

**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE BENBOW CLUB BOWERS GIFFORD
ON WEDNESDAY 29 JULY 2015 AT 7.30 p.m.**

PRESENT:

Councillors: R.Smillie (Chair): B.Foster: G.Guenigault: N.Tyler

In attendance: Christine Barlow (Parish Clerk)

Members of the Public: 20

29/15 Apologies for absence.

Councillor Matthew Phillips: PCSO Emma Spurr

30/15 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

31/15 Public Forum: To enable residents to raise issues of concern with Parish Councillors (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)**31/15/1** It was reported that the tarmac path leading to the play area and other small areas in Westlake Park was cracking.

Action: The Parish Clerk advised this was probably due to ground movement and the dry weather but she would arrange a site visit with the contractor to discuss if anything could be done to deal with the problem.

31/15/2 A resident asked if the Basildon Council Westlake Park sign could be made more prominent as some residents and visitors to the area still did not know where the Park location was. It was suggested that a map could be put into the Parish newsletter.

Action: The Parish Clerk was asked to make enquiries regarding improving the signage to Westlake Park and to look at a map highlighting the Park's location in the next newsletter.

31/15/3 A resident asked if there was any information regarding when the contractors' compound at Sadlers Farm was to be removed as it was becoming an eyesore. The Parish Clerk stated that the last information she had received was that it would take a further two years to complete the works. Councillor Foster said he had raised the question at the Basildon Highways Panel meeting but no-one on the panel was able to give him a definitive answer.

Action: Councillor Foster will raise the matter again at the next Basildon Highways Panel meeting.

31/15/4 A resident reported that the weight limit sign at the Courtauld Road end of Burnt Mills Road was pointing in the wrong direction. Councillors stated that when they met with Essex County Council Highways Officers in June they made them aware and were advised that new signs were to be installed when the new road layout construction in North Benfleet was undertaken.

Action: The Parish Clerk was asked to contact Peter Wright, ECC Highways Officer, who Councillors had previously met in June and ask for an update on road and signage changes to Pound Lane and Burnt Mills Road.

31/15/5 A resident raised the fact that there were few activities in Westlake Park for older youths and offered some suggestions put forward by her teenage daughter (who was also present at the meeting) and her friends. The suggestions were: i) A Themed Kicking Wall ii) A Graffiti Wall iii) Net swings for older young people v) A Climbing Wall vi) A Youth Club or Youth Council to hear what young people had to say and have a voice. The resident had written the suggestions on a poster and presented them to Councillors to consider. (Appendix A)

The Parish Clerk advised she had been in contact with Essex County Council Youth Workers to arrange for the ECC Youth 'Fun' Bus to be parked in Westlake Park so that a discussion could be had with the young people about the activities they wanted to see in the village. It had been suggested that a suitable date might be arranged during October.

Action: To organise the Fun Bus with Essex County Council Youth Workers and notify as many young people as possible of the arrangements using the media available.

31/15/6 A resident again raised the issue of the unkempt condition and look of the grass verges in North Benfleet beside Exchange House. The Parish Council advised they were still pursuing the matter with Essex County Council but were currently unable to get any enforcement action taken.

A dumped caravan in Courtauld Road was reported by the resident and the Parish Clerk said she had already made Basildon Council aware of the same issue.

31/15/7 The problem of parking in William Road was again discussed and the Parish Clerk advised that the matter was on-going but she was unable to provide any update.

32/15 **Policing:** Local Police Officers to update on policing matters affecting the Parish.

Police Officers were unable to attend the meeting.

33/15 **Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 24th June 2015** - 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 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting and signed, as such, by Councillor Robert Smillie, Chairman.

34/15 Parish Clerk's Report: To update on day-to-day Parish Council business and correspondence since the last meeting.

The Parish Clerk gave an update on some of actions taken since the previous meeting and not reported on during the current meeting.

