

FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING FINCHINGFIELD AND CORNISH HALL END



Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at Finchingfield Village Hall on Tuesday 31st October 2023 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Martin-Smith (Chairman), Cllr A. Stanger, Cllr R. Stanger, Cllr Duffin, Cllr Braithwaite, Cllr Butland (ECC) K. Raymond (Parish Clerk) and Kevin B. Money (RFO). There were also 9 members of the public present.

117/2023 Chairman's welcome. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chairman thanked Librarian Linda Turner for all her hard work over 40 years distributing recycling sacks, and the institution that she set up in the Guild Hall, the Parish Council are very thankful. Secondly the new Finchingfield village sign has been erected in the village, the Chairman thanks Cllr Strange and his team for organising this and arranging the new post for the village sign donated by Cllr Warner. The Chairman also gives thanks to Zuleika Thomas for her splendid work in refurbishing the village sign.

The Chairman states it has been a huge privilege being in charge of the parish council for the past 18 months, however due to circumstances of hoping to move home soon, the Chairman stated he believes it is the right time to hand over the Chairmanship at the next meeting, however, will remain on the council. The Chairman gives thanks to all councillors for their hard work, stating the Parish Council have a very good team. A new Chairman will be elected at the next meeting on 28th November 2023.

118/2023 Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr Warner, Cllr Hammond & Cllr Ault

119/2023 To receive Members Declaration of Interest and dispensations in items on the agenda. None received.

120/2023 Minutes of the previous meeting. To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 26th September 2023. **All Agreed**

121//2023 Public Participation Session

A member of the public would like to address a question to Cllr Butland, the Chairman stated all questions are to be directed to the Parish Council only. The question is regarding the current Judicial review regarding Wethersfield Airbase. Member of the public stated a number of residents attended, and it was mentioned by Alex Goodman KC that BDC should be pressed to issue an enforcement notice, stated that just because it is not enforceable is no reason not to issue one, stated Mr Goodman's point being it doesn't need to be enforceable and the government should comply regardless.

Member of the public asks the question will BDC issue an enforcement notice for the Wethersfield Asylum Centre. Cllr Martin Smith thanks the member of the public and noted their question.

A second member of the public states they were present at the Judicial review, stated the legal teams did extraordinary well in supporting the action to stop the Home Office at Wethersfield and Scampton, Stated BDC should have been Challenged to issue a notice on the basis that letters were sent out by the Home Office that they would seek a special development order to progress the development in the future, & also on that basis being in breach of planning regulations. states BDC should immediately issue an enforcement notice, asks Cllr Butland to support this action being taken. Cllr Martin Smith asks if the enforcement notice would mean that the Asylum Centre would have to close, a member of the public states it would mean the Home Office would have to stop work, and no form of development would be able to take place.

Cllr Martin Smith states it is not in the remit of Finchingfield Parish Council to comment on the actions that BDC should take. Stated Finchingfield Parish Council are against the Asylum centre.

A Member of the public thanks Cllr Martin Smith for his hard work over the past 18 months as Chairman.

Signed

Chairman

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122/2023 Report from the District / County Councillor

Cllr Butland states he is at the meeting as County Councillor not District Councillor. Following the questions raised in the public section Cllr Butland stated he can confirm there were discussions on Friday (27th Oct) & a note has been sent out to all BDC councillors from the Home Office saying that they were intending to table an order before parliament before Christmas. Cllr Butland stated he would be at the judicial review tomorrow (1st November) hoping to have a result tomorrow or very soon. Also confirmed work has completed on fixing the parapet on Finchingfield bridge, also stated the pot holes are still ongoing in respect of repairs and expressed how significant they are, specifically the pot holes through Great Sailing of which work should start on the 20th December.

123/23 Chairman to provide an update/statement on the Asylum Centre at Wethersfield Airbase

Cllr Martin Smith stated himself & Cllr Strange are still waiting to do a site visit – Clerk to chase. Cllr Duffin stated he has been told the site is becoming a lot noisier as numbers are increasing, there are plans that 400 will be reached by the end of the month. Cllr Martin Smith stated at some stage BDC will receive £3.500 per bed that is used on the site, the site is 75% in the Parish, the council intend to fight for some of the money provided from the Home Office.

