

FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING FINCHINGFIELD AND CORNISH HALL END



Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at Finchingfield Village Hall on Tuesday 28th. January 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr J. Strange, Cllr J. Braithwaite, Cllr R. Duffin, Cllr R. Gill, Cllr R. Stanger, Cllr A. Stanger, Cllr J. Warner, ECC Cllr G. Butland, BDC Cllr M. Staines, BDC M. Ault and Kevin B Money (Parish Clerk & RFO). There were also 8 members of the public present.

006/2025 Apologies for absence None received

007/2025 To receive member's declarations of interest and dispensations in items on the agenda
None Declared

008/2025 To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 26th. November 2024. All Agreed

009/2025 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.
No questions as the item is on the agenda

010/2025 Essex County Councillor - Cllr G. Butland

a) ECC Local Government Reform and Devolution

The devolution is proceeding with Essex, Suffolk and Southend. Every part of the country will have a Mayoral system. A further announcement this week for a further 10 areas being considered. If this is the case the County Council elections in May '25 will be postponed. Between 2 and 5 Unitary Authorities will take over in 2028. In May 2026 an election for Greater Essex. An additional funding of over £900m coming into Essex. Impact on Parish Councils will initially have no impact. However, at a later date, this may change. Significant changes to the planning system and NPPF policies. In the longer term there will be greater efficiency as there will only be 1 Chief Executive as opposed to 3 or 4
Cllr G. Butland then took questions from the public

011/2025 District County Councillors - Update from Cllrs Staines / Ault from last meeting

Cllr M. Staines gave a report which can be found on the FPC website at

<https://finchingfield-pc.gov.uk/agendas-and-minutes/>

012/2025 Task Force update – Cllr J. Berry & D. Bide

a) Planters for Finchingfield Green

Good news – Play equipment in Finchingfield area is going to be repaired soon. The bench will be repaired shortly. CHE – Due to the condition of the equipment further repairs are needed.

013/2025 Wethersfield Airbase – any update from last meeting Cllr R. Duffin

No change on security procedures everything is working well.

Atmosphere on site over Christmas was good, most had traditional Christmas dinner and preparations for Ramadam are underway.

New pool table and other recreational facilities installed, has come from Scampton, the asylum centre in Lincolnshire which has closed.

Still 2 items to be finalised before they can go up to 800 residents so they are stuck at 580, and currently there are 530 there.

Discussed the flooding of Sculpins Lane and agreed it is a county council issue, Ciaran Gold is attempting to deal with Essex as is Jenny of the Home Office. She has a fortnightly meeting with Essex CC and has been given the name of the person to talk to. An officer. I mentioned that I'd emailed our county councillor and the Cabinet Member for Highways but not had a response yet. I would hope to achieve more through councillors than through officers.

Ciaran Gold gave an update on funding and that the museum now has their grant of £4.5k and that Ross Stuart is happy. He's also been told there is money to improve the path between Wethersfield to the outskirts

Signed

John Strange - Chair

25th. February 2025

of Finchingfield, but he is dependent on Highways to action this.

Mary Cunningham (BDC) and I were the only two Councillors there and Donna Roder of Wethersfield. We could do with more support.

014/2025 ROSPA play inspection reports for Stephen Marshall area & CHE.

Update from Cllrs J. Berry and D. Bide. Roll this over to next meeting

015/2025 Street lighting update from Cllr R. Stanger

Cllr R. Stanger has notified the Ombudsman regarding the monopoly of Npower to supply small Councils the electricity for street lights. There are no other companies to supply smaller Councils with electricity. FPC is locked with Npower and the Ombudsman to rectify this problem.

016/2025 80th. VE-Day Anniversary event

A meeting has taken place regarding celebration/s for the 8th. May 2025. A dance has been arranged for Saturday 10th. May and further activities are being arranged. It would be good to liaise with local school children. Old vehicles, stalls and a possible Maypole is being considered for the weekend. Choir has been booked for the Sunday 11th. May. Further discussions between all parties to be arranged.

017/2025 Prettying up Finchingfield – Cllr J. Berry

Finchingfield map currently on the green outside Winner's. It is now very much out of date and needs an update

Cllr J. Berry has a small article in the village magazine. Next session 7th. March. The list of things to do are increasing. 2 sponsored planters could the Parish Council contribute a planter (£121 each). Cllr J. Strange proposed sponsoring 2 planters costing £242. This expenditure comes from the Parish Maintenance budget. Cllr A. Stanger seconded. **All Agreed**

Regarding the map – Cllr J. Berry to circulate costing to Councillors prior to the next meeting.

