

FINCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING FINCHINGFIELD AND CORNISH HALL END



Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at Cornish Hall End Village Hall on Tuesday, 24th March 2026 at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllr J. Strange, Cllr J. Berry, Cllr D. Bide, Cllr R. Duffin, Cllr R. Stanger, Cllr A. Stanger, BDC Cllr M. Staines | 11 members of the public and the Parish Clerk Mark Nicholls

062/2026 CHAIRMANS WELCOME

063/2026 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. Berry, Cllr Butland

033/2026 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

No declarations of interest were made, and no dispensations were requested.

034/2026 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 24FEB26

a) **RESOLUTION, that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 24th February 2026 be approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.**

051/2026 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION. WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

a) For approximately 15 minutes, parishioners addressed the Council (4 speakers). Members of the public raised matters relating to the proposed pump track, including support for provision for young people and concerns regarding the decision-making process. Concerns were also raised regarding the proposed festival/event use of the Cornish Hall End playing field, including governance, consultation, transparency, and potential impacts on the village. Additional comments were received in relation to the Village Hall CHE (including thanks for grant funding)

b) **NOTED. The Council noted the comments and confirmed that relevant matters would be considered under the corresponding agenda items.**

036/2026 ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

No report was received.

037/2026 BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT – Cllr.M.Staines

The Council received a report noting that the Essex County Council elections will take place on 7 May, with postal vote information to be issued shortly. Updates were provided on local government reorganisation, the North Essex Bus Strategy, and current consultations, including the Essex Safer Speed Strategy and the District Local Plan review. It was noted that further information is available online, and residents are encouraged to engage with the consultations.

The full report is available online:

<https://finchingfield-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Talking-Notes-MARv1.pdf>

038/2026 FINANCE

It was noted that: The accounts were prepared by the RFO, K. Money.

- (a) The bank reconciliation showed a total balance of £91,083.93, comprising £6,773.88 in the current account and £84,310.05 in reserves, consistent with the bank statement.
- (b) Expenditure relating to the sluice gate will be met from the designated earmarked reserve, subject to committee approval
- (c) The comparison of Actual against Budget for the financial year 2025/2026 was received.
- (d) Payments due, including standing orders and variable payments, were noted. So were the additional £95 of the Clerk’s expenses that were not filed by the RFO, but which were authorised by the Council in addition
- (e) Total payments presented for approval for £4334.02 +£95
- (f) Year-to-date expenditure of £92,682.46

(g) It was noted that £1,998.88 should be reallocated from earmarked WASC reserves to the grants budget. This relates to a grant payment made to WASC, which was originally agreed to be funded from the earmarked WASC reserve rather than the general budget (h) Discussed £200 donations to Saxons

RESOLVED unanimously:

- a) To receive and note the bank reconciliation.**
- b) To receive and note the comparison of Actual against Budget 2025/2026.**
- c) To approve payments for March totalling £4334.02 + £95**
- d) To approve the transfer of funds as required.**
- e) To approve the reallocation of £1,998.88 from earmarked WASC reserves.**
- f) It was unanimously resolved that, in recognition of Saxons providing power and support for the village Christmas lights, the Council approves a donation of £200 to their chosen charity, Refuge. The expenditure is to be made under Section 137, the Council being satisfied that the payment is in the interests of, and will bring benefit to, the area and its inhabitants.**

070/2026 CORNISH HALL END | PLAYING FIELDS – DITCH CLEARANCE

RESOLUTION. It was unanimously resolved that the Clerk be authorised to receive from parties’ quotations for the clearance of the ditch surrounding the Cornish Hall End playing field, including seeking suitable local contractors where appropriate. It was noted that provision for this work has been included within the next financial year’s budget.

