

FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING FINCHINGFIELD AND CORNISH HALL END



Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at Finchingfield Village Hall on Tuesday 27th. February 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Strange (Chairman) Cllr Martin-Smith, Cllr Braithwaite, Cllr Duffin, Cllr Heirs, Cllr A. Stanger, Cllr R. Stanger, Cllr Warner, Cllr Butland (ECC), Cllr Staines (BDC), Cllr Ault (BDC) and Kevin B Money (Parish Clerk & RFO) There were also 50 members of the public present.

026/2024 Chairman welcome. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting

027/2024 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr E. Hammond

028/2024 To receive member's declarations of interest and dispensations in items on the agenda. None Declared

029/2024 Minutes

To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 30th. January 2024. **All Agreed**

030/2024 Public participation session A maximum of 15 minutes shall be allowed for public question time, and it is requested each member of the public speak for a maximum of 3 minutes.

- Signage into duck end as traffic is speeding in the village.
- New Dog bin footpath 20
- Village sign name from Saffron Walden
- Listed building cannot add solar panels on the property
- BMX track in the village is not necessary
- Cost of new sluice gates in not apparent
- If the water in the pond is reduced this will affect tourism for Finchingfield

031/2024 Essex County Councillor. Cllr G. Butland

ECC budget £2.6bn + £12m to highways totalling £140m to highways budget

032/2024 District County Councillors. Update from Cllrs Staines / Ault from last meeting County

We are awaiting confirmation that the #9 and 9A will be replaced in the Summer (possibly JUN) by an expansion of the Digi Go bus-on-demand service.

We are very concerned that Bus services will remain unfit for purpose in the interim and that Locals and Tourists will not know how to use this service. We have written to Central for reassurance and are awaiting a reply.

Potholes

We understand that ECC road works will be slow until the new financial year. We are concerned that the strategy of Cllr Scott called "managed decline" is being continued by Cllr Cunningham.

Essex Devolution

Essex Devolution has been paused reportedly due to Essex MP reservations. Despite this pause, resources and funds are finding their way to new groups with similar goals to Essex Devo / Greater Essex - so we expect this topic to continue to occupy officers' time at ECC and BDC and attract funds without a clear set of goals or much accountability.

District

BDC Budget - Last week BDC voted to approve the 2024 / 2025 budget and have issued some infographics to describe how the £19.6m budget is to be spent.

We believe there are some gaps and questions in particular any detail relating to the "The Fit for Future" program and over £70k contribution towards the North Essex Economics Board - which could appear to many to be Devolution by the back door and could see statutory service accountability be pushed even further away from communities.

Signed

JStrange
J. Strange - Chairman

26th. March 2024

Wethersfield Home Office Asylum Grant

We wait to see any detail relating to the Home Office £3,500 per bed community grant process and are baffled that the Leader of the Council appointed himself to oversee the distribution of this money which could exceed £5m and not local community representatives.

3 Fields

We are finalising the output from the Pan Parish session earlier in the month and will be issuing shortly and taking forward actions - in particular a BALC group for 3 fields roads strategy.

Finchingfield

We have informally asked English Heritage's Local representative Rosa [Very helpful with the bridge] to provide some guidance on the potential changes to the duck pond from the lens of supporting UNESCO Heritage listing status.

033/2024 Finance

- 1) To receive the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. January 2024
Councillors noted the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. January 2024
- 2) To receive the comparison of Actual against Budget 2023/24
Councillors noted the comparison of Actual against Budget 2023/24
- 3) To approve the payment of Accounts for February 2024 and to agree a transfer of funds to meet the Parish Council financial requirements. **All Agreed**

034/2024 Finchingfield Parish Council Facebook page – Cllr R. Duffin

Cllr R. Duffin, the Clerk and the Clerk from Wethersfield PC to arrange training days for using the Parish Council Facebook page. A media policy to be drafted and agreed by Councillors. Cllr Duffin proposed spending up to £100 on getting the FPC Facebook page up and running again.

035/2024 Wethersfield Asylum Centre - Update from Cllr R. Duffin

- Meeting at the site (12.02.24) organised by Home Office.
- The presenter was clear and knowledgeable.
- 550 inmates at the time of site visit increasing to 600 in the next month with a maximum of 1700 by end of 2024.
- The prison is not being developed on this site. (at this moment in time)

036/2024 Prison Letter to Minister for the Home Office – update from Cllr R. Duffin

Letter has been sent to FPC MP informing him of the views of Residents and Councillors.

A response has been received from the Home Secretary.

A further letter be sent to MP informing him of the traffic survey etc.

037/2024 Future of airfield Museum – Cllr R. Duffin

In the past a museum was on the airfield which was removed by MOD.

A letter of support from FPC to go to the airfield museum to resurrect the museum. **All Agreed**

038/2024 Pump Track. Update from Cllr A. Stanger and J. Braithwaite

a) Councillors to agree terms of reference. **All Agreed**

b) Planning application update. A pre-application has been lodged with BDC

As children cannot ride their bicycles on the grass and cannot ride on the footpath or road. Therefore, with numerous children requesting riding bikes in safety. S106 monies have been allocated to this project.

The Parish Council is waiting for planning permission. Without planning permission then this project cannot be completed.

039/2024 Finchingfield Pond & Sluice Gates – Cllr J. M. Smith

Terms of Reference and working group was agreed

The pond is an attraction for tourism in the village. DEFRA informed the Council that the sluice gates are not environmentally friendly. The Parish Council are in constant consultation with DEFRA as to either keep or remove the sluice gates. The water flow is reducing due to possible climate conditions. A protected species of muscles is still in the pond.

040/2024 Pond Working Group to discuss – update from Cllr J. Strange

a) Councillors to agree terms of reference & finance. **All Agreed**

b) Team members to be agreed. The working group will consist of 3 members from the Parish Council plus 4 – 6 residents.

Signed

J. Strange
J. Strange - Chairman

26th. March 2024

041/2024 Finchingfield Bridge – Cllr J. Strange to update following the meeting on 21st February 2024

A group of Parish Councillors met with Councillor Tom Cunningham, head of Essex Highways and District Councillor on Wednesday 21.02.2024.

He was able to tell us that in his view he was not convinced that the Ringway Jacobs recent survey confirmed categorically that the bridge was unsafe.

He was prepared to support the possible repair and future maintenance but he would need to take up this view with the engineers.

He will support with Councillor Graham Butland the view of establishing an environmental weight restriction of 7.5tonnes to the Bridge.

We, as the Parish Council, have been tasked with getting more information from our experts to back the view that the bridge can be strengthened and has a future life span of more than 10 years.

We intend to keep residents in the picture and we are planning a further meeting with Cllr Tom Cunningham in March.

042/2024 CHE. To receive an update on the Community Orchard & Play equipment. Cllr J. Strange

- Trees for the Community Orchard has been paid and awaiting the trees to be delivered.
- Play equipment has been installed
- Work to start soon on the pavilion

043/2024 Neighbourhood Plan. Update from Cllr R. Duffin / J. Strange

Cllr R. Duffin explained to the residents what a Neighbourhood Plan represents for Finchingfield Large amount of works has been carried out with approved photographic works

044/2024 Finchingfield New Community Centre & Village Hall

a) Update from the working group - **Cllr J. Strange**

PC have a working group to establish how we can fun & build a new community centre.

The community have been consulted via the joint neighbourhood plan about future community building.

The working group have been tasked with identifying funding streams and how the project could be delivered.

Until PP has been obtained the funding streams cannot commit to a project and funding is therefore not forthcoming from grants.

If the above value was created the plots would be circ 85k a plot £935,000 plots.

Based on the Elsenham model the build costs for the community building would be over £1.5 Million

The village has expressed an interest and desire to deliver a new community hub.

The building will need to be community focused, safe space and multi-functional building with safe guarding needs to be at the heart of this strategy.

A planning application for a village hall redevelopment and up to 11 plots on the exiting village hall, play area, scout hut area & tennis court would cost £65,000

Next steps – John McLarty to prepare and submit a pre application submission to Braintree DC for and enabling development proposal for up to 16 homes to pay for a new village hall and associated facilities.

Planning Pre Application pack will include:-

Pre Application Forms: Planning Position Statement: Existing Site Plan: Proposed Site Plan: Example Village Hall designs: Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Feedback: Finchingfield Village Hall Business Plan: Finchingfield Community Groups: Parish Council Letter of Support: Village School Letter of Support: Community Groups Letters of Support and or questionnaires previous returned: Ward Councillor – Engagement: Leadership team @ Braintree DC – Engagement

b) Councillors to agree terms of reference & finance. **All Agreed**

045/2024 Community Energy Scheme (ECC) – Update from Cllr R. Duffin

No update for this meeting

046/2024 War Memorial – Cleaning and Repairs – Update from Cllr R. Stanger

Signed contract with works starting in March '24

047/2024 Monthly letter to go into The Villager – Cllr J. Strange

This will be submitted by the Chairman / Clerk at the appropriate time

048/2024 Village Hall lighting – Update from Cllr R. Stanger

Fluorescent tubing is not up to requirement replacement with LED lighting

Signed

JStrange
J. Strange - Chairman

26th. March 2024

049/2024 Councillors to discuss purchasing soft solar security light to fix in Stephen Marshall Avenue alleyway – Cllr J. Braithwaite

Cllr J. Braithwaite proposed and Cllr J. Martin-Smith seconded to purchase soft solar security lighting.
All Agreed

050/2024 Planning applications

24/00226/FUL - The Pigeon Little London Hill Finchingfield

Proposed replacement stables for domestic use.

RESOLVED: No objection to this application

24/00354/TPO - Prospect House The Green Finchingfield

Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order TPO - 24/2012/TPO

T001 - European lime (*Tilia x europaea*) - Reduce crown back to previous reduction points, remove lower epicormic growth up to first true branch.

T002 - European lime (*Tilia x europaea*) - Reduce crown back to previous reduction points, remove lower epicormic growth up to first true branch.

T003 - European lime (*Tilia x europaea*) - Reduce crown back to previous reduction points, remove lower epicormic growth up to first true branch. sever at ground level and strip ivy up to 1m above ground level.

T004 - Horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) - Request to sever at ground level and strip ivy up to 1m above ground level.

T005 - European lime (*Tilia x europaea*) - Reduce crown back to previous reduction points, remove lower epicormic growth up to first true branch.

T006 - Horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) - Request to sever at ground level and strip ivy up to 1m above ground level.

RESOLVED: No objection to this application

24/00164/LBC - Colemans Farm Howe Street, Finchingfield

Replace sole plates and repair the posts inside the centre of the building.

RESOLVED: No objection to this application

24/00350/HH - Elms Farm, Stambourne Road, Finchingfield

Two storey rear extension and removal of existing chimney stack

RESOLVED: No objection to this application

051/2024 Items for next agenda

052/2024 Date of next Full Council meeting – 26th. March 2024 at Cornish Hall End village hall at 7.30pm

053/2024 Closure of the meeting.

To close the meeting having considered and determined all items of business.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having considered and determined all items of business at 8.40pm.

Signed

J. Strange
 J. Strange - Chairman

26th. March 2024