



SHOTGATE PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2013

Parish Council to Oppose Planning Application

A planning application was received by members of the Parish Council, just a few days prior to the AGM (Annual General Meeting) of the Parish Council on Tuesday 14th May. *(This meeting took place at 8.15 p.m. and followed the Annual Parish meeting, which is a separate meeting for residents.)

The Application concerned a plan to build 49 houses in the current business district of Bruce Grove, comprising NIBS buses (which is to move to other premises), the former Fortress windows, and other, now empty buildings, known as of Units 1-6. The houses would be mostly in two terraces facing each other with a new road between them. Access to this road is proposed from the residential part of Bruce Grove which currently has a barrier between it and the Russell Gardens/Bruce Grove Business area.

Parish Councillors had already supplied their individual comments on this plan, which would be passed back to Basildon Borough Council. However, it was decided that a joint response from the Parish Council would also be desirable.

The matter was debated, and a three- part motion was proposed to oppose the application on these grounds:

1. Lack of supporting infrastructure in Shotgate for a large development such as this.
2. The land is designated for Business use and this is unsuitable for a residential development.
3. The Barrier between residential and industrial Shotgate, would have to be either removed, or replaced with a “pinch point” which would prevent lorries getting through, but not cars and vans.

The motion was carried. Shotgate Parish Council will monitor the situation and continue to pursue it.

Public Transport – Buses

There are two categories of bus services that traverse the Parish:

- A. Those that the bus operator considers to be commercially viable with no legal obligation to advise the Parish once agreement to start/terminate a service has been cleared with the Traffic Commissioner. However, Basildon Borough and Essex County Councils are usually informed.
- B. Those that are considered by Essex County Council (ECC) to be socially necessary by providing access to shops, post offices, dentists, doctors, health centres and hospitals. These are finally supported by ECC on a Cost Per Passenger Journey basis and cover bus services that the commercial operator does not wish to run, usually on weekday evenings (none in Shotgate), Sundays and Public Holidays.

There is a direct association between the population number of the parish and the minimum number of services that ECC is prepared to subsidise. The Parish is advised and can comment on any alterations proposed. Two operators cover the bus services that run through Shotgate.

Timetable information is supplied by the Operator for their own services, with the full list of routes and services displayed within the frames in the Bus Shelters at The Post Office, courtesy of ECC.

Provided by Keith Adler, Transport Representative.

Consternation caused to Bus Passengers on 25 Route

A major shake up of bus routes across South Essex came into effect on 5th May, 2013. Unfortunately, updated timetables have not been posted in Shotgate four weeks later. Scenes of confusion arose when groups of people waited for buses in the Basildon direction, which used to arrive through most of the day at 07 and 37 past the hour and been changed to 00 and 30 past. Similarly, in the Southend direction, the buses changed from 10 and 40 past to 18 and 48 past. Coupled with the fact that these buses are commonly between 5 and 15 minutes late, this left people scratching their heads.

The correct times are available on the First Bus web site and some printed timetables were available at Basildon bus station information kiosk, but not at Southend Bus station. This disastrous un-co-ordinated change did not just affect Shotgate - the timetables were not updated in nearby Rayleigh either. (They finally went up on 26th May.)

As has been commented on by many of the regular users of this service, if only this ran every 20 minutes like, for example the number 20 service Southend to Hullbridge, you would not need a timetable, but could simply turn up and have an average 10 minute wait.

As is typical of this unsatisfactory service, the writer of this article waited 40 minutes this morning to get the bus to Rayleigh.

The only apparent good thing to come out of this, is that there are a few additional buses in the Southend direction on Saturday only, between 9.00 a.m. and 11 a.m. (at 9.38 a.m., 10.08 a.m. and 10.38 a.m.). To add to the confusion, the first bus on Saturday after 9.00 a.m. is 9.15 a.m. and not 9.18 a.m.

Why the Bruce Grove Barrier must not be removed

Our main article refers to a planning application to build houses in the industrial part of Bruce Grove. This would result in either the removal of the traffic barrier, or its replacement with a “pinch point” which would restrict traffic to small width vehicles. This would have a dire effect on the current relative calm of “old” Shotgate.

Bruce Grove, and its attendant five avenues, comprise the original centre of Shotgate, dating back to its creation in the 1920s. Although there is a through route already to Bridge Road, and the occasional speeding vehicle may be seen once in a while flouting the 30mph limit, the area has retained a remarkable degree of calm, which makes it a pleasure to walk through, and is naturally of particular benefit to those who live there. This gives the area a unique character which is missing from many other parts of Wickford.

The effects of removal of the current barrier would not be immediately apparent, but over the following months, motorists would gradually catch on that you can drive through from Russell Gardens and Hodgson Way and after a year has lapsed, the peace and quiet that the area now enjoys would be gone forever. Furthermore it is quite possible that to allow emergency vehicles, dust carts and lorry deliveries in to the new estate, the Barrier could be removed completely and there would be no stopping the onslaught of commercial traffic. This is why the Newsletter insists: The Bruce Grove Barrier must not be removed!

Shotgate Allotment Association

There is a Committee of seven members including the Chairman and it meets on a bi-monthly basis. It is a member of the National Association of Allotments whose rules it abides by. It is trying to acquire a piece of land that it can use for allotments of approximately 3-4 acres, this would allow it to have about 40 full size plots. At present it has 23 people interested in cultivating a plot, 2 of these at present reside outside the boundaries of Shotgate. If the land that is offered is less than the size required to produce full size plots it could reduce the plot size to suit the Association's needs.

Vacancy for a Parish Councillor

The Parish Council is currently operating with six members plus the Parish Clerk, but its full complement is seven members. There will not be another Parish council election until May 2015, when the entire council will come up for re-election. In this interim period the council may add an unelected council member, until the next election. This process is known as “co-opting”.

The Council invite anyone who feels they might be interested in filling this vacancy to contact the Parish Clerk on 01702 584158 or by e-mail to shotgatepc@live.co.uk.

You do not have to have a background in public service, politics, meetings, or be a long term resident etc. This is a common misconception. A Parish Council is a grassroots organisation whose ear is as close to the general public as it is possible to be and in fact the more diverse the experience of its members is, the more effective it will be.

The only qualifications you need are to be over 18 and on the Electoral register. You do not even need to live in Shotgate - you can apply if you work here.

Furthermore, you will probably find if you should join, that a particular field may emerge as something that interests you most, and you will quickly become an “expert”. You are not allocated work in a Parish Council, but are free to take up whatever piques your interest. So please contact the Parish Clerk if you want to find out more, with no obligation to carry this through if you do not want to.

Parks Tour of Inspection

Early evening on May 23rd, Councillor Hodges conducted a tour of inspection of Shotgate’s parks for the benefit of two councillors and the Parish Clerk, with a view to outlining possible improvements.

This began in Shotgate Park/Fanton Gardens, where there is currently one path, known as Manston Path. Suggested improvements included a perimeter path, which would follow Hodgson Way, co-ordination of the three benches on Manston Path, an additional bench on the proposed new path, which would be an excellent suntrap, replacement of a corroded gate at the Fanton Gardens entrance, some clearing of trees at the Fanton Gardens end in order to improve security for anyone using Manston Path on Winter’s evenings and possible levelling of some of the mounds to improve sightlines.

The tour continued into the Top Park (aka The Little Park), where it was hoped to restore children’s play equipment alongside Bawdsey Path and possibly create a picnic area for families nearby. Outside funding would be sought to complete these projects, including an “Expression of Interest” to the CIF (Community Initiative fund). Councillor Hodges talked about the difficulties of the availability of grants, which have a time limit and the availability of chosen contractors to carry out the work in the same timeframe.

It should be emphasised that not all these improvements may go ahead - they are suggestions and they would be spread over the fullness of time.

Work will continue to seek the necessary funds.

Basildon Civic Service

Councillor David Harrison and Cllr. Keith Allen represented the Parish Council at Basildon’s Civic Service recently.

Parish Chairmanship Election

The first item of business at the AGM was to re-elect the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for Shotgate Parish Council for the forthcoming year.

Incumbents David Harrison and Keith Allen were first proposed for the chair and vice-chair respectively. They received two votes for, three against and one abstention.

Challengers Paul Knott and Peter Vickers were then proposed and received three votes for, two against and one abstention. They therefore will take up the Chair and Vice Chair for the next year (until May 2014).

Don't watch TV on the second Tuesday of the month.....

.....Could be a good way of weaning yourself off Soap operas. Alternatively you could attend the Monthly Parish meeting (check the notice board outside the Pharmacy to confirm). There is a twenty minute section for residents' questions early on in the meeting. This may not have the excitement of the U.S Congress of 1865 but we can promise lively debate, maybe even some wit.

Personal Profile

I did not have time to supply a personal profile in an earlier issue of this newsletter, writes Paul Knott. I joined by the process of co-option in July 2012 (see Advert for Vacancy about this process) to replace a departed member. I was a member, several years ago, of the Parish Plan Steering Group, an interesting experience. On that project my contribution was mostly on the Questionnaire stage. As some members of the Parish Council were also on the Steering Group I was already known - however let me reiterate that you do not need that level of experience to join the Parish Council. Naturally, following on from this, I hope to keep an eye on the progress of putting into effect the recommendations of that Plan, acting as a kind of "conscience", as I think it is the nearest thing we have that reflects the wishes of Shotgate residents, rather than pursuing a purely personal agenda.

YOUR COUNCILLORS

**Paul Knott - Chairman
2, Rochford Close**

**Peter Vickers – Vice-Chairman
274 Southend Road**

Malcolm Hodges - 7 Crouchview Close

Fred Lyons - 324a Southend Road

David Harrison - 49 Alicia Avenue

Keith Allen - 28 Fourth Avenue

THE PARISH CLERK

Georgina Bassett – 01702 584158