



**MINUTES OF BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET  
PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29<sup>th</sup> MAY 2024.**

**PRESENT:**

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Councillors:</b>              | Sheelagh Pegg: (Chair) Colin Morris: Sue Edmonson:<br>Sally McCornack: Susan Moore: Terry Potter: |
| <b>Ward Councillor/s:</b>        | Councillor Ben Westwick (Pitsea South- East Ward)   |
| <b>Guests:</b>                   | Members of the Policing Community Policing Team   |
| <b>Parish Council Clerk/RFO:</b> | Mrs Christine Barlow  |
| <b>Public attendance:</b>        | 13  |

**MINUTES**

**1/24 Introductions:** Welcome to the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council 2024

Before the meeting started in earnest Councillor Pegg thanked ex-Councillor Craig Rimmer, who was in the audience, for all the hard work and support he had given to the Parish Council and residents of Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet over the previous eight years whilst their Councillor, having lost his seat by the narrowest of margins, as Pitsea South-East Ward Councillor, in the May election. The genuine support he had given to the Parish and Parish Council had been a massive help and had been of huge benefit, in many different ways, and he would be missed not only for his care and support but also at meetings which he regularly attended. All present agreed and Craig was given a loud round of applause, in appreciation. In reply Craig thanked Councillor Pegg for her kind words, on behalf of the Parish Council, and declared he had enjoyed his time as their Councillor and wished his successor Councillor, Ben Westwick, all the best in his new role.

Councillor Pegg welcomed all to the Parish Council Annual Meeting and extended a warm welcome to Ben Westwick, their newly elected Ward Councillor.

**2/24 Election of Chair:** To propose and confirm the election of Chair for 2024/2025

The incumbent Chair, Councillor Pegg, stepped down as Chair and the Parish Clerk took over the meeting and asked for nominations for the position of Chairperson.

Councillor Pegg was proposed unopposed, and she agreed to continue in the role of Chair.

**Proposed:** Councillor Sally McCornack: **Seconded:** Councillor Susan Edmondson.

- 3/24 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 Pegg signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, and her signature was witnessed by the Parish Clerk.

- 4/24 Election of Vice-Chair:** To elect a Vice-Chair of the Council if deemed required.

Councillor Colin Morris was nominated as Vice-Chair and agreed to take on the role.

- 4/24/1 Proposed:** Councillor Susan Moore: **Seconded:** Councillor Terry Potter

At this point two of Wickford PCSO's from the Basildon Policing Team joined the meeting.

- 5/24 Apologies for absence:**

Councillor Aidan McGurran (Essex County Councillor for Pitsea)

- 6/24 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.

Councillor Colin Morris expressed an interest in item 14/24 - Planning

- 7/24 Minutes of Parish Council meetings:** To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and Chair to sign.

The Parish Clerk pointed out that on page 5 (Item 127/22) the name of the internal Auditor firm should read Heelis and Lodge and not Heelis and Heelis.

Subject to the above amendment the minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting

- 8/24 Ward/County Councillor update:** Borough/County Councillors to address the meeting.

Councillor Ben Westwick, newly elected Ward Councillor for Pitsea South-East, advised that it had come to his attention that members of the Travelling Community were in the process of unlawfully developing land in Upper Avenue. He advised a Temporary Stop Notice had been issued to the landowners by Planning Enforcement Officers subject to receiving further information of the

infringement. Councillors raised concerns that matters of unlawful development of this type were not being addressed across the plotland areas. Councillor Westwick noted these comments and advised he would seek advice on the matter and update at a future meeting. The Parish Clerk informed Councillor Westwick that the Parish Council had also been liaising with Enforcement Offices on the issues raised. She agreed to forward any correspondence relating to the matter to Councillor Westwick in due course.

Councillor McGurran, ECC Member for Pitsea, having sent his apologies for the meeting asked the content of an email sent to the Parish Clerk to be read out to the meeting. The Parish Clerk informed, from the content of the email, that in terms of the Archers Field Waste Facility the decision to refuse had come as a surprise to him. He felt the ECC Planning Committee were going to approve the application but on closer scrutiny by Councillors the actual voting was 4-3 against - with two abstentions. He had visited the site himself with fellow ECC Councillors, following which the decision was taken that the location was not suitable for the facility.

