

FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING FINCHINGFIELD AND CORNISH HALL END



Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at Cornish Hall End Village Hall on Tuesday 25th. March 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr J. Strange, Cllr J. Berry, Cllr J. Braithwaite, Cllr R. Duffin, Cllr R. Gill, Cllr R. Stanger, Cllr A. Stanger, ECC Cllr G. Butland, BDC Cllr M. Staines and Kevin B Money (Parish Clerk & RFO). There were also 6 members of the public present. Plus 1 police officer

058/2025 **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr D. Bide

059/2025 **To receive member's declarations of interest and dispensations in items on the agenda**
None Declared

060/2025 **To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 25th. February 2025 All Agreed**

061/2025 **Co-Option**

Councillors are requested to receive written applications for the office of Parish Councillor and co-opt a candidate to fill the vacancy for the Finchingfield Ward

The Candidates having completed a short application form and confirmed their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules (Local Government Act 1972 section 79).

Each candidate gave a 5-minute presentation. The Councillors then voted. George Gilbert 4 votes: Tony Clarke-Holland 3 votes.

Cllr J. Strange proposed George Gilbert to be co-opted onto the Parish Council. Cllr A. Stanger seconded.

All Agreed

Cllr G. Gilbert then signed his declaration of Acceptance of Office, E Consent form and was given the Register of Interest form to be returned to the clerk within 28 days.

062/2025 **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

Can yellow lines be painted in Finchingfield village? Advice was to submit a LHP form

Weight limit on bridge has failed to be progressed. CCTV camera on bridge. This is still being looked into.

The posts by Winners does not allow push chairs through.

Essex Highways documentation on the bridge weight is flawed.

The bridge has been hit again and when CCTV camera is in operation it will help recover the costs involved.

063/2025 **Essex County Councillor - Cllr G. Butland**

a) ECC Local Government Reform and Devolution

A lot has happened since January. Devolution Essex has been chosen to proceed at pace. A Mayor of Essex election happens in May 2026 and will take office immediately. The local elections are to be cancelled for at least a year. Working for a Combined authority. The mayor to take responsibility for Highways, Housing, Infrastructure. PFCC role will be absorbed into the mayors role.

Local Government reform is working at pace. As at 21.03.25 a document from Essex to Government to see how they will undertake the local government reform.

September 28th. Essex Councils submit their detailed on how many unitary authorities will be replacing the 15 authorities now. The number will be about 3-5 authorities. Each authority to number about 500,000 residents Social Care and Children's services are the biggest budget for ECC and the new authority.

No more elections to District Councils and County Council.

Town and Parish Council elections will go ahead in 2027.

A vast of work being done by officers and members and to still continue with day-to-day running of the Council. The complete re-organisation to be done by 2029

064/2025 **District County Councillors - Update from Cllrs Staines / Ault from last meeting**

Cllr M. Staines report can be found at <https://finchingfield-pc.gov.uk/agendas-and-minutes/>

Signed

JStrange

John Strange - Chair

22nd. April 2025

065/2025 Attendance of Local Police (subject to operational commitments)

Anti-social rural road use Noisy and speeding bikes and cars.

We have kicked off our annual Spring / Summer engagement program with the Local Police (and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service - where road safety sits). We will report shortly on a suite of measures including, but not limited to, the following.

- **Biker Education Events** - Rural road hazards [walkers, horses, cyclists, farming, wildlife] etc and courtesy to residents (village greens)
- **Social Media Safety / Awareness campaigns** (which we'll share too)
- **Noise checking of vehicles** – Prohibiting and seizures stats etc
- **Speed Checking at Weekends** at locations known to residents as problematic
- **Street Racing on A131 / A120 and Notley's etc.**

The local team are getting new mobile Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) to support their work. The team are refining the use of new Infra Red capability for their TRU CAMS – enabling Speed Checks at night.

More Locations are being approved for Police “speed traps” in the ward.

Essex Police are targeting Motor Cycle problems in both villages. 10 traffic offences: 3 vehicle seized: 4 motor bike stopped for excess noise from exhaust: 7 illegal number plate offences: “Extra Eyes” – Self reporting of crimes using dashcam etc.: 1650 prosecuted from Extra Eyes reports which is over 90% prosecution rate: The police officer then took questions from residents and Councillors

066/2025 Task Force update – Cllr J. Berry

- a) Planters for Finchingfield Green

Planters have been ordered and will be delivered soon

- b) Prettying up Finchingfield

Ask Jason for a report

067/2025 Wethersfield Airbase – any update from last meeting Cllr R. Duffin

Asylum Centre update

Current residency is up to 600, people are still coming in, but also being moved out to new accommodation. The Barbary room is up and running well and being used as social hub. There are more activities moving outside as the weather improves and football training from Wethersfield residents has started and was featured in the Colchester Gazette. Ramadam is under way, and they have an Imam leader on site and also a Christian one to.

