

FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING FINCHINGFIELD AND CORNISH HALL END



Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at Finchingfield Village Hall on Tuesday 24th. June 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr J. Strange, Cllr D. Bide, Cllr J. Braithwaite, Cllr R. Duffin, Cllr G. Gilbert, Cllr R. Stanger, Cllr A. Stanger, ECC Cllr G. Butland, BDC Cllr M. Staines and Kevin B Money (Parish Clerk & RFO). There were also 4 members of the public present.

129/2025 **Apologies for absence** were received from BDC Cllr M. Ault, Cllr J. Berry and Cllr R. Gill,

130/2025 **To receive member's declarations of interest and dispensations in items on the agenda**
None Declared

131/2025 **To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 27th. May 2025**
All Agreed

132/2025 **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 raised an issue into the BMX track application regarding the tarmac. The computer photo generated shows the track is in the wrong position.
About 2 weeks ago a resident was called out regarding the sluice gates being opened and removing the safety feature to stop the water seeping into the pond and the village green. For the future a surveyor is required to survey the pond and sluice gates to prevent this issue happening again.

133/2025 **Essex County Council report – Cllr G. Butland**
Local Government Review

The Government welcomes the steps areas are taking to consider how to maintain strong community voice. Local Government Reorganisation should facilitate better and sustained community engagement and needs a clear and accountable system of local area-working and governance. Neighbourhood Area Committees, led by frontline ward councillors, offer a model of place-based engagement and leadership which maximises the structural efficiencies brought about by Local Government Reorganisation and strengthens localism and community participation across all areas. Neighbourhood Area Committees help councils fulfil their commitments to working in partnership with communities at the neighbourhood level. They can also include other service providers, such as town or parish councillors, when applicable, along with co-opted members from local community organisations.

Areas considering new town or parish councils should think carefully about how they might be funded, to avoid putting further pressure on local authority finances and/or new burdens on the taxpayer. The Government recognises the value that town and parish councils offer to their local communities, but they are independent institutions and are not a substitute for meaningful community engagement and neighbourhood working by a local authority. The Government wants to see every local authority hardwiring local community engagement into their own structures, preferably through neighbourhood Area Committees.

134/2025 **Braintree District Council report – Cllr M. Staines**
BDC Cllr M. Staines report can be found at <https://finchingfield-pc.gov.uk/agendas-and-minutes/>

135/2025 **Task Force update – Cllr J. Berry**

a) Christmas – Councillors to discuss purchase of Christmas Tree and lights
Cllr J. Strange proposed to buy 2 Christmas Trees. Finchingfield £200 maximum, CHE £165 maximum.
Cllr A. Stanger seconded. **All Agreed**

b) Electric Feeder pillar - Cllr D. Bide
Cllr D. Bide is still looking at costings. Electric coming from existing light pole.

c) RoSPA inspection reports. This item deferred to July meeting

Signed

JStrange
John Strange - Chair

22nd. July 2025

136/2025 Councillors Roles and Responsibilities for 2025-2026 Deferred to July meeting.

137/2025 Further Sites Submitted to the Call for Sites for the Local Plan Review Spring 2025

Cllr R. Duffin was asked by Cllr J. Strange to attend the meeting on Thursday 19th. You can see from the link <https://braintree.cmis.uk.com/braintree/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1393/Committee/6/Default.aspx> on what the planning department recommended.

Cllr R. Duffin spoke at the subcommittee meeting at BDC on 19th July. Councillors voted to approve planner's recommendations to not put any sites on. Other than 2135 which is the Eden Green development, already approved and mostly built but which remains on the Local Plan. The next stage will be important on 25th September when the Airbase comes up for discussion. A submission was sent to all PC members and Kevin on 11th June to be discussed below under Wethersfield airbase.

Cllr R. Duffin proposed to send the letter to BDC., Cllr J. Strange seconded. **All Agreed**

138/2025 Wethersfield Airbase – any update from last meeting Cllr R. Duffin

- Response to Wethersfield Airbase being on the call for sites – Cllr R. Duffin

Cllr R. Gill report was circulated to Councillors at the meeting. It read

Wethersfield Air Base

Site update:

- Site numbers as of 17th June – 653
- Intakes continue with phased approach. 60 taken in per week – 30 on a Tuesday and 30 on a Thursday.
- Dispersals consistent at around 20-25 a week.
- Average time for applications to be processed on site currently sitting at around 80 days.
- Outside areas are getting a lot of use in the good weather – football, cricket, picnic benches etc.
- Site remains calm and atmosphere is good.

Speeding in Local Area

- Residents in Beasley End / Blackmore End have raised concerns about emergency vehicles (marked and unmarked police cars) coming through the hamlets at excessive speed but without lights and sirens on, which is deemed exceptionally dangerous due to the lack of pavements. These vehicles are reported to have been seen entering Gate 7 which should be staff only, so HO and Clear Springs taking this away to look into

Increase in numbers following media reports this week of expansion at Wethersfield

- Ciaran Gold (Braintree Council) confirmed that the announcement took everyone by surprise and it has led to a lot of questions being raised with Braintree.
- Ciaran has spoken to the Home Office media team have have said they don't recognise the information being quoted within the media and have no plans for any expansion beyond the 800 outlined by the SDO.
- They believe what has happened is there has been confusion with the fairly recent completion of the SDO conditions as these weren't fully reported on or publicised at the time, and mistaken this for further expansion of the site.
- Ciaran has asked the Home Office to instruct the BBC to remove the articles they have published in recent days and / or update them to be more factually accurate (in line with the above).
- Ryan from the Home Office confirmed that Wethersfield has 1245 bed spaces available on site. 800 of these are in built accommodation. The remaining beds are in the Portacabin area. He confirmed that it is their belief that 800 should be the business as usual occupancy level, with the additional bed space only to be used in time of urgency. There would be a lead in time for this further capacity to be utilised as it would require 'a number of things to be readied on site in order to bring these into use'.

Drones

- Reports locally of a large drone seen going over the site recently. The Home Office confirmed this was not them.

Large Sites submitted to the Call for Sites for the Local Plan Review

- A submission for the Airfield from John Pearce was sent to all PC members and Kevin on 11th June this to be sent to BDC on Finchingfield paper. This runs to 11 pages but it asks the BDC to allocate use of the airbase in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Plan. This will be discussed on September 25th. Can we have agreement to send this? Unanimously approved.

139/2025 Setting up a working group for the pond any update from last meeting Cllr D. Bide

This item to be re-energised again and to be kept on the agenda for future meetings

140/2025 Update on Traffic monitoring CCTV– update from Cllr D. Bide

CCTV is up and running with 4G router.

Cllr D. Bide proposed an additional expenditure of other costs for consideration.

Signed

JStrange
John Strange - Chair

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4G Router supplied as no WiFi available £175inc VAT, one off cost.
 4G SIM card £25plus VAT per month, unlimited data, Cheaper than Gigaclear and non-intrusive t0 building for additional incoming wiring. One months' notice to cancel. Plus 5 CCTV signs to be erected at a cost of £134
 Cllr G. Gilbert seconded. **All Agreed**

141/2025 CHE issues – any update from last meeting Cllr J. Strange
 CHE Clock is broken and the bells do not ring. It was agreed that the vicar sends in a Grant application form to be considered. The recreation ground gate has been repaired.
 Cllr D. Bide proposed repairs to the play equipment of £80. Cllr J. Strange seconded. **All Agreed**

142/2025 Neighbourhood Action Plan – any update from last meeting Cllr R. Duffin
 We are still waiting to hear back from Place Services re the Conservation area and the consultant regarding the Landscape Designation, so what was said at the May meeting is correct apart from a few additions surrounding the NP.

1. We understand the Essex LNRS decisions are expected imminently - including the Airbase.
2. A 17 strong Natural England (NE) delegation are visiting us in early July for a full day workshop to discuss how to extend and fund local nature regeneration activities as part of the pilot sea to source River Pant initiative, including Spain's Hall, Wildfell, the North Essex Farm Cluster and the Airbase. NE are particularly interested in community, cultural, health and recreational linkages that form a key part of our portfolio.
3. RCCE have asked Richard Sidebottom to organise a workshop on our efforts at their event 'Nature Recovery, Biodiversity and your Parish'. It is being run by Nicky Joshua whom I believe you know? Attendees will include Jules Pretty (EWT); Tim Simpson (ECC); and Simon Lyster (Essex Partnership) all of whom have been made aware of local regeneration initiatives.

143/2025 s106 monies – update Cllr R. Gill

S106 Funding

Ramp:

- Confirmation has been received from Sarah at Braintree that as the ramp needs replacing, this would be eligible for use of the S106 funding.
- One quote received so far, further quotes are being progressed.

Playground Equipment:

- Two quotes along with drawings received back from Creative Play covering two different options;
 - both options have a trampoline (can be used by all ages and wheelchairs) and a number of play boards (designed with SEN children in mind)
 - option one has a wheelchair roundabout (accessible for all)
 - option two has a basket swing (can be used by multiple people at once and those with mobility issues, subject to being lifted in)
- Option of including a trim-trail also being explored following feedback from parents.
- Quotes with alternative providers being explored for comparable provision.
- This area of the project cannot be progressed until the work on the ramp has been costed and confirmed, as that needs to be the priority.

144/2025 VJ Day event – Councillors to discuss this event

Discussion took place on what events could be organised for VJ Day. Cllr D. Bide to contact Ivan at RBL

145/2025 Social Media pages – update from Cllr G. Gilbert. No further update since last meeting

146/2025 Winter Salt Bag scheme – Does FPC wish to participate this year

The Clerk informed the meeting of obtaining Salt for the winter. Cllr J. Strange proposed accepting this supply. Cllr D. Bide seconded. **All Agreed**. The Clerk to liaise with Cllr J. Strange for delivery address etc.

147/2025 Planning – including any Current Planning Applications requiring a response

25/01169/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 6no. residential dwellings.

RESOLVED: Finchingfield Parish Council Objects to this planning application

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

Signed

JStrange

John Strange - Chair

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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: The Finchingfield Parish Council feels that this is not a sustainable development. 1. The barns are down at the end of a farm track. This track joins a busy class 3 road which should have a 30mph limit, but most vehicles travel at speeds in excess of 40-50mph. The access onto this Class 3 road is very poor 2. There is no public transportation from Finchingfield along the B1053 through Cornish Hall End to Steeple Bumpstead, or along the Class3 road to Stambourne. 3. A river runs under the access/egress track down into Finchingfield. This a flood risk. 4. This development would not be suitable for social housing as it is: 1. remote; 2. not accessible to the village of Finchingfield without a car; 3. the three barns are close to a Grade 1 listed house, which has a Grade 1 listed Dovecote in its garden. The barns are in a small area very close to to this existing house

Six houses would not be sensitive to the defining character of the local area.

25/01155/FUL - Land North Of Ffuleslo Toppesfield Road Finchingfield

Change of use from Annexe to 1No. bedroom dwelling.

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

25/00368/FUL - 11 Cornish Hall End Finchingfield Essex CM7 4HD

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

Addition documents - arboricultural report and tree protection information

RESOLVED: Finchingfield Parish Council objects to this planning application as it is an overdevelopment of the site and the Parish Council refers you to the Essex Highways Consultee comment

25/01219/FUL - The Stables Spains Hall Spains Hall Road

Temporary change of use of former Stable Block to allow a pop-up bakery (Class E) for one month.

RESOLVED: Because this is for one month only, Finchingfield Parish Council has No objection to this planning application.

25/01302/FUL - Finchingfield Nurseries Bardfield Road Finchingfield

Conversion of 2no. residential outbuildings to holiday cottages.

RESOLVED: Finchingfield Parish Council has No objection to this planning application subject to the outbuildings being limited to holiday lets only.

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

25/01193/PLD - The Old Barn Vicarage Road Finchingfield Essex CM7 4LD

Proposed rendered timber framed conservatory to consist of double glazed windows and doors and insulated flat roof with lantern light

Councillors noted the application above

148/2025 Finance

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

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

- 2) To receive the comparison of Actual against Budget 2025/2026

Councillors noted the comparison of Actual against Budget 2025/2026

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

Council financial requirements. **All Agreed** See link for payments <https://finchingfield-pc.gov.uk/finance/>

149/2025 Items for next agenda

Cllr R. Duffin sent his apologies for the July meeting

150/2025 Date of next Full Council meeting – 22nd. July 2025 at Finchingfield Village Hall

151/2025 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Signed

JStrange

John Strange - Chair

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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 and Cllr A. Stanger seconded to exclude the public and press. **All Agreed**

152/2025 Trust matters

153/2025 Closure of the meeting

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

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.25pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed

JStrange
John Strange - Chair

22nd. July 2025