

FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING FINCHINGFIELD AND CORNISH HALL END



Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at Finchingfield Village Hall on Tuesday 30th January 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Strange (Chairman) Cllrs Martin-Smith, Cllr A. Stanger, Cllr R. Stanger, Cllr Duffin, Cllr Braithwaite, Cllr Warner, Cllr Hammond, Cllr Staines (BDC), Cllr Ault (BDC), Cllr Butland (ECC) and Kevin B Money (Parish Clerk & RFO) There were also 18 members of the public present.

001/2024 Chairman to welcome everyone to the meeting. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

002/2024 To accept the resignation of Mrs Kate Raymond as Parish Clerk to Finchingfield Parish Council with effect from 4th January 2024.

Councillors accept the resignation Mrs Kate Raymond as Parish Clerk. **All agreed.**

003/2024 To ratify the appointment of Mr Kevin B. Money following the HR interview as Parish Clerk & RFO to Finchingfield Parish Council with effect from 4th January 2024. All agreed. Clerk & HR Chairman have signed the employment contract.

004/2024 Apologies for Absence. None received.

005/2024 To receive Members Declaration of Interest and dispensations in items on the agenda. None received.

006/2024 Minutes of the previous meeting. To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 28th November 2023. The chairman signs the minutes. **All agreed.**

007/2024 Public Participation Session

Member of the public first stated they would like to mention and gives thanks to the late Jim Jervis, who was once a Parish Councillor and did a large amount of work for the village for many years.

Cllr Duffin stated he has had a conversation with Cllr Strange to arrange for a letter to be sent from the Parish Council to the Jervis family, to give thanks for all the hard work Mr Jervis did within the community, and how the village appreciated all that he did.

A Member of the public stated concern around the parking enforcement at weekends, as there is very little enforcement put in place He would like this passed on to BDC. Also stated they are still pushing for a 20mph limit but believes this should be throughout the village due to the huge increase in heavy traffic. Cllr Strange stated he has been in contact with Tom Cunningham regarding the Twenty's Plenty campaign. Member of the public stated the new fencing around the bus stop/outside Winners looks very nice, however raised concerns that there is no protection around the posts, specifically from grass strimmer's. Also raised concerns regarding the amount of dog fouling that is being left in the village, stated there should be more dog fouling notices put up.

008/2024 Essex County Councillors. Cllr G. Butland

Cllr Butland stated Essex County Council will be considering its budget on the 13th. February. The total gross expenditure for the County Council for next year will be £2.5bn pounds. Stated the 4 key area's the expenditure will go on are, Adult & Social Care at £881m, Education & lifelong learning including home school transport at £625m, the third area is on Children's Services at £367m, and lastly Highways and infrastructure at £148m. The Council will be raising council tax and the additional supplement for adult & children's social care. Also stated the issue of a potential weight restriction on Finchingfield bridge, Cllr Butland has been talking to ECC. If the Parish Council formally write a letter to himself, he will then put this forward to the LHP for consideration. Cllr Strange confirms this would be regarding the 7.5 tonne environmental weight restriction. Cllr R Stanger stated following Essex Highways putting forward a physical 3 tonne weight limit, concerns over how far a 7.5 tonne environmental weight restriction would get. Cllr Butland confirms he will support what the council put forward. Cllr Braithwaite asked will the

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weight restriction be enough to take this route off the Sat Nav? Cllr Martin Smith thanked Cllr Butland for discussing the weight restriction and supporting the Parish Council moving forward. Cllr Strange proposed to write a letter to Cllr Butland to be put forward to the LHP. Cllr Duffin agreed that a letter should be written putting forward a weight limit.

Proposed Cllr Strange Seconded Cllr Martin Smith. All Agreed.

009/2024 Report from the District County Councillors Cllr Staines & Cllr Ault.

Flooding issues - Marfleet & Hills development. Cllr A Stanger stated footpath 31 is now very difficult to walk on. Cllr A Stanger stated Highways have inspected the footpath and have noted its current state, it is on their list to work on.

Wethersfield Airbase – Dan Gascoyne has sent a letter back to the Home Office, further to the Home Office seeking to enable to stay on the site for 3 years plus. Cllr Staines & Cllr Ault stated the litter around the site has largely increased.