The water in Sculpins Lane has been looked at by Essex Highways 3-4 weeks ago and the ad hoc jetting is completed. Some further work needs to be done on the pond on the side of the road to discharge, but that isn't down to Highways.

Ciaran Gold mentions that Essex Highways have now come up with a scoping document to improve traffic in the area, this is approved by the Home Office and is now with BDC for approval and implementation.

Occupancy isn't going up as quickly as expected, just over 580, it's linked to small boat arrivals and the fact that decision ready migrants are moving to new accommodation. They think it will take 10 to 8 weeks to get up to 800. They will review situation at 650 residents and again at 750 residents.

Discussion of why the press, the Express and the Mail active. The articles have been fairly balanced and may have been prompted by the fact that the SDO conditions have been achieved and residency is forecast to increase. They have focused more on what has happened in the past and not really making any new news – only that things are progressing as outlined.

Questions

Where is the written response to the email regarding the email about rubbish. This is mentioned in the previous minutes. There has been more publicity recently regarding loads of cans being left behind. Ryan will investigate and respond.

Are there any failed asylum seekers transferred to Wethersfield site. Gates at the front now appear closed all of the time and so the question has been raised. No failed asylum seekers at Wethersfield, the gates are closed purely to enable better monitoring of residents movements and keeping numbers registered. Also to stop unauthorised entry by the press or others. The interpretation is down to something Ministry of Housing, Communities and Central and Local Government have put on a website. This is incorrect and Ryan will chase for correction.

How is the increase from 580 to 800 going? Is the increase fostering more problems amongst residents –

Signed

JStrange

John Strange - Chair

22nd. April 2025

more dissension, more attempted suicides, more fights or behavioral problems. No – not as yet and this is being watched closely as per the quantity reviews mentioned above.

The last meeting stated that there was a request from Colin West to see reports discharging the last outstanding conditions of the SDO. This has been referred to Fol. Please add to the agenda a repeat request to share these reports immediately, and in any event before numbers are increased to over 580.

Are these available now? Ryan said these have been sent to CW so he could share. I asked Ryan to forward these on which he's willing to do. Need them to update the Parish Council and for the Neighbourhood Plan.

In response to queries from Councillor Ault, Home Office comment that all residents are advised not to litter, and ref the alcohol cans, the site is a no alcohol zone. The mini buses don't have CCTV on them and there is no plan to introduce this.

068/2025 Setting up a working group for the pond any update from last meeting Cllr D. Bide
Cllr J. Strange proposed deferring this item to another meeting

069/2025 80th. VE Day Anniversary event – update from Cllr D. Bide

- Parking on 10th May – option to open up playing field and possible charge £5 per car.

The playing and pony field can be used but not to charge residents to park on the field.

- Extra toilets – would you approach the agent selling the chapel to see if we could place Portaloo's in the carpark for the day. No extra toilets are required. Guildhall, village hall could be opened up

- Additional costs for a spitfire £3100 +VAT has not been agreed. Cllr J. Strange proposed not to go ahead with this item. Cllr R. Gill seconded. **All Agreed**

Cllr J. Strange proposed that a complete list of items already purchased, to be purchased and future expenditure to be given to the Clerk in readiness for the April meeting.

070/2025 Report on street lighting – any update from last meeting Cllr R. Stanger

Cllr J. Strange proposed to decline the offer of the Energy Ombudsman. Then to go back to Npower to recalculate the Estimated Annual Consumption. Cllr A. Stanger seconded. **All Agreed**

071/2025 Traffic monitoring CCTV – update from Cllr D. Bide

- 1) Weight limit signs for Bridge. Cllr J. Strange proposed deferring this item to another meeting

- 2) Variable Speed signage into the village. Cllr J. Strange proposed deferring this item to another meeting

072/2025 CHE issues – any update from last meeting Cllr J. Strange

Update on Pavilion to undertake the repairs. The interior will need addressing. Play equipment is being repaired. Zip wire cannot be repaired as there are no-one available to undertake the works.

073/2025 Neighbourhood Plan – any update from last meeting Cllr R. Duffin

Neighbourhood Plan next steps

Reg 15 submission: we hope to submit Reg 15 in June depending upon the Landscape assessment which starts in April. Given BDC Local Plan discussions, this is a high priority. The Neighbourhood Plan Team of scribes will ensure everything else is completed as much as we can in the 4-6 weeks. I may be asked to suggest Extraordinary PC meetings to help expedite the approval process.

