



**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET  
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD REMOTELY  
WEDNESDAY 27<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2021 AT 7.30 PM.**

**PRESENT:**

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

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

**Ward Councillors:** Councillor Craig Rimmer (Pitsea South East Ward)

**Public attendance:** 6 identified.

**79/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillor Robert Smillie: Councillor Clare Morgan.

**80/20 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.

None received.

**81/20 VIRTUAL PUBLIC FORUM:** Residents attending 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 matters were raised during the public forum.

**82/20 MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING:** To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed virtually to confirm by Councillor Bernard Foster Chair.

**83/20 WARD/COUNTY COUNCILLOR UPDATE:** Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillors to address the meeting.

Councillor Rimmer (Ward Councillor for Pitsea South East) informed the meeting that as a result of recent flooding issues in the Parish he had contacted Stephen Metcalf (MP for Basildon and East Thurrock) and they were in the process arranging a meeting with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water to discuss what measures could be taken, from their perspective, to reduce such instances of flooding in the future.

Councillor Rimmer also confirmed that following an approach to Essex County Council, and the Parish Council completing an application for funding, ECC have agreed to fund planters on the verge adjacent to Ilfracombe Avenue to prevent cars parking indiscriminately on the verge.

Councillor Rimmer advised that in respect of anti-social behaviour in the shops in Pitsea he was liaising with PC Emily Pentalow regarding the new radio system that had been provided to shop personnel in order to keep a trace on incidents of shop lifting and anti-social behaviour. There had been a mixed reaction from the shop keepers, some of whom were still using the old system and contacting the Police directly for assistance instead of using the radios as a quicker method of making contact. There had also been successful instances where the radio devices had been used to track incident of anti-social behaviour. It was recognised that it was an education process for staff and as the system was more readily used it should help to reduce incidents of crime.

Councillor Rimmer also advised that Covid-19 Breach Orders had been also issued to youths disobeying restrictions of gathering in large groups in the town centre.

#### **84/20 PARISH CLERKS REPORT:**

The Parish Clerk wished all present a Happy New Year and advised that since the previous meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and the Christmas period she had also taken leave. Much of the work she had undertaken would be reported during the meeting via the agenda items, however there were updates on other issues which included having dealt with reports in connection with:

(i) A displaced bollard in Old Church Road being reported to ECC Highways and having received notification from Essex County Council that the matter was under investigation.

(ii) The roof of bus shelter outside the shop in Pound Lane/Canvey Road has now been replaced again with one with a narrower roof due to the roof of the first replacement shelter jutting out too far into the road. (The bus shelter had been damaged during 2020)

(iii) A street- light which was not working outside Woodbine Cottage, Windsor Road had been reported to Basildon Council for a second time. (Street lighting in the plotlands unadopted roads is the responsibility of Basildon Council)

(iv) The Parish Council had received an email from PCSO Rachel Newman advising that she holds a Question & Answer session on a Friday evening virtually and had invited Parish Councillors to join the meeting. The Clerk had also received some Fraud Awareness posters from her and had included these on the Parish Council website and noticeboards.

(v) UK Power Networks are replacing some telegraph poles across the village. Having been in contact with UK Power Networks the Clerk had obtained information regarding the work to be carried out across the Parish and had received a general letter from them for inclusion on the Parish Council website.

(vi) Regrettably, Councillor Martin and Councillor Packer had resigned as Parish Councillors since the November meeting as a result of derogatory and inflammatory remarks made towards them during the recent Neighbourhood Plan consultation. As a result of their resignations the Parish Council had two vacancies to be filled. Action had also been taken by the Parish Council in order to limit any further verbal abuse of this nature

**84/20 FINANCE REPORT:** The Responsible Finance Officer to report on the Parish Council's current financial position and other matters including:

(i) To provide Councillors with a summary of the Parish Council's current financial position and a summary report was provided to Councillors as follows:

