

# FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

## REPRESENTING FINCHINGFIELD AND CORNISH HALL END



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

Present: Cllr Martin Smith (Chairman)  
Cllr R Stanger  
Cllr A Stanger  
Cllr Coverdale  
Cllr Hammond  
Cllr Gordon  
Cllr Strange  
Cllr G Butland (BDC)  
Cllr P Tattersley (BDC)  
Kate Raymond (Clerk)

In Attendance: Members of the Public: 12

**23/191** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received from Cllr Denman and Cllr Duffin.

**23/192** **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

None

**23/193** **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Acceptance of the minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023, signed by the Chairman.

**23/194** **WETHERSFIELD AIRBASE STATEMENT & UPDATE FROM CLLR BUTLAND**

Cllr Butland stated he was addressing the meeting as Braintree District Council leader. Cllr Butland stated that around two weeks ago he asked Braintree District officers to start preparing for what might be a legal challenge against the Home Office if plans at that stage are to house Asylum seekers at Wethersfield Airbase came to fruition. At that stage both James Cleverly and Cllr Butland made it quite clear that it was an unsuitable place to house Asylum seekers for several reasons. Cllr Butland stated Over the last fortnight Braintree District officers have done a tremendous job putting together the witness statements that would be required, details of planning issues that would need to be raised and photographs and videos of actions that had been taken place on and around Wethersfield Airbase. Cllr Butland stated that his morning the Chief Executive

had a phone call with the Home Office, and BDC have at long last received a response to their letter that was sent over 10 days ago regarding what the Home Office plans were, BDC understand there is to be a public announcement made tomorrow. That then enabled BDC with the work that they had done and working with the Barrister to decide that BDC were now in a position to seek to take action against the Home Office. Cllr Butland reads the latest statement released from BDC that afternoon, the statement is also available on the BDC website.

Cllr Martin Smith – Thanks Cllr Butland for his statement and update on the situation. Cllr Martin Smith asks if the Asylum Centre is for processing, or station of. Also is it correct the Home Office cannot do anything until the injunction has been fought.

Cllr Butland – Stated that the asylum Centre would not be a detention centre, and they will be free to come and go, until a decision is made regarding their status. Cllr Butland stated it is his understanding they would stay on site for around 6 months until they have either been granted asylum or not, however this has not come from the Home Office. Cllr Butland stated the Home Office will continue to prepare the site but have made assurances that it is unlikely that any asylum seekers will be housed on the site before the injunction is heard, the injunction should be heard within 7 days.

Member of the public – Stated that BDC have said they would keep residents informed, Cllr Butland replies stating he has had over 250 e-mails and has managed to reply to all individually, also stated BDC will keep residents informed by updating their website. Cllr Butland stated he is also in contact with every Parish Council, and other local groups.

Cllr Coverdale stated to Cllr Butland of a previous case regarding the Home Office and an injunction in similar circumstances. – Short discussion.

Cllr Butland – States he has authorised expenditure for legal costs.

Cllr Butland – Stated if the site would have been for a detention Centre it would have been more difficult to argue. – Short discussion.

Cllr Gordon - Asks if the injunction is to slow the process or stop it.

Cllr Butland states the injunction ceases everything so it goes to a hearing within the high Court, BDC would be present in court putting their case forward, and an individual judge will determine.

Member of the public raises health concerns and asks have the asylum seekers been vaccinated?

Cllr Butland – States he wouldn't like to speculate, there are issues that as a council have been raised. Where is the medical support for the asylum seekers? there are two companies that are engaged by the government to run such establishments one of the companies being Serco, they would have to provide Health facilities.

Cllr Butland wants to assure that BDC are doing everything they can to represent the very strong views and will continue to work hard.

Cllr Martin Smith Thanks Cllr Butland for his statement and time.

23/195

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

Member of the public asks was FPC included in the consultation process? Can FPC be included in all correspondence relating to the Wethersfield Airbase.

Cllr Martin Smith states that he has been looking at the parish the airbase sits in. The co-ordination is going ahead as Cllr Butland has stated, and Finchingfield are to be included in everything that goes on.

23/196

### **CLERKS REPORT**

The Clerk stated that a majority of the correspondence in March has been in relation to Wethersfield Airbase and the potential plans by the Home Office. FPC's response raising concerns was submitted to the Home Office along with responses from other local Parish's. BDC released a statement late afternoon just before the meeting that has been read out by Cllr Butland. Enquiries from Essex Highways in respect of the bridge are ongoing, however, everything is on hold until a decision is reached following the planning application for the Bridge. The Clerk stated contact with an auditor has been made regarding the upcoming internal Audit, quote received, council to vote. The Street cleansing agreement is to be agreed and signed off.

23/197

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

Cllr Tattersley – Stated he was aware tonight's meeting would mainly focus on the current issue with regard to Wethersfield Airbase and Finchingfield bridge. He stated he does continue to send information through relating to any matters which he believes would be useful, and also stated if there is anything anybody would like then to contact him.

23/198

### **FINCHINGFIELD BRIDGE UPDATE**

Cllr Martin Smith stated Cllr A Stanger and himself met two construction engineers and Paul Crick the head of Essex County Council where they walked around the village showing the daily flow of traffic. Cllr Martin Smith stated we will not receive any further news on the bridge until the middle of June, however Cllr Martin Smith will call another meeting regarding the bridge once he has had further discussion with Mr Crick and his team, as there were two concerns raised by them. Firstly, that if a weight restriction was put on the bridge, it would be put at 3 tonnes and therefore that would mean nobody above a small van would be able to go across the bridge which would be

very worrying. Cllr Martin Smith stated the argument was that if a bigger weight restriction was put on then they will not be able to police it. The only way you can put a weight restriction on is if it is a low one which would be very damaging in the longer term. The second point was, should they go ahead with the new bridge, Paul Crick and his team listened to Cllr A Stanger and Cllr Martin Smith regarding a hump back and a hump back could be on their plans, and thirdly the timing, it would take less than 10 months, as little as 5 months. Paul Crick stated he understood the time taken to do it would be very damaging.

Cllr Martin Smith stated that with regards to the timing of the project, it has been put back to September, however they think that is unlikely, and ideally if we could have 5 months from January, if it went ahead that would be the best outcome.

The engineers stated the bridge is unsafe, we haven't got all documentation on this, as Essex Highways are completing further enquiries, reports and monitoring, however if the bridge is unsafe, we have to be very careful as a Parish Council opposing something in case something was to happen in the future to one of our parishioners.

Cllr Martin Smith stated he will call another meeting regarding the bridge once the Parish Council have more information, as it needs much further discussion, and is aware of the passion regarding this that is in the village.

**23/199**

#### **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Cllr Coverdale stated we need to formally agree the Terms of reference that has been jointly prepared by Wethersfield and Finchingfield Parish Councils.

Proposed -Cllr Martin Smith, Seconded – Cllr A Stanger.

**23/200**

#### **UNESCO – HERITAGE APPLIATION**

To be discussed at the next meeting.

**23/201**

#### **B1057**

Cllr A Stanger – Stated that residents are finding it very difficult to get across the B1057, particularly the elderly residents walking from Stephen Marshall Avenue, this is due to the traffic and the speed of the traffic. Cllr A Stanger proposes that a zebra crossing is put in at the bottom of the gate at the Village Hall. Cllr A Stanger would like Cllr Denman to take this proposal to the Essex Highways panel meeting.

Short discussion between councillors on where the zebra crossing should go as there are rules as to where a crossing can go.

Cllr Martin Smith – Approved in principle.

Proposed – Cllr Hammond, Seconded Cllr A Stanger.

Cllr A Stanger raises a second issue regarding parking at the top of the Hopgrounds on the corner of the road. Suggested double yellow lines.

Cllr Martin Smith – Add to Cllr Denman’s issues to take forward to the Essex Highway’s panel.

Proposed Cllr A Stanger, Seconded Cllr R Stanger

**23/202**

### **ESSEX HIGHWAYS**

Clerk stated the two day road closure in May will not go ahead due to ongoing enquires regarding the bridge.

**23/203**

### **CHE SPECIFIC**

Cllr Strange – There is an additional cost for the gate for the entrance to the playing field of £973.00 Cllr Strange discussing possible sliding gate.

Proposed Cllr Martin Smith, Seconded Cllr Gordon

Council agree on additional cost.

Village Sign – Strong feeling amongst residents to have a sign.

Cllr Coverdale – Stated the Finchingfield sign was donated, suggested possibly someone generous in CHE may donate.

Cllr Martin Smith – The cost of a new sign is around £5,000 - £8,000 Cllr Martin Smith suggested a solution of fundraising/donations – will look at how to fund.

Member of the public suggested CHE residents obtain a design from someone locally to produce the sign.

**23/204**

### **PLAY EQUIPMENT INSPECTION**

Play Equipment inspection to take place in May 2023 at CHE and Finchingfield. Once Rospa have completed reports and sent to the Clerk, Cllr Gordon to check.

**23/205**

### **FLOODING ISSUES**

Cllr Strange – Stated had been onto the Highways system online, and stated Highways attended quickly, but

Cllr Gordon/Cllr Martin Smith/Cllr Strange – short discussion on flooding at the paddock around Tinkers green, Farmer trenched the field, this made a significant difference. Willowmead, Cornish Hall End - Drain may be blocked.

Cllr Martin Smith – Stated he will speak to the Farm manager of Tinkers Green Farm to discuss further.

Cllr Coverdale/Cllr Strange – discussion on FPC possibly putting in a complaint into Essex Highways – to comment if action has not been taken.

Cllr Coverdale – Wethersfield Road and Mill Lane continuation onto Vicarage Road. - Joint discussion where the flooding is at its worst.

Cllr A Stanger suggested writing to Cllr Lee Scott at Essex Highways.

Cllr Martin Smith –To write a letter to Cllr Lee Scott at Essex Highways regarding local flooding issues. Cllr Graham Butland stated he will help and forward on the letter.

### **TWENTY'S PLENTY ESSEX**

**23/206**

Council is in support -Item to be moved to the next meeting for further discussion.

### **KINGS CORONATION**

**23/207**

Cllr A Stanger – No official plans for Finchingfield – relaxed approach.

Cllr Strange – CHE have decided not to have a fete due to poor response – short discussion.

Cllr Martin Smith to write a piece for the Villager magazine regarding the coronation.

Cllr Hammond to discuss with all local pubs in Finchingfield.

Cllr Strange to discuss Coronation with The Horse and Groom pub in CHE.

**23/208**

### **FINCHINGFIELD VILLAGE HALL**

Cllr Martin Smith and Brian Patience have discussed the Village Hall.  
Brian Patience is now the Chairman of the Sportsfield Trust.

Discussion on how the Village Hall is not fit for purpose. The Village Hall is a 1930's building, has no insulation and several ongoing issues including damp. Committee has decided to send out a flyer to all residents explaining the issues and to get some feedback, asking residents whether to refurbish the existing hall or to rebuild the Village Hall on the same site or elsewhere. The first step is to gauge interest on having a new facility, then looking at funding for a new Village Hall, Mr Patience in contact with people involved in the funding process, looking at several options. This is a process that can take a few years.

Cllr Martin Smith – CHE Village Hall was a great success with fantastic facilities. Finchingfield Village Hall is not fit for purpose. Cllr Martin Smith asks if the survey can be done over the next couple of months.

23/209

**FINCHINGFIELD PRIMARY ACADEMY TREE PLANTING**

Cllr Martin Smith & Cllr Denman took 30 trees to Finchingfield Primary Academy School, Cllr Martin Smith suggested the children may like to plant the trees themselves so they can see them grow over the years as the children live locally. Cllr A Stanger to assist the children, and employees from Suregreen. John Warner to provide 30 tree protectors for planting.

23/210

**STREET CLEANSING AGREEMENT**

Agreed - Cllr Martin Smith to sign.

23/211

**INTERNAL AUDITOR**

Cllr R Stanger discussing what is needed for the audit.  
Ann Wood to be appointed as Internal Auditor. Quote discussed and approved.  
Vote – Proposed Cllr R Stanger, Seconded Cllr A Stanger.

23/212

**FINANCE**

Cllr R Stanger – Discussing payments, to be paid and what has been paid.  
Accept finance payments and report.  
Proposed Cllr Strange, Seconded Cllr Hammond

Cllr R Stanger – Community defibrillator parts replaced.

Cllr Coverdale – Barclays bank have been in contact - Cllr Coverdale has confirmed the accounts will not be used and they are to be closed.

Cllr Martin Smith – Cllr Gordon to become a signatory for Unity bank, and stated FPC are looking for an RFO.

23/213

**PLANNING**

**Reference: 23/00171/FUL**

Proposal: Proposed stable block and access

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

**Short discussion between all councillors.  
Cllr Martin Smith Proposed a Vote  
Result - 5 for 1 against. DETERMINATION – NO OBJECTION**

23/214

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

- Kings Coronation
- Twenty's Plenty Essex
- UNESCO Heritage application
- Finchingfield Bridge update
- Finance – Annual Audit
- CHE Specific
- Planning

*Councillors are asked to inform the clerk of any items by 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023.*

**NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL:** The next meeting of Finchingfield Parish Council will take place at Finchingfield Village Hall on Tuesday, 25<sup>TH</sup> April 2023 commencing at 7.30pm. The Chairman thanked everybody for attending and declared the meeting closed at 8.54pm.

Signed: .....Chairman

Date: .....