

**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE BENBOW CLUB BOWERS GIFFORD
ON WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH 2015 AT 7.30 PM.**

PRESENT:

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

In attendance: Christine Barlow (Parish Clerk)
Essex County Councillor Keith Bobbin

Members of the Public: 11

137/14 Apologies for absence: Councillor Tyler

138/14 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

139/14 Public Forum: To enable residents to raise issues of concern with Parish Councillors (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

- (i) Residents reported a pile of tyres deposited at the road side near Sadlers Farm. The Parish Clerk was asked to log a report to Highways.
- (ii) Residents in Kelly Road enquired regarding the status of a resident in Kelly Road and the condition of an unkempt property. PCSO Moxon confirmed that the issues raised are being dealt with.
- (iii) A settee and mattress reported as dumped at the last meeting still had not been removed from the side of the road on the A13 near the Church Road underpass. The Parish Clerk was asked to report again.
- (iv) Residents raised concerns regarding the condition of the grass verge and the cars parking either side of a property known as Exchange House and causing an obstruction. The Council had reported the matter to Basildon Council and Essex Highways on several occasions but was unable to give any further information regarding action taken.
- (v) Residents raised concerns regarding the work to install hard standings beyond the perimeter wall at the traveller site on the roundabout at Sadlers Farm. The Parish Council had been advised that a Notice had

been issued by Basildon Council for breach of a previous order and as no action had been taken a breach to remedy an Enforcement Notice had now been issued and further action would be taken to enforce unless the notice was complied with. The Clerk was asked to contact the Police Traveller Liaison Officer in order to discuss residents' concerns.

- (vi) A resident commented that the swimming pool sign in Pitsea had not been removed and was very confusing to any visitors to the area.
- (vii) Residents raised concerns regarding the condition of Burnt Mills Road. The Parish Clerk advised that she had contacted Essex County Council and been advised resurfacing works would take place from 23rd March – 31st May 2015 and road closures were possible. Updates on progress and other potential road works affecting the Parish could be viewed by logging on to the Essex County Council Highways website: roadworks.org.uk
- (viii) Residents enquired why double bus stop signs had been installed along Pound Lane. The Parish Clerk advised she had already made enquiries and had been reliably informed that contractors who had installed the signs had not also been given an order to remove.
- (ix) A glass panel was broken in the bus stop adjacent to the garden centre. The Parish Clerk was asked to report the damage.
- (x) It was reported that traffic light crossing from Bowers Gifford to Benfleet were quick to change and did not give pedestrians time to cross. The Parish Clerk was asked to report to report the fault.

140/14 Minutes: To agree the minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 25th February 2015.

- (i) The minutes of the previous meeting held on 25th February 2015 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair, Councillor Robert Smillie.
- (ii) At the meeting on 25th February 2015 the minutes of the meeting of 28th January could not be signed as being accurate due to Councillors present not being in attendance at the meeting on 28th January 2015. Councillor Smillie was able, at the meeting, to sign the minutes and confirm their accuracy.

141/14 Policing: To receive updates on policing activities for Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet.

PCSO Emma Spurr had advised, by email, that there had been a number of thefts from motor vehicles in Pitsea but nothing had been reported in the Parish. However, there had been a report that cars had been parked in the underpass near Church Road. She suggested that had bollards been installed at the

entrance this could have been avoided. The Parish Council stated the bollards had been requested on more than one occasions and the matter had also been raised at Basildon Council Highways Panel meetings and is being considered. Councillor Foster and Essex County Councillor Bobbin would raise the issue again at the Panel's meeting on 26th March 2015.

PCSO Mandie Moxon advised that there was an intention of all agencies to work together to resolve difficult cases and reduce duplication of work.

The issue of parking at St Margaret's School and of parents parking on the verges and roadway in the vicinity of Ilfracombe Avenue and also mounting the pavement and parking on the verges adjacent to the school was again raised. PCSO Moxon said she would arrange with Traffic Officers to mount surveillance at the school and work together with South Essex Parking Partnership Officers to try and resolve the parking problem at the school and issue notices for illegal parking. It was hope that any action undertaken might make parents act more responsibly.

PCSO Moxon advised Councillors that enforcement action was also being taken to resolve parking problems in William Road.

142/14 Parish Clerk's Report: To update on relevant business and correspondence received since the last meeting.

114/14 The Parish Council's application for a grant to fund work to join up the footpaths in Westlake Park from Essex County Council's Community Initiative Fund had been refused by the Fund Panel due to the fact that, as the land was not owned by the Parish Council, it was considered that it would be inappropriate use of the fund as the land is owned by Basildon Borough Council and suggested that, as there is no lease agreement in place, Basildon Council should be paying for the work. The Parish Clerk will pass the comments of the CIF Panel on to Basildon Council and dependent on the response, if necessary, look for alternative ways to fund the project.

