

**MINUTES OF THE BOWERS GIFFORD AND NORTH BENFLEET
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE BENBOW CLUB BOWERS GIFFORD
ON WEDNESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2017 AT 7.00 p.m.**

PRESENT:

Councillors: R.Smillie: B. Foster: S.Pegg: T.Potter: D.Martin

Parish Council Clerk: Mrs Christine Barlow

Residents present: 45

115/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Nigel Tyler

116/17 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 were received.

117/17 PLOTLAND LANDOWNERS MEETING: To discuss proposals in the Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Neighbourhood Plan in regard to plotland ownership.
(Please note this meeting will commence at 7.00 p.m. prior to the full Parish Council meeting agenda)

Thirty-five members of the public attended for the plotland owner's discussion. Councillor Robert Smillie (Chair) welcomed all to the meeting and Councillor Bernard Foster explained the purpose of the meeting to all present and introduced Brenden O'Neil, RCOH Consultants, who were working with the Parish Council to produce the Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Neighbourhood Plan.

Brendan gave an overview of the Neighbourhood Plan and the reasons behind the Parish Council's intentions of developing the plotland areas within the Plan. He advised that the Parish Council were at the start of this process and nothing was fixed at this early stage and they were simply looking for plotland owners views on the proposals.

The meeting was an opportunity to speak with plotland owners at the beginning of the process, explain what might be possible to achieve, how the plotlands fitted into the Neighbourhood Plan and to find out how plotland owners would like the plotlands to progress as part of the Plan. The areas being considered covered land within the un-adopted roads of North Benfleet on either side of Pound Lane.

Brendan explained how Neighbourhood Plans came about as part of the Localism Act 2012 and how the government of the day decided local residents should have more of a say in the planning process. Under the Act residents could determine

development in their areas as part of a Neighbourhood Plan and what development went into it. He explained the process the Parish Council had to go through to formulate and present their Neighbourhood Plan to a referendum stage when the people of the Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Neighbourhood Area could vote on the Neighbourhood Plan proposals. If more than 50% of who voted agreed with the proposals then the Neighbourhood Plan was passed and the Borough Council had to adopt it. The Parish's Neighbourhood Plan would then become part of Basildon Borough Council's Local Plan. It was important to note that a Neighbourhood Plan can have planning powers to determine what is built and where.

During this process the Neighbourhood Plan will be heavily scrutinised especially where the areas are contentious and the plotlands will be part of this scrutiny. The main issues Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Neighbourhood Plan want to address are how the village is going to grow in the future. Development has to happen but the village wants to have a say in what is built and where building takes place. If it is left to the Borough Council they will determine these factors. The concerns, from the work undergone to date, are that the village will be joined to Basildon and lose its unique identity and the plotlands can play a big part in helping the village retain this. The Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet Steering Group has started to look at how future development of the plotlands can fit in with the Neighbourhood Plan and how the community can support this.

An analysis of what was known of the plotlands at present, has been undertaken by members of the Steering Group and from the information researched consultants have drawn up some plans and maps which have been produced to identify the respective indicative areas. A map was provided to the meeting to help visually with the discussion (Appendix A). It was identified that there were three distinctive areas which made up the plotlands (i) areas which have homes on them and are well developed (ii) parcels of land which do not have homes on them and are not developed (iii) areas which have buildings on them but which have non – residential usage. The infrastructure of the plotlands was also looked at and from the analysis done, a plan was then drawn up looking at three different zones which could be developed in the future as part of the planning process.

Residents were then given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the presentation (Appendix B) and following the question and answer session the Parish Council confirmed they would be re-contacting plotland owners with a short opinion survey, the results which would determine the next course of action.

The meeting was adjourned for 10 minutes at 8.15 p.m. with permission of the Chair and reconvened at 8.25 p.m.

