

**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
INFORMAL MEETING WITH THE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT THE BENBOW CLUB BOWERS GIFFORD
ON WEDNESDAY 26th SEPTEMBER 2018 AT 7.30 p.m.**

PRESENT:

Councillors: R. Smillie: T.Potter:

Ward Councillor: Cllr. Craig Rimmer, Pitsea South East, Ward Councillor

Parish Council Clerk: Mrs Christine Barlow

Members of the Public: 19

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Sheelagh Pegg: Councillor David Martin

Due to only two Parish Councillors being present the Parish Council Meeting was deemed inquorate and the Parish Council agenda was suspended. However as a large number of residents were in attendance the Parish Councillors who were present decided to hold an informal information sharing session and also continue with the Parish-in-Bloom Awards presentation.

Councillors Craig Rimmer, Pitsea South East Ward Councillor, was welcomed to the meeting and invited to join the discussions.

INFORMAL DISCUSSION SESSION: Councillor Smillie, Parish Council Chair, invited those in attendance to raise issues:

(i) A resident asked when the resurfacing of Pound Lane was going to be completed as several areas had been missed. Neither Councillor Smillie or the Parish Clerk were able to provide any information but it was suggested the areas missed, i.e. those areas near to junctions or crossings, were the subject of a different type of surface dressing in order to provide a more permeable skid reduction surface. Councillor Rimmer advised he would speak with Essex County Council in order to obtain an update. He also advised that Basildon Council were considering taking back elements of highways management currently the responsibility of Essex County Council Highways in order to provide a more efficient, focussed and cost effective service.

(ii) A resident asked as to the reasons why it was necessary for Cadent, Gas contractors undertaking the replacement of gas pipework, to carry out ducting work outside her house, dig a large hole, then reinstate the ground only to return the following day and reopen the cavity they had filled in the previous day. Unfortunately Councillors present were unable to provide any answer as the reasons for this. The same resident advised that she had also received a letter to inform that work to connect a supply from the road to her property was also to be carried out from 15th October until mid-November.

(iii) A resident asked Councillors if they knew why she had received a letter asking the residents of Kelly Road to keep the road clear as resurfacing was to take place and then, to date, no resurfacing had been undertaken. Councillors considered this may have been the “ blanket” notification of the surface dressing work being undertaken in Pound Lane and had nothing specifically to do with Kelly Road. The resident asked why a large pothole at the junction of Pound Lane and Kelly Road had

not been filled in when the road resurfacing of Pound Lane was carried out as it would have formed part of the resurfacing work. Other residents also asked if the side roads, especially the “bell ends” or junction, were going to be resurfaced in the near future. Councillor Smillie advised that the Parish Council systematically raised issues of potholes, pavements and the condition of roads at Essex County Council’s Local Highways Panel(LHP) meetings and it was of his opinion supported by Councillor Rimmer agreed that the majority of the Highways budget was spent in north Essex as opposed to the south of the county. It was considered that Essex County Council was just putting “sticking plaster” over the problems. Councillor Rimmer suggested that residents should report problems, with a photo of the affected area, via the Essex County Council CC website and eventually the problem had a better chance of being addressed.

(iv)The Parish Clerk raised the issue of a scheme by Essex County Council to devolve responsibility for minor works to Parish Councils. The scheme is in the process of being trialled but the Clerk asked why Essex County Council’s Ranger Scheme could not be handed over to local areas and Essex County Council’s budget for this work be handed over to the respective Local Authority. Councillor Rimmer advised he would note the point made and raise for discussion with relevant parties at the earliest opportunity. He advised that Basildon Council had increased the budget for the Council’s Pride Team, whose work included clearing undergrowth, footpaths, removing dumped litter and also Basildon Council had engaged two new Street Scene Enforcement Officers to cover issues such as fly-tipping, litter, abandoned vehicles and initial environmental complaints. He advised that the new administration was in discussion with Essex County Council to get a fairer split of their budget in regard to highways and similar activities.

(iv) A resident raised concerns regarding cars parking on pavements and thereby not leaving enough room for pedestrians to walk without having to use the road. Councillor Smillie advised this was a policing matter but, and a fact confirmed by a resident, police numbers had been reduced and their priorities lay elsewhere. The Parish Clerk said she would include an article in the next Parish newsletter asking residents to park sensibly and not obstruct the pavement.

