

# FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

## REPRESENTING FINCHINGFIELD AND CORNISH HALL END



### MINUTES of the Parish Council Meeting held at Finchingfield Hall Village Hall, on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023 commencing at 7:30pm.

Present: Cllr Martin Smith (Chairman)  
Cllr R Stanger  
Cllr A Stanger  
Cllr Denman  
Cllr Coverdale  
Cllr Hammond  
Cllr Strange  
Kate Raymond (Clerk)

In Attendance: Members of the Public: 12

23/172 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Apologies received from Cllr G Butland (BDC) Cllr Gordon and Cllr Duffin.

23/173 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**  
None

23/174 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Acceptance of the minutes of the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023, signed by the Chairman.

Acceptance of the minutes of the EGM meeting held on 21<sup>ST</sup> February 2023, signed by the Chairman.

23/175 **CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT**

Chair stated he had a telephone call today with Councillor Butland (BDC) and he has had some discussion regarding whether or not a weight limit of 7.5 tonnes means that buses and other vehicles cannot go across the bridge – this is not the case. Anybody delivering services to the village that happen to be over the weight will be allowed to do that, the only thing we are trying to distract is the huge lorries coming through our village. I wanted to make that point clear, Cllr R Stanger and I discussed this earlier.

Member of the public states they are concerned with the amount of village green that will be taken if the bridge was re built, and how intrusive this will be, they are unable to find any plans to confirm this.

Cllr Martin Smith asking for Cllr Coverdale's views in terms of what the plans say.

Cllr Coverdale – States Yes, on the far side a corner of the green will be taken, which will be gone forever as it will be tarmacked to allow a better swing for vehicles. It will be an area of green where the Village sign is which will be 56m<sup>2</sup> taken to allow additional swing space.

Member of the public states – 56m<sup>2</sup> is quite a lot in the way that the village looks.

Member of the public stated how it will ruin the look of the village, and it doesn't matter how much you widen the bridge, the angles into it are irrelevant. Also stated the bridge in Bardfield you can drive through straight, but people have still managed to hit it recently. We don't need this bridge changed.

Cllr Martin Smith – Stated the problem is the desolation of the area when they are rebuilding the bridge. 10 months of destroying the area around it will be something that we are fighting against.

Member of the public stated they have been looking at the various websites and have noticed a comment from The Society of Prevention of Ancient Building that echo's what everybody else has been saying on how picturesque the village is etc. I appreciate Cllr Butland isn't available this evening, but he was a consultee in his own right as our County Councillor and I was curious to know whether he had commented as a councillor as it is not on the website, but neither is the Braintree representation, it shows it came in today but it's not actually on the county website, and similarly other organisation's comments have been registered but are not actually showing on the site.

Further stating, they would like this discussed in an open forum so at least the community can put forward exactly what FPC have said in their representation, which is that we don't need another bridge, and the one we have is perfectly adequate for our needs, and as the English Heritage have said it will destroy our quintessential English village.

Cllr Martin Smith – Stated many locals and FPC have put in their representations to stop the bridge re build and I don't think we could of done more. We will look for advice once we have a reply from ECC.

Cllr A Stanger – Stating that on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March Highways will be meeting Cllr A Stanger, Cllr R Stanger, Cllr Martin Smith and Jane Welsh to accompany them around the village. Cllr A Stanger stating how important it is that they come to the village to visually see the impact of larger lorries/traffic through the village and will give them information and show evidence on the damage around the village.

Member of the public stated a local gentlemen attended the last Braintree District Council meeting and directed a question regarding the bridge to Cllr Butland, and at that meeting Cllr Butland said that he would be led by what Finchingfield Parish Council decides on the matter of the bridge. Cllr Butland is aware of FPC's decision following the last FPC meeting he attended where the objection letter/response to ECC was read out and approved.

23/177

### **CLERKS REPORT**

The Clerk stated there had been correspondence from BDC regarding signage on the bridge, the clerk confirmed further to the amendment of language on one of the signs that both FPC and BDC are in agreement that given the sensitivity of the matter the signs will stay.

Clerk confirmed the 2023 Open Spaces plan has been sent to BDC, along with the pre-sept request form.

Clerk confirms receipt of various e-mails of objection for the bridge.

Clerk confirms from the last meeting the temporary change to Vice Chair. Cllr R Stanger will be standing as Vice Chair on a temporary basis.

Clerk states The Community Emergency Plan is currently being updated.

