clean. A date was to be confirmed as lockdown eased. The Parish Clerk had also asked for the help of the Pride Team to assist in clearing out the ditches in Old Church Road and this action may also help with the flooding issue.

(vi) **Planters:** Essex County Council had confirmed the licences to install Planters on the verge at adjacent to Ilfracombe Avenue and the Parish Council was waiting for a delivery date to be confirmed. The Clerk had forwarded emails to Balfour Beatty and asked for them to provide some aggregate for drainage at the bottom of the planters and was waiting for a reply.

(vii) **Recycled telegraph poles:** Pending.

(viii) **Crime Reports:** Police reports had identified one attempted burglary and one actual burglaries over the previous month. The first in Church Road on 23rd March was an attempted break-in and the second in Pound Lane was on 23rd April whilst the residents were not at home and precious items were stolen.

(ix) **Picnic-in-the-Park:** A singer had been booked to team up with existing booked entertainment.

(x) **Net Swing in the Junior Play Area:** The damaged New Swing in Westlake Park is still under discussion.

(xi) Essex Active will be holding some holiday activities during the summer holidays and more details will be available in due course.

123/20 FINANCE REPORT: The Responsible Finance Officer to report on the Parish Council's current financial position and other matters including:

(i) To report on the Parish Councils current financial position and advise on arrangements to carry out the Annual Internal and External Audit.

	£
Balance at Bank 31 st March 2021	16,689.75
Balance at Bank 28 th April 2021	25,256.24
Expenditure:	347.23
Income:	8,913.72
Expenditure:	
(574) HMRC Clerks Tax Plus Emprs. NI (J/F/M)	347.23
Income: BBC 1/2 year Precept 2021-2022	8,913.72

Councillors were advised that cheques in the region of £5000 were outstanding and waiting to be paid and that this will reduce the Parish Council's Bank balance in due course.

(ii) To receive the Parish Council end of year Income and Expenditure and Cash Book details for 2020/21.

Councillors had each been given a hard copy of the Parish Council Income and Expenditure, Bank Ledger and Cash Book (Appendix A,B and C) and had also received a copy, by email, of each document. The documents confirmed that at the end of the year the balance at the bank was £16,689.75

Councillors raised no questions of the Responsible Finance Officer in relation to the documents provided. The Accounts would be published on the Parish Council website for public information in due course

124/20 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: 21/00572/FULL

Erection of attached garage to side/rear - 18 Bowers Court Drive, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex

Having considered the planning application Councillors raised no objections to the application as presented.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 21/00452/FULL

Demolition of existing bungalow and garage, and erection of a new detached chalet with detached garage. - 101 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex

Councillors considered that the proposals within the application were yet another loss of a bungalow type of property within the Parish. However, they raised no objections to the application in principle.

125/20 PLANNING DECISIONS: Councillors to receive updates regarding planning applications discussed at previous meetings and other relevant applications.

St Modwen's Scoping Opinion Report consultation with statutory consultees was regarding Land East of Burnt Mills Road had now closed.

No other planning decisions had been published since the previous meeting.

126/20 ANNUAL INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AUDIT 2020/2021:

(i) **Annual Governance Statement:** To confirm a sound system of internal control is in place regarding the business activities of the Parish Council

Parish Councillors having been sent a copy of the Annual Governance Statement by email and had been provided with a hard copy, **AGREED**, by a show of hands, that there were sound systems of internal control in place regarding the Parish Council's business activities during the year and Councillor Foster signed the statement in his capacity as Chairman.

(ii) **Annual Audit process for 2020/2021:** The Responsible Finance Officer had already circulated details of the Annual Audit process for both the Internal and External Audit to Councillors and explained the process for meeting the timetable in order to reach PKF LittleJohn, the government's appointed external Auditor, by 1st July 2021.

127/20 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: Update on matters as appropriate

Councillor Foster advised that the Parish Council were reviewing all its documentation currently within SD3, which includes the three Neighbourhood Plans currently being put together (Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet, Ramsden Bellhouse and Noak Bridge) and ensure that the content meets the requirements for Basildon Council's Local Plan Examination. The Parish Council will be looking at three separate competences (i) to make sure it succeeds in getting the Neighbourhood Plan through the examination with Basildon Council's Local Plan and making sure that the Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at that time (ii) making sure the Neighbourhood Plan goes through the Regulation 14 consultation successfully and then (iii) to make ensure it finalises agreements with Developers, Basildon Council and Essex County Council and ensure the Parish Council can deliver what has been promised. It is anticipated that the Neighbourhood Plan will not be completed until at least 2022. Of the three Neighbourhood Plans the Parish has approximately 75% of the development and in order to finalise some of the work the Parish Council has to complete it has been requesting financial assistance from Basildon Council for nearly 18 months without success. A grant of £50,000 has been set aside by Basildon Council to assist with the current three Neighbourhood Plans in the district but although the Parish has made requests for the support over recent months, no financial support had been confirmed. The Parish Council had been informed the Borough Council was drawing up criteria for all parties making an application. It was understood the money would be allocated in the form of a Grant which the authority could then recover from Central Government. A final quotation is being prepared to be submitted to cover all the changes the Parish Council has had to make to progress their Neighbourhood Plan through to completion, due to the length of time the Local

Plan Examination had taken to be heard and the changes it accounted on the way in regard the NPPF. The total cost of the support grant from Basildon Council was in the region of £25,400. In addition to this amount a grant to complete work on Affordable Housing for Sale may be required , as a result of the Parish Council not being able to complete elements of the project previously funded by Locality, a government organisation set up to assist organisations such as the Parish council for preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. Due to current restrictions the Parish Council had not been able to meet the criteria of the grant and may have to return any unspent money.

128/20 PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING:

The Parish Council Annual Meeting will take place on Wednesday 26th May 2020 at 7.30 p.m. Subject to a High Court ruling and Government restrictions at the time of the meeting. It is unclear if the meeting will take place in public or remotely, via the Zoom platform. The Parish Clerk to keep Councillors informed of the situation.

Signed:Councillor Bernard Foster

Date: 26th May 2021

Signed Councillor B. Foster , Chair

Date: 28th April 2021