

FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING FINCHINGFIELD AND CORNISH HALL END



Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at Finchingfield Village Hall on Tuesday 25th. February 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr J. Strange, Cllr D. Bide, Cllr J. Braithwaite, Cllr R. Duffin, Cllr R. Gill, Cllr R. Stanger, Cllr A. Stanger, BDC Cllr M. Staines and Kevin B Money (Parish Clerk & RFO).

There were also 11 members of the public present.

029/2025 Apologies for absence were received from ECC Cllr G. Butland, BDC Cllr M. Ault, Cllr J. Berry
a) To accept the resignation of John Warner from Finchingfield Parish Council with immediate effect
Councillors reluctantly accepted the resignation of John Warner and thanked him for all his hard work with the Council

030/2025 To receive member's declarations of interest and dispensations in items on the agenda
None Declared

031/2025 To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 28th. January 2025. All Agreed

032/2025 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.

A resident spoke about a planning application for Obournes Farm.

Any update on the river issues since the last meeting. More rubbish has entered the river and will need clearing. Permission who owns the land needs to be approached to clear the debris.

Can the sluice gates be repainted in white paint? The water is still seeping under the sluice gates.

Can the Christmas tree be placed in the pond this year?

033/2025 Essex County Councillor - Cllr G. Butland No report was given

034/2025 District County Councillors - Update from Cllrs Staines / Ault from last meeting
BDC Cllr M. Staines report can be found at <https://finchingfield-pc.gov.uk/agendas-and-minutes/>

035/2025 Councillor vacancy in the Finchingfield Ward – update from the Clerk
The Clerk has notified BDC of the resignation of John Warner. The official BDC notice has been published. The notice expires at 5pm on 25th. February 2025 where BDC will either inform the Clerk that an election is to take place or FPC can start the co-option process. Information will be circulated ASAP.

036/2025 Task Force update – Cllr J. Berry

a) Planters for Finchingfield Green

Next session is on Saturday 8th March. Meet 10am on the green for 2 hours of hard work and fun!

We now have a possible 9 planters to dot around the village:

- Church Hill blinds:
- The Lion:
- The 3 Tuns (to be placed on the green outside the pub?)
- The Fox:
- GW Hardy:
- The Ault family (to be placed on the Wethersfield Road by the Finchingfield sign?)
- Sue Cannon and the Essex Therapy Dogs.... TBC:
- And TWO from the Parish Council

Olivers Nursery are waiting for a fresh delivery of tubs/planters, and I will then go and select etc. The plan is to allocate a planter to a local keen gardener who will look after, water and tend to (I have a list of willing volunteers!). I'll also arrange some plaques for those who have sponsored a planter. Aim to have them in place by the end of March.

Have approached Rev Alex Shannon with regards to the poor state of repair of the 3 benches, 2 waste bins and

Signed

JStrange

John Strange - Chair

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sign in the churchyard. He agrees, and we are to meet to discuss and arrange for the prettying up group to tackle these. Lots of locals and “tourists” walk through the churchyard, and even though the grounds are well tended by Paul and Andy, the hardware lets the site down!

Finchingfield gym equipment to be serviced/repaired on 7th March (weather permitting)

Finchingfield play area to be serviced/repaired starting this week (weather permitting). Hopefully have started by the time of this meeting!

037/2025 Wethersfield Airbase – any update from last meeting Cllr R. Duffin

Parish Council catch up meeting with the Home Office February 18th.

Currently 560 residents on site. This will now be increasing to 800 over about an 8-week period. New residents coming in batches of not more than 30 at a time.

The SO conditions have been met, we have asked for the reports on pollution on site – these are supposed to be posted on a website. They know the importance of receiving these for the NH plan and future of the site. This has not happened, but we’re advised that the content will be provided as an FOI request.

They have had similar questions from Wethersfield PC regarding the pollution. “I can confirm that Condition 15 documentation was provided to Braintree District Council’s Planning Development Manager on 26 June 2024 (the first set of reports) and more recently on 16 January 2025 (final set of reports).”

They are aware of the puddle on the road, and I pointed out that as the pond has been partially cleared, it’s now apparent that the water from the North West side does not cross the road. They are investigating whether there is a drain on that side of the road.

038/2025 Setting up a working group for the pond – Cllr D. Bide

Cllr D. Bide proposed setting up a working group for the pond. Cllr J. Strange seconded. **All Agreed**

Cllr D. Bide suggested leaving the pond to dry out for a 10 period. Then using a drone to assess whether dredging is necessary.

