

FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING FINCHINGFIELD AND CORNISH HALL END



Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at Finchingfield Village Hall on Tuesday 22nd. July 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr J. Strange, Cllr J. Berry, Cllr J. Braithwaite, Cllr G. Gilbert, Cllr R. Stanger, Cllr A. Stanger, BDC Cllr M. Staines, BDC M. Ault and Kevin B Money (Parish Clerk & RFO).
There were also 5 members of the public present.

154/2025 **Apologies for absence** were received from ECC Cllr G. Butland, Cllr R. Duffin, Cllr R. Gill and Cllr D. Bide

155/2025 **To receive member's declarations of interest and dispensations in items on the agenda**
None Declared

156/2025 **To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 24th. June 2025**
All Agreed

157/2025 **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
The swings on the Sportsfield were dirty and requires cleaning from bird mess. Can a mesh please be placed on top of the swings? There are several barriers stopping prams being able to get through.

158/2025 **Essex County Council report** – Cllr G. Butland. No report was given

159/2025 **Braintree District Council report** – Cllrs M. Staines and M. Ault
BDC Cllr M. Staines v2 report can be found at <https://finchingfield-pc.gov.uk/agendas-and-minutes/>

160/2025 **Councillors Roles and Responsibilities for 2025-2026**
This item is deferred to another meeting

161/2025 **Task Force update** – Cllr J. Berry

a) Christmas – Councillors to discuss purchase of Christmas Tree and lights
Last "Prettying up Finchingfield" gathering was on 21st June when the area opposite the Post Office was finally cleared, possibly in readiness for bulb planting in the Autumn. Next gathering is on Saturday 23rd August at 10am on the green.

2 further offers of planters from local people which will be sited at the next "prettying up" session. £145 each. Autumn plants. Would the Parish Council be agreeable for planter holders for replacement of the spring/summer plants with autumn/winter ones? Oliver plants have quoted.

All planter donations are in except one which is being chased

- Village signs. Update on a sign for the Saffron Walden Road – would there be any objection if we made/installed ourselves? Also, the sign into the village on the Bardfield Road ideally needs replacing as it has been defaced to read "pee" instead of "speed". Not a good look!

- Finally, the area on the Bardfield Road in front of the Hill estate needs attention – fallen trees, weeds, overgrown. Not a good entrance into the village. Any objections if the "prettying up" team tackle this or is it someone else's domain?

b) RoSPA inspection reports

ROSPA report for Stephen Marshall is much improved on last year and no urgent things need to be done

162/2025 **Further Sites Submitted to the Call for Sites for the Local Plan Review Spring 2025**

We have submitted to BDC comments on Wethersfield Airbase, which is 75 to 80% in Finchingfield, composed by John Pearce at the end of June. We will attend and speak at the meeting; you have three minutes. Not sure who will speak, it will probably John Pearce and Richard Sidebottom, anyone from Finchingfield will be welcome to go but would be good to coordinate with the NH team to make sure we get co-ordination with new points being covered rather than repetition of what other speakers say. This leads on to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Signed

JStrange

John Strange - Chair

23rd. September 2025

Neighbourhood Plan

The NP is almost complete, I'd hoped to have it for PC meeting but I think it will be available shortly after and so I'd request an EGM in August to approve it so that it can be submitted to Braintree DC in August so that it's there when the sites for inclusion in the local plan are discussed at BDC on 24th September. Very important that we get this done, without it BDC will not consider it when reviewing the sites for development. Can we agree this will happen? If so I'll liaise with John re a date once I know when it's complete.

Richard presented to 20 Natural England staff at Ground Control on 10th July. Farm Cluster also presented. Key takeaway NE got was the collaboration between different community groups. NE recognise Airbase potential and will liaise with other gov departments. He believes they got the message that the full potential can only be realised if we do everything in the vision not just nature + prison. If anyone's interested, I've attached the Power Point presentation. You'll like the ending. I've seen the draft and I'm expecting a newsletter which I'll send on if it arrives before I go.

He's also at meeting on 16th July presenting to RCCE.

163/2025 Wethersfield Airbase – any update from last meeting Cllr R. Duffin

Home Office Catch up meeting

- 783 service users on site. There will be 1 intake this week to the operational cap of 800.
- The site remains calm; service users are utilising outdoor spaces and minibuses into towns. A recent survey on catering has been very positive.
- The HO is working with Care for Calais who have a distribution centre in Braintree. There is a regular NGO forum with the HO.
- Traffic calming measures through Beazley End and Blackmore End is progressing. BDC will meet with the engineer from ECC who has been assigned to the project. The idea is to set up speed monitoring devices, and possible VAS's and village gates at 5-10 different sites including Shalford to Wethersfield and Finchingfield to Wethersfield. The survey work will take around 2-4 weeks.
- The reinstatement of the footpath between Finchingfield and Wethersfield has yet to be costed by ECC. Apparently, this is difficult to do so Ciaran Gold from BDC has been told by Highways. He's having a meeting tomorrow with the Surveyor.
- BDC has so far received £2.24M in payments from the HO of which £800K has been spent. £1.4M remains for the rest of the duration of the site. 80% of the grant vessel goes to ECC for safeguarding and 16/17% to BDC. The rest is a discretionary community fund of which £50K was spent at the base for additional service user activities.
- The average stay on site is 80 days, with around 50% of asylum claims refused. These are then moved into other accommodation, mostly houses rented from private landlords, awaiting either appeals or deportation. Appeals can take 6 months to two years and these residents are free to roam in this period as they are at Wethersfield.
- The HO investigated the complaint regarding speeding emergency vehicles through Beazley and Blackmore End. This is due that the route is now a police training route and nothing to do with the HO.
- A question was asked about service users missing from the base. The HO advised that absentees numbers are decreasing and that the site is non-detained.
- The disturbing images of various guns on a service users Snapchat account is under investigation by the Police. Currently the service user remains on site, he is not detained and the Home Office have not it seems spoken to him with this and have no idea of the intent here or where the guns were based. Have asked for further information at the next meeting.

164/2025 Working group for the pond update - Cllr D. Bide. No further updates

165/2025 Update on Traffic monitoring CCTV– update from Cllr D. Bide

ANPR CCTV to protect Guild Hall – placement difficult, or place Road bells to stop building being hit

166/2025 CHE issues – any update from last meeting Cllr J. Strange

CHE AGM was held. A request from the Church for Bell maintenance. The Clerk to respond with a Grant application form

167/2025 s106 monies – update Cllr R. Gill

On the s106 spend, I'm waiting on the third and final quote for the ramp works which I'll bring to the September meeting for a decision

168/2025 VJ Day event – update from Cllr D. Bide

RBL have no plans. Next event will be in September for Battle of Britain at Village Hall

169/2025 Planning – including any Current Planning Applications requiring a response**25/01380/HH** - Mill Farm Mill Lane Finchingfield

First floor extension above existing single storey and erection of two storey side extension.

RESOLVED: Finchingfield Parish Council has No Objections to this planning application**170/2025 Finance**1) To receive the Bank reconciliations as at 30th. June 2025Councillors noted the Bank reconciliations as at 30th. June 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 July 2025 and to agree a transfer of funds to meet the Parish Council financial requirements. **All Agreed****171/2025 2024/2025 Annual Return**

1) To receive the Internal Auditors report for 2024/2025 – previously circulated to Councillors 30.06.25

Councillors noted the Internal Auditors report for 2024/2025

2) To Receive and, if agreed, sign Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement of AGAR 2024/2025

Cllr J. Strange proposed to sign Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement of AGAR 2024/2025. Cllr J.

Braithwaite seconded. **All Agreed.** The Chair and Clerk then signed Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement of AGAR 2024/2025

3) To Receive and, if agreed, sign Section 2 - Accounting Statement of AGAR 2024/2025

Cllr J. Strange proposed to sign Section 2 - Accounting Statement of AGAR 2024/2025. Cllr A. Stanger seconded. **All Agreed.** The Chair and RFO then signed Section 2 - Accounting Statement of AGAR 2024/20254) To receive the Bank reconciliation for 31st. March 2025.Councillors noted the Bank reconciliation for 31st. March 2025

5) To receive the Explanation of variances. Councillors noted the Explanation of variances

6) Cllr J. Strange proposed seeking a new Internal Auditor for 2025-2026. Cllr J. Braithwaite seconded.

All Agreed**172/2025 Items for next agenda**

Battle of Britain: Christmas generally: NBUG (North Bus User Group)

173/2025 Date of next Full Council meeting – 23rd. September 2025 at Finchingfield Village Hall**174/2025 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 and Cllr A. Stanger seconded to exclude the public and press. **All Agreed****175/2025 Trust matters****176/2025 Closure of the meeting**

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

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.45pm and thanked everyone for attending