118/17 PUBLIC FORUM: To enable residents to raise issues of general concern with Parish Councillors (The time allowed for this item is 15 minutes)

(i) A resident asked regarding the occupation of land on the south side of Church Road over the previous weekend, and if there was any information available regarding what action had been taken in respect of what was perceived as an unauthorised development. The Parish Clerk advised she was aware of the site becoming occupied on the morning of Saturday 9th December. Information

acquired by the Parish Council indicated that the land had been purchased and a retrospective planning application had been lodged and was in the process of being validated by Basildon Council Planning Department. Discussions had taken place with Basildon Council and other interested parties regarding the occupancy of the land but as with all submitted planning applications there was a due process which had to be followed. The timescale for this element of the consultation process was eight weeks and at the end of this timeframe, after receiving comments from the public and statutory consultees, the application would be presented to Basildon Council's Planning Committee for a decision to be made. As a statutory consultee the Parish Council would have the opportunity to comment on the planning application and would be monitoring events closely.

(ii) A resident commented on the condition of the area around Exchange House in North Benfleet and the untidy appearance of the area.

There was a heated exchange of words between residents present and comments from all were noted. To avoid further confrontation the discussion was moved on.

(iii) A resident considered the new chicane had been built in the wrong place. Councillors advised that when the location was originally discussed at a site meeting with ECC Highways Officers in early 2017 the placement was a little further forward and the Parish Council had requested more signage to be displayed especially on the A127 to deter large lorries from using Pound Lane. The Parish Council would be raising this point with Essex County Council Highways at the earliest opportunity.

(iv) A resident asked if there was any information available regarding resurfacing the areas of pavement in Kelly Road which were crumbling and dangerous. The Parish Clerk advised that she was unable to provide any update at the present time.

119/17 MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: The Council to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2017.

Councillor Pegg requested an amendment on page five (5) of the minutes of the previous meeting in reference to item 118/17: Planning 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).

Councillor Pegg made reference to the last paragraph and last sentence of the paragraph for the wording to be clarified to reflect that the Parish Council could not support the application due to a **“change of use in Green Belt”**. Parish Councillors considered this amendment to be acceptable. The Parish Clerk was asked to make the change.

The minutes were then duly signed as a true record of the meeting by Councillor Robert Smillie (Chair)

120/17 PARISH CLERK'S REPORT: To briefly update on Parish Council business

matters.

(i) **Anti-social Behaviour:** Another episode of egging had been reported to the Clerk at the beginning of the week and there was some damage to the property hit as a result. The perpetrators were on bikes but as yet had not been identified.

(ii) **Old Church Road:** Arrangements had been made to meet with ECC Councillor Stephen Hillier and LHP Liaison Officer Will Price and Gregg Speller on 2nd January 2018 to discuss the re-installation of the barriers at Old Church Road and the possibility of installing cameras.

(iii) **Community Speed Watch:** The application for funding to purchase speed cameras had been unsuccessful because it was considered the funding for such a project could be obtained from other sources. However training for volunteers in the use of the equipment was still to be arranged and the Parish Council was proposing to borrow the cameras from another Parish Council to support the training and seek alternative means for providing the equipment long term.

(iv) Further funding in the sum of £5,978.00 had been successfully obtained from Groundworks UK to complete further stages of compiling the Neighbourhood Plan.

(v) Winter Rock Salt was available from 245 Pound Lane for residents to spread on Parish roads not covered by Basildon Council gritters.

(vi) A letter had been received from Basildon Council regarding consulting on their proposals in respect of Street Trading Licences.

121/17 FINANCE REPORT: To report on the Parish Council’s current financial position and other applicable financial matters.

A Financial report together with a copy of the relevant bank statement to the date of the meeting was provided to Councillors:

Balance as at 29 th November 2017	15,050.82
Balance as at 13 th December 2017	18,867.01
Expenditure:	2,161.81
Income:	5,978.00
Breakdown:	
Expenditure:	
(385) Clerks Salary (November) inc. subsistence	661.81
(386) RCOH (NP Pre-Sub consultancy fee) inc. VAT	<u>1,500.00</u>
	2,161.81
Income:	
Groundworks UK (Grant 2) (Neighbourhood Plan funding)	5,978.00

The Parish Council have written to Basildon Council raising their objections to the authority cutting the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Grant which was part of the grant paid to the authority by central Government as part of the Localism Act, and a proportion of which was required to be passed onto Local Council’s to provide

community support over and above the Parish Precept.

This grant had been reduced in the financial year 2016/2017 to just under £1000 and to remove the grant completely would impact on having to increase the Parish Precept more than the Parish Council would think reasonably acceptable to cover costs. A letter had also been sent to Salid Javid, Secretary of State for ¹Housing, Communities and Local Government, alerting him to Basildon Council's intentions.

122/17 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: 17/01622/FULL

Demolish rear conservatory and construct first floor extension to existing dwelling, two storey side extension and front porch (Revised application) – Lenco, Victor Avenue, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex

Councillors had reviewed the revised application and were satisfied that their comments in respect of the original application, which Councillors had raised objections to and which was subsequently refused by Basildon Council, had been taken into account. It was also considered that the application would have no detrimental effect on the surrounding properties and as such the Parish Council raised no objections on this occasion to the revised application.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 17/01582/FULL

Minor demolition works, and erection of extensions to the existing Crematorium, to provide a new chapel and car parking area, revised entrance area and new waiting room & office areas. - Basildon Crematorium, Church Road, Bowers Gifford Basildon.

In considering the application Councillors recognised the requirement for the Crematorium to expand to meet future need and therefore, in principle, raised no objections to the application. However, the Parish Council considered there were two major problems which would be created if the application was granted and which would need to be addressed in planning terms before a final decision was made by Basildon Council (i) Increase in traffic flow; traffic was already a problem and the solution of using the underpass as mentioned in the applicants transport statement would not resolve this as it was often the subject of closure. The Parish Council considered it was necessary for an acceptable traffic scheme to be put forward for resolving any increase in traffic flow (ii) It was considered there would be an increase in parking problems and not enough consideration had been given to address the many aspects regarding the lack of parking for the users of the Crematorium. Parking was already a problem in connection with capacity and any increase in the use of the Crematorium both for funerals and those visiting loved ones, already at rest within the grounds, would create further problems

¹ Update for the minute: This department, as of January 2018, will be renamed the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) ORDER 2015 Application No: ESS/49/17/BAS

Proposal: Extension to existing Pitsea Power Station site compound by 0.193ha involving installation and operation of activated carbon based landfill gas clean-up system comprising up to 9 vessels (7.2m high), associated pipework, re-surfacing and installing concrete plinths, security fencing, new access gate and repositioning and modifying some other existing fixed plant and equipment.

Location: Pitsea Power Station, Pitsea Landfill, Pitsea Hall Lane, Pitsea, Basildon, SS16 4UH

Councillors raised no objections to the application and the intended works.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 - APPLICATION NO: 17/01715/FULL

Proposed single storey side and rear extensions - Chez Nous, Thomas Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon,

Councillors in considering the application commented that there was insufficient information available regarding any previous extensions and land mass. The Parish Council however, based on the information available, raised no objections.

- 123/17 PLANNING DECISIONS AND COMMENTS:** To receive updates and comments regarding Planning Applications discussed at previous Parish Council Meetings.

None reported.

- 124/17 PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET 2018/2019:** To consider the Parish Council's Budget for 2018/2019 and agree and set the Parish Precept amount accordingly for the financial year 2018/2019 as required under the Local Government Finance Act 1992

The Parish Council had been provided with the details of the Parish Council accounts for 2017/2018 at the previous meeting, plus a budget forecast to 31st March 2018 and Precept calculations for 2018/2019. It was however agreed to defer making any decision to the December meeting to give Councillors more time to consider the options available to them.

The Local Council Support Grant for 2017/2018 amounted to £955.12 however as reported earlier in the meeting the Parish Council had received an email from Basildon Council advising of their intention to cease payment of the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Grant to Parish/Town Councils. Basildon Borough Council's Policy and Resources Committee were considering removing the whole payment of the grant to Local Councils but had decided to defer their decision until their January meeting.

The Parish Council discussed the options available to them and decided to defer making any decision in respect of the Parish Precept until the outcome of Basildon Council Policy and Resources Committee meeting in January was known and

Councillors would then be in a better position for setting the Precept with the knowledge of what the decision by the Policy and Resources Committee would be. The Parish Clerk advised that the Parish Council must set a Precept by the end of February and Councillors were reminded that sufficient reserves must be maintained to cover unexpected expenditure and increases in costs.

It was **AGREED** by all Councillors present to defer setting the Precept until the Parish Council meeting on 31st January 2018 to give time for Basildon Council to respond to the Parish Council's letter of objection to cutting the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Grant.

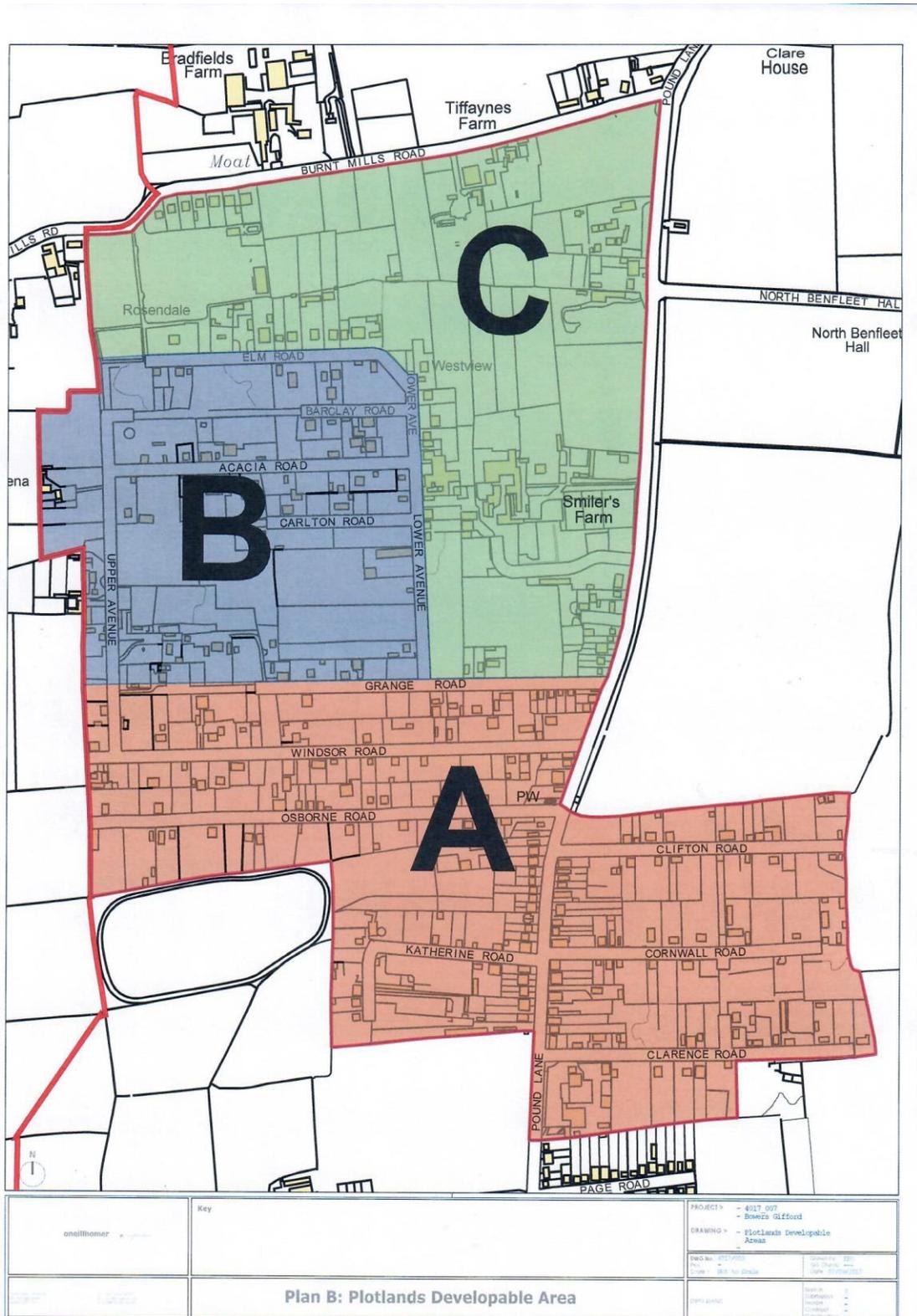
125/17 NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE: To update on progress