039/2025 80th. VE Day Anniversary event – update from Cllr D. Bide

1. Purchase/Hire of Maypole and New flag costing £525.00p + £39 for the flag

Cllr J. Strange proposed Cllr R. Gill seconded. **All Agreed**

2. To accept the hire of stalls for the day at a cost of approximately £8559

Cllr J. Strange proposed accepting the quotation, in principle, of £2480.67p from J&S Fun event hire. Cllr R. Gill seconded. **All Agreed**

3. Possibility of funding free fish and chips for over 80s during VE Day celebrations for Finchingfield and Cornish Hall End residents only @ £10.95p per person?

Cllr J. Strange proposed, in principle, funding free fish & chips for over 80s during VE Day celebrations for Finchingfield and Cornish Hall End residents Cllr R. Gill seconded. **All Agreed**

4. Use of pond on VE day for model boats and 5mtr battleship for evening light show

Cllr J. Strange proposed using the pond be used for model boats. Cllr A. Stanger seconded. **All Agreed**

040/2025 Report on street lighting – Cllr R. Stanger

The Energy Ombudsman has made a decision that will mean the Parish Council will be paying £4,500 a year for street lighting. 4.5 times more a year than a year ago. The council are looking for the Ombudsman and Npower to come up with a more acceptable proposition for the Council.

Cllr R. Stanger proposed to appeal against the Energy Ombudsman decision. Cllr D. Bide seconded.

All Agreed

041/2025 Finchingfield Three-Legged Race 14th. September 2025.

Councillors to discuss and vote to give permission for this event to take place

Cllr J. Strange proposed to give permission for the three-legged race to proceed on 14th. September 2025 subject to Insurance being in place. Cllr A. Stanger seconded. **All Agreed**

042/2025 s106 monies update from Cllr J. Strange

To discuss at a later meeting

043/2025 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

Update of Finchingfield poster (currently outside Winners)

Wonky Wheel Mary and I met with the artist Helen and discussed possible updates etc. Costs of amendments and redrawing of certain bits would be £500. I am still trying to pin down the printing costs. Please could the PC members look at the proposals of the updated drawings first, and comment if necessary. Hopefully Wonky Wheel

Signed

JStrange

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Mary will be at the meeting to add further comments. It would be great to have may be 3 posters strategically placed around the village to encourage the “tourists” to explore. (One outside Winners, another near the PC notice board on the green, and another outside the Guildhall??)

044/2025 The River from Finchingfield to Bardfield needs clearing of obstructions

Cllr J. Strange has walked the river bank and will report back at a future meeting

045/2025 CHE issues – Cllr J. Strange

1) To discuss the revised quotation from E. Gooch on Cornish Hall End Cricket Pavilion for £3090

Cllr J. Strange proposed accepting the revised quotation of £3090.00p from E Gooch Building. Cllr A. Stanger seconded. **All Agreed**

2) CHE Football Nets and a Wheel for the goal. Councillors to approve the expenditure of Nets at £39 and a wheel at £27.62p

Cllr J. Strange proposed purchasing the football nets and goals for £66.62p. Cllr R. Gill seconded. **All Agreed**

046/2025 Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr R. Duffin

NP working Group for the 14 Actions on the plan

The Neighbourhood Plan has had no money from the PC. £18,000 funding has been obtained from government funding and a huge amount of work has been put in to it by local people. Mostly from Wethersfield. And lots of free printing of promotional material and surveys etc.

It's a very good NP, with lots of input from the community re the open days and the survey and what we're delivering is what residents have asked for.

It will help protect Finchingfield and Wethersfield from overdevelopment, but its strength will enhance it's ability.

We've been advised by RCCE (Rural Community Council of Essex) that an independent landscape evaluation survey would be good for the Neighbourhood Plan, and are advised by planners that if it's challenged in court this would protect the valued landscape status. Without it, that protection is lost.

That illustrates the connection between the NPPF, Development Plan, valued landscape and a favourable decision on an individual application. In relation to the Christmas Tree site there was immense effort into demonstrating the site was within a valued landscape. A local designation already in the Development Plan would to a large extent settle that matter.

The inspector said

".....the Framework identifies that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. I have identified that the appeal site should be regarded as part of a valued landscape."

".....I conclude that the development would be contrary to the provisions of the development plan and the Framework. There are no other matters which as material considerations would have sufficient weight to indicate that the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed." Julia Gregory - Inspector
If it's already identified as a Valued Landscape by the Neighbourhood Plan – that is an established fact which does not need to be argued over.

