



**MINUTES OF BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET  
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2023.**

**PRESENT:**

<b>Councillors:</b>	C. Morris: T. Potter: S. Moore.
<b>Ward Councillor/s:</b>	None
<b>Parish Council Clerk/RFO:</b>	Mrs Christine Barlow
<b>Public attendance:</b>	<b>7</b>

**86/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillor Pegg (Chair): Councillor Craig Rimmer (Pitsea-South East): Councillor Aidan McGurran

In the absence of Councillor Pegg, Councillor Potter took over the role of Chair for the meeting.

**87/23 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 declared.

**88/23 PUBLIC FORUM:** Residents have the opportunity to raise questions of a general nature. (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

A resident asked for an update on an enquiry made at a previous meeting regarding the clearing of land behind Pound Lane Autos. The resident was advised that it was not illegal to clear a parcel of land if it was legitimately owned by an individual, but other factors also had to be considered. The matter was still under investigation but there was no further update at the present time.

A resident informed that he and his neighbour had not received their black bins or recycling sacks. He had reported the fact both by telephone and by email, but they still had not been received in time to be used for the new rubbish and recycling collection due to commence in the Parish as of Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December. **Action:** The Parish Clerk advised she would forward the complaint to Basildon Council Project Manager on behalf of the resident.

A resident of Kelly Road reported that the Neighbourhood Watch sign which was attached to a lamp post at the end of Kelly Road had fallen down as the fixing ties had broken. **Action:** The Parish Clerk will get the Parish Council's Handyman to secure the sign back in place.

A resident considered that the temporary crossing lights on Pound Lane, set up because of ongoing gas works whilst the zebra crossing was temporarily not usable, were more dangerous under the circumstances than having any crossing lights at all, as they did not seem to be configured properly. The Parish Clerk advised that work in this location was due to be completed within the next two weeks and gas repairs would then be moved further along the road away from the zebra crossing. **Action:** to update the progress of the gas repairs at the next meeting.

Councillors were asked when the pavements in the Parish were going to be repaired. However, on this issue the Parish Council was unable to provide any update and there were no Essex County Councillors present to update either. It was considered that whilst gas repairs were ongoing there would be no footpath repairs carried out until work was completed as the contractors were also digging up the pavements as part of their work. It was noted that pavement repairs were being carried out in parts of Ilfracombe Avenue, but the Parish Council had not received any notification of impending works from ECC Highways. **Action:** The Parish Clerk was in the process of contacting ECC Highways to ask the reason, regarding Ilfracombe Avenue she had not received notification.

In regarding to repairs in general to footpaths the Clerk advised that to date the Parish Council could do no more than they had done so far to raise the issue of the pavements but suggested that residents also lodge a complaint on the ECC website regarding the condition of the pavements.

**89/23 MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2023:** To approve the minutes of the previous meeting and Chair to sign.

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting by Councillors who were present and were signed to confirm by Councillor Terry Potter, acting Chair.

**90/23 WARD/COUNTY COUNCILLOR UPDATE:** Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillors to address the meeting.

There were no Ward or County Council Councillors present to address the meeting.

**91/23 PARISH CLERK'S REPORT:** To update on business since the last meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023

The Parish Clerk gave an update on current matters and those raised at previous meetings:

- A fallen tree was blocking the footpath from Harrow Road to A127 and although access was still possible, the Clerk was in the process of

contacting ECC Highways to request removal and would also be talking to residents, some of whom were against the removal as it prevented animals straying on to the A127. The pathway had been thought to be part of ECC Public Rights of Way network PROW 150, but it had been confirmed via maps and ECC officers that this assumption was incorrect. It was in fact the responsibility of ECC Highways to keep the pathway clear. Over late summer the Parish Council, however, in the absence of any firm confirmation of any work to be done to prune the shrubbery undertook this task along the length of the footpath to enable clear access for pedestrians and pedal bikes.

- Other Grounds Maintenance was continuing in areas not covered by Basildon Council or Essex County contract. Several residents had identified problem areas and work had been undertaken to prune, cut or trim overgrown areas. It is also on the program, to cut back some of the overhanging tree branches along the verge in North Benfleet. Councillors were advised that the funding obtained in April 2023 for the Council's Ground Maintenance staff member would run out in March 2024.
- The Parish Clerk had also contacted Basildon Council to ask why the highways verge in North Benfleet had not been cut in October as per the contract with ECC Highways. The response given was that ID Verde were having problems with one of their tractors and parts had to be obtained and they were behind with the rural verge cuts. **Action:** The Parish Council to follow up on the response to her email.
- Fly-tipping near the underpass in Church Road had been reported as well as fly-tipping in Burnt Mills Road near Tiffaynes Farm. The Clerk advised that any fly-tipping could be reported on the Basildon Council website.
- The Parish Clerk, along with Councillor Pegg and Councillor Moore attended the Remembrance Day Service on 12<sup>th</sup> November at Howard Memorial Park, Pitsea and laid a poppy wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.

