

FINNINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

*Minutes for the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on
Tuesday 14th February 2023
in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham, starting at 7:30pm*

Present: Cllr A. Kilbee, Cllr C Winter, Cllr N. Arthur, Cllr L. Charter, Cllr J. Miller

In attendance: Miss J. Challis (Clerk), CC & DC Cllr Mellen, 1 member of the public.

22.209 Visiting speakers

Cllr Mellen read through his DC and CC reports which were sent in advance of the meeting, and can be found as addendums at the end of the minutes.

In addition, Cllr Mellen said he has concerns regarding planning application DC/23/00337 (agenda item 21a). Notably that it falls outside of the settlement boundary of the Joint Local Plan and is therefore not in a favourable location, and also that the village does not have the infrastructure to support it.

Mr Aiken sent his Footpath Warden's report in advance of the meeting, which can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

22.210 Contribution by Members of the Public

No contributions made.

22.211 Apologies and approval of absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Trew, and Cllr Black, (both prior engagements), and approved unanimously.

22.212 To receive any pecuniary or non-pecuniary declarations of interest from Members and any Gifts of Hospitality.

Cllr Kilbee declared a non-pecuniary interest against agenda item 21a. It was agreed for Cllr Kilbee to remain in the room but refrain from partaking in the discussion or voting against this item.

22.213 To consider requests for dispensations on agenda items

As above.

22.214 To approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6th December 2022

Cllr Arthur proposed approving the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6th December 2022 as a true and correct record; seconded by Cllr Winter and approved unanimously. The Chairman then signed the minute book..

22.215 Matters arising from the Parish Council meeting held on 6th December 2022

All covered elsewhere on the agenda.

22.216 Chairman's Report

I hope that you have all had a splendid Festive Season and I welcome you to our first meeting of 2023. I am looking forward to be able to bring to fruition this year a number of projects we have been discussing during 2022. I must admit that, with a few notable exceptions, our lack of progress has not been due to any lack of interest or enthusiasm by the Council but by the dilatory nature of the Agencies with whom we have to work.

All I can say that we shall just have to persevere to achieve the goals we have set in the interests of the Community.

Most of my activities over the past two months will be covered by Agenda items, where I shall be able to update you on various aspects of progress (or otherwise).

Not covered however, is an enquiry I received via Jane recently from a lady in Rickinghall who enquired about the interment of family remains (ashes) in our Cemetery. Although the deceased was not a Finningham resident, she had expressed a desire for her ashes to be interred in our Cemetery, as many of her family were buried there. Unfortunately, we really do not have an area set aside for ashes, although there are two places already taken. Before she died, this person had said that she wanted to be on the right-hand side of the Cemetery. The only place that I could offer

was right at the end of the front row, where there were no graves (as far as I could ascertain from the Cemetery map). I have advised the relatives of this and they are very happy with the arrangement.

This episode has brought to light that we do not have a designated area for ashes in the Cemetery and I believe we should have one for future use. When we do the Cemetery clean up in the Spring, we should look at this and map out a suitable area.

22.217 Clerk's Report

- EN020027 East Anglia GREEN Update – National Grid have advised they will be holding a further non statutory public consultation in late spring/early summer 2023. It will detail their emerging proposals and rationale for the preliminary decisions they have made to date. More information about the consultation, including dates and how to participate, will be published nearer the time.
- The Precept request form 2023/24 was submitted to BMSDC prior to the 31st January 2023 deadline, and an acknowledgment received.
- S106 Funding – BMSDC have confirmed that Finningham falls within the 10km Zone of Visual Impact (ZVI) for the wind turbines in Eye. There is approximately £2,100.00 of funds available for parishes falling within this wider 10km ZVI, and £1,000.00 may be applied for per project through BMSDC Grants. This funding is available for all organisations within the parish to apply for.
- Barclays Community Bank Account – a letter has been received stating additional account information is required, which if not received, will result in the account being closed. The Clerk has confirmed the letter to be genuine, and provided the information required.

22.218 Finningham GREEN Footpath CIL bid application

Cllr Mellen has spoken to MSDC Infrastructure which has resulted in contact from the Spatial Infrastructure Officer, who has apologised for the lack of communication advising this is a new area of expenditure for District CIL, and that the Infrastructure Team is currently working with Suffolk county Council's (SCC) Highways and Public Rights of Way teams, to agree a process for taking these types of projects forward. There is a SCC meeting on 20th February when this will be discussed, following which the Spatial Infrastructure Officer would like to arrange a meeting. In addition, MSDC's Sustainable Travel Officer has made contact to see if they can help with the project in any way at all.