(vi) A resident asked if the area on the London Road being used by Balfour Beatty was monitored as it seemed to be growing. The Clerk confirmed she would contact Balfour Beatty for clarification of activities and report any information at the next Parish Council Meeting.

PARISH –IN-BLOOM AWARDS PRESENTATION: Councillor Smillie and Mrs Karen Watts, one of the judges, presented certificates to the winners and runners up in each category and each were given a £20 voucher and selection of winter or summer bulbs. There were three specific categories i.e. Best Front Garden, Best Back Garden and Best Basket/Container and for the first year A Garden of Excellence Winner.

Best Front Garden	Gold Award :	Penny Black. Page Road
	Silver Award:	Nicki Launder, Highlands Road
Best Back Garden	Gold Award:	Kathleen Major, Grange Road
	Silver Award:	Jacqueline Chauhan, Grange Road
Best Basket/Container	Gold Award:	Tina Whitham/Tony Fay
	Silver Award:	Geoff Conner, Pound Lane
Garden of Excellence	Gold Award:	John Spooner, Lee Road

As there were only two entries in the under 14 year old Scarecrow Competition each entrant was given a £15.00 voucher. The Scarecrows were displayed at the Picnic-in-the-Park Event on 2nd September and the relevant vouchers given out on the day.

The Parish Clerk informed that The Parish Council were to receive a stone plaque from the Airfields of Briton Conservation Trust to commemorate the part North Benfleet Airfield played in World War One. Information received identified that the location of the airfield was now part of the A130 dual carriageway and as a result a suitable location to erect the plaque nearest the site would need to be found.

❖ Installation of CCTV in Westlake Park had commenced on 24th September but due to a delay in the delivery of some of the materials completion would be the first week in October. The monitoring of the equipment information was the responsibility of the Parish Council and information could only be provided to the police or authorised personnel, by formal request, if an incident occurred. The Parish Council's Privacy Policy and Procedure was available on the Parish Council website. It was explained to those present that it was hoped any incident of nuisance and vandalism would now be reduced. The Parish Council were considering whether or not the disabled net swing could now be replaced once again as a result of damage earlier in the year. However the Parish Council's Insurance might not cover the cost as the original net swing had been placed by the Parish Council's Insurers, Came and Company, twelve (12) months previously. Councillor Rimmer offered to discuss the matter of replacement with Basildon Council's Leisure, Culture and Environment Committee of which he was a Member.

❖ The Parish Clerk was in the process of producing a Parish Newsletter and invited any resident with a story or information they wished to be circulated to get in contact with her.

CURRENT PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL POSITION: The audience were advised of the Parish Council's current financial position. However due to a substantial amount of expenditure the Parish Council's Bank balance had fallen from £12,862.36 on 20th July 2018 to £4,069.42. This was mainly as a result of a deposit for the installation of CCTV and consultant payments for the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan support both of which included VAT. An application had been made to HMRC for a refund of VAT for 2017/2018 in the sum of £3,185.87. A further application would be made for the period April – October as soon as all invoices had been received.

A statement of account was also provided for the Picnic-in-the Park. A budget target of £1,500 had been allocated for the event, but the final expenditure for the event had been £938.04. The income from the stalls and raffle was £622.40. A local resident had donated the services of a children's entertainer, who kept all present entertained all afternoon, free of charge the Parish Council expressed their thanks for this kind gesture. All those who had volunteered on the day and made contributions to the event were thanked for their support. The entertainment was provided once again by husband and wife duo "Simply Gorgeous" and all who attended enjoyed a very sunny afternoon. A resident offered to work with the Parish Council in organising a future Event. The audience was advised that Parish Councillors would be discussing next years' Event at a future Parish Council meeting and any offers of help would be gratefully received.