No questions were asked of the Parish Clerk by those present.

**92/23 FINANCE REPORT:** Responsible Finance Officer to provide a summary of the Parish Council's financial position and advise on other relevant finance matters.

**(i)** To receive a summary of the Parish Council's current financial position

The Parish Council presented a summary of account for the preceding month as follows:

	£
Balance at Bank 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	48,051.18
Balance at Bank 29 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	45,349.37
Expenditure:	2,701.81
Income:	Nil

**Expenditure:**

BT - ABLC Annual Subscription	20.00
BT – C. Barlow (Misc. Expenses – Materials	48.08
BT - RCCE Annual Subscription	72.60
BT- HP Toner Cartridges X 4	133.86
BT - Staff Wages (Oct)	224.00
BT – Elan Annual Maintenance for CCTV/Licence/Sim	310.66
BT - Parish Clerks Net Salary (Oct) inc. Office Use /BB/Tel	845.70
BT- Gallagher Parish Council Annual Insurance	1,006.91
BT- Benbow Club Hall Hire X 2	<u>40.00</u>
	2,701.81

**Income:**

Nil

The RFO advised Councillors that £31,257.80 + VAT of the balance was for pending payments for the NDO project. Currently the Parish Council assets in monetary terms were approximately £17, 000 until the end of the financial year on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and there was an estimated balance to be carried forward at the end of the year of approximately £6000.

There were no questions directed to the RFO regarding the statement of account.

**(ii) To confirm NJC Pay Award 2023 – 2024 for the Parish Clerk/RFO**

Councillors were advised that an agreement on new pay scales for the permanent employees of Councils. This had been agreed by the National Joint Councilors (NJC) and National Administration of Local Councils (NALC) The National Salary Award was backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. Councillors had been provided with a copy of the details of the award and were asked to confirm the rate and amount applicable to the Parish Clerk/RFO and all copies had been sent to all Councillors.

As the new pay scales were mandatory the Chair duly signed the approval on behalf of the Parish Council.

**(iii) To consider the Budget and Precept for 2024 – 2025 for ratification.**

Councillors were presented with a copy of income and expenditure for the half-year period to 30<sup>th</sup> September and expenditure update to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023. An estimated income and expenditure budget had been provided to the end of the financial year 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

General advice was that Local Councils should have at least a three-to-six-month balance in their accounts. The current precept for 2023/2024 was £21,966.59 and the cost for properties in Band D was £31.51 per annum or for lower Bands less and for a higher Band it was slightly more. Currently the Parish Council had been very successful with obtaining external funding for some projects but there was no guarantee this would continue and the RFO felt the Parish Council should not rely on this additional funding.

The RFO asked Councillors to consider increasing the Precept based on the calculations for a Band D property to upwards of £7.00 - £10.00 per annum which would be a monthly increase of between 60p - 80p per month. The problem was the perceived percentage figure gave the impression that the increase was an over inflated amount. It was considered that without the increase in rising costs the Parish Council may not be able to sustain some of the Council projects.

It was agreed to include an article in the next edition of the Bowers Bugle to gauge the opinion of residents and undertake further discussions regarding the precept at the next Parish Council meeting if appropriate. A decision regarding the Precept must be made and forwarded to Basildon Council for inclusion in the Council Tax notification before 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

**93/23 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: 23/01267/FULL**

Subdivision of existing Traveller site to provide pitch for stationing of up to 4 static caravans. - The Paddocks, Grange Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon

Councillors considered they needed more clarity regarding the application and the number of caravans proposed for the site as the site already had four caravans and was already a sub-divided plot. It was considered that the application would represent retrospective planning on the existing site and appeared to be intending to add more caravans on the adjoining site. As it stood the Parish Council would be opposed to double the numbers on the whole of the site. The Parish Clerk was instructed to contact the Planning Officer dealing with the application and ask for clarity on this point.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 23/01343/FULL**

Proposed alteration and enlargement of existing front dormers - 118 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex.

Councillors considered that on drawings presented they would have no objections to the application.

**94/23 PLANNING UPDATES AND COMMENTS:** To receive updates and comments on planning applications discussed at previous meetings.