- i) **Fouling:** The offensive fouling in the play house in the junior play area in Westlake Park appeared to have been cleaned-up by Basildon Council Operatives.
- ii) **Radio controlled cars:** The question of the use of radio controlled cars in public places, including parks, had been discussed with Basildon Council Parks & Countryside Manager, Steve Prewer, and a ninety-two page document containing a list of bye-laws for a number of activities, including the bye-laws relating to dogs in the park, had been received just before the meeting and had as yet not been read by the Parish Clerk.
- iii) **Shrub pruning:** Overhanging shrubs at the junction of William Road/Pound Lane had been pruned.
- iv) **Unkempt grass verges:** The issues regarding the use of grass verges in North Benfleet was on-going and further emails had been sent to South Essex Parking Partnership requesting an update on the responsibility to control and enforce any restrictions.
- v) **Heritage Assets:** A list of suggested Heritage Assets had been sent to Basildon Borough Council and these would be considered along with those already sent by other individuals and organisations.
- vi) **Locality Addresses:** Councillor Foster and the Parish Clerk had met with Basildon Borough Council Officers and discussed a number of corrections to incorrectly identified postal locality addresses. Basildon Council had agreed to carry out a review of all addresses and update the Parish Council on their findings.
- vii) A letter had been received from a resident supporting the Parish Council's proposals to look at adopting a Neighbourhood Plan and also complimenting the Parish Council on their Picnic in the Park event.
- viii) **Invitation to take part:** An email had been received from Essex County Council Flood and Water Management Alliance advising that the Parish Council had been selected to take part in a project called 'Where Does your Water Go?'. The purpose of the project was to map ordinary watercourses such as ditches and culverts to find out where they were. The project enlisted the help of volunteers in helping to map these areas. The Parish Clerk would contact the Team to obtain further information on the project.

35/15 Finance Report: To advise Councillors on financial matters since the last meeting on 24th June 2015

The Parish Clerk presented a summary account of the current financial position and advised that although a budget of £750 had been agreed for the Picnic in the Park event the actual expenditure was under £600.

The amount currently ring fenced for Parish Council projects from funds raised by the

Parish Council and its Councillors was approximately £1500.

Balance at bank as at 22nd June 2015	£8,160.72
Balance at bank as at 26th July 2015	£6,391.14
<u>Summary</u>	
Expenditure	£1,769.58
Income	Nil
<u>Expenditure</u>	
Net Clerks Salary+ Office Allowance (June)	£565.39
HMRC Clerks Tax & EMP NI (3 months)	£413.79
Coker Expo – Display boards	£221.40
Printing	£245.00
Expenses - Picnic in the Park (Band)	£300.00
Expenses – Picnic in the Park (Banner overlay)	£24.00
	£1,769.58

36/15 Planning - Councillors to review and comment on Planning Application/s under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

36/15/1 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 15/00742/VAR- Sadlers Park, London Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex

Variation of condition attached to Appeal Decision dated 12th October 2005 (APP/V1505/C/02/1089676&677) Vary condition 1 by amending number of caravans to 8 mobile homes and 6 tourers. Increase the number of pitches to 6 and delete reference to eastern half of site being retained as grassland in condition 2 and vary condition 4 to amend and increase names of authorised occupiers.

Councillors had considered the application and took into account that since the original agreement in 2002 only one family had joined the site and now most of the children of the existing families had grown-up, similar to many families in the area. Whilst the Parish Council were of acceptance of the existing caravan site and would agree that the younger children needed to obtain an education, for the older children this was no longer the case as they had now become teenagers and adults and were no longer in full time education. The caravan site was considered to be incorrectly stated in the application as being "completely surrounded by urban roads". It was of triangular shape and on one side adjacent to fields and an allotment area and was in a semi - rural setting. The increase in the number of caravans would increase the movement of traffic both on and off the site and would impact on the safety of already busy surrounding roads.

It was considered that the enforcement order issued by Basildon Council had been ignored and work to create a new hard standing would appear to have continued in violation of several enforcement notices to cease.

The views of the Parish Council were to request that the appeal be dismissed on the grounds that if granted (i) it would be harmful to the openness of the area and Green Belt (ii) it would damage the visual amenity as it would be clearly seen from the road

and by neighbouring properties. (ii) The development is in Green Belt and would therefore constitute an illegal encroachment. (iii) Safety of an already busy London Road/Sadlers Farm junction would be compromised. (iv) There were no special circumstances to vary and appeal the decision of 12th October 2005 to amend the number of caravans (mobile homes and tourers) allowable on the site.

