

**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE BENBOW CLUB BOWERS GIFFORD
ON WEDNESDAY 27th JANUARY 2016 AT 7.30 p.m.**

PRESENT:

Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Parish Council

Councillors: R.Smillie (Chair): N. Tyler
Parish Council Clerk: Christine Barlow

Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Residents Association

Elaine Horwood: Jon Horwood: Tina Whitten: Daphne Payne:

Essex County Council

Councillor Keith Bobbin

Members of the Public

Councillor Robert Smillie, Chair, welcomed a packed audience to the meeting and explained that the Residents Association had also booked the venue on the same night. It had therefore been agreed to combine the two meetings and incorporate discussion on Basildon Council's Draft Local Plan in the first part of the evening as part of the Public Forum which would give residents the opportunity to raised questions of both parties. He also informed that the Parish Council had attended a meeting the previous evening with Basildon Council and members of neighbouring Parish /Town Councils and it appeared there were some changes to the information which the Residents Association had obtained at a meeting they attended on 7th January and he would be able to update where necessary.

115/15 Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from Councillors Bernard Foster and Matthew Phillips.

At the December meeting Councillor Guenigault's impending move outside the Parish had been reported and this had now taken place and as such a further vacancy on the Parish Council had now been created and would be advertised to enable co-option to the vacant post.

116/15 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.

No declarations were received from members.

117/15 Public Forum: To enable residents to raise issues of concern with Parish Councillors (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

Councillor Smillie, Chair, invited the Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Residents Association to introduce their presentation.

(i) Tina Whitten, on behalf of the Residents Association, commenced with a brief update and progress of the Page Woods Project. The price to purchase Page Woods was £33,000 and following the receipt of grants totalling nearly £21,000 plus other funding pledged or received their target was now insight but a little over £3000 was needed to reach this target. She asked if any resident had pledged any money for the project that they turn their pledges into donations. This could be done by cheque or the PayPal account on the Resident Association website. The Association also intended to set up The Page Wood Company. The company would be made up of three (3) Directors and a small day-to-day Management Team and if any resident wanted to be part of that Management Team they were asked to contact the Association.

(ii) Jon Horwood, Residents Association Committee member, gave an outline of the key facts and dates around the proposals of the Draft Local Plan which had been obtained from Basildon Council's Full Council meeting on 7th January 2016. He advised there was to be an eight (8) week consultation across the Borough commencing on 28th January 2016 until 24th March 2016.

He advised that from the figures given on 7th January there was a requirement for Basildon to build 15,260 homes across the Borough by 2034 and the Plan outlined the proposals for achieving this. Accounting for what had already been built, had planning permission or were under construction land for 8,000 homes was still to be allocated within green belt locations. As the Residents Association understood from this meeting one quarter of these homes, some 2000 were to be built in Bowers Gifford. A map was displayed for the audience identifying the areas affected across the Parish and Borough. The Green Belt areas highlighted on the map had been down-graded within the proposed Draft Plan to accommodate new development

The importance for all residents to review and carefully consider the proposals and understand how they affected the area and then to send letters of support or objections to Basildon Council was stressed by the Residents Association and reinforced by the Parish Council

Councillor Smillie then brought the meeting up to date with information from the meeting with Basildon Council the previous evening. The Plan has to be completed by March 2017 and if it isn't government Inspectors will take over and complete it for the Council. This was not considered to be a good idea. The numbers for Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet were now 600 with 50 homes being allocated for infill in plotland areas. He advised that ten exhibitions were to be held across the district during the consultation period for the public to see what the proposals were and ask questions.

The exhibitions locally would be held in Pitsea at The Place , Pitsea Leisure Centre, Northlands Pavement, on: Saturday 13th February 2016 between 10.00 am – 4.30 pm & Monday 29th February between 2.00 pm – 8.00 pm

A special edition of Basildon Council's Borough Diary would be published carrying only information concerning the Draft Local Plan and there would be a survey form in the edition with five questions and space for comment.

The Draft Local Plan would be available on Basildon Council's website, in public libraries and hard copies would be available to purchase for a nominal fee.

The importance of residents completing the survey or sending in their views by letter was emphasised again. All comments **must** be in writing as verbal comments were not acceptable. The format for sending in could be letter, email or by completing the survey.

If any resident needed any help in completing the forms or writing a letter they could contact either, the Parish Council or the Residents Association and both organisations would be willing to help.