The Responsible Finance Officer advised that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) had been concluded satisfactorily and the Government's external Auditor had made no comments for attention and resolve. A notice of conclusion of audit had been posted on the Parish Council's website and in the Parish Council noticeboards informing that the accounts were available to review by appointment. The AGAR Report and financial statements were available on the Parish Council website: www.essexinfo.net/bgnb-

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PLANNING DECISIONS: The Parish Clerk informed those present of the following planning application decision:

Planning Application 18/00945/OUT: Land Junction Of Pound Lane And Windsor Road Windsor Road Bowers Gifford Basildon Essex: Erection of three two storey houses - **Refused**

Planning Application 18/00962/REM: Burwood Works Windsor Road Bowers Gifford Basildon Essex SS13 2LH : Approval for all matters reserved following consent ref: 14/01268/OUT for the demolition and removal of existing commercial buildings and associated yards (Class B1 - Business, and Class B2- General Industrial) and the construction of two detached chalet style dwellings. _Burwood Works Windsor Road Bowers Gifford Basildon Essex SS13 2LH - **Granted**

Planning Application: 18/00787/FULL: 29 Kelly Road, Bowers Gifford : Single storey front extension and roof elevations. - **Granted**

Planning Application: 18/01042/FULL (Revision to 18/00014/FULL): 11, Highlands Road, Bowers Gifford: Conversion of bungalow to chalet - **Granted**

Planning Application: 18/00857/FULL : Ivy Cottage Clarence Road Bowers Gifford Basildon SS13 2JW - Proposed single storey rear extension - **Granted**

Planning Application : 18/00833/VAR: Carpenters Farm, Harrow Road, North Benfleet Basildon Essex SS12 9JJ: Removal of condition 1 of planning permission ref: BAS/1196/92 to enable the existing dwelling to be occupied by someone not employed in the operation of the leisure facility approved under planning permission BAS/818/93 – **Granted**

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: A resident asked for an update regarding Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet Neighbourhood Plan

Councillor Smillie informed that it was potentially good news in some respects. At Basildon Council's Strategy, Planning and Infrastructure Committee Meeting held on 29th August the Committee had listened to the Parish Council and the community and given the Parish Council the opportunity within the Local Plan to allocate development where the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group felt were the best location and of benefit to the whole Parish. The total number of dwellings allocated within the Parish was 1,350 with a further 650 houses outside the Parish Council designated area in Pitsea. The Parish Council have managed to reduce the housing numbers from 2,800, proposed by the previous administration to 1350 within the designated Parish Council area. Some Gypsy, Traveller and Traveller & Show People pitches/sites were also proposed but the exact location for these was as yet unknown. The Parish Council, in consultation with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, community and information provided from questionnaires and drop-in sessions, over several months, had confirmed that the best location to build was Hall Farm to avoid coalescent but not all the allocation could be included in this location so other areas would need to be considered. Through the Neighbourhood Plan the Parish Council will be able to put together a Design Code Policy to

stipulate what any development, style and type of properties, would be built. The Parish Council is also questioning how much of Bradfields Farm has been allocation for economic and employment development and proposals for other uses which it is not in agreement with. Basildon Borough Council Officers were still very resistant to these proposals favouring the original site west Pound Lane as presented by the previous Basildon Council coalition of UKIP and Labour administration before May 2018.

Councillors were asked if there would also be a doctor's surgery within the new proposals. Councillor Smillie advised that at the moment it was unclear if doctor's services would be available given the lack of GP's or trained NHS doctors but further discussion would need to be had as development progressed. The Parish Council were also proposing an infill policy for land not currently built on and available in the plotlands. Plotland owners had already been consulted earlier in the year on their views and further consultations would take place once the details of the Revised Local Plan had been finalised and agreed. The Local Plan was due to be ratified by Basildon Borough Councillors at their Full Council Meeting on 18th October 2018.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS: A suggestion had been put forward by Councillor Sheelagh Pegg, who was on holiday and unable to attend, to create a Circular Walk around the village. This request was noted and would be put forward for discussion at future Parish Council meetings.

A resident advised that a Macmillan Coffee Morning was being held at Sadlers Farm on September 28th September from 10.00 am and all were welcome to attend or give donations to this very worthwhile cause if they were unable to attend.

For information the audience were advised that the next Parish Council meeting would take place on Wednesday 31st October 2018 at The Benbow Club, 77 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford commencing at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 8.50 p.m. and all present were thanked for attending.