PAN Parish meeting on Monday 5th February- Topics for discussion, B1053, Wethersfield Airbase, weight restriction on Finchingfield Bridge, and spring break (discussion around preparations for the area as it is a tourist destination)

Bus Shelter – Cllr Ault stated he has had many residents contact him regarding the current state of the bus shelter. Councillors confirmed it is the Parish Councils responsibility to maintain the bus shelter, Cllr Strange stated the Parish Council will obtain a quote to look at getting the maintenance work done. BDC Budget meeting on 31st January.

Cllr Strange thanked Cllr Staines & Cllr Ault & asked for their report to be sent to councillors before the meeting.

010//2024 Finance

a. To receive the Bank reconciliations as at 31st December 2023

Councillors noted the Bank reconciliations as at 31st December 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 January 2024 and to agree a transfer of funds to meet the Parish Council financial requirements. **All Agreed**

d. To agree releasing the £2,000 in the EMR account for the Forest School play area.

Cllr Hammond stated following a visit to the area where Forest School will be located, a tree survey is required, so would like the Parish Council to continue to hold the £2,000 in the EMR account. This will not be a closed off area and should be available to use by the school in March 2024.

RFO Stated there is an invoice for the CHE Orchard for £771.00 which needs to be approved.

All Agreed.

011/2024 Parish Council Website

Cllr Duffin stated he has looked through the contract and had a conversation with the website host, amendments have been made. Cllr Strange signed the contract between the Parish Council and website host. Cllr Duffin to scan and return a copy to the website host.

012/2024 Finchingfield Parish Council Facebook page – Cllr R. Duffin.

Cllr Duffin stated it is very important to start using the Facebook page to provide information and updates on current issues. Cllr Duffin stated he will arrange training for the Clerk.

013/2024 Wethersfield Asylum Centre – Update from Cllr R. Duffin

Cllr Duffin stated he had recently sent a traffic survey to Councillors, the survey shows traffic produced if two prisons were to be located at the Wethersfield Airbase. The survey gives a figure of around 1,100 extra vehicles a day that would be travelling over Finchingfield bridge, also an extra 1,582 vehicles travelling through Silver Street in Wethersfield, and an extra 504 vehicles travelling over Great Bardfield bridge. The extra vehicles are predominately through rush hour, the impact on traffic in the area will be extreme. Local groups are active in trying to help, The Fields Association, The Neighbourhood plan and WASC. Firstly, looking at ways to understand the physical impact of the extra vehicles, discussions around the idea of a demonstration to get this number of vehicles on the road, a suggestion has been put forward to ask local people to take part by using their vehicle to travel around the area several times to enable to physically see the increase and impact in extra vehicles, however stated this is only at the idea stage, but need to take action. Cllr Strange stated a starting point would be to try and get an environmental weight restriction on Finchingfield bridge and 20mph limit through the village. Cllr Martin Smith agreed with Cllr Duffin that action needs to be taken. Cllr Duffin stated as a community we need to engage, write letters, set up meetings, include all local groups to start the process.

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014/2024 Section 106 Funding - Marfleet site, Brent Hall Road. Money stands at £18,043.00 to be available once 4 dwellings are occupied. Cllr Strange stated the S06 money from the Marfleet site still stands at £18,043.00.

015/2024 Open Spaces Plan. Cllr A Stanger read out the Open Spaces plan form 2014 and compared it to the 2023 Open Spaces plan. Stated the 2023 plan is very similar, Councillors discussed projects to keep, add and remove. Councillors agreed to add the following extra projects to the 2024 Open Spaces plan; Forest School; Picnic benches for CHE & Finchingfield playing field near the Pavilion; CHE Community Orchard; Village Pond/Village green. **All Agreed**

016/2024 Pump Track. Cllr A Stanger & Cllr J. Braithwaite to head up a working group. Cllr A Stanger stated a full planning application is being presented to BDC this week. Cllr Strange & Clerk confirmed the pre application and tree survey has been paid. Cllr A. Stanger stated the working group is in progress, once planning permission is in place, the working party will meet.

017/2024 Finchingfield Pond & Sluice Gates

Cllr Martin Smith stated £35,000 was spent 18 months ago to repair the Sluice gates, unfortunately they have broken again, therefore a meeting was held with five councillors present, Archie Ruggles-Brise and the Environmental Agency. The Environmental Agency have said they will not support any changes/repairs to the Sluice gates. If the Parish Council are to go ahead with the option of repair, as it is not an environmentally friendly operation to continue to have sluice gates. Also stated they have ideas to move forward, however have not yet come back to the council with these ideas due to the uncertainty regarding the bridge. Cllr Martin Smith stated one option would be to effectively create a deep stream in the summer and a pond in the winter. The Environmental Agency will provide the plans and fund the work, Cllr Martin Smith stated the council are also aware of any concerns residents may have. Cllr Braithwaite stated concerns around the cost to repair the sluice gates, also discussed the current state of the pond throughout the seasons and how climate change will impact, stated it was once a brook running through the village, and how important it is to look into an environmentally healthy option. A member of the public stated that the pond with the gates around it is a listed building, also raised concerns over the protected creatures the pond contains.

Cllr Duffin stated at the meeting with the Environmental Agency the Parish Council were presented with three options, the Parish Council need to wait for the report from the Environmental Agency to then put forward to the community, and potentially form a working group and look at how other villages manage their ponds. Cllr Braithwaite stated she initially approached Archie Ruggles-Brise & the Environmental Agency to look at what would be a healthy option for the pond. A member of the public stated the aesthetics of the pond very much like the physical look of the bridge is what the village is known for, accepting the pond needs work doing to it but mindful that the pond is a great asset to the village. Cllr R Stanger stated there are two options, either keeping the sluice gates or not, mentioning the impact of climate change and the effect this will have on the pond. Cllr Strange asked Cllr Braithwaite to contact the Environmental Agency regarding the report that the Parish Council are waiting for. Also stated that an update on the Parish Council website will be available.

018/2024 Finchingfield Bridge – Cllr J. Strange to provide an update.

Cllr Strange stated he has spoken to Tom Cunningham (Head of Essex Highways) a meeting is being arranged to discuss the recent survey/assessment, and to discuss the environmental weight restriction on the bridge. Cllr Hammond asked why the bridge is closed 11th – 13th March, councillors believed this could be for maintenance. Cllr Duffin stated at a recent BALC meeting it was noted through open questions to Dan Gascoyne & Cllr Butland the lack of communication from Essex Highways. Cllr Strange stated he will speak to Tom Cunningham further regarding communication.

019/2024 Community Planting Working Group. Update following the recent purchase of a Tulip tree. Cllr Braithwaite stated the Tulip tree will be planted on 7th February.

020/2024 CHE Specific. Cllr J. Strange to provide an update on the Community Orchard & Play equipment.

Cllr Strange confirmed the new play equipment has been erected and work to the gate at the playing field will start in March.

a) Permission is requested from the Parish Council for CHE Village Hall to make use of the adjacent playing field for a Fayre and Car-boot fair in June 2024. Cllr Strange discussed with the council, no objections raised. **All agreed.**

b) Charity commission new recording procedure. Cllr R. Stanger is aware of the procedure.

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021/2024 Neighbourhood Plan – Update Cllr J. Strange & Cllr R. Duffin