Unless we want to weaken the Neighbourhood Plan we must support the funding. By not supporting it when Wethersfield PC have already voted to put half the money in, that's a great insult to Wethersfield and all the people without whom we would not have a Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish has the money sitting in our account for this. We have £2,000 already in the earmarked reserves for the NP and for WASC £4,000 allocated from the last two years underspend and another £2,000 allocated for 25/26. WASC are happy for the funds to be used for this.

I propose that we vote to approve NP £2k and that our Clerk goes over the finances to see if we can support it without using the WASC money, but if we can't then to use £1750 of the WASC allocation.

Cllr D. Bide proposed to approve NP £2k and that our Clerk goes over the finances to see if we can support it without using the WASC money, but if we can't then to use £1750 of the WASC allocation. Cllr R. Gill seconded. **All Agreed**

Cllr R. Gill informed the meeting that the Neighbourhood Plan requires mapping and future volunteers will be required

047/2025 Valued Landscape Designation Assessment request for £3,750 for half of a Valued Landscape

Cllr D. Bide proposed using £2000 from NP EMR money and the RFO to find the balance of £1750 from another source. Cllr R. Gill seconded. **All Agreed**

Signed

JStrange
John Strange - Chair

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048/2025 Finance

1) To receive the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. January 2025

Councillors noted the Bank reconciliations as at 31st. January 2025

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 February 2025 and to agree a transfer of funds to meet the Parish Council financial requirements. **All Agreed**

4) To approve a Donation to Essex Air Ambulance for the use of electricity for the Christmas Tree
Cllr R. Stanger proposed a sum of £200 to be donated to Essex Air Ambulance for the use of electricity for the Christmas Tree. Cllr J. Braithwaite seconded. **All Agreed**

049/2025 Planning – including any Current Planning Applications requiring a response**FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

25/00081/COUPA - Finchingfield Farm Howe Street Finchingfield Essex CM7 4JB

Prior approval for the change of use of agricultural building to a dwellinghouse (Class C3), and for associated operational development - Change of use to 2 no. residential dwellings.

Councillors noted the above planning application

25/00274/COUPA - Obournes Farm Upper Howe Street Finchingfield Essex CM7 4PH

Prior approval for the change of use of agricultural building to a dwellinghouse (Class C3), and for associated operational development - Change of use to 6 No. residential dwellings.

RESOLVED: Finchingfield Parish Council states that this application does not qualify for Class Q and requires full planning application. Class Q requires functioning as a dwelling and is not appropriate where almost a complete rebuild is required. This is more than what is “reasonably necessary” as defined in Class Q

The previous application 23/02351/COUPA was granted for 3 dwellings, the proposed new application 24/02333/COUPA is for 6 dwellings

The Parish Council is mindful of the sustainability and over development of this rural small hamlet. 6 dwellings, along with the original house would almost double the size of the hamlet and undermine the rural character of the area.

It's also contrary to BDC's aims to ensure most housing development is around the towns in the District and alongside major roads such as the A120. There has been over 70 houses with planning approval over the last couple of years in Finchingfield village increasing accommodation significantly.

No consideration has been made for the privacy of the neighbouring property.

The Footpath/Unmade Road: The access to the site is via an unmade lane which links the existing dwelling house and the agricultural buildings with Howe Street. The lane itself is a footpath. The proposed 6 new dwellings will significantly put unnecessary congestion on the lane resulting in a hazard to the local community who regularly use the footpath on daily walks. Any suggestion to widen this unmade road will have an impact on the surrounding wildlife and the river that passes underneath the unmade lane flowing into Finchingfield village.

The proposed planning has provided spaces for 11 cars, this does not take in to consideration for any visiting vehicles, amenities vehicles or delivery vans etc.

Increase in dwellings:

050/2025 Planning Decision/s made by BDC

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

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

Application Granted

051/2025 Items for next agenda

052/2025 To discuss date of Annual Parish Assembly possibly 22nd. April 2025 at 6.30pm

053/2025 Date of next Full Council meeting – 25th. March 2025 at CHE Village Hall

Signed

JStrange
John Strange - Chair

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054/2025 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Councillors to Resolve that by virtue of the provisions of Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded during discussion of the following business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Cllr J. Strange proposed to exclude the public and press from the meeting. Cllr A. Stanger seconded.

All Agreed

055/2025 Staffing matters

The Clerk informed the meeting of continued problems with the existing payroll provider. The Clerk submitted an alternative quotation.

Cllr R. Duffin proposed to accept to change payroll provider as from 6th. April 2025. Cllr J. Braithwaite seconded. **All Agreed**

056/2025 Closure of the meeting

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

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.10pm and thanked everyone for attending