	£
Balance at Bank 20 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	20,452.67
Balance at Bank 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2021	19,827.41
<b>Expenditure:</b>	4,785.26
<b>Income:</b>	4,160.00
<b>Expenditure:</b>	
(560) Came & Company Annual Insurance Premium inc. VAT	772.03
(561) Distribution 4U – Delivery of NP consultation Newsletter	96.00
(563) ONiell Homer – NP Consultancy Fees	720.00
(564) PDS Digital – NP Newsletter & Questionnaire Printing	689.00
(565) Clerks Net Salary (Nov) + Office Use/BB/Tel	754.85
(566) Survey Monkey Neighbourhood Plan Consultation	99.00
(567) PKF Littlejohn External Audit inc. VAT	240.00
(568) HMRC Clerks Tax (Oct/Nov/Dec) + Emprs NI	347.03
(569) Rradar Limited – Cease & Desist Letter inc. VAT	300.00
(570) Clerks Net Salary (Dec) + Office Use/BB/Tel	<u>767.35</u>
	4785.26
<b>Income:</b>	
EALC-Funding towards the provision of a Handyman Service	4,160.00

(ii) Parish Precept 2021/2022: Basildon Council had been notified of the decision by Councillors to increase the Precept amount for 2021/2022 from £16,750.19 in 2020/2021 to £17,827.43 in 2021/22 an annual increase in monetary terms of £1.89 per annum based on the tax base for a Band D property. The increase was required to cover the anticipated increase of anticipated costs in 2021/2022 including progressing the Neighbourhood Plan to Examination. The Parish Council had also been advised by Basildon Council Finance Department that the tax base was lower than in 2020/21, due to the expected fall in collection rates of Council Tax as a direct consequence of Covid-19. This affected Band D calculations across the local preceptors and would therefore show a higher percentage change per annum for the Parish Precept compared to 2020/21 despite the Parish Precept increase in monetary terms being minimal. Councillors had been provided with a chart showing the increase for each Band as follows:

Year	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
20/21	23.40	28.60	33.80	39.00	46.80
21/22	25.29	30.91	36.53	42.15	50.58
Increase	1.89	2.31	2.73	3.15	3.78

**86/20 PLANNING:** Councillors to review and comment on Planning Application/s under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

**86(i) TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 21/00059/FULL**

Change of use from a mixed B1 and B8 use to a Sui Generis use relating to the storage of scaffolding and timber scaffold boards, including concrete hard surfacing of the site, together with the erection of a cutting shed and siting of two portacabins - Sadlers Hall Farm, London Road, Bowers Gifford.

Having previously been granted permission to develop the site the applicants now wish to amend the previous application in respect of the type of materials stored on the site, moving parking spaces to different locations within the site and instead of building multiple small units aim to erect less units but ones that were larger in size. The Parish Council raised no issue regarding the changes however they did raise concerns regarding:

- (i) Noise in respect of start and finish times each day which may have a detrimental effect on residents.
- (ii) Concerns regarding the lack of details in respect of lighting which might have a detrimental effect on residents and implications on wildlife.
- (iii) Information contained in the application regarding visitor parking but no information regarding where employed personnel would park.
- (iv) The original application provided cycle sheds, but these have disappeared from the existing application. Councillors questioned if the cycle sheds will be put back into the application.

Councillors concerns would be sent to Planning Officers.

**86(ii) TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 21/00005/FULL**

Change of use from residential to mixed residential and dog grooming business with erection of wooden garden building. - The Sporrán, Highlands Crescent, Bowers Gifford.

Councillors raised no objections to the amendments in the application which was a re-submission of the previous application which had been refused by Basildon Council. However, they considered if the revised application was granted a condition should be imposed to limit trading hours Monday - Friday to between 9 am - 5 pm and Saturday 9.00 am - 1.00 pm to avoid any disturbance and parking issues in respect of neighbouring properties.