Appeals lodged against the decision of Basildon Council to refuse application.

**PLANNING ACT 1990 APPEAL UNDER SECTION 78**

Planning Application: 22/01748/FULL: Land at Osborne Road, Bowers Gifford Basildon:

The Parish Council had nothing further to add to their original comments in

respect of the above planning application which was refused by Basildon Council. All representations had been sent to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the appeal process.

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:** Demolish the existing structures on the site and construct a 4-bedroomed half chalet bungalow with attached double garage and private driveway with 2 parking spaces.

**PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPEAL UNDER SECTION 78 & SECTION 174**

Planning Application: 23/00737/FULL: Land East of The Firs, Osborne Road, Bowers Gifford,

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:** 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

**ALLEGED BREACH(ES):** Without planning permission, the material change in use of the Land for the stationing of caravans for residential. Occupation

The Parish Council had made further comments regarding the above application, and these had been sent to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration along with the previous representation.

**PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPEAL UNDER SECTION 78**

Planning Application: 21/01477/OUT: Land East of Ilfracombe Avenue Bowers Gifford

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:** Outline planning application for a new 70 bed care home, 42 assisted living units and 13 retirement bungalows /villas (all Use Class C2), together with vehicular access onto Ilfracombe Avenue, a new school parking area for parents and pupils of St. Margaret's C of E Primary School, new nature area, landscaping and communal facilities including a Day Care Centre and cinema room. All matters reserved except for access.

The Parish Council had nothing further to add to their original comments in respect of the above planning application which was refused by Basildon Council. All representations had been sent to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the appeal process.

**95/23 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES:**

Councillors to consider Basildon Borough Council's arrangements and proposals to carry out a review of its polling districts and polling places in regard to forthcoming election.

Basildon Council advised that as part of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 which introduced a change to the timing of the compulsory reviews within the Electoral System the next compulsory review must take place within a 16-month window starting on 1 October 2023 and ending on 31 January 2025. The Parish Council had therefore been notified that publication of a formal Notice of Review with comments and

observations had been published for a period of four weeks from 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

The review was designed to access if the polling districts and polling places in the Parliamentary Constituencies in the borough were arranged to suit the needs of voters. The review covered (i) the polling district boundaries within each ward in the borough (ii) the location of the polling places and stations in each polling district (iii) access to each polling station.

Notification of the Review will be included on the Parish Council website and the Parish Council would forward their comments in respect of the consultation by the closing date. More information could be found on the Basildon Council website.

**96/23 NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT ORDER:** To update on the progress of the NDO and briefly discuss the impending Reg 21 consultation.

The NDO reports were near completion and following a Steering Group meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> November it was agreed to request the Parish Council to consider conducting a six-week consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Development Order and related reports from 2<sup>nd</sup> January to 13<sup>th</sup> February with all interested parties. All Parish Councillors present confirmed their agreement with the request to consult.

Proposed: Councillor Moore: Seconded: Councillor Morris.

It was also confirmed that a newsletter would be published before Christmas and in this there would be information regarding the consultation asking the community and interested parties to provide their views on the Draft NDO consultation.

**97/23 TO DISCUSS FUTURE PROJECTS:**

▪ **D - Day 80 Celebrations 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024 – Lighting a Beacon:**

Councillors present agreed with the suggestion of holding an event to celebrate the D-Day celebrations on 6<sup>th</sup> June in Westlake Park. It will be an evening event and an application for funding will be sought to purchase a Beacon to light at the appointed time of 9.15 p.m.

▪ **Future funding of Grounds Maintenance/ Handy Person:** Grounds Maintenance funding will cease on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and new funding is required to continue with the project. If the Precept is not increased/or funding secured the project cannot be continued.

**Action:** Deferred any decision until Precept amount set.

▪ **Annual Event – July 7<sup>th</sup> 2024:** The date for the Annual Parish Council event was confirmed as 7<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at the previous meeting. Basildon Council would be informed of the date to pre-book Westlake Park for the event.

▪ **Playground improvements and maintenance:** Some maintenance currently needed to be carried out on the Parish Council's equipment in the

Park Junior play area as a matter of Health and Safety. The trampoline chamber is filled with water again and Basildon Council to be contacted regarding the installation of the equipment. Some of the equipment will also need replacing within the next five years.

**98/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** To confirm the date of the next meeting.

Due to the Christmas period the meeting is to be held earlier in the month on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023. Councillor Moore gave her apologies for this meeting.

Signed ..... Chair, Councillor Sheelagh Pegg

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023