

**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE BENBOW CLUB BOWERS GIFFORD
ON WEDNESDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 7.30 p.m.**

PRESENT:

Councillors: B. Foster: T.Potter: D.Martin

Parish Council Clerk: Mrs Christine Barlow

Residents present: 6

99/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Robert Smillie, Councillor Nigel Tyler, Councillor Sheelagh Pegg.

Councillor B Foster (Vice – Chair) took over the Chair in the absence of Councillor Robert Smillie.

100/17 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

102/17 COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION: To agree the co-option of a new Councillor to the Parish Council:

Councillor Foster welcomed Mr David Martin to the meeting. Having previously interviewed Mr Martin as a prospective Parish Councillor, all Parish Councillors were in agreement as to his suitability for co-option as a Parish Councillor and it was agreed to co-opt David Martin to the Office of Member to the Parish Council until the May 2018 elections.

Councillor Martin duly signed the Member Declaration of Acceptance in respect of the co-option.

The Parish Council still has one Councillor vacancy to complete its allocated number of seven (7).

103/17 PUBLIC FORUM: To enable residents to raise issues of concern with Parish Councillors (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

(i) A resident asked if there was any update on the barriers at Old Church Road but the meeting was advised that, despite several requests for information, no conclusive update had been received.

- (ii) A resident asked if the side entrance gate to Westlake Park could be locked to restrict access at night and prevent it being used for other than the purposes it was intended. Councillors advised that Basildon Council, the owners of Westlake Park, no longer locked park gates due to cost implications. The resident said she could get a number of volunteers to lock and unlock the park on a rota basis. Councillors considered that locking the park at night might move the problem elsewhere. Following a discussion Councillors said they would consider the suggestions and speak to Basildon Council on residents behalf.
- (iii) A resident asked if there was any update regarding the introduction of CCTV into Westlake Park. The Parish Clerk advised the Parish Council were still waiting for the confirmation of their funding application to Essex County Council's Community Initiative Fund. A resident asked if the CCTV would also cover the roadway leading to the Park. The Parish Clerk advised that this area would not be covered by the proposed CCTV cameras.
- (iv) A resident advised that Wilton Pet Shop were still leaving their wooden pallets outside the rear gates to the shop beside the pathway leading to the park entrance. The Parish Clerk advised she had previously requested the shop to store them inside the yard until they could be collected and this practice had been followed for a period of time. The Parish Council said they would monitor and discuss the matter with the shop owner.
- (v) A resident stated there were signs of drug dealing in Clarence Road adjacent to the Garden Centre and signs of the discarded metal canisters. Residents were urged to report incidents of this nature to the Police using the 101 telephone number.

104/17 POLICING UPDATE:

There was no policing update available for the Parish but information received from the Pitsea Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator indicated that there were no reported incidents in the Parish for the previous month. Councillor Foster disputed these facts as he was aware of several incidents that had been reported. The meeting was advised, however, that there had been a report of criminal damage to a property in Hovefields Avenue on 25th October 2017 when a large rocket firework was thrown through a garage window.

The meeting was also advised a notice had been received, from Neighbourhood Watch, regarding an increase of burglaries and warning residents to lock doors and windows properly and to remove any keys from locks and storing them safely out of view.

105/17 MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: The Council to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 25th October 2017.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 25th October 2017 were accepted, by

all Councillors present, as an accurate record of the meeting and signed as such by Councillor Bernard Foster (Chair)

106/17 PARISH CLERK’S REPORT: To update Councillors on Parish Council business matters.

The Parish Council Clerk reported on the following matters:

- (i) Street lights not working in Thomas Road and Osborne Road and some lights not working in Pound Lane. All had also been reported either to Basildon Council or Essex County Council.
- (ii) Damage to the bus shelter outside the garden centre adjacent to Clarence Road had been reported to Essex County Council Bus Transport.
- (iii) Following a request to Essex County Council Public Rights of Way Officer maps had been received identifying the Public Rights of Way, Bridle Ways and public footpaths in the Parish.
- (iv) Information received indicated that vegetation clearance was being undertaken at the end of Pound Lane.
- (v) It was also considered that Essex County Council /Ringway Jacobs were installing another chicane in the north of the village but no information had been received in time for the meeting. The Parish Councillors had previously discussed the installation with Essex County Council Officers several months previously.
- (vi) An email had been received asking for the Parish Council’s views on Basildon Council’s proposal to withdraw the Local Council Tax Support Grant which was paid to the Parish Council in addition to the Percept and was sanctioned by Government as a grant to District/Borough Council’s.

Other matters were included for discussion on the agenda.

107/17 FINANCE REPORT: Responsible Finance Officer to provide a summary of the Parish Council’s current financial position.

- i) To receive a report on the Parish Council’s current financial position.

The Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer provided Councillors with the following report.

	£
Balance at 25 th October 2017	16,818.80
Balance at 29 th November 2017	15,050.82
 Expenditure	
(378) Training – Data Protection	45.00
(379) Tesco (BBQ) – Picnic-in-the-Park	189.00

(381) PKF Littlejohn – External Audit	120.00
(382) Clerks Net Salary (Oct) inc. Subsistence	662.01
(383) Basildon Locksmith – Park Container Padlock	53.64
(384) Parish Council Annual Insurance Premium	<u>698.33</u>
	1,767.98

Councillors were advised that new Data Protection Law would be introduced in April 2018 hence the Clerk attending the training session to obtain the necessary information and implications in regard of Parish Council business.

The Finance Report was accepted by all present as presented.

ii) To receive a budget forecast to 31st March 2018 and to discuss the Parish Council's Budget for 2018/2019 and consider the Parish Precept amount for 2018/2019 as required by the Local Government Act 1972

Estimated budget figures for 2018/2019 and Precept calculation figures showing the various scenarios for setting the amount for 2018/2019, provided by Basildon Borough Council, were provided to Councillors for information and consideration.

The Local Government Finance Act 1992 ("the 1992 Act") Section 41 prescribed that for each financial year a local precepting authority (the Parish Council) must issue a precept to the billing authority (Basildon Borough Council) for the next financial year in accordance with the Act. Councillors were asked to consider the following issues when agreeing the Precept budget figure:

- (i) Basildon Borough Council's proposal to withdraw the Local Council Tax Support Grant and its implications.
- (ii) The possibility of incurring costs in respect of the Parish Council Elections due in May 2018
- (iii) Any increase in staff salary and related costs.
- (iv) Increases in subscription and affiliation charges to external organisations.
- (v) Future costs in regard to setting up Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Neighbourhood Plan.
- (vi) The need to retain financial reserve levels to cover any unexpected future expenditure.

Councillors to consider the information provided by the Responsible Finance Officer and discuss the implications of the information provided at the meeting on 9th December 2017 and to agree the Precept amount for the financial year 2018/2019 at the next meeting.

108/17 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: 17/01438/FULL

The use of land for the stationing of caravans for residential purposes, together with the formation of hardstanding and utility/dayroom – Land Adj. The Willows, Lower Avenue, Bowers Gifford, Basildon

The Parish Council had discussed the application prior to the meeting and considered that the proposals for the site would constitute inappropriate and harmful development in the Green Belt. The current site being classed as a meadow proposed a material change of use.

Reference was made to the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for such developments and the Parish Council felt there were no special circumstances to grant the application. Although limited infill is acceptable in planning terms it is believed that the development would have a greater impact on the openness of the green belt given that the applicant had applied for caravans (plural) including the development of related facilities. It was considered there was an intention to place a number of caravans on the site, without defining that number in the application and the Parish Council considered the site to be unsuitable for the development of a caravan site/ traveller pitches and would set a precedence and open-up the area for the eventual set up for any numbers of caravan sites in a hitherto existing green belt and should be refused.

