

**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE BENBOW CLUB, BOWERS GIFFORD
ON WEDNESDAY 27th MARCH 2019 AT 7.30 p.m.**

PRESENT:

Councillors: R.Smillie: T.Potter: B.Foster:

Ward Councillor: Councillor C. Rimmer

Parish Council Clerk/RFO: Mrs Christine Barlow

Members of the Public: 8

114/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor David Martin (Holiday)

115/18 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS 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

116/18 PUBLIC FORUM: Residents have the opportunity to raise issues and ask questions of the Parish Council (The time allowed for this item is a maximum of 20 minutes)

(i) Residents remarked that although the work being undertaken to widen the footpath along Pound Lane was beneficial there seemed to be no logical sequence to the work. The Parish Clerk advised that joint working with Councillor Rimmer had managed to secure Basildon Council's Pride Team to carry out the work. Due to the fact that the Team was also working in other areas within the Borough they were completing the work in phases as and when other work patterns allowed.

(ii) Councillor Rimmer, Pitsea South East Ward Councillor, advised that he was pushing for a swimming pool in Pitsea. The reason for the previous pool being demolished was that it would cost £9 million to carry out a refit and it was considered, given the age of the pool, not economically sustainable. At the Basildon Full Council meeting on 14th February Borough Councillors agreed to investigate providing a swimming facility in Laindon and Pitsea and several ideas regarding locations in these Wards were being discussed. Councillor Rimmer advised that a public consultation to obtain the views of residents would be held. In addition, he advised, the old cinema in Pitsea had been bought by private enterprise with the intention of transforming it into a wedding venue.

(iii) A resident asked Councillor Rimmer if the paths in Pound Lane and other

paths in the same condition were to be resurfaced. Councillor Rimmer advised he would raise the issue with Essex County Councillor Stephen Hillier. The Parish Clerk would liaise with Councillor Rimmer for any update.

(iv) Councillor Rimmer stated that Basildon Council has a budget for bollards and would be pleased to receive any requests for placements. A resident stated that Essex County Council had agreed to install a bollard outside No 78, Pound Lane, to prevent lorries causing damage when reversing away from the Pet Shop but to date, despite the location on path being marked, no installation had taken place. Councillor Rimmer stated he would note the request. The Parish Clerk advised Councillor Rimmer that she had been pursuing Essex County Council Highways to install some bollards on the verge adjacent to Ilfracombe Avenue due, as reported at the previous meeting on 27th February parking on the verge and damaging the surface. The Chair suggested a barrier along the verge. The Clerk advised that she would provide Councillor Rimmer with any correspondence regarding the parking issues.

(v) A resident asked if Balfour Beatty were going to close the London Road to undertake bridge works at Easter and if they still intended to go ahead with the plan to make provision for a footpath to give pedestrian access to Benfleet. The Parish Clerk advised she would make enquires with Balfour Beatty regarding this query.

(vi) A resident asked if there was any more news about the reinstatement of the buses by First after 6.00 p.m. The Parish Council were currently unable to provide any information but would update as soon as possible.

117/18 MINUTES: To agree the minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 27th February 2019.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th February were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed to confirm by Councillor Robert Smillie, Chair.

118/18 PARISH CLERK'S REPORT: To report and update on matters since the last meeting.

The Parish Clerk update Councillors regarding issues raised on the previous meeting agenda:

(i) Item 104/18 (v) Kelly Road repair: Need for a repair to be carried out regarding seam in the road raised on Essex County Council website.

(ii) Item 104/18 (vi) Parking issues: The Clerk had spoken to a Senior Essex County Council Highways Officer who had advised that due to only two part-time Parking Enforcement Officers dealing with parking issues across the district resources were limited and suggested that the Police might be better placed to deal with parking matters. Councillor Rimmer had suggested, earlier in the meeting, that there were some resources set aside in Basildon Council budgets to

install bollards. **Action:** The Parish Clerk to discuss further with Councillor Rimmer.

(iii) Item 105/18: A letter had been sent to Rushbottom Lane GP Surgery regarding the changes imposed regarding medical treatment for residents of Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet but had not received any reply to date.

(iv) Item 106/18: An enquiry had been received, by email, from a resident regarding Councillor vacancies and a reply had been sent in reply informing of the requirements in taking on the role of Parish Councillor.

The Parish Clerk advised the meeting regarding Essex Police reports in respect of criminal activity, in the Parish. She advised, from the information received, that there had been:

- (i) Damage to a vehicle in Grange Road on 17th February 2019
- (ii) Theft from a motor vehicle(TFM) on 27th February 2019
- (iii) Theft or unauthorised taking of a pedal cycle on 2nd March 2019

The Clerk requested to attend a course on the new Public Sector Accessibility Regulations on Saturday 8th June 2019. The course introduces new standards to make the Parish Council website more inclusive and accessible to everyone who use it. The request was granted.

119/18 FINANCE REPORT:

- (i) To report on the Parish Council's current financial position and provide a summary of account.

	£
Balance at Bank as at 27 th February 2019	9,942.09
Balance at Bank as 19 th March 2019	9,099.89
Income:	NIL
Expenditure:	842.20
Breakdown:	
Expenditure	
(457) BBC Lottery Permit	20.00
(458) Parish – in – Bloom Expenses	135.00
(459) Clerks Salary (Feb) Plus Tel & Office Use	<u>687.20</u>
	844.20

The Responsible Finance Officer provided Councillors with a statement to 18th March 2019. She also advised that she was in the process of reclaiming VAT incurred in 2018/2019 of approximately £7,000. She further advised that on 22nd March two payments of £288.00 and £213.86 respectively had been credited to the Parish Council's bank account in error. The respective organisations were in the process of reversing the payments to correct the errors.

(ii) To provide an income and expenditure statement for the financial year 2018/2019 to the date of meeting.

An income and expenditure statement was provided to Councillors. This showed that from 1st April 2018 to 19th April 2019 the total income was £50,082.97 and the total expenditure was £50,557.16 and that the overall income secured through grant applications was £31,467.

(iii) To confirm the date of the Parish Council Internal Audit as 26th April 2019 and agree the appointment of the Internal Auditor to carry out the Audit process.

Councillors were advised that arrangements had been made, as required by the Annual Governance and Accountability Regulations 2015 for Smaller Authorities, to undertake an Internal Audit on 26th April and that accountancy firm Heelis and Heelis would carry out the internal Audit. Councillors confirmed they were satisfied with the arrangements made. Following the Internal Audit an external Audit would need to be carried out due to the Parish Council's income, although momentarily, being over £25,000 per annum.

(iv) To note and approve National Joint Council for Local Government (NJC) pay scale increase for the Parish Council Clerk effective from 1st April 2019 and note the introduction of changes regarding existing spinal column points to new pay scale points.

Councillors had been provided with details of new pay scales for Clerks and other similar type employees under mandatory NJC pay increases and were provided with the details of the Clerks pay increase. New spinal column points had also been received under the new arrangements to correspond due to the changes made by the National Joint Council for Local Government (NJC).

In addition the Responsible Finance Officer advised she had queried with Basildon Council the differential percentage calculation by Basildon Council for the Precept 2018/19 against the actual percentage calculated by the Parish Council for 2018/2019.

She had been advised, by Basildon Council Finance Officer, that the figure that had been used for the 2018/2019 calculation had been based on an estimated Precept figure of £14,897.28 – Band D calculation of £20.61 per annum - but when the Parish Council provided their overall precept figure, on 28th February 2018, for 2018/2019 it had been slightly higher at £15,107 – Band D calculation £20.88. however, Basildon Council's Billing process had already been completed for Council Tax and the lower estimated figure of £14, 897.28 had been used to calculate a lower percentage increase. This meant that when the 2019/2020 Precept figures were confirmed - £16,042.28 – the increase showed a higher overall percentage increase.

In monetary terms the overall increase per annum for 2019/2020 a Band D property, on which calculations are based, was £1.44 (Total = £22.32 pa) and for properties in Band E & F an increase of £1.76 (Total = 27.28 pa) and £2.08

(£32.24 pa) respectively. Higher Band properties would be slightly higher and properties below Band D would be lower.

120/18 PLANNING: Councillors to review and comment on Planning Application/s under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 19/00179/FULL : Redevelopment of northern part of site for B1 and B8 uses, with associated parking, cycle bays and hardstanding - Sadlers Hall Farm, Sadlers Farm, London Road, Bowers Gifford.

Councillors having reviewed the above planning application had previously sent their objections in letterform to the Planning Officer dealing with the application (Appendix A).

No other Planning Applications had been received since the previous Parish Council meeting on 27th February 2019.

121/18 PLANNING DECISIONS AND COMMENTS: To receive updates and comments on decisions in respect of planning applications discussed at previous meetings.

(i) **PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 18/01597/FULL:** Raise roof ridge height by 600 mm, convert loft space and construct first floor rear dormer addition – Glenwood, Carlton Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon – **Refused**

The Parish Council had also objected to this application on the grounds given for refusal in Basildon Council's report.

The Clerk informed Councillors that despite Basildon Council having served a 28 day Temporary Stop Notice, dated 22nd February 2019, on the owner of Sadlers Park (adjacent to the Sadlers Farm roundabout) seeking the removal of multiple static caravans from the eastern end of the site and stating that the occupation was unauthorised, the caravans remained on site and no further information had been received to date.

122/18 BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: To update on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan.

A brief update on the Neighbourhood Plan was given. It was explained that a list of sites was currently being collated using the information gather from the Parish Council's "Call for Sites" consultations. A second letter drop had been undertaken and eighteen additional site notifications had been received.

The Parish Clerk had also made an application to Locality, a government funded Neighbourhood Plan organisation, for Technical Support for an Options and Site Assessment to be carried out on land within the Parish which had been put forward for development, due to the Parish Council's budget was limited to engage the Parish Council's consultant to carry out this work. The application had been successful and a company has been appointed to assist in this work. The Parish Council were waiting for the company to make contact and arrange timescales. It was hoped to complete the Site Assessment work by the end of April beginning of May 2019.

- 123/18 ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL BUS CONSULTATION:** To record the Parish Council's views.

The Parish Council had sent their comments regarding the consultation to Essex County Council Bus Transport as attached (APPENDIX B)

- 124/18 MEETINGS ATTENDED BY COUNCILLORS:** To receive information regarding meetings attended by Councillors during the past month.

Councillor Foster advised that both he and the Parish Clerk would be attending a Basildon Liaison Group meeting on 3rd April. The topics to be discussed included changes within the Planning Enforcement Team, the recycling plant in Courtauld Road and Basildon Council's future recycling methods.

- 125/18 PERSONNEL MATTERS:** To review the Parish Clerk's current contractual hours and confirm the Annual incremental progression payscale.

Councillors having reviewed the contractual hours of the Parish Clerk/RFO **AGREED** to her request to increase the number of contracted hours worked from 15 hours per week to 18 hours per week and that an annual review would take place to review the arrangement. Councillors also **AGREED** an incremental rise to the top of Spinal Column 13 -17 (Previously Spinal Column 19 – 25) for the Parish Clerk/ RFO. All other subsistence for Office Use, Broadband and Telephone would remain the same.

- 126/18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** To confirm the date of the next Parish Council meeting as 24th April 2019

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 24th April but it was also agreed to hold the Annual Parish Meeting on the same evening. It was **AGREED** by all present to hold the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.30 p.m. and the Parish Council Meeting at 8.15 p.m.

APPENDIX A

ITEM 120/18:

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 19/00179/FULL Redevelopment of northern part of site for B1 and B8 uses, with associated parking, cycle bays and hardstanding- Sadlers Hall Farm Sadlers Farm London Road Bowers Gifford

The Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Parish Council has concerns over the development of this site and considers the planning application should be refused for the following reasons:

The Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet Neighbourhood Plan is still being developed and the number of commercial properties required and their potential usage is still to be determined. If the number of commercial properties constructed on the site was to excessively exceed those required, by the area, this would contradict Basildon's Local Plan Green credentials by creating unnecessary journeys. The purpose of the planning application, as presented, is to split the site into two sections, and to develop only the Southern section.

Green Belt:

The plot is within the Greenbelt and even without contesting the legality of the existing structures, some of which would qualify as temporary, this application plan would exceed the original footprint of the area to be developed by more than the amount permitted under the redevelopment of Greenbelt guidelines. It would not qualify as having any exceptional circumstances in order to support any additional structures. This development would reduce the openness of the southern end of the site which is visible from the A130 Bridge. Its value as greenbelt can only really be considered in line with coalescence and not as scenic or a public asset.

Coalescence:

Historically this site has been used mainly for parking and the temporary storage of vehicles with structural development being predominately progressed in the northern section. The site is to the east of Hall Farm so any development would need to be carefully controlled to avoid causing concerns of coalescence with South Benfleet.

Atmospheric pollution and noise:

The sites isolated position, being nearer to South Benfleet than Bowers Gifford could help when it comes to avoiding the detrimental effects on local amenities by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit but as prevailing winds would generally be from the east such detrimental effects would still affect Basildon/Pitsea more frequently than Castle Point. In addition the poor internet speed and reliability could inhibit Class B1 usage of the site as offices.

Parking and traffic flow:

Parking gives rise to concern with regards to Health and Safety should anything larger than a small truck be used on the site, which must be considered a possibility, with Class B8 being storage and distribution. This application would increase the number of business properties available and therefore increase the traffic flow in the surrounding area which is already at a premium.

Health and Safety:

The Supporting Statement (SS) states "The proposed development would be using the existing access located on the northern side of London Road. The access serves the existing commercial uses of Sadlers Hall Farm". It is assumed this statement is referring to the south side of the B1464 which is to the north of Sadlers Hall Farm then the only change to the existing exit would be an increase in the traffic flow crossing the bus lane at Sadlers Farm roundabout.

The Block Plan however seems to show the existing access being from the A130/ A13 link which would raise major Health & Safety concerns. The access would appear to require a 135 degree turn in, this could only be taken at relatively slow speeds. This level of speed would become even slower for larger vehicles or during inclement weather. When making this turn vehicles would be exiting from a 70 mph major road, with only a restricted view of any manoeuvring in the motorcycle parking area. The plan presented only shows an access but as it states "only the area shown which is to be developed" therefore one assumes there is an exit (not shown on the drawings). Larger vehicles leaving the site would be entering the A130 from a stationary position unless a slip road is provided. In addition any vehicle wishing to enter the Sadlers Hall Farm Industrial Park would have to stop on the main road if a vehicle were to be exiting at the same time thus causing congestion or possibly an accident on an already heavily congested main road.

APPENDIX B

ITEM 123/18:

RESPONSE TO ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL BUS CONSULTATION:

Whilst the Parish Council understands the need not to squander tax payer's money the need for the community living in rural areas, like ours, must also be considered as many do not have the ability to use alternative transport so these members of the community must be a priority.

As a semi – rural community on the outskirts of Basildon to reduce our current limited service will be detrimental to the community we serve.

Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet is currently a small diverse community of ages, ranging from the very young to very elderly who leave home early in the morning to go to work or school, others who use the bus to go shopping, to the hospital and doctors surgery in Pitsea or Basildon and as a lifeline to visit friends and clubs and unable to re-arrange their travel times. To cut these services would cause hardship and isolation.

Recently, the cuts in service on the London Road between Pitsea and Canvey, although understandable, have meant residents having to find alternative costly transportation to travel to the station, town centres, schools and colleges.

Already, our village roads are unable to cope with the increase in traffic and over the next 20 years more development is expected therefore causing increased use of cars.

In order to reduce carbon emissions on our village roads, the use of public transport, giving the community the opportunity to be able to leave their cars at home, needs to be sustained as an alternative mode of transport both early morning, early evening and weekends.

Regarding Devolution , the Parish Council would be very concerned that the onus of running local bus services was devolved to Parish Councils and consider that more specific consultation should be undertaken before further comment is made.

We hope Essex County Council will consider the above comments when determining future Bus Transport Services in the local area and not consider that "one fix fits" all.

Sent on behalf of Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Parish Council 20th March 2019