36/15/2 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 15/00820/FULL - St Margaret's School, London Road, Pitsea, Essex

Demolition of existing community hall and erect proposed extension to existing classroom to create a new community hall, together with the conversion of an existing grassed area to create a car park.

Parish Councillors had met with St. Margaret's School Head Teacher, Emma Wigmore, on several occasions to discuss parking issues, the last meeting being 6th July 2015. At this meeting the prospective site improvements were discussed.

Councillors considered the proposals of a drop – off system which would help resolve the issues of parking and congestion at school times, primarily in the morning and go some way towards helping reduce nuisance to residents and neighbouring properties. The new community building would also help provide support for the school and St Margaret's Church in their various activities.

The Parish Councillors having considered the planning application raised no objections to the application.

Action: The Parish Clerk was asked to pass all comments regarding the planning application discussed to Basildon Borough Council Planning Officers as a matter of record.

36/15/3 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 14/01114/FULL - Cranfield Place Cranfield Park Avenue, North Benfleet Essex

The continued use of the land as a seven pitch residential Gypsy/Traveller/Caravan Site consisting of hard standings, fences, static and touring caravans, day rooms/utility blocks, outbuildings and landscaping as set out in submitted schedule personal to the applicants and their residential dependants.

Due to the response timescales for reporting back to Planning Officers Councillors had discussed this planning application outside of the meeting and their response was reported at the meeting. Councillors considered that the application should be refused on the grounds that:

- a) Residents on the site were acting illegally and were in breach of any condition notice served in the past.
- b) There were no special circumstances that would warrant granting the application.
- c) Further encroachment on Green Belt would be harmful.

36/15/4 APPLICATION NO: DM/279/B/7/RPD - Proposed changes to traffic regulations in Rectory Park Drive, Pitsea: To discuss any proposed changes which might impact on residents who live in the Parish, who are patients of the doctors surgery at Rose Villa, Rectory Park Drive, Pitsea

Councillors considered what impact on the proposed traffic regulations in regard to the application by the new Morrison's Supermarket would have on parking and how these regulations would affect residents in the Parish who were patients of the Rose Villa Doctors Surgery and would have to travel by car to make appointments. On behalf of the Parish Council the Parish Clerk had contacted the Site Project Manager and been advised by him that all indication showed that there would be limited parking of two hours for members of the public within the existing car park. Number recognition digital cameras would be used for all car park users on entry and exit. Users outside the designated times would receive a penalty notice and fine. It might be possible for the surgery to apply for a disabled parking bay, which would help any users who were disabled.

Action: Councillors Foster confirmed he would raise this issue with Basildon Highways Panel when it next met.

36/15/5 Planning decisions and comments – To receive updates and comments on decisions in respect of planning applications discussed at previous meetings.

36/15/5/1 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 14/01114/FULL - Cranfield Place Cranfield Park Avenue, North Benfleet Essex

The Planning Committee had sat on the previous night (28th July 2015) and, on the recommendation of Officers, had granted a five year extension for the temporary use of the pitches until a new Traveller policy was in place.

36/15/5/2 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 15/00557/FULL The Gun Public House, London Road.

The application by the owners of the Gun Public House to build a large extension at the rear of the existing building and create a 27 bedroomed hotel was passed by Basildon Council Planning Committee the previous night (28th July). The Chair stated the Parish Council, although objecting to the application, were pleased for Lynne Mosheni, landlady of The Gun and her staff but were fearful of the message that the granting of the application would send to prospective developers, especially those involved with Little Chalvedon Hall Farm, in respect of building on the Parish's Green Belt and opening the Parish up to large scale development in the absence of a Local Plan.

37/15 Bus shelter cleaning: To consider, in the absence of any contract by Essex County Council, what action can be taken to clean bus shelters in Pound Lane.

A letter had been received from a local resident complaining of the dirty condition of the bus shelters in Pound Lane. The Parish Clerk explained that having approached Essex County Council, as owners of the bus shelters, several times she had been told there was currently no contract in place to clean the shelters. Quotations had been obtained for the Parish Council to bear the cost of cleaning the five shelters and these had been in the region of £150 - £200. Councillors had considered the costs and although the amounts were modest felt the money could be put to better use and had decided to undertake the cleaning themselves. The Bus Shelter Clean was arranged for the following Saturday, 1st August 2015 and anyone was welcome to join them. Two residents took up the invitation and confirmed they would clean the Kelly Road bus shelter.