018/2025 Essex highways - flooding/blocked drains – Cllr R. Duffin

The Parish Council had been contacted by Wethersfield PC on behalf of some residents living at the top of Sculpins Lane regarding flooding of the road. This also affects traffic into the airbase and means the road cannot be walked by Home Office residents. Home Office cannot get any response from Highways team. Cllr Duffin has contacted our County Councillor, Graham Butland and the Cabinet member for Highways, Tom Cunningham. The soakaway pond is blocked so the pond doesn't drain away. Cllr Cunningham advises that the road has now been put on the ad hoc jetting list. We've replied to say that we believe this doesn't sound as though it will solve the problem and suggesting an engineer visit and assess the situation. PC to monitor to ensure Essex Highways do something to fix the problem and/or liaise with the Home Office or farmers involved

019/2025 The River from Finchingfield to Bardfield needs clearing of obstructions – discuss way forward.

Cllr J. Strange walked the Finchingfield to Bardfield river. Cllr J. Strange will contact Environment Agency to see if they can rectify this problem

020/2025 CHE issues - Pavillion project (to approve quotation from E. Gooch), hedges, ditches

Meeting at the AGM. Things are going well. Hall hire is good. The quotation to be reviewed as the quote is more than 2 years ago.

021/2025 ECC Waste Exemption consultation. Remove from next agenda

022/2025 Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr R. Duffin

The NP was circulated in November and this generated 60 mostly supportive comments from individuals but also from Essex CC, BDC, Natural England, National Grid, Anglian Water, Home Office, NHS, Sport England and others.

There is an NH meeting on Thursday where these will be discussed, decisions made on where response is necessary and then a report will come to the PCs for response and hopefully agreement at the February meeting. Then the NH goes back to BDC who will appoint an independent examiner.

As mentioned in November we have now contributed to Essex County Councils Local Nature Recovery Strategy. LNRS.

We have also made a submission to BDC's consultation for Design Code.

Linked with the NP a small group of individuals are having meetings with the Home Office and BDC, these are now going to be quarterly, next one is in March and the task is to create a Master Plan for the airfield, circa 80% of which is in Finchingfield.

Two things to mention on this.... We've been advised by RCCE that we need Landscape Designation for the whole area and this is likely to be financed by Finchingfield and Wethersfield PCs and probably Shalford. We're getting four quotes and the overall cost will be circa £4,000. I'll come back with proposals on this at the next meeting for the PC to vote on.

Signed

John Strange - Chair

25th. February 2025

Secondly, we've been exploring getting the airbase listed as a conservation area. Place Services (part of Essex CC) have quoted £1,857 the initial analysis to see if it's viable and £3,126 for the full assessment and £669 for the public consultation. WASC has the finance for the initial assessment and but may apply for some of the earmarked reserve in PCs budget for the remainder. Look out for this in February unless we can raise it elsewhere.

For both of the above we will also look to The Fields Association for financial support.

023/2025 Finance

- 1) To receive the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. December 2024

Councillors noted the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. December 2024

- 2) To receive the comparison of Actual against Budget 2024/25

Councillors noted the comparison of Actual against Budget 2024/25

- 3) To approve the payment of Accounts for January 2025 and to agree a transfer of funds to meet the

Parish Council financial requirements. **All Agreed**

024/2025 Councillors to agree 2025-2026 budget and Precept

Cllr R. Duffin proposed an expenditure for 2025-2026 of £88196 resulting in a Precept demand from BDC of £78026. Using the BDC tax base figure of 807.05 produced a Band D property figure of £96.68p (an increase of £2.54p or 2.70%) Cllr D. Bide seconded. **All Agreed**

025/2025 Planning applications

24/02398/FUL - Freshwell Health Centre Wethersfield Road Finchingfield

Replacement of black wood framed sealed window units with black uPVC framed sealed units.

Finchingfield Parish Council responded to BDC before the planning deadline. The response was:

Finchingfield Parish Council has no objection to this planning application

25/00009/HH – Ashwell Hall Ashwell Hall Road Walthams Cross Finchingfield Essex CM7 4QP

Single storey rear extension, link access, landscaping works and associated operational development.

RESOLVED: Finchingfield Parish Council has No objection to this planning application

25/00063/ELD - Mandalay Farm Pump Lane Walthams Cross Finchingfield CM7 4QP

Application for Certificate of Lawfulness for an existing development - Confirmation of the implementation of planning permission 22/00714/FUL

RESOLVED: Finchingfield Parish Council noted the application

026/2025 Items for next agenda

Setting up a working group for the pond: Remove RoSPA report from next agenda: s106 monies from BDC

027/2025 Date of next Full Council meeting – 25th. FEBRUARY 2025 at Finchingfield Village Hall

028/2025 Closure of the meeting

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

The Chair then closed the meeting at 8.50pm and thanked everyone for attending.