

**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET  
PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING  
HELD AT THE BENBOW CLUB BOWERS GIFFORD  
ON WEDNESDAY 27 MAY 2015 AT 7.30 PM.**

**PRESENT:**

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

**In attendance:** Christine Barlow (Parish Clerk)

**Members of the Public:** 9

**1/15 Introductions** - To welcome all to the Parish Council Annual meeting

Councillor Smillie, Chair welcomed all to the meeting and then stood down as was protocol in respect of the Annual meeting. Mrs Christine Barlow, the Parish Clerk, took over for the initial part of the meeting until a new Chair was elected.

**2/15 Election of Chair.**

Nominations for the position of Chair were taken. Councillor Robert Smillie was proposed as Chair.

**Proposed:** Councillor Bernard Foster: **Seconded:** Councillor Nigel Tyler.

Councillor Smillie was asked if he would accept the nomination and confirmed his acceptance of the role. All Councillors were in **AGREEMENT** with the proposal.

**3/15 Declaration of Acceptance** - Signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office by elected Chair.

Councillor Smillie signed the declaration and the Parish Clerk was duly elected to the position of Chair and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

**4/15 Election of Vice-Chair.**

Councillor Smillie asked for nominations to be received for the position of Vice-Chair and a nomination was received for Councillor Bernard Foster.

**Proposed:** Councillor Nigel Tyler: **Seconded:** Councillor George Guenigault.

Councillor Foster accepted the position and was duly elected.

**5/15 Apologies for absence.**

None, all Councillors were present.

**6/15 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

**7/15 Appointment of Representatives –** To appoint representatives to the following areas of interest:

- Parish Council's Planning Advisory Group – Councillors N. Tyler, B Foster and G. Guenigault.
- Association of Basildon Local Council's ( ABLC) – Councillor B. Foster
- Bus Transport Forum – Councillor G.Guenigaut
- Basildon Council Liaison Group – Councillor B. Foster.  
If Councillor Foster was unable to attend this meeting Councillor R.Smillie would deputise.
- Other groups where applicable – Local Highways Panel & Basildon Council Standards Committee – Councillor B Foster attended both these Panels as Representative of the Association of Basildon Local Councils.

It was **AGREED** by all Councillors present to retain the status quo for all external bodies and areas of interest.

**8/15 Public Forum:** To enable residents to raise issues of concern with Parish Councillors (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

(i) The Parish Council was asked to raise the issue of the condition of the zebra crossing in Pound Lane which needed to be repainted before a serious accident happened. The resident also advised that the Belisha Beacon to the west side of the crossing was not working and this added to the danger of any incident.

**Action:** The Parish Clerk was asked to raise the concerns with Essex County Council Highways and request repairs carried out and the crossing repainted.

(ii) A resident raised her displeasure over the fact that the heading of an article in the winter edition of the Parish newsletter was misleading. The Parish Clerk, with the permission of the Chair, informed that the article heading was a 'play on words' to highlight the fact that there **was** flooding in parts of the Parish and was asking residents to identify these area. The resident advised she was part of the Flood Action Group but was unaware that the Parish Council was also in dialogue with other partners on the matter. She asked to be kept informed of

any action that the Parish Council was undertaking in regard to flood issues.

**Action:** Councillor Smillie commented that he felt it was a good idea to exchange information and in future if there were issues, which the Parish Council could exchange relating to flooding, they would contact the resident with any information that could be shared so as not to overlap with the work being undertaken by the Flood Action Group.

(iii) A resident asked what support the Parish Council would give to the community bid by Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Residents Association to purchase Page Woods which was up for sale by the current owners. Councillor Tyler confirmed that the Parish Council had received a letter requesting their support but that it was rather ambiguous in as much that it did not give any figures as to cost, the degree of funding needed and how the area was to be managed if the bid was successful. The Resident Association Chair, who was present, gave an outline on the background of the intended bid. Councillor Smillie advised that the Parish Council would be happy to look at the proposals, providing a breakdown of costs could be provided. The Parish Council was informed that the Residents Association had prepared a draft bid for funding to the Veolia Thames Trust and had received pledges of support from residents and external organisations. The Council was advised that the Residents Association had agreed a date, with the current owners of the wood, to complete the sale to purchase the site by mid- August.

**Action:** The Parish Council concluded that they did not have any substantial funds to support such a proposal, however, if the Resident Association provided the Parish Council with costs for the project and a business plan for ongoing costs they would consider the request and update at the meeting in June. The Chair of the Residents Association agreed to provide this information.

**10/15 Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015 -** Council to approve the accuracy of the minutes of previous meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015 and the Chair to sign.

The Parish Council approved and accepted the minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> April and they were duly signed by the Chair, Councillor Smillie.

**11/15 Parish Clerks Report**

- i. An anonymous letter had been received from a resident regarding the condition of the grass verges within the Parish and other matters.
- ii. An email had been received from the Secretary of Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Residents Association asking for the support of the Parish Council in connection with the Associations proposals to purchase Page

Woods.

- iii. A Freedom of Information request had been received from a resident.
- iv. Issues raised by a resident of Lower Road in connection with flooding at the Annual Parish meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015 had been passed to Essex County Council Flood Management Engineer and a reply in response received just prior to the meeting.
- v. Councillor Guenigault and the Parish Clerk had visited a local landowner and discussed several separate issues with him including: the condition of Burnt Mills Road, ditch clearance and injury to his livestock.
- vi. Confirmation had been received from Basildon Council Arboricultural & Grounds Maintenance Officer that highways verges in the Parish were due to be cut in June and October. A request to meet with the Officer had been accepted and a suitable date was to be arranged.
- vii. An email had been sent to the Waste Disposal Plant in Courtauld Road requesting a visit to the Plant.
- viii. Two drop-in sessions had been held on 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> May 2015 to consult with residents on proposals to move forward on a Neighbourhood Plan. Twenty – three residents attended over the two days.

