

FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING FINCHINGFIELD AND CORNISH HALL END



Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held at Finchingfield Village Hall on Tuesday 28th. May 2024 at 6.30pm

Present: Cllr J. Strange, Cllr J. Braithwaite, Cllr R. Duffin, Cllr A. Stanger, Cllr R. Stanger, Cllr J. Warner, ECC Cllr G. Butland and Kevin B Money (Parish Clerk & RFO).
There were also 18 members of the public present.

1. Chairman's welcome

- a) The Chairman started by saying that Ashleigh Heirs has resigned from the Council with immediate effect. He thanked her for all the work she has done for the Council

2. Apologies for absence were received from BDC Cllr M. Ault and Cllr E. Hammond

3. Annual Parish Council Statement 2023/2024 – Cllr J. Strange

I want to welcome you all to the Annual Parish assembly.

I want to start by thanking Johnny Martin Smith for the enormous amount of support he has given to the Parish over the years, He agreed to stay on the Parish council last November after I pleaded with him to be Vice Chairman after being Chair. He has always given me and our team his great wisdom and patient support this past year and after he offered his notice to resign from the Parish Council, we will surely miss him.

We have had a busy year with many projects, some are long-term term others more immediate but all need residents' input in order to steer the PC in the direction that residents desire.

We set the annual budget for the Parish with a small increase which allowed for inflation and also notice of withdrawal of the street cleaning grant, this subsequently was agreed to continue by the Braintree district council.

Some of the long-term projects have come to fruition such as the play equipment for Cornish Hall End and the cross-over gate to the playing field from the Hall. We also obtained a community planting grant from Braintree to plant an orchard by the Pavilion which has now been completed.

The Finchingfield Village sign has been re-painted and placed on a new oak post, thank you to both Zulieka and John Warner for their help and for donating the post.

Planting the Coronation Tree was completed and the Tulip Tree looks lovely, thank you to Jason Berry for helping and Mark Bell for the loan of the digger and Brian Patience for watering the new tree.

The Christmas Tree's new location worked out well after some heavy digging and welding, thanks to Weathersfield welders and Mark Bell and all those who helped choose the tree, dress the tree and then remove the lights and dispose of it. A good team and community effort all around.

Thank you to all the many working groups and the residents taking time to participate in meetings in the evenings.

We allocated funds towards the making of an area for a Forest School for the children to experience outdoor activity in a safe space. Thank you to Emma Hammond for the work and time on this project.

We were lucky to receive a donation towards a new oak fence around the Well and I want to thank the donors for their generosity towards this project. We hope that we can set up a fundraising page for the fence to be replaced around the pond, the PC have allocated some funds towards this but more will be required to complete this project.

The long-term challenges this year are the future of the Bridge and we await some encouraging news from Essex Highways as to a decision not to replace the bridge but repair and issue an Environmental weight restriction of 7.50 Tons which would safeguard the listed buildings and bridge from heavy goods vehicles passing through the Village.

We are also looking into a Vehicle-activated speed restriction device for both CHE & Finchingfield, this will monitor the speed of vehicles passing through both villages.

We have signed up to 20's Plenty campaign and there is encouraging news that Cambridgeshire is trialling speed restrictions, this may spread to Essex in time.

We had looked into noise monitoring equipment to monitor noise levels in the village some years ago, from memory Kensington and Chelsea had set up monitoring but we need to resurrect what was discovered and

Signed

Chairman

allocate a budget towards the equipment as there are no grants available.

The future of the Village Hall is another long-term project. We have improved the ventilation with an improved heating system and installed new lighting and Wi-Fi but the Hall isn't getting any younger and the cost increase for maintenance and repair. We have established a working group to look into the feasibility of building a new community centre. This is early days and we have to have a separate meeting to address residents' concerns. There has been established a working group made up of Parish Councillors and residents to look into the building and funding of a BMX Pump track. The project has been worked on by the Finch Trust for many years to have an activity for young people in the village. The Parish council voted on and allocated 106 grant money from the Hills Group toward the costs. The plans are currently with the Braintree Planning Committee. The working group established to draft a joint neighbourhood plan with Weathersfield has made good progress with the fourth draft being completed soon at which stage we are required to issue this to the residents to digest and vote on. Thank you to all those who participated in the questionnaire and open days which were well received.

We understand that communication with residents about all the projects is important to the teams involved as well as feedback from residents. We are always open for discussion and also welcome residents to join any of the working groups. The working groups have a mix of residents and Parish Councillors but we welcome additional assistance in many areas.

I want to thank again the fantastic team and camaraderie of the Parish Council, and as JMS stated last year it was a breath of fresh air to have a team that works together to resolve issues and plan ahead for the future of the Parish.

I also want to thank you, the residents for your support, it is important to us to understand your passion towards the future of our lovely Parish.

4. Report from ECC Councillor Graham Butland

See ECC Cllr G. Butland at <https://finchingfield-pc.gov.uk/agendas-and-minutes/>

5. Report from BDC Councillors Cllr Michael Staines No report was given

6. Reports from village groups and organisations No reports were given

7. Public Participation session

- How will the residents record what they think is important to villagers.
- Will the Parish Council canvass the residents for information?
- Any internal surveys can be undertaken and circulated to residents.
- There is only a one-way communication on Facebook from residents. Could this be opened up for a two-way communication?
- What is happening to the village sign on Brent Hall Road? This mantle is being taken up by Cllr A. Stanger.
- From Wethersfield to Finchingfield there are 2 village signs. Could one of these signs be placed on Saffron Walden Road?
- A resident thanked all Councillors for their commitment in the past year.
- Can these be taken tasks be taken forward – Additional Speed restriction to be put in place - Footpaths be made "fit for purpose" - Better measures to deal with careless and dangerous parking?
- Can more contact information be given in "The Villager" for better communication aspect.
- Can the yellow lines be restored to original condition.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having considered and determined all items of business at 7.15pm.