The Chair closed the meeting to allow the applicant, who was attending the meeting, to inform Councillors regarding his reason for making the planning application. The applicant, who was also a resident in the village, advised that his sole intention was to provide a home for his family on the site and he had did not intend to develop the site in the way described. Parish Councillors thanked him for the additional information but advised they could only base their judgement on the facts within the planning application and their recommendation to Basildon Council would still stand as the Parish Council considered they could not support the application due to a change of use in Green Belt.

The meeting then reconvened.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 17/01462/FULL

Single storey rear extension - 20 Page Road Bowers Gifford Basildon Essex

The Parish Council considered that the property had already been extended extensively but it was still in keeping with adjacent properties and saw no reason to object to the application.

The Parish Council Clerk was asked to pass Councillor comments on to Basildon Borough Council Planning Officers.

109/17 PLANNING DECISIONS: To receive updates regarding Planning Applications discussed at previous meetings.

Planning Application: 17/01255/LDC - The Stable Yard, Osborne Road,

Bowers Gifford Basildon - To establish the lawfulness of an existing, free standing, store building – Refused

Planning Application: 17/01344/PDPA - Louisa Villa , Katherine Road, Bowers Gifford – Notification for large home extension - Permitted development

110/17 BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: To update on progress.

The Parish Council had held several meetings over previous months with both Basildon Council, the Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet Steering Group and also had a meeting with a representative for Bradfields Farm in respect of developing this area which included employment land.

The Parish Council had been working with consultant company RCOH (Limited) on their Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission. In addition Council Foster and Councillor Pegg were working on the plotland areas and in particular the process of identifying land ownership with a view to obtaining plotland owners views in regard to infill. The Parish Council's aim was to find a way of developing the plotlands area and make it a better place for everyone to live and to become part of the village identity. To do this the Parish Council would need to present a case to Basildon Council regarding taking the plotlands out of Green Belt by producing a Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) alongside the Neighbourhood Plan. It was proposed that there would be a design code which mirrored the rest of the village for all the plotland developments.

It was intended to have a meeting with plotland owners to obtain their views on the proposals. A local planning authority is the only body that can currently take the plotlands out of Green Belt but there had to be special circumstances put forward to do this. The Parish Council considered they could make a case for this to happen and present a case to Basildon Council in respect of the Local Plan.

111/17 PARISH PROJECTS : To update on funding applications in regard to Parish projects

The Parish Clerk advised that she had currently submitted applications for external funding for CCTV Cameras in Westlake Park for £17,295 plus VAT to Essex County Council Community Initiative Fund and to Essex County Council Local Services Fund in regard to Community Speed Watch Cameras at a cost £3621 plus VAT. Both applications had yet to be confirmed.

A further funding application for £5,978.00 had been submitted to My Community, the Government funded organisation that dealt with Neighbourhood Plans, and this funding had been confirmed. A total of £14,978.00 had been obtained to cover expenses in regard to Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan proposals. It was anticipated that the Parish Council may also, on information provided, be able to apply for a further £3000 funding via the same government fund in March 2018.

112/17 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ISSUES: To discuss a series of anti- social behaviour

issues which have bighted the Village over recent months.

In recent months residents in some parts of the Parish had been subjected to their properties being “ egged”, street furniture and street lights damaged and other incidents of anti-social behaviour.

Pound Lane News, the shop on the corner of Canvey Road and Pound Lane, had also been subjected to “egging” and theft of goods. The incidents had been reported to the Police and the Parish Clerk had been advised that these incidents were being investigated and that the police had intelligence which they were following up. Residents were urged to report all incidents as this enabled the police to take a reactive approach when dealing with such incidents.

113/17 MEETINGS ATTENDED BY COUNCILLORS: To provide information on any meetings attended by Councillors during the month.

Councillor Foster advised he had attended a Highways training session at which Officers had advised on the various processes involved in carrying out highways repairs and the type of work highways carried out and the functions of the different Highways sections within Essex County Council.

He had also attended an Association of Basildon Councils meeting along with the Parish Clerk as a representative of the Parish Council.

114/17 DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: To confirm the date of the next Parish Council meeting as 13th December 2017

The date of the next Parish Council meeting was confirmed as 13th December 2017
The Benbow Club, Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford.