

FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING FINCHINGFIELD AND CORNISH HALL END



MINUTES of the Parish Council EGM Meeting held at Finchingfield Village Hall, on Wednesday 8th February 2023 commencing at 7:30pm.

Present: Cllr Martin Smith (Chairman)
Cllr Duffin
Cllr Denman
Cllr A Stanger
Cllr R Stanger
Cllr Gordon

Members of the public: 23

- 23/158** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies received from Cllr Coverdale, Cllr Hammond, Cllr Strange. Cllrs Peter Tattersley (BDC) and Cllr Graham Butland (ECC) were not made aware of the meeting due to an error on invites.
- 23/159** **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**
None
- 23/160** **The Refurbishment of Finchingfield Bridge:** Ratification of the discussion of the Public Meeting held at 4.45pm on Friday 3rd February. Approval of actions in relation to the ECC planning application for Bridge Refurbishment.

Meeting opened by Chair Cllr Johnny Martin Smith giving thanks to all for helping in gathering information, a special thanks given to Michael Staines.

With thanks to The Parish Council the consultation on the bridge has been extended 28th February 2023.

A helpful letter posted by the residents who live in Saxons in the centre of Finchingfield has been posted on the consultation for the bridge - they have put together a very useful letter of objection, these objections are:

- Safety
- Traffic management
- Flood risk
- Heritage impact
- Local business
- Environment

There remains a question as to whether the county council are trying to make the bridge wider.

A further meeting will be held prior to the 28th Feb for the village for the rebuttal of the arguments for the bridge reconstruction to proceed.

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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Jane Welsh - Post Office – Giving thanks for the extension.

Michael Staines (MS) - update given on the petition - 2350 signatures to James Cleverley to withdraw the application or call it in for SOS public inquiry and independent inspector.

James Cleverley sent an update today via email to MS – Stating does not comment on individual applications, aware of the Unesco piece. World Status application - is not an open status to make application, needs to be at a time when applications are open, have reached out to other local heritage organisations to support.

Options with extension of time - put in objection now or wait?
Michael Staines states put it in now to put pressure on Essex CC.

Cllr Duffin - Could be an issue as related to any serious damage that could take place on the bridge and what this could do in terms of how damaged the bridge is.

Jane Welsh - 2021 report states the arch is strong.

Cllr R Stanger - using their own reports is a summing up (visual) inspection which came up positive - this states it is fit for purpose.

Ann Fields – “if it isn’t broken, don’t fix it.”

Mark Ault - Need to remind Essex CC, if the bridge is unsafe is it not negligent to put a weight restriction on now?

Denise Cole - Could we not get a private survey?

Why have we only been presented with one option (destroy and repair) why not use option 2 from 2010 report, visual inspection comes back sound.

Mark Ault - Pond flooding, Victorian drains near the surface of the green, will this impact on the residents and visitors?

Jane Welsh - 3 options outlined by Andrew, these options were not from Ringwood Jacobs so they didn't need to use these.

Michael Staines - Can the bridge take 40 or 60 tonnes? The roads, sewer, verges, Guildhall can't take this. How can we protect the village from being overrun by trucks.

Cllr Martin Smith - Trunk road system is built for trucks, Finchingfield is not built for this - it does not make sense to widen the roads, it also can't be done near places like the Guildhall.

Cllr Martin Smith outlined the proposed response (from Michael Staines)

Heavier vehicles, local issues (drainage, sewers, businesses)

Cllr Duffin – Need a better timescale, it's currently too long and is open ended for the work length, bridge redesign is now flatter.

Cllr Martin Smith - Should be rebuilt with weight restriction.

Cllr Strange – The key thing is a construction lawyer, collate evidence and put a letter together.

Society for protection of ancient building and historic England - could these resources help - historic England did not object to the bridge.

Mark Ault - Need an independent assessor.

Mary Turley - comments on the petition, the comments from this can be PDF'd and put in as an objection.

Cllr Denman - what do you want your Parish Council to do now?

Mary Turley - Get an independent person.

Mark Ault - You don't have time.

Jane Welsh - There is no evidence for the bridge needing to be rebuilt. There are no cracks in the bridge.

Cllr Martin Smith – Is this meeting saying: "We don't want the new bridge - If it needs to be rebuilt - rebuild as it is".

Cllr A Stanger – Has asked Cllr Lee Scott to attend the village and look at the village and the issues we currently have. Cllr A Stanger happy to show them all the issues around the village.

Suggestion on getting photos for the application for the submission.

Paul Crick is the person you likely need to speak to at Council.

Braintree and Witham times - Braintree council have stated to ensure that the bridge needs to be strong enough for the vehicles that go across it - if we put a weight limit on it this will make it safer.

Cllr Duffin - Graham Butland has been in contact for a meeting with the relevant technical officers about the bridge and has requested from them the proof of the need for the bridge rebuild.

Cllr R Stanger - is 7.5 tonnes in one place and 40 tonnes in another – the documents are on the Braintree website site, this has changed to 10 tonnes and it is not clear as to why?
It is not weak - it Isn't built for big tonnage lorries.

We don't want a 'flat 'new bridge - Essex CC have not asked us about the options for a new bridge.

Michael Staines - These problems need to be sent to Graham Butland.

NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The next meeting of Finchingfield Parish Council will take place at Finchingfield Village Hall on Tuesday, 28th February 2023 commencing at 7.30pm. The Chairman thanked everybody for attending the EGM and declared the meeting closed at 8.53pm

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Signed:Chairman Date:

