

FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
REPRESENTING FINCHINGFIELD AND CORNISH HALL END



**MINUTES of the Parish Council Meeting held at Finchingfield Hall Village Hall, on
Tuesday 27th June 2023 commencing at 7:30pm.**

Present:

Cllr Martin Smith
Cllr Strange
Cllr A Stanger
Cllr R Stanger
Cllr Gordon
Cllr Duffin
Cllr Hammond
Cllr Warner
Cllr Braithwaite
Cllr Staines (BDC)
Cllr Ault (BDC)

Kate Raymond (Clerk)
Kevin B. Money (RFO)

In Attendance:

Members of the Public: 10

24/23

TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN FOR THE YEAR 2023/2024

Cllr Strange proposed Cllr Martin Smith, all councillors in agreement – unanimous vote.

25/23

Cllr Martin Smith signed Declaration of Acceptance of Office, also signed and witnessed by the clerk.

26/23

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Butland (BDC)

27/23

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Cllr R Stanger & Cllr A Stanger disclosed they cannot discuss point 52/23
Cllr Martin Smith gives consent for Cllr R Stanger & Cllr A Stanger to take part in discussion on point 52/23 but not vote.

28/23

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Acceptance of the minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly & the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 9th May 2023, signed by Cllr Martin Smith.

29/23

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Member of the public- Stated that Britain First (far right political group) made an appearance in Finchingfield on Saturday 24th June, handing out leaflets and targeting businesses. Phone calls to were made to 101 and the police were informed regarding behaviour, James Cleverley's Chief of Staff has been made aware and the District Commander. Also stated Finchingfield has been used as a video to advertise themselves.

Council discuss further and make it clear that they do not condone this behaviour.

Member of the public- Stated they believed a peaceful demonstration is taking place on Saturday 8TH July.

Cllr Warner -Suggested writing a letter to the Villager magazine and asked for a copy of the leaflet, also stated we need to ensure the Home Office are aware of the Parish Councils concerns. Cllr Martin Smith agreed and asked Cllr Warner to co-ordinate between councillors and Clerk in respect of a letter.

Councillors ask if BDC can help in anyway and discuss talking to the legal department. Council discuss further, Cllr Martin Smith states it will be taken very seriously, contact will be made to James Cleverley's Chief of staff and a letter will be published in the Villager magazine.

30/23

REPORT FROM THE DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr Staines – Stated he had a team's call with the Home Office last week, along with some local business's - still waiting for a formal update from the Home Office.

Cllr Staines also mentioned that the Chief Superintendent will host a meeting regarding a discussion on women's protection– no date as of yet or any format agreed, this could be either face to face or via zoom, Cllr Staines will confirm details soon.

Also stated he will action with BDC and will look into a Traffic Order/dispersal order regarding protesters.

Cllr Staines stated he is aware of the number of HGV's coming through the village. Stated we need as much footage as possible to put forward to Highways to try and get it resolved.

Cllr Staines stated he was involved in a policies meeting, involving other District Councillors, once he has a list of new policies, he will advise the Parish Council.

Cllr Staines attended the "singing for you" group at Cornish Hall End Village Hall, this group currently has over 40 attendees, they will apply for a grant from BDC for PA equipment so the singing club can take part elsewhere as well as at Cornish Hall End.

31/23

2022/2023 ANNUAL RETURN

1) To Receive the Internal Auditors report for 2022/23
Councillors noted the Internal Auditors report for 2022/23

2) To Receive and, if agreed, sign Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement of AGAR 2022/23
Cllr J. Martin-Smith proposed accepting and to sign Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement of AGAR 2022/23. Cllr J. Strange seconded. **All Agreed.**
The Chairman and Clerk then signed Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement of AGAR 2022/23

3) To Receive and, if agreed, sign Section 2 - Accounting Statement of AGAR 2022/23
Cllr J. Martin-Smith proposed accepting and to sign Section 2 - Accounting Statement of AGAR 2022/23. Cllr R. Stanger seconded. **All Agreed.**
The Chairman and RFO then signed Section 2 - Accounting Statement of AGAR 2022/23

32/23

FINANCE

1) To receive the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. May 2023
Councillors noted the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. May 2023

2) To receive the comparison of Actual to Budgeted for 2023/24
Councillors noted the comparison of Actual to Budgeted for 2023/24

3) To approve the payment of Accounts for June 2023 and to agree a transfer of funds to meet the Parish Council financial requirements.
Cllr J. Martin-Smith proposed authorising the payments for June 2023. Cllr J. Braithwaite seconded. All Agreed

4) Councillor J. Martin-Smith proposed Miss Ann Wood to be the Parish Council's Internal Auditor for 2023/2024. Cllr R. Stanger seconded. All Agreed

33/23

PARISH COUNCIL POLICIES

Council agrees to readopt the following policies-
Standing orders; Risk Register; Financial Regulations; Reserves Policy.

Council also agrees to adopt the Internet banking policy.

Proposed Cllr A Stanger, Seconded Cllr Hammond. **All Agreed**

Following discussions on the Internet banking policy in respect of signatories for Unity Bank.