124/2023 Finance

- a. To receive the Bank reconciliations as at 31st October 2023
Councillors noted the Bank reconciliations as at 31st October 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 October 2023 and to agree a transfer of funds to meet the Parish Council financial requirements. **Proposed Cllr Martin Smith Seconded Cllr R Stanger All Agreed**

125/2023 Budget for 2024/2025

RFO asks councillors to start discussions regarding the anticipated expenditure for 2024/2025. Discussions will start after agenda point 142/2023.

Cllr Martin Smith states he would like a finance committee set up to discuss the precept before the next meeting on 28TH November 2023.

126/2023 FPC/Policies

Cllr Martin Smith asks if all councillors have read/received and happy with the policies sent.

Proposed Cllr A Stanger, Seconded Cllr J Braithwaite to accept the FPC policies. All Agreed

127/2023 Finchingfield Bridge

Cllr Martin Smith stated works took place on 23rd & 24th October to fix the parapet and the result has been very good. It has been noted that in the recent letter from Essex Highways to residents, they have said that Finchingfield Parish Council have not given permission to carry out works on the Village green, stating that the Parish Council are requesting evidence that the bridge needs replacing. Cllr Martin Smith reads out part of the letter from Essex Highways to residents to confirm this. However, there has been no further correspondence following the Chairmans letter to Essex Highways dated 19th September 2023. Cllr Duffin stated that following the Essex Highways meeting with Councillors, they did state that further research was about to be completed, we should hear the outcome of this very soon, Cllr Martin Smith agrees. Councillors also agree to put forward a request to the Braintree Local Highways Panel for an environmental weight restriction on the bridge, with exemptions of local traffic.

128/2023 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Duffin stated that there has been a lot of progress recently, the 6 drop in meetings have been completed with a very modest and reasonable turn out. Stated we are now very close to finalising the proofs for the questionnaire that will be sent out to the community in Wethersfield & Finchingfield, it is likely these will be printed over the next week & distributed as quickly as possible. Cllr Duffin stated if there is time, he is hoping the Finchingfield questionnaire will be distributed with the Villager magazine. The questionnaire is to find out what the community wants, what is proposed and what resident's expectations are. Cllr Duffin asks for help distributing the questionnaire if it does not make the villager magazine in time. Cllr Martin Smith stated the Neighbourhood plan is a legal document and is worth doing properly. Cllr Martin Smith asks Cllr Butland, is there currently a great deal of work going into neighbourhood plans within the County and are they respected by the government in the way they

Signed

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should be? Cllr Butland states that several neighbourhood plans have been completed within the district and when planning applications come forward, they are part of the consideration regarding whether planning consent should be given, Cllr Martin Smith asks if not having a Neighbourhood plan may leave the community open? Cllr Butland confirms this and states that once the Neighbourhood plan is completed it goes to the district council & once approved it then becomes part of the planning procedure for any applications in that area, Cllr Butland states there is a lot of work involved but worth doing. Cllr Duffin stated he is extremely impressed with the expertise of the members that are currently working on the neighbourhood plan, noting that Great Bardfield, Toppesfield and others have also started neighbourhood plans. Cllr Duffin stated the idea of the survey is to ask the community what they would like to happen in the area, so it is very important the questionnaires are completed in order to feedback to members. Funding has come through from central government, & an application for more funding will be done in January. Cllr Strange stated the neighbourhood plan is well supported locally, and the drop in sessions went very well. Cllr Martin Smith thanks Cllr Strange & Cllr Duffin for all their efforts.

