

FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING FINCHINGFIELD AND CORNISH HALL END



Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at Finchingfield Village Hall on Tuesday 26th September 2023 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Martin-Smith (Chairman), Cllr A. Stanger, Cllr R. Stanger, Cllr Duffin, Cllr Hammond, Cllr Braithwaite, Cllr Butland (ECC) Cllr Staines (BDC), Cllr Ault (BDC), K. Raymond (Parish Clerk) and Kevin B. Money (RFO). There were also 3 members of the public present.

088/2023 Chairman's welcome. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Cllr Martin-Smith stated that an EGM will be held on Tuesday 24th October at 7.30pm at Finchingfield Village Hall regarding the Asylum Centre at Wethersfield Airbase.

089/2023 Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr Warner & Cllr Strange

090/2023 Co-option: To consider co-opting a candidate onto Finchingfield Parish Council to fill the vacancy. This item is deferred.

091/2023 To receive Members Declaration of Interest and dispensations in items on the agenda.

Cllr Hammond disclosed an interest on point 102/2023

Cllr Martin Smith gave consent for Cllr Hammond to take part in discussion.

092/2023 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 25th. July 2023. **All Agreed**

093/2023 WASC Contribution from Finchingfield Parish Council

Cllr Martin Smith asks Andrew Hull (WASC Chairman) to provide councillors with a statement on what the Finchingfield contribution of £2,000 will be going towards. Cllr Hull provides councillors with information on various reports and surveys regarding the safety at Wethersfield Airbase & the importance to analyse and critique previous reports done.

Further discussions between councillors and District councillors around the concern regarding the safety of the site, costs, and the potential impact on the neighbourhood plan.

Council agrees to release £2,000 of the earmarked reserve amount to WASC.

Proposed Cllr Duffin Seconded Cllr Hammond. All Agreed

094/2023 Public Participation Session

Member of the public stated the long term plan of what to do at Wethersfield Airbase is yet to be decided. Raised concerns following a recent visit to the Asylum Centre. Stated it is the community's responsibility to take care of the asylum seekers currently being housed at the Wethersfield Airbase, the community have a duty of care to our residents, raising concerns over mental health and the importance of providing English lessons and other activities/help to keep the Asylum seekers occupied. Also stated that this should be addressed by the Parish Council, Cllr Martin Smith states that the EGM meeting to be held on 24th October will be to put forward a plan. A member of the public states that BDC should provide some of the funding that is coming from the Home Office to help facilitate helping the Asylum seekers. Also states that residents are not well informed by the Home Office.

095/2023 Report from the District / County Councillor

Cllr Butland confirms that BDC has not received any funding from the Home Office, however discussions have been had with the Home Office, stated it is likely there will be a 25% payment based on 400 beds by the end of October. Cllr Butland makes it very clear that BDC have no idea what the funding will be allowed to be spent on and what the restrictions will be, this is decided by the Home Office. Also states that the funding is not just available to BDC, and in respect of Mental Health Services, this is covered by Essex County Council Adult Social Care, therefore all funding coming to BDC is available to all local partners. Cllr Butland states that the Judicial Review hearing

Signed

31st October 2023

J. Martin-Smith – Chairman

will take place on 31st October & 1st November, also states there has been an increase in funding for legal costs to £300,000. Further discussions between a member of the public, councillors & Cllr Butland regarding the current situation at the Wethersfield Airfield site, Cllr Butland stated how complicated the situation is. Cllr Butland is clear that BDC are not to take on any responsibilities for the Asylum seekers, it is the responsibility of the Home Office within the site, a member of the public states the community has a duty of care & suggested that services be put in place for the Asylum seekers, for example English lessons. Cllr Braithwaite agrees, stating there needs to be a focus and activities available on site, states it is in our own interest to make the site more pleasant.

Cllr Martin Smith states this will be discussed further at the EGM on 24th October 2023.

Cllr Ault stated that West Lindsay have put an enforcement notice to stop any building work on the site, states he has written to the Home Office regarding his concerns over the safety of the West Lindsay site, Cllr Ault has received a response explaining that the safety concerns will be put right, however there is no proof this has been done, or will be done, there is no process to check this. Following onto the Wethersfield Airfield site, raising questions as to why we can't put a stop to anymore Asylum seekers entering the site until we fully understand the Home Office plan and what is happening on the site.

Cllr Butland states, this is Crown land, after following legal advice an enforcement notice will not be enforceable. Stating the situation is very different as it is Crown Land. Cllr Butland states the importance of continuing the fight to prove this is not a class Q situation. Further discussions between Cllr Ault & Cllr Butland regarding the land at Wethersfield, this land is crown land, not an ordinary piece of land and BDC are not aware of the terms of the lease.

Cllr Martin Smith states interesting points have been raised, brings discussions to an end and stated we need further information.