Cllr Martin Smith - Donna Roder has resigned as Clerk and Kate Raymond has currently taken on the Clerk role.

23/178

### **REPORT FROM THE DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

Cllr Tattersley – Stated firstly, explaining that generally speaking if there are signs that need planning permission they would be removed, and therefore as a general rule the council used to remove boards. However, given the sensitivity around the issues of the Bridge and Prison at this time if it is what the Parish wanted then we will leave the signage where it is.

Budget – We have had to make around 1.5 million pounds of savings, and to make those savings you have had to come up with several options on how to do that. Since the time when we first discussed savings a lot of things have changed, one is the Parish Council Street cleaning budget, that reduction is no longer happening.

Bridge – I have had lots of e-mails and correspondence regarding the bridge, but the one thing that stands out, is the issue with the 7.5 tonne weight limit, the dustbin lorries cannot get over the bridge as they weigh around 30 tonnes, you will not be able to get oil deliveries, some ambulances are over 7.5 tonnes, there are a range of vehicles that go above 7.5 tonnes. There is no sensible de tour, which means that these bigger vehicles have a long way round to go, they will be making quite strong objections to

that specific issue, and I wouldn't want to see FPC's arguments about the bridge get lost on the simple technicalities.

Cllr A Stanger – States that the vehicles Cllr Tattersley has mentioned have always driven over the bridge without hitting it. These are special vehicles that need to get over the bridge. The lorries that come from, for example Braintree that have to get to Saffron Walden are sent this way via their Sat Nav, on very unsuitable roads. Our roads are damaged with little verges left, lots of deep potholes and ridges.

Cllr Martin Smith – Thanks Cllr A Stanger for her point.

Cllr Tattersley stated his Portfolio responsibility at the Council is Health and Well-being. We have been aware for some time that the number of developments going on around Braintree and the surrounding areas, particularly Witham, is adding an awful strain on the hospital infrastructure. Stated there is a very good Health Centre in Finchingfield which we should be grateful for, as a lot of places haven't got that. Cllr Tattersley also stated that BDC have been doing some work behind the scenes and have managed to now do something about the Braintree Community Hospital site. In that hospital there are two operating theatres that are not being used simply because there are not enough beds for people that have been through that operating theatre, as the beds are taken up by people that are fit to go home but have nowhere to go to. BDC have been looking at finding a way to get people out of the hospital quicker to ease the pressure on doctor's surgeries. There are doctor's surgeries in the area that are not in a good state where people are struggling to get appointments etc.

Braintree Community Hospital are looking to get a CT scanner, x ray machines, blood tests, ultrasound's, heart and lung diagnostic tests, and MRI scans all to hopefully be introduced in 2024, If we can get these in our local community hospital it will help the pressure that is put on our local surgeries and also Broomfield.

The Travel Lodge in the centre of Braintree is now a walk in clinic. offering services and tests, for example, there are sexual Health clinic's twice a week, along with Diabetic services, Health and well-being, long Covid services, paediatric doctors and more. BDC are gradually recognising there isn't enough doctors and nurses to go around.

The majority of the district are struggling in terms of the increase in growth.

With unwanted developments, we are not getting the infrastructure to support that including new doctor's facilities.

Cllr Martin Smith – Stated money going towards expanding The Freshwell Health Centre.

- Short discussion on how BDC could rectify the infrastructure to support developments.

Member of the public stated Braintree along with other Essex authorities do not have a 5 year Land Supply, Cllr Tattersley confirms this.

Cllr Tattersley – Stated BDC have approved an awful lot of planning applications and permission has been granted but builders are not building.

23/179

### **FINCHINGFIELD BRIDGE UPDATE**

Cllr Martin Smith - Going back to Cllr Tattersley's original point, stated it is very important that Braintree District Council understand that when people contact you regarding the 7.5 tonne weight on the bridge, that 7.5 tonnes does not restrict busses, supply vehicles waste, oil etc to this village.  
It would be really helpful from our perspective as our will is not to have a new bridge and the disruption that it causes, is to say that the 7.5 tonnes is only a restriction for huge lorries so they see the sign and divert to the main roads.

Cllr R Stanger – Stated as far as we understand there are two types of restrictions, there are restrictions for actual weight, and also ecological/environmental weight.  
Restrictions of 7.5 tonnes or over that have a necessity to use the bridge can do it.

Discussion on weight restrictions for the bridge, using Shalford and Bardfield as examples. There needs to be signage and diversion for much larger heavier lorries.

Cllr Tatterseley – Stated a suggestion on representations to the people in respect of the Sat Nav routes.

Cllr A Stanger – Stated Highways have the power to change the Sat Nav route. We have spoken to Highways a long time ago discussing the short cut through these roads and to re direct large lorries.

23/180

### **FINCHINGFIELD VILLAGE HALL RENOVATION**

Brian Patient has been in contact with Cllr Martin Smith regarding the Village Hall Committee starting the process at looking at several options for refurbishment. Starting with the demolition and rebuild, secondly the renovation, and thirdly to what extent of the renovation. Cllr Martin Smith explains that on a recent visit to a new Village Hall seeing how it has been rebuilt and re designed really does make Finchingfield Village Hall seem very decrepit. Cllr Martin Smith puts forward that he would like the council to start the process of further discussion, Cllr Martin Smith would like to add two more members to the Village Hall Committee. Currently Cllr R Stanger, Cllr A Stanger and Cllr Hammond are on the Village Hall Committee.

Proposal of Village Hall Renovation discussion; Cllr Martin Smith, seconded Cllr Denman.

23/181

### **CHE SPECIFIC**

Cllr Strange – Updated the council that CHE had an EGM meeting recently and discussed their coronation plans. An invitation has been designed and issued throughout the Cornish Hall End, following the discussion of the budget (£500) CHE

have suggested that they will use their own money and will then send the bill to Finchingfield Parish Council.

Cllr Strange has spoken to Kevin Gooch regarding the crossover to take the hedge out for the new parking, he is looking to start at the end of March, Cllr Strange/Cllr Gordon to project manage as it goes but firstly the gates will change to moving in rather than out.

Insurance has been discussed and they are currently locked into another two year deal with Zurich. CHE put forward to continue with current insurance this year which has been budgeted for and will send the bill to Cllr R Stanger, and to look at changing insurers once the deal comes to an end next year.

Cllr Strange looked at the Pavilion with Kevin Gooch, in respect of what maintenance needs to be done, there are lots of over hanging trees and a fence that has fallen over into the pond behind, Cllr Strange may ask for a quote from Kemp in respect of the fence. The maintenance work should be done at some point in the summer, looking at cost of £2,400 which has been budgeted for.

Playing Fields- Cllr Strange has given CHE the play equipment brochure which is for age 5 + equipment.

Cllr A Stanger – Stated there are 5 swing seats stored in Finchingfield Village Hall and would they be of any use to CHE.

Cllr Martin Smith – Stated he has 30 trees in his yard in CHE, further discussion between Cllr A Stanger and Cllr Martin Smith to find a place to plant them.

### **HILL UPDATE**

23/182

Cllr A Stanger – Stated the current road works along Bardfield Road is The Hill Group putting their electricity cable in from their building site, along the B1057 and up into the Village Hall carpark to the sub station. Cllr A Stanger states FPC were aware this would happen but unfortunately, were not given a start date. UK Power Networks have done their work in the Village Hall car park, currently this is the next stage by Hill. The work is looking likely it will take two weeks or longer. FPC voted to say the work could take place and asked for compensation.

Cllr Denman/Cllr Coverdale – Stated FPC need to speak to Hill regarding the 60mph sign, and there is also the point regarding the trees as we have not heard anything from them.

Member of the public stated he had received a letter from UK Power Network stating a slight disruption for two days, the council have not seen this letter. Cllr A Stanger to investigate further.

## **ESSEX HIGHWAYS**

23/183

Clerk stated that there was going to be a road closure for two days for some monitoring outside the bridge, this is now going to take place in May – dates to be confirmed.

Cllr Denman – Stated there is a Local Highways Panel meeting taking place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March. We will need an Agenda for this meeting, various applications have been put in.

## **OPEN SPACES**

23/184

Clerk – BDC have now received the 2023 updated version from FPC.

Scout Hut – Cllr Denman - One of the scout leaders has been looking to get an architect to do a design for free. The building is not in a good condition and needs rebuilding.

Cllr A Stanger - It was built for free by Villager's in the 1960's, The scouts own the building although it is on Trust Land.

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

23/185

Cllr Coverdale – Combined the Neighbourhood plan update with the Prison as they are interconnected.

Cllr Coverdale stated in respect of the Neighbourhood plan, there has been a meeting between four Parish's, Fundamentally the airbase extends into four Parish's, Finchingfield, Wethersfield, Hedingham, and Toppesfield, Hedingham are halfway through their neighbourhood plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan takes 2 years to create and lasts 5 years. Finchingfield Parish Council need to find people to get on board -need volunteers to assist in this. The suggestion is we advertise through the Villager however, we also need to appoint one councillor onto this.

Vote - Cllr Strange to join neighbourhood plan- Proposed Cllr Martin Smith, Cllr Coverdale seconded.

Cllr Coverdale stated mega prison report has now been completed and will be circulated to all clerks. Cllr Coverdale has received the report.

Prison land – Cllr Coverdale stated virtually the whole of the site is very heavily contaminated with chemicals that are increasingly dangerous to human life, the land is not fit for anything except trees and wild animals, there will be a detailed study completed on the soil.

It is likely a proposal will come out in a few weeks to house 1,500 young male Asylum Seekers the MOJ have not yet published any info.

Cllr Tattersley – Stated there are three prisons currently under planning applications. Areas are Lancashire, Leicestershire, and Buckinghamshire.

Cllr Coverdale – Stated One prison was turned down, it went to appeal, and they were told that if they tweaked the Highways part of it, then it would be approved.

Cllr Denman – Stated how do we stay ahead? when is the announcement. - Discussion on correct contact in Home Office to ask what exactly is happening.

Vote – Cllr Martin Smith to write to the Home Office.

Cllr A Stanger Proposed, Cllr Hammond seconded.

23/186

### **BRIDGE LIGHT**

Cllr A Stanger – Updated Council that the electrician is in contact with the undertakers, no quote received yet.

23/187

### **FINANCE**

Cllr R Stanger – Audit is due next month. Cllr R Stanger has received a book from the EALC to help with the Audit. Cllr R Stanger continues to work on this.

“Scribe” has sent a letter asking if we wish to continue using their software for our accounts this will at a cost of £560, we don’t currently use this software at the present moment, Cllr R Stanger’s suggested not to continue, Vote – Proposed by Cllr Martin Smith and seconded by Cllr Coverdale.

Unity Bank – 3 payments yet to be raised – issue with bank. Cllr R Stanger rectifying the following day.

Cllr R Stanger will continue to do the RFO role until a replacement is found.

Cllr Martin Smith address’s the audience regarding the current position open for RFO and to please let the council know if anyone is interested in taking on this role.

23/188

### **PLANNING**

**Reference: 23/00274/HH & 23/00275/LBC**

Proposal: Proposed replacement of existing damaged roof tiles, render, windows, and doors to exterior of granary; proposed conversion of upper floor to living space, alterations to ceiling, works to wall timber boarding, lath & plaster, replacement of floor slab (including installation of underfloor heating), staircase, creation of shower room, and addition of services to interior of granary; proposed replacement of wall to garden, hardstanding and patio edge to exterior of Brent Hall.

Location: Brent Hall, Brent Hall Road, Finchingfield

**NO OBJECTION**



**Reference: 23/00299/HH**

Proposal: Single storey side extension

Location: Hylands, Bardfield Road, Finchingfield

**NO OBJECTION**

**Reference: 23/00237/FUL**

Proposal: Change of use of barn to residential dwelling with alterations & extensions.

Location: Ashwell Hall Farm, Ashwell Hall Road, Walthams Cross

**NO OBJECTION**

**Reference: 23/00171/FUL**

Proposal: Proposed stable block and access

Location: Land Between The Haven And The Nurseries, Bardfield Road, Finchingfield.

**ONGOING DISCUSSION-DETERMINATION NOT REACHED**

**Reference: 23/00160/HH**

Proposal: Retrospective planning application for change of use of existing outbuilding to residential annexe.

Location: Brook House, Duck End, Finchingfield

**NO OBJECTION**

**ITEMS FROM COUNCILLORS TO BE ADDED TO THE NEXT AGENDA.**

**23/189**

- Kings Coronation
- Twenty's Plenty Essex
- Hill Update
- Finchingfield Bridge update
- Finance committee report
- CHE Specific
- Planning

*Councillors are asked to inform the clerk of any items by 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023.*

**23/190**

**NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL:** The next meeting of Finchingfield Parish Council will take place at Cornish Hall End Village Hall on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023 commencing at 7.30pm. The Chairman thanked everybody for attending and declared the meeting closed at 8.56pm

Signed: .....Chairman

Date: .....