129/2023 Finchingfield Village Hall/Community Centre

Cllr Martin Smith stated the Parish Council needs to lead in the case of moving forward with a new Village Hall/Community Centre. Stated it is obvious that the village hall is not fit for purpose for a village that is growing in size & has a huge reputation. Cllr Martin Smith will Chair a Community Hall initiative, that consists of a member of the current village hall committee, and to look for more people involved that will help to drive this forward and will really appreciate a new community centre. Stated this is a long winded process that could take up to 10 years and may involve planning permission, & it is important to find funding/grants. Cllr Martin Smith stated he will address more at the next meeting regarding the new committee. **Proposed Cllr Duffin Seconded Cllr A Stanger. All agreed.**

130/2023 WASC Letter to BDC

Cllr Duffin discusses the letter that was sent from WASC to BDC regarding restoring the museum at RAF Wethersfield offering a positive project to the community & asking BDC to start the process of returning land ownership to a local organisation, stated Finchingfield Parish Council are being asked to also write a similar letter to BDC, councillors discuss further & agree to also write a letter to BDC. **Proposed Cllr Duffin Seconded Cllr R Stanger All agreed.**

131/2023 Section 106 Money

Cllr Martin Smith introduces guest speaker Rob Green to explain more regarding his knowledge, experience & the benefits on pump tracks. Rob Green introduces himself & his friend who is also experienced using BMX/pump tracks. Mr Green stated after initially posting a social media post regarding the existing pump track that is currently at the playing field and questions around who built it and re-building it, this followed with a conversation with Cllr Duffin who made Mr Green aware that the idea of a new BMX/pump track in the village has been put forward, and how important it was that someone with experience using BMX/pump tracks would be involved in the potential project & give their views to the council. Mr Green stated himself & his children all use BMX/pump tracks, the main BMX/pump track that they use is the track at Radwinter, however also uses other mountain biking tracks elsewhere being Braintree & Thetford. Mr Green stated there is a big difference in these tracks and their different needs. Cllr Martin Smith ask Mr Green "What would be the best track for our community, what would suit the village best - either a BMX or pump track?" Mr Green stated a BMX track like the track at Braintree would only appeal to the more experienced bikers, however if you look at other types of tracks that are hybrid with the combination of a pump track & BMX track this would appeal to many more people. Stated the gradients at the Braintree BMX track are quite high, it is more of a managed facility, however the track at Ely has a mixture of both, children using balance bikes, & mountain bikers, you would need a track that caters for all. Cllr Martin Smith states a hybrid track would be the best result. Further discussions on basic & experienced bike runs on a BMX/pump track, suggestions on a hybrid track that can offer basic and experienced runs. Cllr A Stanger states that planning permission has not yet been granted, however they are currently obtaining surveys to put in for planning also states they currently have a basic design & costing, Cllr A Stanger asks Mr Green & his friend if they would be prepared to join a working group to help take the proposal of a BMX/pump track forward, as people with biking experience are needed. Cllr R Stanger stated the plan was to build a track that covers all abilities. Stated, they have several builder's names, however Clark & Kent contractors have been recommended. A member from the Finche Community Group stated the youth of the village created the current pump track & 18 months ago the Parish Council approved a new pump track for the village. Since then the Finche Community group have been perusing a pump track for the village, an architect has been working with them along with the help of other local businessman. Cllr Martin Smith asks Cllr A Stanger & Cllr R Stanger to lead the working group, to include the Finche group & others with experience, & to also look

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further into other quotes from contractors.

Cllr Duffin stated he has visited the Radwinter track & and has had a conversation with the person behind the building of that pump track. They stated the importance of having experienced bike riders behind the design of a new BMX/pump track. Cllr Duffin stated he was given the names of who was involved in the building of the Radwinter pump track, this also includes the health & safety aspect/approval. Also stated the possibilities of looking at local involvement in terms of building, designing/creation & the importance of having the right people involved also that it should be a cost conscious decision. A Member of the public stated the Shriever family have offered to help & be involved. Cllr Martin Smith asks Cllr A Stanger to come back to the council with an update on progress.

Further discussions continue between councillors regarding planning & the size of the site.

Cllr Martin Smith states he would like councillors to vote in principle for the section 106 money to be put towards a pump track. Cllr Duffin asks for confirmation on whether the vote is for all the section 106 money to go towards the proposed pump track, Cllr Martin Smith confirms it is all section 106 money or as much of it is needed.

Proposed Cllr Martin Smith seconded Cllr Jacqui Braithwaite.