114/14/1 Discussions were ongoing with Essex Council regarding issues surrounding flooding by residents, especially in Elm Road, as a result of heavy rainfall over winter months and in recent years. Following a meeting with Parish Councillors, an Officer from Essex County Council's Flood Prevention Team had visited one resident, who had contacted the Parish Council in regard to her experiences of flooding both inside and outside her property. The resident discussed her issues and concerns with the Officer and was advised to make an application for funding to cover flood defences and protect against internal flooding. The Parish Clerk stated that an article asking residents to contact and advise the Parish Council of any instances of flooding in their homes would be included in the Spring edition of the Parish newsletter.

In addition Basildon Borough Council was also undertaking a separate Flood Risk Assessment Survey and the Parish Council had been asked to identify areas within the Parish that had experienced flooding. Information in the Parish Council archives was being collated and, via the Parish newsletter, residents would be asked for further information and examples of flooding with any photographs.

114/14 Councillors had met with J A P Holdings, the owners of The Old Rectory and had been provided with an update for the Parish newsletter to clear up any misconceptions surrounding their proposals.

114/14 (v) A production of A Christmas Carol by a theatre company based in Norwich, who specialised in giving performances to schools and communities, and a performance had been booked at St Margaret's School on 16th December 2015. The Parish Council had agreed to cover the cost of £300 for the performance.

114/14(vi) The item on incorrect locality addresses was on the agenda.

129/14 All comments on planning applications from the previous meeting had been passed to Basildon Council Planning for inclusion in the decision making process.

133/14 A request had been sent to Ringway Jacobs/ Essex County Council Highways to meet and discuss their proposals in regard to traffic calming in Pound Lane and a response is still to be received.

134/14 Neighbourhood Planning item on agenda item

Essex County Council's "Getting around Essex" consultation closing date for the submission of comments was 31st March 2015.

Quotations were being obtained for a commemoration plaque in memory of Councillor Brian Wall and once obtained the plaque would be attached to one of the benches in Westlake Park.

143/14 Financial update: To update on the Parish Council's finances and confirm details of the Annual Parish Council Audit for 2014/2015.

Balance at bank as at 25 th February 2015	£1,992.16
Balance at bank as at 25 th March 2015	£4,017.77
<u>Summary</u>	
Income	£2,705.40
Expenditure	£680.39

Income

Refund of VAT	£2,705.40
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Expenditure

Net Clerks Salary (March)	£565.39
Clerk and Councillor Training	£115.00

The Parish Council had agreed to cover the CILCA registration fee of £250.00 to enable the Parish Clerk to undertake and complete the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA). The Council would be refunded £150.00 of the cost under the Essex Association of Local Councils (ABLC) Clerks Bursary Scheme.

There were still some expenses to be covered before the end of the financial year but it was anticipated the balance in the bank at 31st March would be in excess of £2000.

Details for the dates of the Annual Internal and External Audit were not currently available.

144/14 Planning: Councillors to review and comment on Planning Applications under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

144/14/1 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 – APPLICATION NO: 15/00280/FULL

Single storey rear extension, demolition of existing garage at rear and construction of a new detached garage - 139 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford, Essex SS13 2HN

Councillors in considering this application felt that it was in keeping with other properties in the area. However they did feel that a condition should be inserted if the application was granted regarding making adequate arrangements to remove any surface water.

No objections were raised to this application.

144/14/2 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 – APPLICATION NO: 15/00290/FULL

Change of use from woodland to garden – 9 Page Road, Bowers Gifford, Essex SS13 2HP

Councillors considered the application and visited the site in question. There appear to be a larger number of trees on the site than quoted by the owners of the property in making the planning application. The land in question appeared to have been purchased in July of 2014 from the new owners of the woodland area who acquired the area known as Page Woods early in January 2014. Councillors considered that the same conditions should apply to the application

site as it did to the woodland area It was noted that relevant species on the woodland area were protected by a Tree Preservation Order 8/99.

The site is designated as Green Belt in the current Basildon Local Plan and Councillors were concerned that, if granted, a president would be set and it would be very difficult to control such applications in the future and any constraints imposed in respect of building on the land, and indeed on the woodland area, might be rescinded.

After considering the application Councillors **AGREED** that they were unable to support the application and as the Parish Clerk to pass on their comments to Basildon Council Planning for the application to be refused.

- 145/14 Planning decisions and comments** – To receive updates and comments on decisions in respect of planning applications discussed at previous meetings.

The Parish Council had received notification that an appeal (APP/V15105/C/14/2211587) against a decision in respect of land at Grange Road, Bowers Gifford, SS15 4NZ had been dismissed.

An appeal had been lodged against an enforcement notice served by Basildon Council for breach of planning control. The appeal was dismissed by the Planning Inspector and the notice was upheld.

- 146/14 Parish postal address consultation:** Parish Council to confirm their support for the Post Office to carry out a consultation to amend the locality information of incorrectly identified postal addresses in some areas of the Parish.

