



**FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**  
**REPRESENTING FINCHINGFIELD AND CORNISH HALL END**

**To Stuart Froud and Clive Woodruff**

Essex Highways  
Essex County Council  
PO Box 11  
County Hall  
Chelmsford  
Essex  
CM1 1QH

19<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Dear Stuart and Clive,

Thank you very much for meeting with the Parish Council last Tuesday. As far as I am aware this was the first meeting with Highways and the Finchingfield Parish Council since the Planning Permission to rebuild the Bridge was sought. These meetings are important for both sides to understand the separate perspectives.

You called me out on a personal changing of attitude. You were right to do so. When I met you both with Paul Crick in March at the pond, I had previously had discussions with two of the three previous Chairmen and their view was a new bridge was inevitable and my job was to get the right process in place as quickly as possible. Since then, I have been persuaded of two important things. Firstly, you have never shown written proof that the bridge was weak and needed rebuilding and secondly a new bridge was not only disastrous in the construction phase but unwanted by the village in any case. A new bridge, wider, flatter, and stronger will encourage the scourge of our village - huge trucks - to rumble through the centre causing damage to the infrastructure and reducing the centre of the village to be a thoroughfare not a pretty thriving special place for our community to welcome visitors.

So yes, this Chairman has changed his stance. Unless you can prove that the bridge is too weak for local traffic and local service use and that it cannot be strengthened, then the Finchingfield Parish Council resolves to oppose the planning permission application. It also will not engage with the Highways in having holes dug on the Green in October. A temporary bridge may be necessary if the bridge is to be rebuilt but of no consequence if that rebuild is not necessary.

On further investigation of council websites, it is quite common practice for village bridges to be given environmental weight restrictions from three tonnes to eighteen tonnes depending on circumstances. This allows for all local traffic like school busses, ambulances, fire engines, waste collection trucks and all essential access vehicles to use the bridge. This would seem entirely appropriate for Finchingfield.

You also said you would check the status of the steel plate that lies on the bridge which was put in by the Americans to strengthen the bridge.

Yours sincerely,

**Jonathan Martin Smith**  
**Parish Councillor and Chairman of Finchingfield Parish Council**