The Neighbourhood Plan was moving forward. The Parish Council had met with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in December and discussed how the plotlands could be integrated in the Neighbourhood Plan. In September a meeting with Basildon Council had been cancelled because documents being prepared by Basildon Council consultants, Pell Frischmann in respect of development in East Basildon, were not available and it was considered without this documentation there was no point in holding the meeting. However, information had since been received that the Local Plan was to be discussed at the Growth, Infrastructure and Development Meeting on 7th December and the previously mentioned documents would now form part of the discussion. A request was made by the Parish Council to speak on the Parish Council's position at the meeting. The request was granted and the Parish Clerk was given a statutory three (3) minute slot to state the Parish Council's case. The Parish Council considered Pell Frischmann's report to be flawed but despite the Parish Council making a good argument against the content of the report the Infrastructure, Growth and Development Committee voted 5 to 4 in favour of Basildon Council Officers proposals and voted to push forward H13 and the East Basildon Extension. The main objection to the Parish Council's preferred site was that areas of the alternative site flooded; electricity pylons were erected on the site; the alternative site coalesced with Thundersley and for the plotlands to remain in the Green Belt. The Parish Council were proposing to take the plotlands out of Green Belt in order to provide structured development and join the village as one and the Parish Neighbourhood Plan was supporting this. Despite the decision of the Infrastructure, Growth and Development Committee the Parish Council intended to continue pushing ahead with preparing their Neighbourhood Plan.

126/17 DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: To confirm the date of the next meeting as 31st January 2018

The date of the next Parish Council Meeting was confirmed as 31st January 2018 at The Benbow Club, 77 Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Appendix A



Appendix B

Question and answer session

Q: Are you talking about the whole area including Clarence Road on the other side of Pound Lane

A: Yes, Clarence Road is included in one of the zones on the map identified as plotlands.

Q: What were the alternative sites which were being looked at?

A: Benfleet Hall Farm, Little Chalvedon Hall Farm (H13) and Bradfields Farm

Q: What was a Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO)?

A: A Neighbourhood Development Order was a set of standards that dwellings within a certain area had to follow when development occurred. Any such development would have to follow a specific Design Code. The Parish Council were looking to obtain the views of residents living in the plotlands regarding taking the plotlands out of Green Belt in order to develop the plotlands and make the village as one. The Parish cannot avoid development in the village, no development is not an option but by developing the plotlands the Parish can offset some of the housing needed in the style it wanted and make it a better place to live for everyone by keeping the rural aspect and design of houses and take some of the pressure off the rest of the village.

Q: What about the flooding in some parts how could that be resolved?