Following an enquiry by a resident in Osborne Road it had been identified that a number of addresses in the Parish were incorrectly stated in regard to their locality and the Parish Council had been asked to support a consultation, by the Post Office, to obtain residents views on correcting any inaccuracies. The Parish Clerk had also made inquiries of Basildon Council Land Registry and asked for a meeting of the agencies concerned , details were yet to be confirmed

Councillors **AGREED** to support a consultation by the Post Office to determine the correct locality addresses in both Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet. Proposal to meet with Basildon Council Officers to define the correct areas based on the information available in regard to Parish Council boundaries were also accepted.

- 147/14 Parish Council Risk Assessment** – To review and amend, where appropriate, the Parish Council's Risk Assessment in regard to roles and responsibilities of the Parish Council.

Councillors considered the Risk Assessment which covered the mechanisms by which the Council's business was carried out. The existing Assessment had been approved previously on 29th May 2013.

Having considered the document it was considered that all safeguarding measures were in place and the only amendment required was regarding the inclusion of the wording in respect of the back-up of the Council's IT and data information and it was **AGREED** to make this amendment.

- 148/14 Parish in Bloom:** To discuss and consider holding a Parish in Bloom competition for 2015.

Following discussion it was agreed to hold the Parish in Bloom competition at the beginning of July 2015. The categories for the competition were to be agreed.

- 149/14 Neighbourhood Planning:** To update and discuss the involvement needed to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan for a small Parish.

Councillor Foster summarised the intention of Neighbourhood Planning, which was introduced by the Localism Act 2011, as a tool for local communities to guide the future development in the places where they live and work and have more of a say where building is undertaken. In 2012 Local Council's (including Parish and Town Councils) were given powers to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans (Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012)

Basildon Council does not currently have a Local Plan and in its absence developers could argue that land within the Parish should be developed to the detriment of local communities.

A Neighbourhood Plan is a way for Parish Councils to have control over new development in their area and once formalised establishes general planning policies for the development and use of land in a 'defined neighbourhood area'.

The process of putting together a Neighbourhood Plan is lengthy and time consuming and can take up to two years. It is a framework led by the Local Council and put together with the help of a small number of volunteers from the local community. It does not stop the planning process but is a way of influencing what should be built. Once adopted the Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the Local Development Plan of the Borough and will be used in determining planning applications and land allocation in a Neighbourhood area.

Initially the process had been costly but since its inception this cost had been reduced and in most cases would cost between £12,000 - £17,000. A majority of this outlay could be obtained via grants.

Councillors considered that without a Neighbourhood Plan the Parish could be left open to large scale unwanted development.

Councillors **AGREED** to look at the first stages of putting together the

information needed to formulate a Neighbourhood Plan.

150/14 Feedback on meetings attended by Councillors: To briefly update on the relevant issues from meetings and training attended by Parish Councillors.

Councillor Foster had attended the Standards Committee Meeting on 18th March. The only action was to change the status quo of the Committee but this proposal was defeated by the casting vote of the Chair.

Councillor Foster had attended the Association of Basildon Local Council meeting on 19th March. The Committee had a new Secretary and it was hoped communication would improve and the ABLC would pick up the momentum which had been lacking in recent months.

Councillor Foster will be attending Basildon Council Highways Panel meeting on 20th March and the Church Road bollards are on the agenda.

Councillor Guenigault attended the Bus Transport meeting on 4th March. He advised that the Passenger Transport Team has been cut by two thirds and consideration was being given to merging resources with Castle Point. A new eco-friendly bus had been introduced on the No 9 Route which was supposed to be 30% more efficient than previous vehicles. The 100 Service is suffering from the effects of delays due to road works and the No 25 bus route had been affected by flooding via Shotgate in October 2013.

As part of its tendering process Essex County Council is reviewing its existing local bus contracts which are due to end in August 2015. Currently 11 services are being tendered for but over 100 contracts will be offered for extension to existing contractors until April 2016 when it is proposed to put all services out to tender.

The 'Getting around in Essex' consultation was due to end on 31st March and Councillor Guenigault urged everyone to take part.

151/14 Parish Annual Meeting and Annual Council Meeting 2014/2015 – To advise on dates of each respective meeting and the differences between each meeting in the formal Council calendar.

(i) The Parish Annual Meeting will take place on Wednesday 29th April 2015 and will commence at 7.00 p.m. and close at 8.15 p.m. The meeting will be held prior to the normal Parish Council meeting which will now commence at 8.15 p.m. The Parish Annual meeting gives electors more time to raise questions of their Parish Councillors.

(ii) The Annual Parish Council Meeting will be held on 27th May 2015 and is the first meeting of the new Parish Council year. It is a formal meeting where Parish

Councillors elect or re-elect a Chair and Vice – Chair for the forthcoming year or new term of office.

152/14 **Date of next full Parish Council meeting:** To confirm the date and time of the Parish Council's monthly meeting.

The next Parish Council meeting will commence at 8.15 p.m. on 29th April 2015