Councillor McGurran also advised his new role in Basildon Council was that of the Cabinet Member for Environment and he and Council Officers were already working on potential legal challenges in respect of the Waste Facility. He assured residents that if an appeal was made by the site owners, to the Secretary of State, Basildon Council would fight any legal action to overturn the decision to refuse the planning application.

**9/24 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)

(i) Craig Rimmer said he wasn't surprised about the eventual outcome to refuse the planning application in regard to Archers Field Waste Facility. At the time Basildon Councillors, from all parties, had raised their objections to the facility and the matter was then deferred for further investigation and thus there was a change of minds and the right result achieved.

(ii) A resident asked if there had been any progress on the St Modwen development on Land East of Burnt Mills Road. In response the meeting was informed no information had been received to date and this may have been due to the recent Borough Elections and the election of new Councillors to the Planning Committee.

(iii) A resident asked the Parish Clerk if the brambles from a property at the beginning of Kelly Road, which were once again overhanging the footpath, could be removed again. The Parish Clerk advised she would contact the Estate Agent in order to request the owner to prune the shrubs.

(iv) A resident asked if the Parish Council knew why the bottle bank had been removed at the top of Ilfracombe Avenue on the London Road. The Tesco trolley still had not been removed. The Clerk advised she would make enquiries.

(v) A resident asked if there was any update on the Care Home development

adjacent to Ilfracombe Avenue. The resident was advised that the Planning Application had been granted at the second attempt but currently there was no indication of when building works would commence.

(vi) The two PCSO from the Community Policing Team (CPT) introduced themselves and updated the meeting on the work of the Community Policing Team (PCT). The Team operates out of Basildon Police station and, although they were part of the Wickford PCT there is a small Community Policing Team that covers Pitsea and Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet. They advised that their colleagues held a “Let’s Talk” Surgery at Alton Garden Centre but If there was also a suitable venue in the Parish where a “Let’s Talk” Beat Surgery could be held they would be pleased to investigate. He suggested that the Parish Council contact the aforementioned team for details of the relevant officers in their specific team. **Action:** The Parish Clerk advised she was aware of some of the Officers but would contact team members for more information.

The issue of motor bike anti-social behavior in the fields behind Ilfracombe Avenue was discussed and the Officers agreed to request the Sargeant of the relevant Policing Team to contact the Parish Clerk.

There being no further questions the Officers were thanked for attending.

**10/24 Appointment of Representatives:** To confirm the appointments of Parish Councillors to the following areas of interest:

- Association of Basildon Local Councils (ABLC) - Councillor Colin Morris
- Basildon Council Liaison Group – attendance due to availability.

**11/24 Parish Clerks Report:** The Parish Clerk to update on the outcomes of business since the previous meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024

- (i) Potholes have been reported for Canvey Road, Kelly Road and Osborne Road
- (ii) The Zebra Crossing Beacon not working has been reported on ECC website.
- (iii) The Vehicle Activation Sign (VAS) not working reported to ECC Local Highways Officer for a repair to be carried out
- (iv) The Parish Council Grounds Maintenance Project has been well received. An application is pending for further funding to support the project in order to continue to support the project.
- (v) An application has been made to ECC Community Safety Fund for up to £2,000 to support the Picnic-in-the Park Event on 8<sup>th</sup> September 24.
- (vi) Complaints regarding motor bike and quad bike nuisance reported to the Police.
- (vii) Contact made with Enforcement Officers regarding unlawful development in Upper Avenue.
- (viii) The blocking of PROW 143 is ongoing with ECC Public Right of Way Officer.
- (ix) Leaflets for the D-Day Event are being delivered.

**12/24 Finance Report:**

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

The Parish Clerk provided a summary of the bank statement to Councillors as detailed below:

No issues were raised regarding the summary of accounts.

|     |   | £         |
|-----|---|-----------|
| B/L | Balance at Bank 24 <sup>th</sup> April 2024 | 22,162.62 |
|     | Balance at Bank 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2025   | 27,313.83 |
|     |   |           |
|     | Expenditure:                                | 3,327.57  |
|     | Income: HMRC VAT Refund                     | 8,478.78  |

|    |  |               |
|----|--|---------------|
| 07 | Clerks Expenses HP-Toner Cartridges x2                   | 84.00         |
| 08 | Clerks Expenses – London Hearts Defib Pads & supplies    | 130.99        |
| 09 | Clerks Expenses – Zoom Annual Payment 2024-25            | 143.88        |
| 10 | Benbow Club – Hall Hire Oct- April £30 x 6               | 180.00        |
| 11 | Atkins Cleaning – Bus Stops- Pound Lane                  | 210.00        |
| 12 | GMO Staff Wages (April 2024)                             | 224.00        |
| 13 | Petty Cash payment to Clerk                              | 250.00        |
| 14 | EALC/NALC Affiliation Fee 2024-2025                      | 548.45        |
| 15 | 21 CC D-Day Beacon                                       | 658.80        |
| 16 | Clerks Net Salary + Office/Tel/BB Allowance (April 2024) | <u>897.45</u> |
|    |  | 3,327.57      |

(ii) To present the Internal Audit Report for 2023/2024 and advise on the next steps in respect to the External Audit.

The Parish Council's Internal Audit had been carried-out satisfactorily by Heather Heelis of Heelis & Lodge and all matters had been conducted satisfactorily a copy of all documents had been provided to Councillors and are included on the Parish Council website. All relevant documents will now be sent to the Government's appointed External Auditors, before 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024, for ratification. A copy of Notification of Public Rights, which enables members of the public to view the Parish Council accounts, by prior arrangement, will be published on the Parish Council website and noticeboards for a period of 30 days.

(iii) To review the Parish Council's Risk Assessment:

Councillors reviewed the Risk Assessment document and agreed no changes were required at this point in time. The Risk Assessment will be continuously updated in line with government legislation.

**Proposed:** Councillor Morris **Seconded:** Councillor McCornack.

(iv) To confirm the Parish Council's bank account signatories for 2024/2025:

Two authorised signatories are required to complete transactions on the Bank Account. The authorised Bank signatories were confirmed as:

Councillor Colin Morris: Christine Barlow, The Parish Clerk/RFO and an application has been made to add Councillor Moore as a signatory.

**13/24 Planning** - Councillors to review and comment on Planning Applications under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended):

**PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 24/00494/FULL** - Single storey rear extension – Mayfield, Osborne Road, Bowers Gifford

No objections raised.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 24/00566/FULL** - Remove existing roof and construct new roof system incorporating internal habitable space within enlarged roof space at first floor level within Summer House R/O Dora Cottage – Dora Cottage Cornwall Road Bowers Gifford Basildon

Parish Councillors considered that the planning application constitutes over-development of the site. After a period of unauthorised development on the site, an LDCE was granted and latterly a change of status from a residential annex to a private dwelling. The creation of further living accommodation in the roof would increase the overall size of the development and would thus substantially increase the size of any permitted development. The Parish Council therefore objected to the application as it stands.

**14/24 Planning updates and comments:** To receive updates and comments on planning applications discussed at previous meetings.

Councillor Colin Morris notified of a Member Interest in the appeal below and had taken no part in any discussion.

Notification of Appeals from Basildon Council in this current cycle:

**PLANNING APPLICATION: 23/01262/FULL:** Land at The Cabin, Windsor Road, Bowers Gifford - Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling.

Parish Councillors felt they could add nothing more to the comments already made in respect of the application in the first instance, which had been sent to Planning Officers, and would subsequently be sent to the Planning Inspector. They had raised no objections in principle to the original application which was refused by Basildon Council. Their only comment had been a request that all foul water and sewage should be disposed of via a mains sewer and no other system.

**15/24 Neighbourhood Development Order:** To update on the progress of the Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO).

To date no response had been received from the Secretary of State in respect of the documentation sent to them for a decision regarding a Screening Direction in respect of a difference of opinion between Basildon Council Planning Officers and AECOM, the company engaged by Locality to provide technical support to the Parish Council for their Neighbourhood Development Order in respect of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

**16/24 Parish Council Events:** To confirm the dates of the Parish Council community activities for 2024:

The following dates were confirmed for the respective Parish Council activities by all present.

- (i) D-Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Lighting of the Beacon 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024
- (ii) Parish in Bloom Competition – July 2024
- (iii) Picnic-in-the-Park- 8<sup>th</sup> September 2024

**17/24 Date of next meeting:** To confirm the date of the next meeting.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 7.30 p.m. in the Benbow Club, 77 Pound Lane.

Signed ..... Chair, Councillor Sheelagh Pegg

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024