**86(iii) TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 20/01623/FULL**

Cease existing use of land as D2 (Equestrian) with ancillary storage and removal all buildings and associated operations; redevelopment of site for 4no. residential dwellings, including associated access road and landscaping. - Carpenters Farm Harrow Road, North Benfleet.

Councillors confirmed the comments previously discussed and forwarded to Planning Officers to meet the timeframe set for a response. They had commented that the application should be refused on the following grounds of:

(i) The stables, tack rooms etc are currently behind a hedgerow out of sight and are legitimate structures within the Greenbelt but by opening- up the vista to build the proposed dwellings the open view of the site would be obstructed and therefore the proposed development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt and no exceptional circumstances having been evidenced or justified by the applicant within the documentation provided.

(ii) The application has been submitted in advance of the Local Plan Examination and of the Local Plan being adopted by the Basildon Borough Council

(iii) Currently within SD3 of the Local Plan, Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Neighbourhood Plan enables the Parish Council to provide a level of development within the Parish area, as required, which will be presented at the Local Plan Examination and if the above application were to be granted it would pave the way for other green belt development within the area to be accepted as standard prior to the Local Plan Examination.

Councillor Rimmer commented, with permission of the Chair, that the applicant's argument of "tilted balance" should not apply to Green Belt development in this instance but although they talk of back gardens as land supply it is clear in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that Green Belt is supposed to be sacrosanct and to change that an applicant needs to make a good case to grant development of this nature.

86(iv) **TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 20/01659/COND** Application for approval of details reserved by Condition 6 (Materials), Condition 10 (Desk-top Study) and Condition 15 (Flooding) to consent of 20/00093/FULL - 1 Claremont Mews, Burnt Mills Road, North Benfleet, Basildon SS12 9JX

The Chair advised that because the application was for approval of details reserved by a condition in the Planning consent 20/00093/FULL they would not normally be asked to comment but Councillors were of a mind, regarding their previous history of the site, and would forward their comments for consideration.

Briefly, it was considered that there was a high degree of contamination in the ground due to previous use. The site itself runs into the Parish flood moat system and any contamination coming off the adjacent fields could enter the water system and be spread around the area. A statement within the conditions of the original application stated that any contamination could be harmful to residents. The Parish Council had requested that until the level of contamination and danger to residents is accurately assessed and therefore the request to remove conditions be refused

**87/20 PLANNING DECISIONS:** Councillors to receive updates regarding Planning applications discussed at previous meetings and other relevant applications.

**Planning Application 20/01427/LDCP:** To establish the lawfulness of a proposed

single storey rear extension – Charlot, Lower Avenue, Bowers Gifford, Essex SS13 2LZ - Refused

**Planning Application 20/01445/FULL:** Construction of two detached chalet houses with new access from Katherine Road - Land West of Elizabeth Villa, Katherine Road, Bowers Gifford, Essex - Refused

**Planning Application 20/01288/FULL:** Single Storey Extension to Annex. Buers Cottage, London Road Bowers Gifford, Essex SS13 2EU - Refused

**Planning Application 21/00084/CC:** Non-material amendment to revise the design details originally approved as part of application ref: CC/BAS/28/19 (Upgrade works to the A127/A130 Fairglen Interchange including the creation of a new link road between A130 and A127) and remove the requirement to provide details of and install noise barriers along the A1245 and A127 - No objection

**88/20 FLOODING:** Councillors to discuss recent flooding in the Parish and measures available to them to mitigate further instances.