Cllr Butland discusses road closures over the next month, due to the fixing of potholes, these road closures can be found on the Essex County Council website. Also stated the local government Boundary Commission is now considering the new Essex County Council division of boundaries, the first view should be known by the end of November, everyone will then have an opportunity between the 28th November & 19th February to comment on this, the final new boundaries for the county divisions will be in June 2024. The proposal put forward by Essex County Council would mean that this area, would be in with the Hedingham division and the split with Great Notley would cease & Great Notley would move in with Braintree West. There will be two Parish's in Saffron Walden that will be moved to the Braintree division, one being Great Sampford, and Black Notley will also move into this area.

Cllr Staines gave a comprehensive report which can be found at <https://www.finchingfield-pc.gov.uk/agendas-and-minutes/>

Following on from Cllr Staines report, Cllr Ault states they would welcome a discussion with Cllr Butland regarding concerns over the weight & width of HGV vehicles traveling along the B1053 between Wethersfield & Finchingfield, mentioning recent damage to Finchingfield bridge. Cllr Butland stated he doesn't believe you are able to impose a width restriction on "B" roads, stated no organisation enforces weight limits in Essex. A member of the public mentioned they had seen a sign in Sudbury which stated unsuitability for "weight & width". Further discussions regarding signage, and how this can be implemented in this area.

Cllr Duffin gives thanks to Cllr Ault, Cllr Staines & Cllr Butland for all their hard work, stated the Parish Council really appreciate their support.

096/2023 Finance

a. To receive the Bank reconciliations as at 30th September 2023

Councillors noted the Bank reconciliations as at 30th September 2023

b. To receive the comparison of Actual to Budgeted for 2023/24

Councillors noted the comparison of Actual to Budgeted for 2023/24

c. To approve the payment of Accounts for August & September 2023 and to agree a transfer of funds to meet the Parish Council financial requirements. Proposed Cllr R Stanger Seconded Cllr Hammond **All Agreed**

097/2023 Audit 2022/2023

Councillors noted the report from the external auditor.

098/2023 Budget for 2024/2025

RFO asks councillors to start discussions regarding the anticipated expenditure for 2024/2025

099/2023 To receive any Grant Applications.

Signed

31st October 2023

J. Martin-Smith – Chairman

Councillors discuss & agree the grant applications from the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme & the CHE Churchyard & Church clock. Proposed Cllr Martin Smith. Seconded Cllr Duffin. **All Agreed**

100/2023 FPC/Policies

Cllr Martin Smith proposed and Cllr R Stanger seconded to accept the FPC policies. **All Agreed**

101/2023 Section 106 Money

Cllr A Stanger stated she would like to propose a BMX/Cycle track in the village to be used for anyone of any age & ability. Cllr Martin Smith stated he would like to record views of projects and the passion from Cllr A Stanger for a BMX track, Cllr Martin Smith stated we need to consider the cost, and it is the duty of the Parish Council to make sure other projects are not excluded. Further discussions between councillors. Cllr A Stanger provides further information regarding the BMX track & also reads a letter from a local resident. Cllr Martin Smith stated we cannot earmark £60,000 for a BMX track until we have more information, Cllr R Stanger stated the current quote for the proposed BMX track is £120,000, and the remaining £60,000 would be raised through grants. Cllr Hammond stated villages would very much like a BMX track, recent comments have been made on social media. Cllr Duffin raises the question of are the villagers aware of how much this is going to cost? Stated he has not seen a quote, or plans, this is a large sum of money & it is the duty of the Parish Council to ensure it is properly spent. Further discussions between councillors. Cllr R Stanger states a local architect has been used, the Finche Group are currently progressing with this application and have paid £700 for a pre application in May 2023. Also stated BDC planning are happy with the plans, currently Finche group are funding this but would like to hand over to the Parish Council if this project is agreed.

Cllr Martin Smith states he would like more quotes obtained, more work done, along with investigation into the maintenance contract. Cllr Martin Smith asks Cllr A Stanger to circulate to councillors all costings, quotes, detailing the maintenance of the track. Also stated that he would like to vote at the next meeting as to whether the section 106 money is to be spent on a BMX track.

Councillors discuss other projects, possible Community Hall, however questions raised around having to change the terms of the section 106 money if it was not spent on outdoor sports facilities at the Finchingfield playing fields. Cllr Martin Smith states a vote will be made at the next meeting.

102/2023 Forest School

Councillors discuss the length of the lease, Cllr Martin Smith asks Cllr Hammond to liaise with the Clerk to finalise the wording in the lease agreement, this will be drawn up by the Clerk.

Proposer Cllr Martin Smith Seconded Cllr R Stanger. **All agreed.**

103/2023 War Memorial Cleaning Grant

Cllr R Stanger has completed a grant form for funding, the grant will not fund the full amount, stated we would need another £1,750 from the Parish Council. Also stated we should hear an outcome from the grant form if funding is approved by the end of December beginning of January.

104/2023 Finchingfield Bridge

Cllr Martin Smith reads out a letter which he has written to Essex Highways following a recent closed meeting between the Parish Council and the technical officers from Essex Highways regarding Finchingfield bridge. Cllr Martin Smith states it is very important that this issue is cleared up as it has gone on for too long. Cllr Braithwaite wishes to make a note regarding the meeting with Essex Highways, stating that she felt the behaviour of the technical officers was appalling, and overall unhappy with their conduct. Also stated Essex Highways signed a report in 2010 recognising & confirming that there was a metal plate in the bridge, however at the meeting with the Parish Councillors the technical officers denied there was any metal plate. Cllr Braithwaite raises concerns in respect of having to work with the officers regarding the bridge following their behaviour at the recent meeting. Further discussions continue between councillors, a member of the public thanks the Chairman & Parish Council for the recent letter sent to Highway's confirming the position and thoughts of the residents.

105/2023 Finchingfield Christmas Tree

Cllr Martin Smith would like to start a working group. A member of the public involved in discussions regarding the positioning of the Christmas tree suggests to put the tree outside of the pond on the green attached to the railings, as putting the tree in the pond involves a lot of work and this is all depending on having the right resources. Council discusses the potential of putting a cylinder into the ground similar to Wethersfield, a member of the public advised speaking to Kerry from Kerry Landscapes.

council discuss further and suggest Cllr Hammond to start a working group Cllr Martin Smith to discuss with Cllr Hammond.

106/2023 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Duffin stated there will be flyers distributed over this weekend providing dates for drop in sessions at

Signed

31st October 2023

various Village Halls which will help provide more details on what a neighbourhood plan is. Following this there will be questionnaires going out to the community, this will help establish what the community would like, so whatever is done in respect of the neighbourhood plan it is what the residents want. Cllr Duffin asks for any volunteers to help distribute leaflet, councillors agree to help.

Cllr Martin Smith asks to vote for more time to continue the meeting as the meeting had reached the 9.30pm mark. Proposer Cllr Martin Smith Seconded Cllr R Stanger. All agreed.

107/2023 Community Planting Working Group

Cllr Braithwaite stated the planting group have applied for a grant and have also obtained quotes. Planting around the pond will be put on hold until the fencing has been done. Stated that following a visit to look at trees, they have found a Tulip tree that they would like to reserve at a cost of £500 which also includes two seasons worth of watering.

Vote to reserve a Tulip tree- Proposed Cllr Martin Smith Seconded Cllr A Stanger. **All agreed.**

108/2023 New fencing around the pond and Tea room

Cllr Braithwaite stated a quote from Bell Fencing has been received for the two fencing areas. A local resident has kindly agreed to finance the new fencing outside Winners Tearooms, however until the issue with the bridge is resolved, the new fencing around the pond is currently on hold. A plaque will not be displayed.

109/2023 Overgrown Hedge on 30mph sign Wethersfield Road & Footpath/Bridal path alongside Wincey Chase & proposed Solar lighting in the area close to Wincey Chase

Cllr Martin Smith raises concerns from a local resident regarding the lack of lighting in this area, Cllr Martin Smith asks the council to agree to purchase Solar lights as a starting point, Councillors agree to look at motion activated solar lighting. All agreed.

Vote to cut back hedge growth at a quote of £500. Proposed Cllr A Stanger Seconded Cllr Duffin. **All agreed.**

110/2023 CCTV

Cllr Duffin stated that this was possibly an option if the section 106 funding could be used, however the section 106 funding cannot be used for this.

111/2023 Final decision on Finchingfield Parish Council Website

Council discusses using a local resident that is very knowledgeable in the area of websites, Cllr Martin Smith ask the Clerk to contact a local resident for technical assistance.

112/2023 The Greedy Duck

Cllr R Stanger states he has been in contact with a local business owner and Essex Highways in respect of obtaining a key to the Greedy Duck to have access to switch the light on which is above the arch way & to also decorate the window with art work displays, unfortunately Cllr R Stanger has not had a response.

113/2023 CHE Specific

Cllr Martin Smith defers this point to the next meeting.

114/2023 Twenty's Plenty Essex & Traffic calming measures

Cllr Martin Smith defers this point to the next meeting.

115/2023 Planning – To agree a response to the following applications;

Reference: 23/02140/HH - Croft House , Spains Hall Road, Finchingfield

Proposal: Single storey side extension

COMMENT: NO OBJECTION

Reference: 23/02081/ADV - Land West Of, Bardfield Road, Finchingfield

Proposal: Installation of 2.No. Flags, 2No. Now selling stack signs, 2No. Welcome to s tack signs No. Availability stack sign, 1No. Sign attached to existing V board

COMMENT: NO OBJECTION

Reference: 23/02243/TPOCON - Parsonage Farm, Vicarage Road, Finchingfield

Proposal: Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area: 1No Conifer Remove tree to near ground level - 1No Boxelder maple - 1.5m crown reduction - 1No Ash - 2m crown reduction

COMMENT: NO OBJECTION

Reference: 23/02274/TPOCON - 15 The Causeway, Finchingfield, Essex
Proposal: Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation
T1 Apple Tree- Reduce crown height by up to 2.5 m and cut sides up to 1.5m
H1 Assorted trees - Cut overhanging branches back to boundary of garden
COMMENT: NO OBJECTION

116/2023 Closure of the meeting

The next meeting of Finchingfield Parish Council will take place at Finchingfield Village Hall on Tuesday 31st October 2023 commencing at 7.30pm.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having considered and determined all items of business at 9.45pm and thanked everyone for attending.