

**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE BENBOW CLUB BOWERS GIFFORD
ON WEDNESDAY 30th OCTOBER 2013 AT 7.30 PM.**

Present:

Councillors: R.Smillie: B.Foster: B. Wall: N.Tyler

Officer: Christine Barlow – Parish Clerk

Members of the Public: 8 members of the public

64/13 APOLOGIES: Councillor R Griffin who was on holiday

65/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: To receive any declarations of interest to any agenda items in accordance with Part 2, Paragraph 9 of the Members 'Code of Conduct.

None received.

66/13 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Public participation session with respect to items on the agenda, previously notified to the Clerk. (The maximum time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

(i) A resident raised concerns regarding large articulated lorries using Burnt Mills Road and Pound Lane. The resident stated that over recent months the use by such large vehicles had increased and was causing a danger to motorists as the roads in the Parish were unsuitable and too narrow to take such heavy vehicles. It was considered more load restrictions were needed and signage improved. The Parish Clerk was asked to make enquiries of Essex County Council Highways to ascertain what safety measures could be put in place.

(ii) The general poor condition of paths in the Parish was again raised. There were large holes near to the Clifton Road Bus stop opposite No 245 Pound Lane and the pavement at the corner of Pound Lane and Page Road had sunk and was uneven. The Parish Clerk was asked to send a report to Essex County Council Highways

(iii) The subway in Old Church Road was full of water. Although this had already been reported the Parish Clerk was asked to contact Essex County Council and request the problem be rectified.

(iv) The street light on the junction of Church Road and London Road was not working and drains along the London Road were blocked. Councillor Wall confirmed he would obtain the number of the lamp column and confirm the location of the drains to enable a report to be sent to Essex County Council.

(v) Despite being reported graffiti had not been cleaned from the play house in the play area in Westlake Park, however the slide had been cleaned. The Parish Clerk to request the graffiti is removed.

67/13 MINUTES: Confirmation of minutes of the meeting held on 25TH September 2013 and the Chair to sign as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

The minutes of the last meeting were **AGREED** as an accurate account of the meeting by all present and were signed by the Chair.

68/13 POLICING: Local Police Officers to attend and inform of policing activities for Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet.

PCSO Emma Spurr advised she had brought to the meeting stickers for resident's windows to warn off unwelcome potential Trick or Treaters. She had also brought with her some infra-red property marker pens and some car number plate screw caps, for residents to take away, as there had been a spate of number plate and property thefts in the area recently.

Statistics: PCSO Spurr informed that in the previous month there had been a number of burglaries, in Pound Lane, Cornwall Road, Katherine Road and Clarence Road, where small items and jewellery had been stolen. There had been one (1) incident of criminal damage to a meter cupboard and also, the theft of a purse from the local shop. The increase in criminal activity was very unusual and residents were asked to report anything suspicious and not to leave keys on the inside of doors and lock all windows and doors. Police patrols would be increased in identified 'Red Zone' areas in the lead up to Christmas and 'Operation Insight' would be predicting and targeting hot-spot areas of criminal activity. PCSO Spurr was thanked for her attendance.

69/13 PARISH CLERK'S REPORT: Parish Clerk to update on relevant business and correspondence.

The Parish Clerk updated Councillors on the progress of reported items from the previous minutes:

Item 40/13(ii): The verges in Pound Lane had been cut but were still not satisfactory and discussions were ongoing to obtain improvements in schedule.

Item 40/13(v): Overgrown shrubs on the corner of Pound Lane and William Road were still outstanding but agreement had been obtained from Basildon Council

that these would be pruned.

Item 40/13(vi): The bus shelters in Pound Lane had been cleaned and the missing units in all but one had been replaced with what appeared to be polycarbonate instead of toughened glass. New bus stops had been installed in Pound Lane and new bus flags had been placed on existing stops following enquires to improve the location of bus stops by both Councillor Wall and the Parish Clerk.

Item 58/13: Pending planning application decisions Parish council comments had been passed to Basildon Council Planning department for consideration. In respect of planning applications reviewed by councillors.

Item 59/13: The Parish Council views on part-night lighting had been recorded on the Essex County Council website and consideration requested for parts of the Parish to be excluded. An acknowledgement of the feedback had been received and notification that any turn-off in the Basildon area would commence on 18th November 2013. Further information could be found on www.essexhighways.org

70/13 **FINANCE REPORT AND BUDGET:**

Update on financial matters since the last meeting and to present a half year budget report and budget forecast for 2014/15 for Councillor consideration.

70/13/1 **Financial statement :**

Balance as at 22 nd October 2013	£23,659.09
Incoming payments :	£ 6,459.63
Outgoing payments:	£ 2,004.91

70/13/2 **Presentation of half year budget report and budget forecast for 2014/2015:**

Chris Barlow, Responsible Finance Officer, presented a half year statement of account on Parish Council's finances (Appendix 1) and the estimated forecast of expenditure for 2014/15 on which the Parish Precept would be based. Councillors were advised that the account did not include all cleared bank transactions to date.

Members were advised that as 2014 was election year money had to be set aside to cover any election costs that might be incurred as a result and this was reflected in the forecast. Reserves needed to be kept constant to cover any unforeseen expenditure.

Currently the Parish Council finances were in a very healthy position but Councillors were reminded that the figures presented were provisional figures based on information known at the present time as Basildon Borough Council basic Council Tax amounts for a band D property, on which the precept calculation was based, would not be known until end of November /beginning of December. Councillors were advised by Chris Barlow that if there was any large

scale change in calculations, to potentially retain the present level of reserves, it may be necessary to increase the precept slightly in order not to have any huge increases in future years.

Councillors discussed the need to make increases in the precept amount per household and considered that they would determine the need for this when Basildon Borough Council provided information on their budget forecast for 2014/2015. If current levels were maintained it was **AGREED** to keep the precept amounts for 2014/2015 at the same level as 2013/2014 and any large scale spending would need to be obtained by an application for external grants, as had been accomplished successfully in the first three years of the Parish Council.

The Responsible Finance Officer to keep Councillors informed of the financial position at the November and December meetings.

72/13 PLANNING APPLICATIONS: 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: 13/00952/REM

Erection of a new bungalow and detached garage (Reserved Matters Application relating to application 10/01256/EXTBAS) – Winifred, Windsor Road, North Benfleet Essex SS13 2LH

The original outline application had been made in 2007 and the current amendment before Councillors formed part of the Full application that had already been granted permission. Councillors had looked at the application in the light of the amendments but could see no grounds to raise any objections.

73/13 PLANNING DECISIONS: To inform Councillors on decisions regarding Planning Applications discussed at previous meetings as advised by Basildon Council Planning Services.

None received

74/13 PARKING: To inform on discussion held with regarding resolving school term time parking.

Councillor Robert Smillie and Chris Barlow, the Parish Clerk, had met with the Emma Wigmore, Head Teacher of St Margaret's School and two of the school governors. The membership of the governing board had changed since the Parish Council had last met with the school during the summer and the possible alternatives to the parking problems at the school were again revisited. The Parish Council's proposals were considered and it was confirmed that contact would be made with the Diocese Planning Officer with a view to considering the

viability of the proposals to use some of the school field for parking by moving the school fence. The proposal would however not limit the usability of the school field or football pitch as the land identified would not obstruct or reduce usage of the area for outdoor activities. Funding would need to be obtained if agreement was achieved and this would probably be achieved through a grant application to external funding streams.

75/13 FEEDBACK ON MEETINGS ATTENDED BY COUNCILLORS: A brief update on meetings attended by Councillors.

Councillor Foster had attended an Association of Basildon Council Executive Committee meeting. He informed that major highway projects were now transferred to Essex County Council's Highways Panel. Two Cabinet members from Basildon Council sat on the Panel but until now there had been no Parish or Town Council representation allowed to attend meetings. However after 18 months of discussion agreement had finally been reached for a representative of the Town /Parish Councils to sit in on the discussions and take notes of the proceedings. Although not entirely satisfactory as the representative would not be able to contribute to the decision making it was a step forward. It was not clear who would attend as yet but Councillor Foster was a potential nominee to undertake on the role.

There were no other meetings during the previous month attended by Councillors present.

76/13 WESTLAKE PARK: To update on the progress of funding and works to improve Westlake Park.

As reported in previous minutes £61,000 of funding had been obtained for Phase II of the project to improve Westlake Park for community use. A further £20K to complete this phase of the project had been applied for from Essex County Council's Community initiative Fund (CIF) the outcome of which would be known on 21st November. This would enable the work on the project to install a path around the park, new gates, improvements the Park car park and access road, an outdoor gym and planting, to go ahead. It was noted that there was a requirement to receiving the funding that work needed to be completed by March 2014.

77/13 PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER: To discuss the content and publication date of the Winter edition of the Bowers Bugle - Parish Council newsletter.

The winter edition of The Bugle, the Parish Council newsletter, would be published and delivered during December. All content and suggested articles must be with the Parish Clerk by 15th November. Suggestions for articles were: puzzles, dot-to-dot, colouring, RSPB information and update on Little Chalvedon

Hall Farm and Westlake Park project.

78/13 Date of next meeting:

The meeting closed at 9.00p.m. The date of the next meeting was Wednesday 27th November 2013 at the Benbow Club, Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford commencing at 7.30 p.m.