**11/15 Finance Report**– The Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer to advise on:

**11/15/1** The Parish Council’s current financial position

The Parish Clerk presented the finance report for the period 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015 – 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015

Balance at bank as at 29 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	£10,249.49
Balance at bank as at 26 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	£ 8,876.11
<b><u>Summary</u></b>	
Expenditure	£ 1,373.38
Income	Nil
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>	
Net Clerks Salary + Office Allowance	£565.19
Bugle Printing	£395.00
HMRC (Tax & Emprs. NI)	<u>£412.99</u>
	£1373.38

**11/15/2 Internal Audit:**

The Internal Audit was carried out on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015 by Heelis & Lodge and all was in order.

As required by the Act a notice had been displayed on the Parish Council noticeboards giving electors the opportunity to view the accounts by contacting the Parish Clerk and making an appointment to do so.

The Parish Council was satisfied that the Audit had been carried out in line with the Governance Statement on the Annual Return and Councillor Smillie, as Chair, signed the statement on behalf of the Parish Council.

The completed Annual Return and relevant documents would be submitted to the External Body of Auditors, PKF LittleJohn, by 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015 to be certified as in order.

**11/15/3 New regulations introduced by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in regard to changes to the auditing regime for smaller councils.**

New regulations in respect of smaller authorities were to be introduced in 2015 in regard to Audit. The Councillors had been provided with a copy of the changes which were set out in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, prior to the meeting. Any smaller authority with an annual turnover below £25,000 would be exempt from carrying out certain audit functions. The Annual Return would still need to be completed in accordance with proper practices and until the end of 2017 the Annual Return would continue to be audited by the external auditor appointed by the appropriate body but some administration changes would take effect during 2015/2016.

**11/15/4 To confirm the Parish Council's bank account signatories for 2015/16.**

It was **AGREED** by all present that the Parish Council bank signatories would remain the same.

The signatories were: Councillors Foster, Tyler and Guengault.

**12/15 To consider and adopt or approve the following policies:**

- (i) The Publication Scheme and the changes made by the Protection of Freedom Act 2012 in regard a "dataset" held by a council.
- (ii) The Openness and Transparency Policy as defined by the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014.
- (ii) The Parish Council's Complaints Policy

The above documents had been provided to all Councillors prior to the meeting and their contents read and noted. It was **AGREED** by all present to approve

and adopt the documents as presented.

- 13/15 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:  
15/00604/FULL**

Proposed two storey side and rear extensions - **94 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford, Pitsea, Essex**

The Parish Council had considered the content of the planning application and felt that the property was overly large for the site. The applicants had included a terrace on the rear upper floors and it was considered the view from the terrace would intrude on the meaningful enjoyment of neighbouring properties and properties to the rear would be overlooked. In addition load noise from rear of the property would be amplified across neighbouring properties. Councillors therefore felt the design of the property in regard to planning was inappropriate.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO:  
15/00557/FULL**

Erection of a part first floor/part two storey rear extension to existing public house and restaurant, to provide function suite on ground floor and hotel bedrooms on first floor; together with a free standing two storey building linked at first floor level, to form a 27 bedroom hotel; and extension to the existing car park to provide 26 additional parking spaces. - The Gun Public House, London Road, Bowers Gifford, Essex

The Parish Council had considered the application but felt that the proposals were inappropriate development.

**Action:** The Parish Clerk was asked to pass their comments on the applications discussed to Basildon Council Planning Department.

- 13/15/1 Planning decisions and comments** – To receive updates and comments on decisions in respect of planning applications discussed at previous meetings.

None received.

- 14/15 Neighbourhood Planning:** To update Members on the introductory consultation drop- sessions to discuss proposals for a Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Foster reported that the two drop-in sessions to meet Councillors and discuss proposals with electors regarding Neighbourhood Planning had gone well. There had been a surprising level of interest on the mechanics of Neighbourhood Plan and it was the intention of the Parish Council to hold more meetings and drop-in sessions over the next few months to obtain residents views and ensure a Neighbourhood Plan had the support of the community. A

grant application would need to be made to cover the costs of putting the Plan into place. The Parish Council would analyse all the feedback received from residents and agree a strategy to move forward with any proposals. The Council had support from Basildon Council and is also looking at successes from other Parish Councils in regard to their applications for a Neighbourhood Plan.

- 15/15 Park Opening Event:** To discuss and agree a date to thank the Parish Council sponsors for the funding received for the refurbishment of Westlake Park in 2014.

The Parish Council had been reviewing dates to celebrate the Park Opening event to thank all their sponsors for funding the second phase of the Park regeneration project. The Parish Clerk was awaiting responses regarding availability of key sponsors. Having previously discussed possible dates Councillors **AGREED** the date for the event as the end of June. When the availability of the sponsors was confirmed invitations would be sent to all interested parties including the new Mayor of Basildon and leaflets would be sent to residents to inform them of the event. A plaque in memory of Councillor Brian Wall would be also be placed on one of the benches at the same event.

**Action:** The Parish Clerk was asked to obtain confirmation of the availability of the sponsors and Councillors would then meet to finalise arrangements for the day.

- 15/15 Date of next meeting** - To confirm the date of the next Parish Council meeting.

The date of the next Parish Council meeting was 24<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30 p.m. at the Benbow Club, Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford.