

July update



The redrafting of the Neighbourhood Plan is (finally) nearing completion and now reflects the (very) large volume of comments we received. We have been waiting for some key research to be completed before we finish our draft. We aim to produce what is called our 'Regulation 15' draft for approval by Parish Councils during August, so we can submit to Braintree District Council (BDC). BDC will do a consultation, send the Plan for Inspection and then it comes back to the community for a referendum. This draft will be published on our website <https://www.fw-np.org/community>

The Plan now includes the results of our 'Valued Landscape' study which found that two-thirds of our area satisfied the criteria for designation. The idea of a 'Valued Landscape' can be important in planning applications. This does not mean that non-designated areas are not important to us all, just that they do not quite get over the line to meet the Landscape Institute's strict criteria. We would like to thank everyone for their fantastic help in gathering evidence of why residents and visitors alike find our area so amazing. Information about local artists, writers and nature recovery can be found on the Neighbourhood Plan and Finchingfield Guildhall websites <http://www.finchingfieldguildhall.org.uk/>

We have also just found out that our submission for the Airbase's inclusion in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) was successful. The Airbase is now defined as a 'Strategic Opportunity'. According to the LNRS document <https://essexnaturepartnership.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/lhrs-june-2025.pdf>. This is important in several ways:

- Provides information that may be a 'material consideration' in the planning system
- Helps prioritise areas for nature recovery
- Highlights key areas that development footprints should avoid where possible to maintain opportunities for habitat creation.

Research concerning the possible designation of the Airbase as a Conservation Area (Action 5 of the Neighbourhood Plan) and discussions with the Home Office regarding an Airbase Master Plan (Action 14 of the Neighbourhood Plan) are ongoing.

The Neighbourhood Plan Team also helped Finchingfield and Wethersfield Parish Councils submit very detailed responses to BDC's Local Development Plan review. This includes a number of local proposed development sites (which were rejected in June) and the Airbase (which will be debated by BDC on 24th September).

We continue to work with Finchingfield and Wethersfield Parish councils to put in place the rest of the 14-point Action Plan in our Neighbourhood Plan that addresses some of the concerns you told us about last Autumn, such as footways, public transport, and danger points.

If you have any questions, please email the NPT at fnpteam@gmail.com, contact us via Facebook or check out our website <https://www.fw-np.org/>.