Actions monitoring and evaluation process: have Parish councils been able to make any progress on a strategy of how to look at its Action Plan as per residents' priorities? This can go ahead immediately.

One of these actions is asking authorities to examine the apparent contamination issue in our waterways.

Dominic said he would follow this up, so Richard will prepare some material to support this.

At the Masterplan meeting with the Home Office and BDC on 20.3.2025

Dominic Collins (Corporate Direction at BDC), stated the forthcoming 'devolution' means that Parish Councils (and associated Neighbourhood Plans) could become of greater significance with respect to their connection with (and accountability to) local residents than ever before. We are a tiny community now thrown into a very large soup. If we do not stand up and shout, we will be lost amongst the 500,000 shouting at the mayor. PCs (and their Neighbourhood Plans) are the platform that higher echelons of government view as legitimate and credible forms of shouting.

Neighbourhood Plan achievements

The clear evidence from last Thursday's meeting is that we would not be in the room without the NP.

BDC are certain to have an Airbase policy in their new Local Plan. Our NP policies should have a bearing upon that but there is no guarantee. What we can say for certain is that if we had said nothing, we would have had NO influence whatsoever.

Due to our relationships formed through the NP, the Home Office are likely to grant access for Conservation Area and Landscape assessments, each of which will form an essential part of a future Master Plan for the base.

Signed

JStrange
John Strange - Chair

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BDC's Local Plan had only 400 survey responses from a population of 160,000. Our NP had 400 survey replies and nearly 100 responses to the Reg 14 draft from a population of 2,700. The message and the degree of engagement is clear. People in Finchingfield and Wethersfield want their voices to be heard using any platforms or tools at their disposal. The issue is not whether or not upper echelons of government will listen; the issue is that people expect their representatives to shout on their behalf - even if no-one is listening.

074/2025 Finance

- 1) To receive the Bank reconciliations as at 28th. February 2025
Councillors noted the Bank reconciliations as at 28th. February 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 March 2025 and to agree a transfer of funds to meet the Parish Council financial requirements. **All Agreed**

075/2025 Planning – including any Current Planning Applications requiring a response

25/00318/HH - 1 Coronation Cottages Heards Lane Cornish Hall End

Proposal: Proposed two storey rear extension & front porch.

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

25/00368/FUL - 11 Cornish Hall End, Finchingfield, Essex

Erection of 1no. detached 3 bedroom dwelling with associated operational development and landscaping

RESOLVED: Finchingfield Parish Council has No Objection but it is an overdevelopment of the site

25/00386/TPOCON - Prospect House The Green Finchingfield

Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area:

T009 -Hawthorn - (Crataegus sp.) Lateral reduction of crown overhanging driveway by approx. 2m to vertical growth points
T012-Norway maple - (Acer platanoides) Heavily ivy clad stem-Pollard to lower than existing points, approximately 5-6m above level

RESOLVED: Finchingfield Parish Council has No objection to this planning application subject to the tree and conservation officer approval

25/00387/TPOCON - Finchingfield House, The Green, Finchingfield

Proposal: Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area: Trees 1 & 2 - Horse Chestnuts- Removal Tree 3- Sycamore- Removal Tree 4 -Leylandii- Removal of hollow limb above garage
Trees 5 & 6 -Ash- Crown lifting to restore light. Remove both 2 lateral lower branches

RESOLVED: Finchingfield Parish Council has No objection to this planning application subject to the tree and conservation officer approval

25/00409/HH - Elms Farm Stambourne Road Finchingfield

Single-storey side extension

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

25/00427/TPOCON - Fox Barn The Green Finchingfield

Proposal: Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area - Reduction of 5no. Laurel Trees, 1no. Magnolia Tree and 1no. Cherry Tree to previously cut points.

RESOLVED: Finchingfield Parish Council has No objection to this planning application subject to the tree and conservation officer approval

25/00556/TPOCON - Beddalls Vicarage Road Finchingfield Essex CM7 4LD

Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area:- T1 - Japanese Acer - removal of tree. T2 - Ornamental Cherry - removal of tree.

RESOLVED: Finchingfield Parish Council has No objection to this planning application subject to the tree and conservation officer approval

076/2025 Items for next agenda

S106 – Cllr R. Gill:

077/2025 To discuss date of Annual Parish Assembly possibly 22nd. April 2025 at 6.30pm

078/2025 Date of next Full Council meeting – 22nd. April 2025 at Finchingfield Village Hall

079/2025 Closure of the meeting

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

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.15pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed

JStrange
John Strange - Chair

22nd. April 2025