The meeting, with permission of the Chair, was opened up to the floor and questions were taken from the audience (**Attached: Appendix A Pages 8 – 11**)

Following the question and answer session the Parish Council closed the discussion to the public but advised that Basildon Council Officers had agreed to attend the next Parish Council meeting on 24th January and residents were invited to attend this meeting to ask questions of the Officers on the Draft Local Plan.

The formal Parish Council Meeting then continued.

(iii) A resident informed that the roadway leading from London Road through to Church Road was again littered with rubbish and other debris and also she had been nearly run down by a car driving through the underpass at the Church Road end. **Action:** The Parish Clerk agreed to raise the complaint with Basildon Council/Essex County Council

118/15 Community Payback Team: Jenna Sicheri, Community Payback Officer to give a short presentation on the work of the Team.

Jenna Sicheri gave a brief presentation and overview of the work of the Community Payback Team and the type of projects that they undertook within the Community including clearing paths, litter picking, cutting back hedges, painting and decorating. She explained that the labour was free but any materials used during the work would be at cost. The working parties were supervised by Community Payback Officers and a full days' programme of work was needed for each visit together with the use of hygiene facilities for the

workforce.

Action: Jenna was thanked for attending the meeting and Councillors confirmed they would consider suitable projects and look at finding a venue which could be used to provide the hygiene facilities needed whilst undertaking any projects. The Residents Association suggested that it might be possible, in future, to use the team to do work in Page Woods if the purchase was successful.

119/15 Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 9th December 2015: Council to approve the accuracy and content of the minutes of the previous meeting.

The signing of the previous meetings minutes was deferred until the February meeting as Councillor Smillie was the only Councillors present at the previous meeting.

120/15 Parish Clerk's Report: The Parish Clerk to report and update on Parish Council business.

Reported items from previous meeting on 9th December 2015: :

(i) **Item 105/15:** Highways verge - The condition of the verge in North Benfleet had again been reported to Essex County Council Highways but no response had been received or action to remedy been received to date. Other issues in regard to reports to Highways were still outstanding and were being monitored for action.

(ii) **Item 107/15 (ii):** Jenna Sicheri - Community Payback Officer was attending meeting.

(iii) **Item 107 (vi): Youth Bus:** January session had to be cancelled due to illness and lack of drivers and the project continuation will now be reviewed with Essex County Council Youth Workers.

(iv) **Item 110/15: Planning Applications:** - All outstanding Planning Application comments passed to Basildon Council Planning Officers.

(v) **Item 112/15:** Booking of Bands for Picnic in the Park – Waiting for feedback on availability.

(vi) The Clerk advised that she was still looking for volunteers to take part in Essex County Council's "Where Water Goes" Project to plot the location of water courses and drainage in the Parish. She also advised that volunteers were still required, on a rota basis, to help with the Youth Bus Project. Two residents at the meeting said they would be willing to help but were unable to do so every

week. The Parish Clerk noted their offer and contact details.

121/15 Finance Report: The Responsible Finance Officer to advise on the Parish Council's current financial position and to request Councillors responses regarding participating in new Audit arrangements for 2016/17

i) Chris Barlow, Responsible Finance Officer, advised on the Parish Council's current financial position as follows.

	£
Interim balance at 9 th December 2015	7,930.46
Balance at bank 22 nd January 2016	6,651.08

Summary

Expenditure	1,279.39
Income	Nil

Expenditure

Net Clerks Salary+ Office Allowance (December)	565.39
Clerks Tax & Emp. NI (3 rd Quarter)	413.99
Christmas Carol Play	<u>300.00</u>
	1,279.39

ii) At the Parish Council meeting on 9th December 2015 the Clerk requested Councillors consider audit changes, within the government's New Transparency Code, commencing from the financial year 2016/17. Councillors had been advised a Sector – Led Body made up of representatives from the National Association of Local Councils, Society of Local Council Clerks and the Association of Drainage Authorities, with government approval, would undertake the task to procure auditors for Smaller Authorities (Parish Councils whose annual turnover is less than £25,000) thus simplifying audit arrangements and reducing the burden on Parish Councils of procuring audit services. The appointment of an auditor to complete the end of year auditing of Parish Council's accounts was still a legal requirement. Currently there was a scale of costs, dependent on turnover, and it was anticipated a one off fee to carry out the services of procurement would be no more than £100. If the Parish Council wished to opt - out of the proposed arrangement they must inform the Sector Led Body by 31st January 2016. However, if the Parish Council decided to opt-into the arrangements, under the new Sector-Led-Body, they needed to do nothing but their decision would tie them into the agreement for 5 years.