- 38/15 Social Media:** To discuss and consider setting up a social media site to improve communications between the Parish Council and the Parish electorate.

The Parish Council had previously taken a decision as a Parish Council to avoid Facebook, Twitter or Streetlife and until now had been very happy using their own website and other media available to them to communicate. They did however, when setting up the Parish Council obtain a Twitter ID which had not been used to date and having discussed have decided it would now be beneficial to use Twitter to inform residents about events, activities or provide information at a local level that may affect the Parish and link it into the website.

Councillors **AGREED** that for a trial period of six months the Parish Council would engage the use of Twitter as another way of communicating with residents.

Action: The Parish Council to set up a Twitter account for an initial period of six months and then review it's' effectiveness after this period. The Parish Clerk confirmed they had an Openness and Transparency policy procedure in place which covered the use of such an account.

- 39/15 Parish locality addresses:** To update Councillors on the progress of discussions regarding amending incorrectly identified Parish postal locality addresses.

See 34/15 - Parish Clerk's Report - Item (vi)

- 40/15 Grant Policy:** To discuss and consider the implementation of a grant and donation policy under the Local Government Housing Act 1972 Section 137

The Parish Council Budget in the past and the Budget Precept of 2015/2016 had not taken into account any facility for the allowance of grants or donations to external organisations when setting the Parish Council Annual Budget. The Parish Council had recently been approached by the Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Residents Association for a grant towards funds for Page Woods but currently there was no mechanism in place to consider such a request. A draft policy had been drawn up by the Parish Clerk and submitted to Councillors. Councillors had considered the content of this first draft but felt further discussion on the main points was needed. It was recognised that, if a grant policy was agreed, the total amount set aside for such a facility would have to be capped and the allocation for each grant would be small, as the amount would need to be agreed within the Annual Budget Precept.

Action: The Parish Clerk was asked to amend the document and to include an item on the agenda of the August meeting for a second reading of the policy.

At this point the Chair allowed a resident the opportunity to speak.

The resident stated that having spoken to other Trustees in respect of a dormant account set up to fight the building of St. Andrews Care Home it had been agreed to donate the £1000 in the account to the Parish Council to help fund a project in Westlake Park for older youngsters and teenagers. The stipulation for donating the money was that it would be not used for any project other than the one identified and an article inserted in the Parish newsletter to this effect.

The Chair thanked the Trustees for this donation.

- 41/15 Youth activities:** To update on proposals to bring Essex County Council's Youth Bus to the Parish.

This item had been covered in the public session.

- 42/15 Feedback on meetings attended by Councillors:** To briefly update on the relevant issues from meetings and training attended by Parish Councillors.

Councillor Foster gave a brief update on discussions undertaken at the Basildon Highways Panel meeting and the Association of Basildon Council's (ABLC) meeting which he had attended.

- 43/15 Parish in Bloom:** To update on the Picnic in the Park and Parish in Bloom events.

(i) Parish in Bloom: Judging for the Parish in Bloom had taken place the day before the meeting on 28th July and the standard of entries was once again very high. Councillor Bernard Foster and ex-Councillor Mo Larkin, now Deputy Lieutenant of Essex had judged the entries. All participants would be notified regarding the date the results would be announced and a presentation would take place at the next Parish Council meeting on 26th August 2015 and each entrant invited to attend.

(ii) Picnic in the Park: Despite the bad weather some residents had braved the rain and stayed to enjoy the afternoon. The feedback from these residents had been very positive and the Parish Council would consider holding the event again. A vote of thanks was given to the residents who helped on the day. Further discussion would be held on repeating the event and the format would be put forward for agreement at future Parish Council meetings.

- 44/15 Date of next meeting** - To confirm the date of the next Parish Council meeting.

The next Parish Council meeting would take place on Wednesday 26th August 2015 at 7.30 p.m. at The Benbow Club, Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford.