



**BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 18th MAY 2022 AT 7.30 PM.**

PRESENT:

Councillors: B. Foster: C. Morris: S. Pegg:

Ward Councillor/s: Councillor Craig Rimmer (Pitsea South-East Ward Councillor)

Parish Council Clerk/RFO: Mrs Christine Barlow

Public attendance: Seven (7)

1/22 Introductions: All present were welcomed to the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. The recent Parish Council elections held on 5th May 2022 was uncontested and notice had been given, by the Basildon Council's Returning Officer, that all Parish Councillors nominated to stand and present at the meeting were duly elected to Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Parish Council unopposed.

The Parish Clerk took over the meeting until after the election of a new Chair.

2/22 Election of Chair:

Councillor Foster was proposed as Chair. **Proposed:** Councillor Morris:
Seconded: Councillor Pegg.

3/22 Declaration of Acceptance - Signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office by elected Chair and to receive a signed Declaration of Acceptance from each elected Councillors.

Councillor Bernard Foster duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and all Councillors duly signed Declarations of Acceptance as Councillors.

4/22 Election of Vice-Chair.

It was agreed that Councillor Sheelagh Pegg and Councillor Morris will both take on the role of Vice-Chair.

5/22 Apologies for absence: Aidan McGurran, (Pitsea Essex County Councillor)

6/22 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.

7/22 Minutes of Parish Council meetings: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 27th April 2022 and Chairman to sign.

With one amendment in regard to the designation of Councillor Rimmer, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th April 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by Councillor Bernard Foster, Chair.

8/22 Ward/County Councillor update: Time is set aside for Borough/County Councillors to address the meeting.

Councillor Rimmer advised that the Basildon Council Conservative administration had retained control of the Borough Council at the May elections and had retained the majority of Council seats. Councillor Luke Makenzie had been re-elected for the Pitsea South East Ward and had taken 60% of the vote. He had also been nominated by the Conservative Group as their choice for Mayor.

Councillor Rimmer advised Borough Councillors had met with Essex County Councillor Kevin Bentley, Leader of Essex County Council, Cabinet Members and Officers and it had been agreed to form "Team Basildon" to deal specifically with related issues in the Borough which impacted both areas of ECC and Basildon Council. Some of the key areas to be considered would be estate renewal, joint ventures in connection with regeneration of Basildon Town Centre and Pitsea and Levelling-Up issues where there is joint responsibility of land. This would include rural areas such as Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet. Councillor Rimmer also advised that the Association of Basildon Local Councils (ABLC) would also be consulted on the proposals as a key-stakeholders in the Borough. The Arts Council was also very interested in Basildon and had expressed a wish to work with Basildon on a number of Arts Projects.

The key priorities for Basildon Council were the revision of the Local Plan and protecting the Green Belt and looking at Design Codes across the Borough. Councillor Rimmer agreed with Councillors that if Essex County Council were not prepared to improve infrastructure in the village large scale housing development within the Village could not go ahead. The administration will endeavour to keep Council Tax low and continue investment in Parks and Leisure facilities.

Public Spaces Protection Orders had been put in place for Pitsea Town Centre, under Pitsea Flyover, Parks and other Town Centres across the Borough, giving the Police extra powers to move people along or fine on the spot for any law enforcement issues under the Order. The Council has also hired a private security company to work alongside Park Wardens and the Police in regard to law enforcement.

9/22 Appointment of Representatives: To confirm the appointments of Parish

Councillors to the following areas of interest:

- Association of Basildon Local Councils (ABLC) – It was AGREED that Councillor Foster would continue in the role of the Parish Council representative.

- Basildon Council Liaison Group – Councillor Foster and Councillor Morris to attend on behalf of the Council but it was noted that a further representative could be added as a deputy at a later date.
- Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) Steering Group – The Steering Group, which was in place for the Neighbourhood Plan, would continue to work with the Parish Council on the NDO project. The Parish Clerk would continue to provide an admin service for the project.

Councillor Pegg raised the issue of the Bus Timetable and the clarity of any changes to times and routes. Councillor Rimmer advised he was on the Panel of the Essex Bus Forum and would be happy to raise any issues on this matter. Councillor Pegg would meet with Councillor Rimmer to discuss matters after the meeting.

10/22 Finance Report:

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

The RFO provided a summary report as detailed below.

	£
Balance at Bank 27 th April 2022	116,218.69
Balance at Bank 18 th May 2022	113,507.92
Expenditure:	2,710.77
Income:	Nil
Expenditure:	
(661) Picnic-in- Park Expenses	1,000.00
(662) Handyperson Net Pay (April)	224.00
(663) EALC/NALC Affiliation(EALC- £391.88 & NALC £121.94)	513.82
(664) Benbow Club Hall Hire (Jan/Feb/March) + VAT	72.00
(667) Clerks Net Salary (April) Plus Tel/BB/Office Use	700.95
(668) Petty Cash Payment	<u>200.00</u>
	2,710.77
Income:	<u>NIL</u>

The RFO explained that the large balance of income included a grant of £96,500 to cover work on the NDO Feasibility Study and if the outcome of the study was found to be viable the grant would then cover work to progress Neighbourhood Development Orders for designated areas in the Parish.

- (ii) **Annual Internal Audit:** The Annual Internal Audit would take place the following day, 19th May 2022.

(iii) To confirm the Parish Council's bank account signatories for 2021/2022.

The bank account signatories were confirmed as Councillor Bernard Foster, Councillor Colin Morris, Councillor Sheelagh Pegg and Christine Barlow, RFO (in an emergency capacity only). Two signatories were required to sign cheques and any bank transfers for each debit.

11/22 Planning - Councillors to review and comment on Planning Application/s under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended):

Notice ID: MFN0653013: Essex County Council: Proposed disposal of land at Cornwall Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex

The Parish Council had written a letter to the Secretary of State raising concerns that the disposal of the land in Cornwall Road by Essex County Council, at the current time, was ill considered at the present time and that any decision be delay on the disposal of the land or a caveat on the land to minimise the impact on the revision of Basildon Council's Local Plan and the BGNB Neighbourhood Plan to enable both to reformulate their Green Belt Strategy. Councillor Rimmer confirmed he would look into the matter and raise the issue with Planning.

12/22 Planning updates and comments: To receive updates and comments o

22/00490/PDPA - The Gables, Clarence Road ,Bowers Gifford, Basildon Essex SS13 2JW - Notification for a proposed larger home extension projecting 8.00 metres from the rear wall of the original dwelling with a maximum height of 2.70 metres and an eaves height of 2.70 metres, materials to match existing dwelling – Prior approval not required

22/00318/FULL - The Orchard, 8 Clifton Road, Bowers Gifford Basildon Essex SS13 2LE Construction of 4 detached chalet bungalows, associated garages and parking areas, new garage and driveway for the existing dwelling – Refused

22/00245/FULL- 5 Page Road, Bowers Gifford - Extending garage to front by 3m with flat roof and converting garage into annex – Refused.

13/22 Parish Clerks Report: To update Councillors on business since the last meeting held on 27th April 2022 and the progress of plans for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Picnic-in-the-Park Event.

The Parish Clerk advised that the Parish Council Handyperson has been kept very busy carrying- out work in various parts of the village. The disputed area at the junction of Pound Lane an Alpha Close has been cut on several occasions in addition to the grass verge opposite the Gun where the planters have been sited, due to the infrequency of cutting m which was the responsibility of the grass cutting contractors engaged by ECC/BBC. At a previous meeting residents had requested shrubs be pruned in Cornwall Road and with the help of residents this work had been undertaken and wheelie bins used to remove the vegetation. The ground at the rear of 118 Pound Lane had been cleared in consultation with the landowners who had agreed to make a donation of £500 to a Parish Project.

The corner at the junction of Pound Lane and Burnt Mills Road, which was overgrown with “cow parsley” had been cut to minimise the danger of any obstruction to the sight line. (This work normally undertaken by the Basildon Council’s contractors ID Verde) The play area in Westlake Park had also been cut on several occasions by the to keep it short for public use.

The load restriction signs on both corners of Pound Lane and Burnt Mills Road were now clear of overhanging branches.

Unfortunately, cars were still parking on the verge at Ilfracombe Avenue but the number of cars had reduced since the second four planters had been installed.

Discussion on additional play equipment in the park is continuing. It had been agreed that the equipment would consist of a climber, zip wire and ground level trampoline in junior play area. The preferred wet pour safety surfacing under the climber would incur an additional cost in excess of the £35K set aside for the project and it had been suggested by Officers that the Parish Council might fund the additional cost. However, the Parish Council did not have the funds to make up any shortfall at the present time. Councillor Rimmer agreed to discuss further with the Parish Council.

Councillor Pegg and the Parish Clerk have been working of the programme of Events for the Jubilee Picnic-in-the Park. Raffle prizes for the event had been donated by local businesses and entertainment and activities confirmed and the application to hold the event had been confirmed by Basildon Council. First Aiders for the event had been engaged via St John’s Ambulance and attendees had provided Public Liability Insurance and other related documents in connection with their activity. Basildon Council had provided Jubilee bunting and every child attending the event would be given a souvenir memento of the day. It was proposed to erect the Marquees for the event on the Saturday morning prior to the event on 5th June 2022 and to engage a security company to oversee the security of the equipment overnight. The event had been publicised in the Echo, on the Parish Council website and in the PC noticeboards and email sent to BBC Essex. An email from Gateway FM asking for an interview had been received. A leaflet had already been delivered to residents and the Bowers Bugle newsletter would also be delivered to residents before the event. More volunteers were needed to help at the event, and it was hoped residents would come forward as a result of the publicity being circulated.

