

Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet

Residents Association

www.bowersgifford.info

**INTERIM COMMITTEE - TO FIGHT THE PLANS TO
BUILD ON BOWERS GIFFORD & NORTH BENFLEET GREEN BELT**

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING WHICH TOOK PLACE

at the BENBOW CLUB on 3rd October 2012

The Chair opened the meeting at 19.00.

Steering Committee Attendees Rose Griffin (RG) Acting Chair; Gary Lee (GL); Tracy Calver (TC); Barry Groves (BG); Pam Groves (PG); Derek Twidell (DT); George Smith (GS); Doreen Glibbery (DG); Caroline Sanderson (CS).

Apologies received from Tina Whitham (TW). CS acted as minute secretary

1. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12th September were distributed, read and accepted. These had been emailed in advance to the members on the database.

2. Matters arising from the last minutes

- a) RG is still working to find other groups, fighting plans to build on green belt, with a view to supporting and learning from each other.
- b) Problems had arisen with the search to find out what options are held by other developers on land in North Benfleet and Bowers Gifford. Rob Barr a local architect had been asked to help but it was still felt that specialist knowledge was needed.
- c) Whilst out with the petition RG had met a member of the family who owned the land behind Ilfracombe Avenue and along London Road. He had declined to sign the petition because his family wanted to build on the land. No discussion was entered into with regard to any developers holding options on the land.
- d) RG said that there had been a report in local papers that the Secretary of State had turned down an appeal by Cogent the developers at one of the sites in Rochford. Rochford Council were setting a precedent by seeking costs of £83k, for fighting the appeal, from Cogent

3. Petition and Letters to MP

RG said that there were about 1100 names on the petition. Only 6 residents had declined to sign. The momentum had not been so great in recent weeks because BG and PG, who were the most active foot soldiers, had been on holiday and delayed for other reasons. She asked for more volunteers to help with the petition.

RG said that the figure reported last time of 30 letters to the MP referred to households and that this figure had probably increased significantly as quite a few people had contacted her with regard to addresses, example letters etc. Furthermore, Stephen Metcalfe had written to all households suggesting that, if they objected to the proposal to build on Little Chalvedon Hall Farm, that they write to him.

RG said that letters to our MPs were still the strongest weapon to fight Nottingham's plans to build on our green belt.

4. Website

This is now up and running. It was hoped that all residents would use the website for information and to join the forum. It could take about 24 hours to join the forum as the website was run by volunteers. We are all very grateful for the work put in by TW and Tony Fay and for Robin Walter who funded the design and Rob Smillie who is paying for the hosting.

Soon the email service would be up and running and residents would receive information emails from "Bowers Gifford Info" rather than RG sending them out personally.

5. Communications – Email from Meridian

Another email had been received asking for a meeting with "our group". The Residents Association found the term "group" condescending. The steering committee had declined to meet with Meridian because it was only a steering group. A decision would be made on whether to meet Meridian when the newly elected committee met for the first time.

6. Wildlife Information Update

A short wildlife update was given by DG

7. Adoption of Constitution and Election of Committee

Christine Barlow(CB), parish clerk, took over the meeting at this point and the steering committee stood down.

CB explained the process in respect of setting up the Residents Association, the adoption of the constitution and the election of officers. She advised that a notice had been published in the Summer/Autumn edition of the parish council newsletter (the Bugle) and delivered in the normal way as previous newsletters to residents. Residents had been given the option to put their name forward for membership of the committee via the reply slip in the newsletter or, in some cases, by letter to the parish clerk. The names of all candidates, in the appropriate form, had been received prior to the meeting by the parish clerk.

Approx 120 people were in attendance. Voting was undertaken by a show of hands. Candidates for the executive committee were proposed and seconded. Nominations for the election of committee members were agreed by all present and taken on masse. The proceedings were witnessed by Councillor Tony Ball, Leader of Basildon Council.

Chair – Rose Griffin (proposed by Paul Picton, seconded by Barry Groves)

Secretary – Derek Twidell (proposed by Daphne Payne, seconded by Gary Lee)

Treasurer – Tracy Calver (proposed by Rose Griffin, seconded by Derek Twidell)

Committee Members – Laura Watts, Tina Whitham, Gary Lee and George Smith.

All members were elected by a show of hands unopposed. There were no abstentions. In accordance with the constitution only residents from Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet were permitted to vote.

Cllr. Ball congratulated those present on the way the elections were conducted.

The constitution was adopted by a show of hand but parish councillor Bernard Foster said that paragraph 2 would need to be looked at if the Residents Association boundary were to be extended to include Pitsea residents. RG agreed to look at this.

CB said that she had received nominations for Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and a further 4 nominations for other committee members.

8. Tony Ball Talk and Questions and Answers session

Cllr. Ball gave short presentation providing the background to Basildon's original strategy, to build 6500 dwellings, that had been rejected by central government because Basildon was required to build more dwellings. One of the problems had been that not enough residents had commented on the strategy which he admitted had not been easy for a layman to understand. He said that he hoped more people would comment on the revised strategy that would be ready early in 2013.

Cllr. Ball answered a number of questions that had been provided in advance and also answered a number of questions from the floor. During the Q&A session cllr. Ball said that the council may consider future applications to build on the Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet plotlands which were green belt.

During the Q&A session RG asked for a show of hands to demonstrate how many people attending Meridian's presentation believed that the proposed development was a "done deal" and that the questionnaire used by Meridian could be biased and skewed in any way. A large majority of attendees raised their hands.

RG thanked Cllr. Ball for attending and for answering so many questions. There was a round of applause from attendees

9. Any other Business

University of the Third Age were holding a Christmas Fayre at the Benbow 3rd November.

St. Andrew's Hospital will hold an open day to show residents one of the new wards. December date to be notified.

10. Date of Next Meeting – 15th November 2012, at the Gun Public House, at the later time of 7.30 pm – guest Speaker Stephen Metcalfe MP.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm. The committee thanked Brian the Benbow caretaker for giving his time to open and close the hall. Residents were invited to leave a donation if they wished.

120 members of the public including committee members were in attendance.

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