Cllr Duffin states he is currently against as there is an unrestricted budget. Would much prefer a proposition of the research group/Finche group continuing with the work, looking at what is required, also looking at funding to help contribute towards the BMX/pump track leaving some section 106 money available for other projects.

132/2023 Solar Energy

Cllr Duffin stated following a recent BALC meeting (Braintree Association of local Councils) which he attended, Cllr Jane Taylor gave a speech on solar energy. Cllr Duffin stated Essex County Council are responsible for this, however this is now being promoted by a district councillor the Chairman of White Colne Jane Taylor. Cllr Taylor is one of the leaders of the Colne Valley Community energy project, which is aiming to bring solar panels into the community with domestic storage, also possibly commercial but have at least one project up and running. Cllr Duffin stated that Cllr Jane Taylor is willing to come and discuss further with the Parish Council on how to bring solar energy into the community. Councillors agree. Cllr A Stanger raises concerns regarding the suitability due to the village having mostly listed buildings in the centre. Cllr Duffin confirms Cllr Taylor's brief will be addressing the whole of the parish also states finding out more information from the neighbourhood plan, whereby 50% of the houses are in the parish and 50% are on the outskirts. Cllr Duffin confirms it is mainly rooftop panels on houses which will be looked at first. Councillors agree to meet with Cllr Jane Taylor for a further discussion, Cllr Duffin to liaise with Cllr Jane Taylor.

133/2023 Parish Council Website

Clerk states she has been in contact with the host of the website regarding a support & maintenance package as there has never been one put in place. The host stated they would charge £60 per month (£10 per hour) along with an annual renewal charge of £180. The Clerk sent the contract from the host to councillors to read before the meeting. Cllr Duffin states he has had issues with his e-mails which is ongoing, clerk to look further into this. RFO confirmed that in 2023/2024 a budget of £500 was put aside, but with regard to the new contract from the Host & the cost of the renewal this would amount to an 80% increase. Further discussions between councillors, RFO and the Clerk. RFO states there is a mirrored website up and running behind the scenes which is a free website called e-voice.

Cllr Martin Smith asks to defer this agenda point & asks the Clerk to liaise with the RFO to investigate & look at alternatives with regard to a new website, also to address the e-mail issues.

134/2023 CCTV Finchingfield Pavilion & replacement of security light

Cllr R Stanger states there has been several incidents to the football nets at the playing field. Stated looking at CCTV with infra red that rotates at a cost of £190.00 plus VAT. Security lighting is also needed as the pavilion light doesn't currently work. Cllr R Stanger raises concerns how low the cable is that runs from the pavilion to the light. A new light would need to be fitted higher up to prevent any risk of it being potentially damaged, a security light is a good idea, however discussions needed on how to get an electric supply to it. Suggestion of purchasing the CCTV at 190.00 plus VAT & look to get a light fitted, higher up than the current fitting. **Proposed Cllr Strange Seconded Cllr Duffin, All agreed.**

135/2023 Purchase of new 5 aside football goals

Cllr R Stanger confirmed there is a demand for the goals, they are used regularly. Also stated the Finche group originally bought two sets of goals 6 years ago, one set for Finchingfield & the other for CHE. Cllr R Stanger confirms the cost is £240 for a pair of new goals, however due to the damage can claim from

the insurance up to £850. Cllr Martin Smith proposes the council put in a claim & purchase the goods with the insurance money as the council will be claiming for damaged property, councillors agree if the claim is unsuccessful then to go ahead & purchase the goods.

Proposed Cllr Strange Seconded Cllr A Stanger, All agreed.

136/2023 New fencing outside Winner's tearooms & around the bus stop

Cllr Strange confirms the new fence around this area will be erected on 11th December. Stated that phase 2 of this project is on hold until more is known regarding the potential bridge rebuild. Phase 1 was £19,000 and phase 2 slightly less. Cllr Strange asks the RFO in respect of funds what could be reserved for phase 2 for fencing around the pond. Cllr A Stanger confirms the second phase of fencing will cost around £15,000, RFO confirms at this time £7,500 can be reserved. Cllr Strange proposes Cllr R Stanger & Cllr A Stanger look into grants to be able to help fund the remaining cost of the fencing. Cllr Martin Smith asks RFO to reserve £8,000 for the second phase of fencing, RFO confirms this can be done. **Proposed Cllr Martin Smith Seconded Cllr Braithwaite, All agreed.**

137/2023 Appoint a handyman to carry out various repairs & maintenance around the village.