Cllr Strange introduces Mr Richard Sidebottom to the councillors. Mr Sidebottom thanked everyone for their engagement in taking part in the survey, stated that the survey has been very positive & educating, and how both communities care. The results of the survey showed how the setting is very important to people in terms of happiness and keeps the businesses thriving, whether it be in the visible direct sense of hospitality, or in directly where residents are working from home and are not visible. Stated 35% of people are in visible businesses working from home and the business survey showed how they loved where they lived, as it enables them to live, run their business and enjoy their lifestyle. Also stated Wealth, Health and Setting are a link and connect all local parish's which is very important. Mr Sidebottom stated there are over 50,000 data points, over 300 housing needs surveys, 369 residents' survey's, and over 60 land owner and business surveys. Stated engagement between primary schools the young person's survey has been very good, currently RCCE are going to be attending primary schools to engage and become part of the curriculum, stated also trying to get children to engage through poetry & drawing competitions to find out what they value & like & don't like about where they live. Mr Sidebottom stated children have asked for more shops, cafes & to protect the environment. Stated overall the results showed there was a very strong sense of community, support for business and not resistant to change, allowing a moderate degree of development on a small scale. Stated 60% to 70% wanted to downsize, there is a want for a mix of housing to allow for more movement. Mr Sidebottom stated the business & residents survey will be posted on the Neighbourhood Plan Facebook page & website. The next stage will be to begin the drafting process of the Neighbourhood Plan, this will involve a consultation with the consultant. Following this, the Neighbourhood Plan hope to go back to the community & work in small focus groups & focus on 3 or 4 key issues confirming what was voiced by residents & businesses. Stating that following the survey, there were two main key areas of concern, Finchingfield bridge & pond, & the prospect of two prisons. Stated along with the Fields Association the Neighbourhood Plan group are going to come up with some positive plans & to build on ideas that came from the Neighbourhood Plan and any ideas the community has discussed previously. One of which is a positive use for Wethersfield Airbase, the most common being a country park, followed by small accommodation for veteran's, reinstate the museum, and re using some of the current buildings for business units. Shared work space for people working from home was also important along with a possible training centre, cycle tack and equestrian use. Cllr Strange thanks Mr Sidebottom for presenting his findings and all his hard work, stating the Neighbourhood plan are doing an outstanding job. Cllr Strange stated how following a recent meeting with Cllr Butland and Dan Gascoyne how impressed BDC are confirming they are also in support of the plan.

022/2024 Finchingfield New Community Centre

Cllr Strange stated the next meeting will take place on Thursday 1st February, the group will be discussing the outcome of views from the survey, plans drawn up by the architect & the next phase. Also stated Terms of reference will need to be agreed for the New Community Centre and the pump track. Cllr Strange asks for terms of reference to be completed by the next meeting.

023/2024 Community energy Scheme (ECC) Cllr Strange & Cllr R. Duffin

Cllr Strange stated Cllr Duffin and himself attended a meeting in White Colne to met with Jane Taylor the Chair of White Colne Parish Council & is organising the Colne Valley Community Energy Project which was discussed at the last Finchingfield Parish Council meeting. Cllr Strange stated Essex County Council are backing the scheme. Cllr Strange asked councillors if this is of interest? Jane Taylor can be invited to discuss in further details with councillors. Cllr Duffin stated the Community Energy Project group would like a public meeting to discuss & explain further, the group are looking for two people from the area to project manage. Cllr Strange suggested the group attend the AGM in May, Councillors voted for a meeting with the Colne Valley Community Energy Project to take place.

Proposed Cllr R Stanger Seconded Cllr Duffin. All Agreed.

024/2024 Planning – To agree a response to the following applications.**23/02932/HH - Florence House, The Green, Finchingfield**

Proposal: Erection of a single storey rear extension and replacement side extension.

Due to the time constraints imposed by BDC, FPC submitted the following planning response which was due to BDC by 2nd January 2024. FPC have no objections to this planning application.

23/02927/FUL - The Pigeon, Little London Hill, Finchingfield

Proposal: Proposed stables for domestic use.

Due to the time constraints imposed by BDC, FPC submitted the following planning response

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which was due to BDC by 17th January 2024. FPC have no objections to this planning application.

24/0043/FUL – Great Wincey Farm, Brent Hall Road, Finchingfield Essex, CM7 4JZ

Proposal: Erection of 6No Cart lodges. - **FPC COMMENT: NO OBJECTION**

24/00099/FUL – Daw Street House, Daw Street, Finchingfield CM7 4LQ

Retrospective change of use of existing holiday accommodation to 2No. residential dwellings.

FPC COMMENT: NO OBJECTION

025/2024 Closure of the meeting

The next meeting of Finchingfield Parish Council will take place at Finchingfield Village Hall on Tuesday 27th February 2024 commencing at 7.30pm.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having considered and determined all items of business at 9.10pm.

Signed

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