

# **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 12<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2012**

The Chair opened the meeting at 19.00.

#### **Attendees**

Rose Griffin (RG) Acting Chair; Gary Lee (GL); Tina Witham (TW); Barry Groves (BG); Pam Groves (PG); Derek Twidell (DT); George Smith (GS); Doreen Glibbery (DG); Caroline Sanderson (CS).

Apologies received from Tracy Calver (TC).

CS acted as minutes secretary

#### **1. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August were read. The date on Page 1 for nominations for the new committee should read 21<sup>st</sup> September, not 27<sup>th</sup> September. The minutes were accepted with this amendment.

#### **2. Matters arising from the last minutes**

RG said she has contacted the group in Rochford who were trying to stop building 650 houses on green belt land. After their appeal was turned down by the local council they had appealed to Eric Pickles the Secretary of State to stop the development and supplied reports by consultants including one report stating that the A13 and local roads could not cope with the volume of additional traffic. Mr. Pickles rejected the appeal very quickly and building had started almost immediately.

RG said that there were several other local groups fighting against building on green belt land. There was another group in Rochford fighting the building on Coombe Farm, a group in Wickford, a group at Kent's Hill and others in various areas. It was a pity that there was no organisation joining all these groups together and this Residents Association should try to make contact with them.

There are still a number of people outside the Parish boundaries, going towards Pitsea, who would like to join this group or perhaps form their own group to fight the building on Little Chalvedon Hall Farm. RG still has to arrange to meet organisations in Pitsea to discuss this. Once the Residents' Association has elected a formal committee the new committee might amend the draft constitution to include part of Pitsea.

RG stated that nothing had yet been done with regard to the search for "rights to build" on Bowers Gifford land which John Handley had offered to pay for. DT was seeking help from Rob Barr a local architect as the searches were not straight forward.

3. **Election of formal committee to take place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October**

Details of nominations for the committee had been put in the Bowers Bugle.

4. **Strategy**

- a. RG explained the petition was doing well; there were now over 800 signatures, but that more volunteers were needed to gather signatures on the petition.
- b. RG asked for a show of hands from everyone who had already sent letters to MP Stephen Metcalfe. On counting the hands it was decided that not all the letters or emails sent had been received and RG would check with Mr Metcalfe. RG asked whether anyone would be interested in a letter writing workshop at the Benbow utilising a computer and printer. A standard letter did not carry the same weight as a personalised letter. It was agreed that the committee would try to arrange a workshop.
- c. All trustees of Nottingham County Council (NCC) Pension fund were councillors. Therefore RG had written to all 69 NCC councillors expressing concerns about the purchase of Little Chalvedon Hall Farm for building. She also advised in a subsequent email that 2 of the 5 properties on the estate were empty, at a time when there was a housing shortage. Copies of RG's correspondence had also been sent to all Nottingham City Councillors, all Nottingham MPs and Pitsea East Ward councillors. She had also copied to Nottingham press. No replies had been received and RG had been informed that Tony Ball had also tried to contact someone at the council to discuss Little Chalvedon Hall without success – this may be because NCC is currently a hung council. No further communication had been received from Meridian despite their email stating that they would contact RG earlier in the month to arrange a meeting. RG had not agreed to such a meeting.
- d. RG said that TC had received a reply from the Woodland Trust. They did not think they would be able to help us at this time as none of the trees on Little Chalvedon Hall Farm were recorded as being over 50 years old.
- e. TW read out an email from the Commission for the Protection of Rural England

5. **Website**

TW said that the website was still under construction. TW and Tony Fay (TF) were in communication with the website designer. The website would be up and running very soon. RG thanked TW and TF for the work they were putting into the website on behalf of the Residents Association

6. **Wildlife Information**

DG gave a talk about the wildlife in the area. She said she had been in touch with the Essex Wildlife Trust but while the site was still being used as farmland with no planning application yet being submitted, there was not much they could do to help. She explained that the area we live in is a wildlife corridor from East Anglia providing resting places for migrating wildlife. Examples of Elephant Hawk Moth caterpillars were exhibited. DG explained how the area was ideal for its procreation. She asked everyone to look at what rare flora and fauna we have in the area and photograph it with the date and time set to show what vegetation we have growing locally. She will put these on a website. We should collect as much evidence

as we can to show what lives and grows in our fields so that preservation orders can be applied for to protect any rare species e.g. Barn Owls

**7. Fundraising**

RG said a talk on Bowers Gifford would be held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> September at the Benbow Club. We will also have a few stalls selling bits and pieces to help increase the funds. If anyone can think of any other ways to raise funds please let one of the committee know.

**8. Aiden McGurran, Pitsea East Councillor, spoke to the meeting and also provided answers to questions sent in advance.**

Aiden McGurran gave a short speech on his stance on the green belt development and gave residents advice on gaining support for the campaign. He then answered the questions put to him in advance and also took a number of questions from the floor. RG thanked him for attending and giving us his time. Questions and Answers will be available on request.

**9. Any other business**

£60 was collected in donations

There being no further business, the meeting closed 20.20.

64 members of the public were in attendance.

**Date of Next Meetings**

The next meetings will be on: 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2012 at 7.00 pm. This will be the AGM and election of committee members. Tony Ball (Conservative Councillor and Leader of Basildon Council) will be attending as a guest.

**RG asked for questions for Mr. Ball to be sent to her in advance of the meeting. Questions will not be taken from the floor.**

**Volunteers to help with the petition and leafleting are urgently required –please contact any member of the committee if you would like to help in this or any other way.**

**[www.bowersgifford.info](http://www.bowersgifford.info)**