



Cllr Mark

AULT



Cllr Michael

STAINES

Dear Finchingfield residents,

How time flies! Over the past year, it's been a real privilege to work alongside the Finchingfield Parish Council and so many of you to support the priorities that matter most to our community.

Together, we've made real progress in the areas within our District Councillor remit — from planning (including advancing the Neighbourhood Plan shared with Wethersfield), Local Plan and helping navigate waste collection improvements. We've spoken up at key Council meetings and helped residents engage with Braintree District Council to secure positive, practical outcomes.

We've also stepped up on County matters too — addressing concerns around Highways, pushing for a positive resident and heritage friendly resolution for our local heritage bridges and working with police and fire services and local groups to improve rural road safety for all users; cars, horses, cyclists, walkers, motor cyclists and support practical measures to address speed, noise and problem parking.

Better Public transport remains a priority for us too. We've had rich conversations with many of you and local groups about DigiGo, compiling clear, robust feedback that we've delivered to County officers and the Cabinet member. In February, we supported 7 parishes across the 3 Fields with Great Notley Division submit a joint "Love Your Bus" grant application with DigiGo which was successful and will deliver £49K to improve the NORTH zone especially in weekday evenings. At the same time, we're continuing to work to direct all >£1m over 5 years S106 funds from Towerlands development to secure a more sustainable, long-term DigiGo NORTH service for residents.

Please look out for a new BUS USER GROUP soon!

We've continued to speak up on wider County matters — from voicing concerns about Essex choosing to incinerate all its black bin waste and challenged emerging plans for Essex devolution.

And throughout, we've consistently made it clear to the Home Office, Ministry of Justice, ECC, BDC, and our MP that Wethersfield is not a suitable site for housing asylum seekers or for future prison development — or a *new town* - and we are working with local action groups watching Local Plan developments closely. We're proud to support the Finchingfield and Wethersfield Neighbourhood Plan as it offers a more sustainable, community-focused vision for this significant site and important wider area.

We work hard and enjoy promoting and supporting awareness of 3 Fields attractions to potential visitors from near and far.

As Independents, we answer only to you — not to any party whip. We listen, we act, and we use formal and informal settings to champion your concerns and shape better LOCAL outcomes.

Looking ahead...

We share your disappointment at the cancellation of the County elections this May — denying over two million residents across Essex the chance to shape their future. But we are moving forward, preparing for the Essex Regional Mayoral election in May 2026 and navigating the challenges and opportunities from Essex devolution and Local Government reorganisation.

We're actively collaborating with like-minded Independents, Green supporters, and the National Independent Network within the Local Government Association across Essex. We're looking far and wide for lessons from other regions to make sure the Greater Essex Combined County Authority (GECCA) delivers real, meaningful improvements for residents — especially here in Finchingfield and wonderful rural North Essex.

Our vision is clear:

- The right number of affordable, high-quality, secure homes for local people not speculative estates on green fields swamping our villages.
- Distinctive, thriving communities connected by reliable, affordable public transport.
- A vibrant unique economy boosted by inward and international tourism.
- Stronger local voices in planning and rural service provision.
- A Council that puts people before party politics — always.

Please do get in touch with your thoughts, ideas, or questions — we're here to serve you, stand by you and make your voices heard.

Warm regards, Mark Ault & Michael Staines

Independent District Councillors for Three Fields