ACTION – Clerk to pursue CIL bid and arrange meeting as above

22.219 To discuss the emergency plan.

Following advice received from Suffolk Association of Local Council's (SALC), the Clerk has made contact with the Emergency Planning Officer from SCC who would like to arrange a meeting to discuss further.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange meeting as above

22.220 To discuss Annual Newsletter to everyone in the village, including approval of printing costs

Cllr Kilbee said it is now too late to proceed with a 1st March 2023 publication date. It was agreed that it would be best for the date to be after the upcoming elections in May. After discussing, it was decided not to proceed with individual councillor's biographies, and to concentrate on the newsletter being more about the aims of the Parish Council; what is within its power to do and what is not, recent works/achievements, alongside information for new residents in a Welcome Pack style. Cllr Charter will work on a draft before the next meeting.

ACTION – Cllr Charter to progress Annual Newsletter as above

22.221 To discuss PCC request regarding ongoing maintenance of the churchyard

Cllr Kilbee visited the Suffolk Archives in Ipswich to look at archived Parish Council and Finningham PCC minutes. However there is no record of a formal Order passing on maintenance of the churchyard to the Parish Council. This is a statutory requirement as per the Local Government Act s.215. The Clerk has advised the PCC, and they are in the process of writing a request which will be presented at the next meeting.

22.222 To discuss a permanent speed camera on Station Road

Cllr Trew has requested the Council consider a permanent solar powered VAS device on Station Road, to avoid the bracket being vandalised again. The Clerk thought VAS devices needed to be rotated but will check with SCC and investigate device options for further discussion at the next meeting when Cllr Trew is present.

ACTION – Clerk as above

8:24pm Cllr Mellen left the meeting

22.223 To discuss the footbridge on Eastlands Lane

Cllr Trew has reported that the footbridge is in a very bad state of repair, making it dangerous to users, and likely to block the river if it collapses and falls in. The Footpath Warden advised prior to the meeting that he has reported the bridge on numerous occasions, and spoken to SCC directly, who confirmed the footbridge was flagged to them over 4 years ago. Yet despite this, no action has been taken. The Clerk will report it again stressing the potential hazard it creates in its current condition, and the Council's health and safety concerns.

ACTION – Clerk as above

22.224 Elections May 2023

Town and Parish Council elections are being held on 4th May 2023. Anyone wishing to stand for election must complete and hand in a Nomination Form by 4th April 2023. The official Notice of Election is 16th March 2023, and 9th May 2023 is the date retiring councillors step down and new councillors start. The Annual Parish Council meeting must be held within 14 days of 9th May 2023. The Clerk has upcoming election training with SALC, following which further details will be provided.

ACTION – Clerk as above

22.225 King's Coronation May 2023

Cllr Kilbee said that Friends of Finningham (FOF) are making village event plans for Saturday 6th May 2023, starting at 3pm once the Coronation has taken place. These are due to be held next to the White Horse pub. Councillors agreed for the beacon to be lit noting there appears to be no official lighting of the beacons as there was for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee last year. There was a discussion on whether this should happen on the Saturday in conjunction with the events being planned by FOF, or on the Sunday alongside the official nationwide act of celebration.

Councillors agreed unanimously to light the beacon on the Sunday, and went on to discuss ideas for a commemorative item to hand out to residents. Cllr Kilbee will ask Cllr Trew to contact the company who made the bespoke mugs for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee last year, in time for a decision to be made at the next meeting.

ACTION – Cllr Kilbee/Cllr Trew as above

22.226 Play Inspection Report 2023

An inspection was carried out on 1st February 2023 by the Play Inspection Company with an overall low risk assessment. Cllr Arthur will check through the report, look at the risks identified, and organise a working party to carry out any work that needs to be done.

ACTION – Cllr Arthur as above

22.227 Correspondence received

An email has been received from a resident asking the Parish Council to consider their objections to planning application DC/23/00337 (agenda item 21a). The contents were shared with councillors prior to the meeting.