Action: The Parish Council having discussed the documentation presented to them confirmed their agreement to opt – in to the new arrangements.

- 122/15 Basildon Council's Draft Local Plan Consultation:** Councillors to consider their response to the Draft Local Plan and the arrangements Basildon Council intend making in respect of carrying out the consultation.

This item, with agreement of the Chair, had been moved up for discussion within the Public Forum.

- 123/15 Planning:** Councillors to review and comment on Planning Applications under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended):

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 15/01528/FULL

Conversion and extension of bungalow to a two storey house - 8 Westlake Avenue, Bowers Gifford, SS13 2JJ

Although the Parish Council comments had been sent to Planning Officers they were not available at the meeting and the report back was deferred to the next Parish Council meeting on 24th February 2016.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 15/01547/FULL

Convert and extend bungalow into chalet with front and rear dormers - 283 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford, Essex SS13 2LN

Although the Parish Council comments had been sent to Planning Officers they were not available at the meeting and the report back was deferred to the next Parish Council meeting on 24th February 2016.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 15/01583/FULL

Siting of 1 No. cycle shelter - St. Andrews Healthcare, Pound Lane, North Benfleet, Basildon

The Parish Council raised no objections to this application.

- 124/15 Planning decisions and comments:** To receive updates on decisions in respect of planning applications discussed at previous meetings.

i) **15/01407/FULL:** 20 Westlake Avenue, Bowers Gifford - Erect single storey rear extension - Planning granted

ii) **15/01414/FULL:** Junction Of Pound, Lane, Osborne Road - Proposed 2 bedroom detached dwelling house – Planning granted

iii) **15/0126/FULL:** Colarado, Burnt Mills Road - Rear extension to existing

bungalow incorporating changes to the roof profile and dormers – Planning refused.

125/15 Community Clean-Up: To consider an invitation from Basildon Council to take part in the country-wide 'Clean for the Queen' Event.

The Clerk advised Councillors that as part of the Queens 90th birthday in June Community Clean-up events aptly named “ Clean for the Queen” were being held across the country between 4th & 6th March and Basildon Council had invited the Parish Council to take part. To assist the Parish Council, litter pickers, black sacks, hi-vis jackets, gloves and other equipment would be provided.

Action: Councillors to give consideration to the request and inform Basildon Council of their decision.

126/15 Feedback on meetings attended by Councillors: Councillors to provide a brief update on meetings they have attended as representatives of the Parish Council during the previous month.

No information was available.

127/15 Date of next meeting - To confirm the date of the next Parish Council meeting.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 24th February 2016 at the Benbow Club, Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford at 7.30 p.m. It was confirmed that Basildon Council Officers had been asked to attend the meeting and answer questions in relation to the Draft Local Plan.

APPENDIX A

Questions and Answers

Q: Could some sample letter be produced to give residents an understanding of how the letters could be constructed?

A: *The Residents Association said they would put some sample letters on their website.*

Q: Where were the homes to be built within the Parish?

A: *No exact locations had been identified and the only certainty was that development would occur somewhere within Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet as identified by the orange area on the map.*

Q: Do we have any assurances that the detail in the Draft Plan would not change between now and 2018?

A: *There is no guarantee that things will not change given the current climate of Basildon Council.*

Q: Has the Plan been submitted?

A: *No, not yet this is the first draft. There will be a second draft and then it will be submitted.*

Q: What happens if Basildon Council do not complete?

A: *The government will do it for them.*

Q: Do Meridian still own the land at Little Chalvedon Hall?

A: *Nottinghamshire County Council Pension Fund owns the land. Meridian were the developers but no developers are involved at present as no exact locations for development had been defined.*

A: Are they going to build pumps to drain the water and sewage away.

Q: *Any developer will have to take this into account when building. Anglia Water seems to think there is loads of capacity in the area and there is no problem of flooding. This was a misconception and everyone living in the Parish knows flooding after heavy rain tells a different story. Measures will have to be put in place to solve this problem.*

Q: What about senior schools, where is the provision for them?

A: *This issue had not been considered as there was only provision for another primary school, which meant the nearest senior school is at least 3 miles away.*

Q: If the housing goes ahead, will residents have a say in the type of property to be built?