Cllr Strange states the village is in need of somebody local to help with handy work in Cornish Hall End & Finchingfield. Cllr A Stanger states she will speak to somebody that she has in mind. Cllr Duffin stated to look out for adverts, further discussion between councillors.

138/2023 Finchingfield Christmas Tree

Cllr Martin Smith stated Cllr Hammond is leading the working group and has been liaising with Mary Turley. As Cllr Hammond is not at the meeting, Mary Turley provides information with regards to the positioning of the Christmas tree. The tree will be placed on the green in a bucket, using guy ropes. The current issue is that there is no confirmed donation of a tree. Cllr Martin Smith states he may have a tree that he can donate, Cllr Martin Smith & Cllr Strange to follow up. Mary Turley confirms the date for the Christmas tree switch on will be on 9th December at 4.50pm, celebrations will take place from 5.00pm onwards, also stated the tree needs to go up on 2nd December.

139/2023 CHE Specific

- a) **Councillors to discuss & accept a quote for the CHE play equipment funded by section 106 money.** Cllr Strange talks through the quotes obtained, councillors discuss & agree quote B based on the play equipment provided & cost. **Proposed Cllr Braithwaite Seconded Cllr A Stanger. All agreed.**
- b) **Update on CHE Orchard.** Cllr Strange confirms that the Community Orchard has been accepted for a grant, stated just waiting for paperwork to arrive through the post from BDC.
- c) **Planned works to start on the CHE playing field gate by Kevin Gooch in February 2024.** Cllr Strange confirms he has been advised that work will start in February 2024, stated the Parish Council will be invoiced for 50% of the cost payable upfront, Cllr Martin Smith asked RFO to confirm this money can be earmarked.

140/2023 Community Planting Group

Cllr Braithwaite confirms that a Tulip tree was reserved, however it is a big commitment initially as it needs watering for two seasons. Cllr Duffin raises concerns over the height of a Tulip tree, Councillors discuss where to plant the tree, height, & spread of the tree. Cllr Braithwaite would like the views of the parishioners before making any final decision. Cllr Martin Smith questions if there is a way of seeing the tree virtually before it is planted to have a visual of how it would look on the village green. Cllr Martin Smith states himself & Cllr Braithwaite will liaise & discuss further the positioning of the tree over the next month. Cllr Strange states it would need to be ordered very soon to be planted in the winter. Cllr Martin Smith proposes to purchase the Tulip tree, **Proposed Cllr Martin Smith Seconded Cllr A Stanger. All agreed.**

141/2023 Planning – To agree a response to the following applications.

Reference: 23/02411/ELD

Application for a certificate of Lawfulness for an existing use of a cabin as a residential dwelling since December 2000. Annex at Champions, Bardfield Road, Finchingfield, CM7 4LJ. **COMMENT: NO OBJECTION**

Reference: 23/02550/TPOCON

Proposal: Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a conservation area: Goat WILLOW TREE (T2) Reduce it down to 4m high and 4m wide to ensure the tree stays safe & well.

Signed

Chairman

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Location: Brook House, Duck End, Finchingfield. **COMMENT: NO OBJECTION**

Reference: 23/02529/HH

Proposal: Erection of single story side & rear extensions with integral garage.

Location: Parsonage Farm, Vicarage Road, Finchingfield. **COMMENT: NO OBJECTION**

142/2023 Exclusions of the Public & Press

At 9.06pm Cllr Martin Smith thanks members of the public for attending and asks councillors to stay behind for further discussion on agenda point 125/23 the 2023/2024 budget.

143/2023 Closure of the meeting

The next meeting of Finchingfield Parish Council will take place at Cornish Hall End Village Hall on Tuesday 28th November 2023 commencing at 7.30pm.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having considered and determined all items of business at 9.20pm.