071/2026 CORNISH HALL END | BUS SHELTER

RESOLUTION. It was unanimously agreed that the Parish Council, being confirmed as the owner of the bus shelter at Cornish Hall End, shall authorise the Clerk to receive quotations for its removal and to take the necessary steps to apply for a Section 80 demolition notice, if required. Members noted the potential for alternative use of the site, such as a planter, and this will be considered following receipt of quotations and associated costs

072/2026 CORNISH HALL END | PLAYING FIELDS - Horse & Groom Festival

RESOLUTION. It was unanimously resolved to approve, in principle, the use of the Cornish Hall End Playing Field by the Horse and Groom for a festival-type event, subject to the usual requirements, including adequate public liability insurance, resident notification, and the organiser ensuring the site is left in good condition and disturbance to residents is minimised. Full details to be forwarded to the Clerk in advance. Grill Master Enquiry: No resolution was made.

073/2026 20’s PLENTY CAMPAIGN

It was unanimously resolved that the Clerk be authorised to prepare a draft 20’s Plenty Parish Council policy for consideration at a future meeting, setting out the Council’s position, including a draft scope and application of any proposed 20mph speed limits within the parish. It was further agreed that consideration of any additional actions, including engagement with Essex Highways and potential support for wider campaigning, be deferred pending review of the draft policy. Including the response to 20’s plenty campaign and that this topic be kept open on the councils action planner

074/2026 WETHERSFIELD AIRBASE AND WASC UPDATE

It was noted that an update report had been received, including current and projected occupancy levels and ongoing impacts. It was resolved that no further action be taken at this time and that the situation will continue to be monitored. Full details of the report are available in the minutes section of the Council’s website.

<https://finchingfield-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/DRAFT.-03-02-MARCH-DRAFT-OGM-minutes-Wethrsfield-Airbase-and-teh-neighbourhood-plan.pdf>

075/2026 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN | PARISH ACTION PLAN

Members received an update on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan, noting its advancing status with Braintree District Council and its future role as part of the statutory planning framework.

It was noted that the update had been received. No further action was required at this time. Full details of the report are available in the minutes section of the Council’s website.

<https://finchingfield-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/DRAFT.-03-02-MARCH-DRAFT-OGM-minutes-Wethrsfield-Airbase-and-teh-neighbourhood-plan.pdf>

076/2026 PLANNING

050/202626/00428/TPOCON -The Overlook, Old Vicarage,5 Vicarage Road.
Notice Of Intent to carry out works in a tree conservation area.

RESOLUTION: The council has no objection

26/00507/LBC - 2 Hillside Cottage, Church Hill, Finchingfield
Repainting exterior and window frames.

RESOLUTION: The council has no objection

26/00547/TPOCON -Vicarage Cottage, Vicarage Road Finchingfield Essex CM7 4LD
Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area:

RESOLUTION: The council has no objection

078/2026 FINCHINGFIELD | SLUICE GATES

An update was received on the two replacement worm drives, previously approved and paid for by Council at a cost of £900.32 (ex. VAT), The council noted that further independent specialist advice from other parties is being considered by the council in regard to the pond and sluice gates.

RESOLUTIONs

a) That the update regarding the ongoing replacement of the sluice gate worm drives be noted, including that certain components expected within the consignment have not yet been confirmed as received, and that these be actively chased by Cllr.Bide, who will come back to the Council with an update at the next meeting

b) That it be noted that Colin Murphy was engaged to undertake a survey of the sluice gates, and that the inspection undertaken to date is to be considered in the scope of any further works

c) That the Council note that further technical input is being considered and explored, including potential advice such as upstream and downstream monitoring.

d)That further action be deferred until water levels have reduced sufficiently to allow proper inspection and assessment of the pond and sluice gates.

079/2026 DEDICATED RECORDING DEVICE FOR MEETINGS

RESOLUTION. That the Purchase of the dedicated recording device and memory card for £155 be approved for purchase by the clerk

080/2026 MAYDAY FÊTE AND TRACTOR RUN

(i)The Council considered an update on arrangements for the **May Day Fête**, noting that the event will take place on **Monday 4 May 2026**, following confirmation that the tractor run is no longer able to coordinate.

(ii)An update was received on planning arrangements, including liaison with event organisers, confirmation of facilities and suppliers, and ongoing coordination of activities, entertainment, and volunteers. It was noted that stallholder contributions, event infrastructure, and community participation were being progressed.