14/22 Neighbourhood Development Order: To confirm the appointment of consultants to conduct a Feasibility Study to conduct the viability of moving forward with the Neighbourhood Development Order Project and the next steps in the process.

Funding to proceed with the research to introduce Neighbourhood Development Orders to some part of the Parish has now been secured. O’Neill Homer has been retained as overall consultants for the NDO Project and other specialist contractors will be engaged to conduct some of the technical work. The assessment work previously undertaken whilst developing the Neighbourhood Plan would be revisited for the Green Belt Study. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group would continue to be involved in

discussions on the Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) Project to provide continuity and understanding due to their involvement with the Neighbourhood Plan. It was anticipated that the first phase of this work would be available at the beginning of August. Councillor Pegg asked how many of the most significant plotland sites were in the Borough and locally to Basildon. It was suggested that some research could be done to determine the numbers and that the work being undertaken in connection with the NDO Project might help to resolve other wider issues. It was AGREED to try and identify this information for future reference.

15/22 Councillor Vacancies: To discuss the recruitment of Councillors to fill Councillor vacancies.

Councillor Smillie and Councillor Potter had decided not to stand at the May elections. In their absence both were thanked for their service and commitment to the Parish Council over several years. There was now a shortfall of Parish Councillor and an advert had been placed on the Parish Council website and in the Parish Council noticeboards and the same notice would be displayed at the Jubilee Event. Several suggestions were put forward regarding the recruitment of Parish Councillors and publicising the Parish Council which included (i) a recruitment drive for new Councillors (ii) a survey asking residents for their priorities in respect of Parish issues (iii) compiling an information pack for new residents and (iv) a drop-in event

16/22 Public Forum : Residents have the opportunity to raise questions of a general nature not discussed during the meeting. (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

Residents raised the issue of speeding in Pound Lane again. The Parish Clerk advised that Councillor Mackenzie would be asking for an update, at the next Local Highways Panel (LHP) meeting on the traffic survey he had requested for Pound Lane. A resident, who had been keeping a log of the number of vehicles she had considered to be speeding through Pound Lane and to date in May over 60 hours the number was 1,892.

A resident asked if there was any update on the vehicles parked on the bend adjacent to number 60 Pound Lane. The Parish Clerk advised she had sent an email to Basildon Police on 6th April 2022 regarding parking on the pavement and she had received a response informing that the matter had been forwarded to the geographical Sergeant for Pitsea asking for some patrols to be carried out. An email had also been sent to South Essex Parking Partnerships (SEPP) but unfortunately, currently there was no further update from either. Councillor Rimmer asked for a copy of the emails to be sent to him.

Councillor Rimmer advised that he had forwarded a complaint to enforcement regarding the illegal use of buildings on a site at the end of Lawrence Road. The Parish Clerk advised that the issue had been reported to the Parish Council also and she had raised the matter to Planning Enforcement following the receipt of a complaint.

Councillor Rimmer had also reported the Bingo Hall building in Pitsea to Planning Enforcement on a matter of Health and Safety.

A resident complained that some of the shrubs along the pathway from Kelly Road to London Road were overhanging the footpath. The Parish Clerk was cutting back some of the shrubs around the post box that were hanging over but was unable to cut large areas because of taking the shrubs away or the equipment. Councillor Rimmer confirmed he would make a request for the Pride Team to undertake the work.

A resident asked if the erosion on the road at the corner of Burnt Mills Road and Pound Lane and the stretch of road from Burnt Mills Road/Pound Lane to A127 was also showing signs of erosion at the side of the road. Both had been reported and Councillor Makenzie was intending to raise at the next LHP Meeting

17/22 Date of next meeting: To confirm the date of the next meeting as 29th June 2022 and subsequent meetings for the financial year 2022-2023.

The date of the next Parish Council meeting was unable to be confirmed as 29th June due to the fact that Councillor Pegg was unable to attend and this would mean that the meeting would be inquorate. The date of the next meeting would be published as soon as a decision had been made.

18/22 Personnel Matters: To discuss the Parish Clerks/RFO incremental increase in salary. Members of the public to be excluded from the discussion .

Decision added to the minutes after the meeting:

A review of the Parish Clerks salary should have taken place in April 2021 , but due to the Covid pandemic the discussion did not taken place (Parish Council Meeting 28th May 2021 Minute 11/21(v). A further incremental rise appropriate to the grade was now due with effect from 1st April 2022. In addition since April 2021 a National Salary Award for 2021 – 2022 had been agreed by the National Joint Council (NJC) for local government services employees and this was effective from April 2022 but backdated to April 2021.

Based on the figures presented by the Parish Clerk /RFO and verified by the evidence provided by the Parish Councillors it was AGREED that an incremental increase should be paid as set out in the evidence, in line with the appropriate Grade ,as of April 2022, together with any backpay due to bring the Parish Clerk/RFO in line with her graded pay entitlement to date.

Signed:Councillor Bernard Foster, Chair Date: 29th June 2022