A: *Each developer will still have to submit a planning application for approval. The Parish Council is about to start the process of putting together a Neighbourhood Plan to enable them to influence what is built in the Parish. The government has introduced a Community Infrastructure Levy. This is a charge on new buildings, to replace the Section 106 tariff system although some S106 agreements will still exist. Parish Councils, if they had a Neighbourhood Plan in place, would receive 25% of the levy to spend on projects in the Parish.*

Q: Will developers keep to the number of homes to be built in their application?

A: *One would hope so, but due to changes over a number of years in policy and government this is a question that cannot be answered. As developers come in and start to build the application process gets more difficult as land availability gets smaller.*

Q: In the plotlands has the criteria been set?

A: *The number of properties to be built has been proposed but not the type. An answer might be for residents in each road to get together and state their opinion on the type of property that was best suited. What had been said was that there was a probability that detached properties only would be built.*

Q: From the update on the numbers that had been stated at the meeting on 7th January it looked like there were to be 600 in Bowers Gifford and 500 the other side of the green strip which was not shown on the map displayed, was this correct?

A: *The information given to Parish/ Town Councillors the previous evening was that 600 were to be built in Bowers Gifford and 180 acres of open space would be created between Pitsea and Bowers Gifford/North Benfleet. The Residents Association advised that from the meeting on 7th January the sports facilities at Basildon South were to be relocated into the area of the green strip. Cllr. Smillie informed, he only acquired the Draft Plan document the previous evening and was unable to comment as he had not had time to read the entire document and this information had not been covered the previous evening. What was not on the map, however, was that the industrial areas at Burnt Mills would be expanded into Bradfield's farm and the existing Traveller sites will also be expanded with the assumption that the illegal Traveller encroachment will become legal and this will mean that effectively there will be more sites but it was believed we will see no difference to what already exists. Also there would be a Major junction from the A127.*

Q: Will Burnt Mills Road be made wider?

A: *Burnt Mills Road will look very different to what it is now as there would be a junction at Pound Lane and the A127. It was understood that Burnt Mills Road was to be downgraded.*

Q: Will the new chicane still be built in view of the changes?

A: *The information currently available did not say anything different from when Councillors met with Essex County Council / Ringway Jacobs Officers in Summer 2015 and as far as it was known it was still earmarked for June 2016. Councillor Bobbin, who was present, and was Chair of the Highways Panel, confirmed there would be highway improvements including the widening of the A127 and a new junction on the A127 at Pound Lane and on the A13 to serve Pitsea and Wickford.*

Q: What about the junction of Pound Lane and London Road are any improvements to be made there?

A: *It would be assumed that improvements would need to be made at some time to this junction also but at present this was not known.*

Q: Can residents have more details on the map regarding where properties were to be built?

A: *At the moment there is no detail available.*

Q: Is it correct that there would be 15 more Traveller pitches?

A: *Only the total figure of 104 pitches for household growth district-wide was given to Councillors the previous evening.*

Q: What about the wildlife?

A: *The Residents Associations had undertaken a lot of research when the Parish appealed against the development of Little Chalvedon Hall. This information was on their website. Basildon Council had also undertaken and published a number of Assessments alongside the Draft Local Plan which were also available to view on the Basildon Council website or purchase and would be considered when making any comment.*

Q: Will there be more employment be for local people?

A: *Hopefully, Yes, the draft proposal includes a statement on employment but no one knows if this will be the case. It makes sense to employ local people.*

Q: What about any compensation for noise and nuisance. When Sadlers Farm was being developed there had been letters from a company offering to get residents compensation?

A: *Cllr. Smillie said he was not aware of any such letters but would try and find out about them and asked the resident to provide her details to the Clerk*

Q: What do we hope to achieve with a Neighbourhood Plan.

A: *Although the development of the area cannot be prevented it will give the Parish Council the ability to control the impact on the village.*

Q: What about the Sadlers Farm compound, is that included in the Plan?

A: It did not appear from the map that it was.

Q: The Residents Association asked if once everyone had had a chance to read all the documents if another meeting could be held to discuss further.

A: *Yes, Basildon Council Officers had already agreed they would attend the next Parish Council meeting on 24th February 2016*

Q: How far along is the Parish Council with the Neighbourhood Plan?

Q: *It will take approximately 18 months and volunteer help would be needed to help with the process.*