34/23

WASC CONTRIBUTION (The Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee)

Cllr Duffin - Stated the PC have contributed to WASC for the past 2 years since it started and stated the importance of contributing, WASC is still very active. Given the current situation whether it be the Asylum Centre or the prison proposals, it is important to contribute towards the fight against the use of the site, there are two main Parish's effected by the current proposals to the site, Wethersfield and Finchingfield. The PC'S precept was increased by 31% this year, suggested the PC contribute £4,000.

Cllr Hammond further discusses the amount contributed by referring to the breakdown of contributions received by WASC. Stated we also need to be aware that we may need to financially contribute and concentrate on other projects within the Parish.

Council discusses further, Cllr A Stanger raises concerns regarding the site, council discuss the impact WASC has had and the current work the group is doing, for example pushing for traffic survey's and to continue to monitor traffic and pinch points to present evidence to Highways and the Home Office. General discussions regarding what the contribution goes towards.

Cllr Ault states SWAP (Stop Wethersfield Airfield Prison) was formed to help fund WASC and assist the council. Also discussed further and advised the council may need to look at what contribution is necessary.

Cllr J. Martin-Smith proposed transferring £4000.00p from FPC Current account to the Earmarked Reserve account for any monies to be sent in the future to WASC. Cllr R. Duffin seconded. **All Agreed**

35/23

VILLAGE HALL

- 1) Heating Quotation.
- 2) Refurbishment

Cllr Martin Smith asks to discuss this point at point 56/23 on the agenda as it relates to Trust Business from the Management Committee

36/23

CHANGES TO WASTE EXEMPTIONS

Cllr Martin Smith & Cllr Strange to investigate further before the next Parish Council meeting.

37/23

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr Duffin updates the council – The Neighbourhood plan working group met two weeks ago. Cllr Duffin hands out a printed booklet outlining an initial land use study plan for Wethersfield Airbase. The Neighbourhood Plan itself will cover the entire communities of Finchingfield and Wethersfield within the parish boundaries including Cornish Hall End and Blackmore End and other areas.”

Cllr Duffin stated that there needs to be more engagement with residents and the local community. Stated consultants are needed to help, also currently working on reports on traffic, housing needs, the environment, and other areas. Cllr Duffin stated the next meeting is 29th June.

Cllr Ault – In respect of finances to help towards the Neighbourhood plan, stated that once the asylum seekers are on site at the Wethersfield airbase, Braintree District Council will receive £3,500 per bed, Cllr Ault stated that this money from the Home Office could help towards funding projects like the neighbourhood plan.

Council discuss further, Cllr Ault and Cllr Staines will contact Cllr Duffin who will co-ordinate with other Parish Councillors regarding any potential funding.

38/23

FINCHINGFIELD BRIDGE

Cllr Martin Smith stated he had spoken to Stuart Froud an engineer/ Technical Officer regarding the bridge, they have confirmed that there has been an assessment on the bridge, whereby the results will be made public in the next month or two. Also stated this assessment is a similar survey that was done in 2010, and that this will reflect changes, if any, that have happened since then.

Cllr Martin Smith stated that following these results, a public meeting for residents will be held where the technical officers will also be present.

Member of the public questioned when is the outcome of the planning application that was submitted. Cllr Martin Smith to investigate this further.

Further discussions over the time frame of the potential refurbishment, structure, strengthening work, all points will be discussed at the public meeting.

39/23

ESSEX HIGHWAYS

Finchingfield Bridge and Bridge Street Road closure to take place in October 2023. Parish Council are aware that this is due to undertaking investigation works.

40/23

PARKING/YELLOW LINES

Cllr Martin Smith thanked Sam Denman for all his hard work in respect of parking issues in the village whilst he was a councillor. Yellow lines order going ahead for Bridge Street and Duck end.

41/23

ZEBRA CROSSING B1057

Cllr A Stanger discussed the safety issues in respect of the village needing a zebra crossing, particularly in the area close to the new Hills development in order that new families walking into the village should be able to cross the road safely.

Cllr A Stanger would like to discuss further with Cllr Butland. Cllr Martin Smith suggested the council thinks further regarding this point and asks this agenda point to be carried over to the next meeting for further discussion.

Cllr Duffin also commented the village is still moving towards the “Twenty’s Plenty” speed limit scheme, and noted there are also other ways of achieving safety within the village.

42/23

THE GREEDY DUCK

Cllr Braithwaite stated concerns over the village having an empty shop front, Essex Highways now own the lease for 5 years.

Discussions over what is the use of the shop for Essex Highways, it should not sit empty for 5 years. Suggestions to use the shop front for advertising in the local community.

Cllr Martin Smith to speak to Stuart Froud at Essex Highways to discuss the situation further.

Cllr Staines to contact Braintree District Council.

43/23

PLANTING IN AND AROUND THE POND

Cllr Braithwaite would like to improve the look around the pond and centre of the village green, stated she had been in contact with Archie Ruggles Brise to help with a plan in respect of planting, who will also contact the environmental agency for help. Further discussions around planting.