(iii)The Council considered anticipated costs, including first aid provision, equipment, and activities, together with a proposed budget for entertainment. The estimated total cost of the event was reported as **£990.28**, with an overall budget provision of up to **£1,000**.

RESOLUTION

a) To confirm that the May Day Fête will take place on Monday, 4 May 2026

b) To receive and note the update on event planning and coordination;

c) To approve expenditure totalling £990.28 for the event;

d) To approve an overall budget provision of up to £1,000 to allow for finalisation of entertainment and associated costs;

e) To authorise the Clerk, in consultation with the relevant Councillor, to finalise arrangements and incur expenditure within the approved budget.

081/2026 FINCHINGFIELD | OPEN GARDEN EVENT – GUILDHALL FUNDRAISING

The Council considered a request from the organisers of the Open Gardens charitable event, to be held on Saturday 30 May 2026, seeking permission to display two promotional banners on the fencing adjacent to the village pond between 15 May and the event date.

RESOLVED: That permission be granted for the display of two promotional banners, approximately 2m x 50cm in size, on the fencing on either side of the village pond for the period 15 May to 30 May 2026.

082/2026 FINCHINGFIELD | PUMP TRACK

NOTED. That correspondence from the FinCHE Community Group and a statement made during Public Participation regarding the pump track be received and noted; that it be further noted that planning permission has been granted by Braintree District Council and that correspondence and consultation to date has indicated a majority of expressions of support; that options for gauging public opinion, including a public vote, were considered; and that the matter be referred to the Charity Trust meeting for further consideration, it being noted that the Sole Trustee is responsible for determining the Trust’s position in relation to the pump track.

083/2026 FINCHINGFIELD | POND | WATER QUALITY SAMPLING REQUEST

The Council considered a request from Dr Sarah Brockless (Brockless Ecological Land Management), in connection with an Oxford University research project, seeking permission to place temporary water-quality sampling equipment in Finchingfield Pond between 13 and 22 April 2026. It was noted that the monitoring forms part of a wider research project, that Oxford University would take full responsibility for the equipment, and that no liability would fall to the Parish Council. Members expressed support for engagement with the research and the potential to receive findings.

RESOLUTION: That permission be granted for the placement of temporary water quality sampling equipment within Finchingfield Pond for the period 13 to 22 April 2026, on the basis that no liability rests with the Parish Council. That the data be shared with the Parish Council who would also be interested in data upstream and downstream of the pond

084/2026 FINCHINGFIELD | CCTV CAMERA BRIDGE | LOCATION AND ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

The Council considered correspondence regarding the proposed licence to affix a CCTV camera to Unit 1 and to access an internal electricity supply. It was noted that the quoted licence preparation fee was £500 plus VAT, with an ongoing electricity cost. Alternative options for powering the camera were considered, including connection via a nearby premises and the potential for future connection to the street lighting network. Members noted the importance of establishing CCTV coverage to support evidence gathering for vehicle movements and incidents at the bridge.

RESOLUTION: That the Council proceed with the installation of an electricity supply to the rear of Hardy's at a cost of £460, in order to enable the CCTV camera to become operational without delay; and that alternative long-term power options, including connection to the street lighting network, be explored in due course

085/2026 FINCHINGFIELD | VILLAGE POND | DREDGING WORKS

The Council considered whether to obtain quotations for dredging works to the village pond. It was noted that a budget provision of £5,000 remains available and that relevant licences are in place.

RESOLUTION That quotations be obtained for dredging works to the village pond and brought back to the council for consideration. Quotes to be submitted to the clerk as the policy for obtaining quotes, and that any necessary licences be confirmed or applied for as required prior to works proceeding.

086/2026 ENERGY REDUCTION – STREET LIGHTING

The Council considered introducing an energy-reduction programme for parish street lighting, including replacing existing units with high-efficiency LED units as they fail. Discussion included the current stock of heritage lights, cost considerations, and a phased approach to replacement. It was noted that further clarification is required regarding options, costs, and existing agreements and council resolutions before a policy can be determined.

RESOLUTION. That the Clerk prepare a short one-page report setting out the current position, available options, costs, and any existing agreements in relation to parish street lighting, and bring this back to a future meeting for consideration.

087/2026 MATTERS LISTED FOR APRIL

a)Finchingfield Green Rubbish Bins Replacement Proposal

To receive a proposal and indicative costings from Cllr Berry regarding the potential replacement of ageing rubbish bins located on the Village Green, following a review of their current condition, and to consider whether the Council wishes to proceed with replacement.

b)Brent Hall Road Sign – Update

To receive an update from Cllr Berry regarding the Brent Hall Road sign.

088/2026 COUNCIL | POLICY | VEXATIOUS, PERSISTANT OR ABUSIVE COMPLAINTS

The Council considered the draft Vexatious, Persistent or Abusive Complaints Policy, noting advice received from the Clerk following consultation with the Monitoring Officer.

RESOLUTION. That the Vexatious, Persistent or Abusive Complaints Policy be adopted with immediate effect.

089/2026 COUNCIL | RESIGNATION | CLLR.BRAITWAITE

NOTED: Cllr.Braithwaite's resignation became effective following the meeting of 24th February 2026

090/2026 COUNCIL | VACCANCY | FILL COUNCILLOR VACCANCY BY CO-OPTION

The Council noted that the Clerk, as Proper Officer, had published the Notice of Casual Vacancy and that confirmation had been received from Braintree District Council that no election had been called within the statutory period. It was further noted that the Council may proceed to fill the vacancy by co-option in accordance with statutory requirements.

RESOLUTION. That the Council proceed with the co-option process in accordance with the Clerk's outlined procedure, with any applications in this first instance to be invited and considered at a future meeting. If no applications are received The Clerk will return to the Council for instructions

091/2026 COUNCIL | AUDIT | INTERNAL AUDIT ARRANGMENTS

RESOLUTION: That Ann C Wood LL.B, Cert. HE, DMS, PIALC be appointed as the Council's Internal Auditor for the 2025/26 financial year; and that the Internal Audit be confirmed for 12 June 2026.

092/2026 COUNCIL | MEETINGS | DATE OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

NOTED 28.04 Annual Parish Assembly Finchingfield Village Hall: 26.05 FPC AGM: 23.06: 28.07: 22.09: 27.10: 24.11.26

093/2026 COUNCIL | CORRESPONDENCE

NOTED. That correspondence was received, and responses were sent by the Clerk since the last meeting

094/2026 COUNCIL | PUBLICATION

NOTED. No items were approved by the council for publication through Print/, social media/Website. This excludes statutory notices and other publications representing the council issued by the Clerk in the course of their duties. The Parish Council's Instagram account is to be given to the Clerk

095/2026 COUNCIL | CLOSURE OF THE PARISH MEETING

NOTED. The parish council meeting was closed, and the chair thanked members of the public for attending, having considered and determined all items of business.

T062.1/2026 TRUST MEETING - Exclusion of the Public and Press – Trust Meeting

The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Sec 1 (2) states "A body may, by resolution, exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would

Chair: Cllr John Strange. Signed..... Date 28 APRIL 2026

be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings; and where such a resolution is passed, this Act shall not require the meeting to be open to the public during proceedings to which the resolution applies”.

Noted. Following a break, the trust meeting agenda was noted, business was conducted, and minutes were issued to the Trustees

TRUST AGENDA

- T063/2026 TRUST | Chairman’s Welcomed all to The Trust Meeting**
- T064/2026 TRUST | The chair confirmed and signed the last meeting minutes**
- T065/2026 TRUST | Sole Trustee - Previous Matters were discussed**
- T066/2026 TRUST | New Village Hall Working Group recommendations were considered**
- T067/2026 TRUST | New Village Hall – Correspondence was considered**
- T068/2026 TRUST | Pump Track – Correspondence and position was considered**
- T069/2026 TRUST | The chairman closed the meeting**