As reported in item 82/20 Councillor Rimmer along with the Parish Council had been trying to set up a meeting to discuss the extreme flooding issues which had occurred in recent weeks. The issue was not isolated to flooding in Burnt Mills Road and Pound Lane as parts of the Parish including Highlands Road and in the plotlands had been susceptible to raw sewage as the drains could not cope with the heavy rainfall being experienced each year. It was felt that a multi – task force should be set up with all interested parties to resolve the issues being experienced by the community. Councillors considered that the problem of flooding and drainage should be resolve before the start of any development or is resolved within any development plans. Much of the problem related specifically to flooding occurring where ditches had been filled in or cleared of debris to allow the flow of water. This, in part, was the responsibility of the Riparian landowners in the area and in the past an article highlighting flooding this fact had been included in the Parish newsletter and the Environment Agency had also sent letters to landowners reminding them of their responsibility. Councillor Rimmer advised that as part of any meeting a Parish Council representative should be included in the discussion. **Action:** Councillor Rimmer advised that he keep the Parish Council informed regarding any liaison meetings off the ground.

**89/20 PLAY REVIEW CONSULTATION:** To receive Councillor comments on Basildon Council's Play Review.

Basildon Council was undertaking a review of all the play areas in the district both large and small although the review does not directly affect Westlake Park it does indirectly. The Parish Council had invested a considerable amount of time and resources in previous years to improving the Park, the land of which was given over by the previous owner to Basildon Council to be held in perpetuity for the community, but it was considered that as the equipment in the Park needed to be replaced funds may not be available for the Parish Council to obtain the funds required to replace the equipment. It was **AGREED** that the Parish Council should raise their concerns to Basildon Council directly by letter as part of the Play Review. **Action:** The Parish Clerk was asked to send a letter to Basildon Council with a view to highlighting the issue.

**90/20 BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:** To provide a brief update on matters.

Councillor Foster advised that the three-week consultation carried out from 16<sup>th</sup> November to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020 had proved positive in a number of ways. There were 189 questionnaire responses which in the scheme of things was considered a good return. The overall result, averaging out all the replies was 83% in agreement with the Neighbourhood Plan process and in some cases the figure was as high as 92%. The Steering Group will meet to analyse the comments received from the consultation in depth and identify the key issues raised. Their recommendations will be submitted to the Parish Council for a decision to be made on any changes to the Neighbourhood Plan proposals. In regard to Basildon Council's Local Plan Basildon Council having submitted a pre-submission report had been asked to respond to several questions from the Local Plan Examiner, Paul Griffiths, some of which have a bearing on the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan, and it is hoped that their replies to the questions will give a clearer picture of their development proposals in the Parish before the February Parish Council meeting. In addition, it would also be helpful to learn what Essex County Council Highway proposals were in respect of highway infrastructure in the Parish, but the Parish Council were not confident regarding this point.

**91/20 PARISH PROJECT:** Councillors to discuss and agree to move forward with current projects for which funding has been received.

**Planters:** As mentioned by Councillor Rimmer earlier in the meeting, the Parish Council had been awarded funding via Essex County Council's Community Initiative Fund, to purchase some planters to be installed on the verge along the London Road adjacent to Ilfracombe Avenue to prevent cars parking on the verge in this location. Having completed an application for the funding, which was supported by Councillor Rimmer and Essex County Councillor Stephen Hillier and notified that a grant in the sum of £3,800 would be forthcoming to fund the planters. A meeting was then held with Essex County Council Highway personnel to discuss the project and obtain a licence to site the planters on the verge.

Although a substantial amount of funding it will not enable the Parish Council to purchase sufficient planters to cover the whole length of the verge and the Parish Council has been in discussion with UK Power Networks regarding recycling the old telegraph poles, which are being currently replaced in some parts of the Parish, to form a barrier and fill in the gaps between the planters and create an aesthetically pleasing visual effect on the verge and resolve an ongoing issue.

**Handyman Service:** The Parish Council has successfully obtained a grant from the Essex Association of Local Council to fund a Handyman Service initially for 12 months. The job has yet to be advertised but it is hoped that in the current climate the project will provide someone who may have lost their job with the opportunity to return to work.

**92/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** To confirm the date of the next meeting

The date of the next Parish Council Meeting was confirmed as 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 7.30 p.m. and would be held virtually.

Signed .....Councillor B. Foster, Chair      Date: 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021