A: The flooding had resulted because the ditches had been filled in and a lot of the drainage had been covered up over time. The map provided for the meeting identified three flood Zones 1, 2 and 3. Zone 1 and 2 were part of an Anglian Water project and Zone 3 was being looked at by the developers. Currently the flooding in Elm Road is being looked at and any pumping system will help the whole area but there is no quick fix and it is going to take time. Zone 1 and Zone 2 on the map were the areas where the Parish Council hope Anglian Water can resolve the flooding. The flooding could not be prevented completely because of existing subsoil but measures can be taken to control it.

Q: When will the Neighbourhood Plan come about?

A: It was hoped to deliver the Pre - Submission or basic Neighbourhood Plan to Basildon Borough Council at the end of January/beginning of February. The Parish Council do not have to agree with Basildon Borough Council's Local Plan proposals and is setting out its own proposals based on the results of a consultation held earlier in the year. The Neighbourhood Plan will go to a Planning Examiner in August 2018 and if accepted, could become part of Basildon Council's Local Plan in 2019. The Parish Council have one developer within their proposals to build on Benfleet Hall Farm whereas H13, the area including Little Chalvedon Hall Farm has several landowners. Change will also

come to the plotlands and if the NDO is not achieved it will be a free for all. The collective approach is a better one.

Q: When will building start?

A: The Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan development will happen quicker and where the Parish want it, rather than if Basildon Council builds on the areas they are looking at and where residents have said they don't want it. It will be a battle because the Borough Council are not currently sympathetic to the proposals but what can be guaranteed is there will be change, and this will include the plotland areas and there will be a need to start thinking about what residents want as a collective rather than having to fight unwanted development as an individual. Success is not known however but there is a need to start somewhere. Residents need to think about infrastructure, roads and green spaces in the future in the plotlands. If the Parish Council doesn't do it now someone else will come along and decide for us.

Q: What if only a few residents in the plotlands want what the Parish Council are proposing, will it still go ahead?

A: The Parish Council will go by the majority view. The Plotland owners can create a consortium but complications arise if one person does not want to join and this stops everything happening. The Parish Council wants to do things as a collective. It is not all about maximising the development of each plot it has to be acceptable to all, if there is a plan owners don't have to do anything but collectively they can have control over their land and what happens in the plotlands. If there is a plan and there is a policy that sets out development and there is a Master Plan with green space and infrastructure plotland owners do not have to do anything. All the Master Plan will do is to give permission for the land to be developed. It is up to the landowner if he/she wants to develop the land or do nothing.

The plotlands Neighbourhood Development Order is a complete blank sheet of paper and we need to stay ahead of Basildon or try and get them to join us. It is a case of do you want to change and how you want to change it. There is a simple story which can be told (i) where the plotlands has come from (ii) where it is now (iii) where it wants to be. If owners do not want to build they don't have to but if they do building is structured. It is important that (i) there is a collective opinion and collectively residents can have control over where building occurs. Living conditions will then improve within the plotland area and it will become a place where people want to live.

A: Why did Nottinghamshire County Council buy Little Chalvedon Hall Farm?

A: It was part of pure speculation. Many developers speculate on land purchase and it may take 20-30 years before they do anything with the land acquired but all that time it is increasing in value.

Q: Burnt Mills Road cannot take any more Traffic?

A: The Parish Council agrees that more infrastructure needs to be planned for the Parish and development is what pays for this.

Q: Has the Parish Council tried to involve the ²Homes & Community Agency

² As of January 2018 this Government Department will be renamed as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

A: The HCA is normally brought in by the Borough/District Councils in regard to social house building.

Q: Has the Parish Council involved the MP for the area.

A: The Parish Council have met Stephen Metcalf MP on various occasions and have lobbied him on matters of the Neighbourhood Plan and various other matters.

Q: How did you know who to contact for the meeting?

A: Research was undertaken via the land registry to identify all plotland land owners. Those with away addresses were posted an invitation to the meeting. Those residents living in the plotlands, providing they had delivery points, received a hand delivered letter of invite.

To be approved