Cllr Martin Smith – stated this is a very worthy cause and asks Cllr Braithwaite to look further into costs.

Vote – proposed Cllr Martin Smith, seconded Cllr John Strange. **All Agreed**

44/23

FINCHINGFIELD SIGN

Cllr Braithwaite states her sister has confirmed she will refurbish the Finchingfield sign at no cost and is happy to do so.

Cllr Strange – States the paint materials he originally sourced were under £450. Also stated the post of the sign is rotten and asks Cllr Warner to look into the dimensions of the post.

45/23

CLEANING OF THE WAR MEMORIAL

Cllr Duffin stated he has a new quote of £3,400 plus vat and hopes to get some funding from the memorial trust, Cllr Duffin has now passed this over to Cllr R Stanger to look into funding.

46/23

BRITISH LEGION PRESENTATION ON THE VILLAGE GREEN

Cllr Duffin – British Legion has asked for permission to have a display on the village green, Carver Barracks will be organising this. The dates are the 2nd and 3rd September, council in full agreement.

Proposer – Cllr R Duffin, seconded Cllr A Stanger. **All Agreed**

47/23

ROSPA PLAYSAFETY INSPECTION REPORT –CHE & FINCHINGFIELD

Cllr Hammond and Cllr Gordon start discussions regarding the reports. Noted that CHE play equipment needed more repair, Cllr Gordon stated the repairs need to be done by a professional company, Cllr Hammond suggested the councillors assigned to “Open Spaces” should meet and discuss what is needed in respect of repairs for both sites. Cllr Martin Smith puts forward Cllr Strange and Cllr Hammond to co-ordinate and work through the reports. Kevin B. Money (RFO) stated ROSPA have a list of professional companies that will take on any maintenance and repair works, Kevin will send a link over to the clerk.

48/23

CHE SPECIFIC

Cllr Strange - Crossover Car park – Stated he met with Peter Dacey and Steve Caden, they went through the gate options, and the outcome is all now in agreement to use the original swing gate system that was agreed and voted on by the Parish Council on 28th March 2023.

49/23

FOREST SCHOOL AT THE PLAYING FIELD

Cllr Hammond stated she has been in discussions with Finchingfield Primary Academy School and given that the school site does not currently have any green space, they would like to use a small area of the woods near to the playing field which would be used as a forest school. Cllr Hammond stated this area would need to be fenced off, the site would be inspected along with a risk assessment completed by the school. Cllr Hammond will obtain further information. Council in full agreement to the proposal.

proposed Cllr Hammond, seconded Cllr Warner. **All Agreed**

50/23

BMX TRACK

Cllr A Stanger stated she attended a pre application meeting at the Braintree District Council Offices. There is one current issue in respect of car parking, due to new planning rules more car parking spaces are required. Currently 20 car parking spaces per one football pitch are required, it has been suggested that plastic matting could be used as a way forward to address the issue. Council discusses further and access to the site.

Cllr Warner declares an interest at this point. Discusses further the advantages of using the plastic matting for car parking.

Cllr A Stanger stated planning are looking at this favourably, but the design still needs to go to full planning, hopefully planning permission is granted. Also stated that three quotes need to be obtained, currently only have one quote which is from the company that built the Olympic BMX track, the quote is £100,000. Cllr A Stanger stated grant funding will be needed.

51/23

PARISH COUNCIL FACEBOOK PAGE

Cllr A Stanger stated further to the recent issues with the Parish Council Facebook page, is a Facebook page needed?

Cllr Martin Smith agrees not to use the Facebook Page and perhaps replace it with a business FPC WhatsApp which would be directed to the clerk, an alternative way of communicating if a resident does not have Facebook or e-mail. Council agrees not to use the Facebook page.

Proposed Cllr Martin Smith, seconded Cllr R Stanger. **All Agreed**

52/23

EVENT FUNDING

Cllr Martin Smith states Cllr R Stanger and Cllr A Stanger will not take part in the vote as they sit on the committee that are organising the event.

Cllr Martin Smith had a question regarding insurance, Cllr R Stanger stated he did contact the Parish Council insurer Zurich to confirm insurance for the event would be in place. Council in full agreement for the event and approve £500 grant.

Proposed Cllr Strange, seconded Cllr Hammond. **All Agreed**

53/23

TRAINING COURSES FOR COUNCILLORS

Cllr Braithwaite stated she would like to attend a councillor course, Cllr Martin Smith agrees, and suggested Cllr Warner also attend courses being a new councillor. Cllr Braithwaite and Cllr Warner to inform the clerk of the courses they would like to attend.

Proposer Cllr R Stanger, seconded Cllr Duffin. **All Agreed**

54/23

PLANNING

Reference: 23/001197/FUL

Proposal: Proposed stable block and access.

Location: Land between The Haven and The Nurseries, Bardfield Road, Finchingfield.

DETERMINATION: NO OBJECTION

Reference: 23/01314/HH & 23/01315/LBC

Proposal: Single storey side extension.

Location: Mill Cottage, Mill Road, Finchingfield

DETERMINATION: NO OBJECTION