22.228 Finance

a. RFO's report (bank balance, receipts, and payments)

Balances as of 29/12/2022

Community Bank Account

Balance as of 29 December 2022: £27,491.98

(Balance as of 29 Nov 2022: £29,477.45)

Receipts (since 29 Nov 2022): £0.00

Payments (since 29 Nov 2022): £1,985.47

Deposit Account

Balance as of 29 December 2022: £3,333.32

General funds: £10,680.42

Reserves (1/2 of precept & election costs): £4,258.71

Restricted funds (CIL & grants not spent): £15,886.17

b. Requests for payment

Admin J. Challis - £369.43

HMRC J. Challis - £92.40

Clerk expenses (J. Challis mileage) - £20.61

A. Kilbee mileage expenses to Ipswich archives - £32.07

MKM Agriculture (fuel for mowers) - £25.71

MKM Agriculture (service of mower MAGA1363092) - £210.88

MKM Agriculture (service of ride on mower MAHF2903120) - £437.96

Friends of Finningham (annual website fee) - £100.00

N. Arthur expenses (planings church track) - £57.00

A. Brownlie (biannual churchyard clearance) - £300.00
SWALEC electricity DIRECT DEBIT - £32.34

TOTAL payments - £1,678.40

The payment request for the churchyard clearance was discussed, following advice from the Clerk that the Parish Council may contribute towards utilities, but not churchyard maintenance.

SALC have provided the following confirmation:

NALC Legal advise that parish councils should not fund churchyard maintenance as this would breach the Local Government Act 1894, which prevents expenditure on works relating to the Church, or an ecclesiastical charity. This restriction overrides the power in the s.214, Local Government Act 1972 to maintain/fund cemeteries, or use if s.137 of the same Act.

Councillors were unaware of this restriction, and will take it into account for future contributions.

The invoice was approved because the work has already been carried out.

Cllr Winter proposed authorisation of the above payments, taking into account the advice received from SALC regarding the churchyard; seconded by Cllr Arthur and approved unanimously.

ACTION - Cllr Kilbee and Cllr Winter to pay the remaining above approved payments by bank transfer (dual authorisation). Cllr Black to confirm when he has access to online banking.

22.229 Planning

a. To consider applications

DC/23/00337 APPLICATION FOR OUTLINR PLANNING PERMISSION

Application for Outline Planning Permission (all Matters Reserved) Town and Country Planning 1990 (as amended) – Erection of 4 No. detached chalet bungalows. Location: Land Adjacent, White Horse Inn, Station Road, Finningham.

Cllr Kilbee handed chairmanship of the meeting over to Vice Chair Cllr Winter, having previously declared a non-pecuniary interest against this item.

Cllr Winter asked councillors for their comments against the application, and a discussion ensued during which concerns were raised including sustainability of the development, access, lack of supporting infrastructure and the settlement boundary. One councillor said they liked the design on the proposed chalet bungalows.

9:24pm the member of the public left the meeting.

Cllr Winter asked for councillors to vote on whether they supported or objected to the application.

1) To support planning application DC/23/00337

Votes for: 1

Votes against: 3

Abstentions: 1

2) To object to planning application DC/23/00337

Votes for: 3

Votes against: 0

Abstentions: 2

The vote to OBJECT to planning application DC/23/00337 carried. It was agreed for the Clerk to collate the objections raised for email approval, before submitting to MSDC Planning. Cllr Winter handed the meeting back to Cllr Kilbee.

ACTION – Clerk as above

Following email approval, the following comments was submitted to MSDC Planning Department:

Finningham Parish Council objects to planning application DC/23/00337, Land adjacent, White Horse Inn, Station road, Finningham, based on the following material considerations:

- The proposed development is outside of the settlement boundary of the Joint Local Plan.*
- It is not sustainable development and does not meet the interdependent sustainable development objectives of the NPPF.*
- The parish does not have the infrastructure capacity to support the development.*
- It is an overdevelopment of the site; the density of building design is too high.*
- The loss of sunlight, overshadowing, and loss of outlook is to the detriment of residential properties sited behind the proposed development.*

- *There are significant highways issues; the site access is next to a busy crossroads, and the location is an approved site for one of the Council's VAS devices due to traffic and speeding issues, which impact the visibility splays.*
- *Incompatible uses; the development site will share the current access with the White Horse Inn.*

b. Decisions & to consider planning matters coming forth.
None.

22.230 To discuss date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 14th March 2023 in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham.

22.231 Questions to Chairman

None.

22.232 Items to be discussed at the next meeting and included in the April agenda.

Elections and Annual Meeting dates.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9:45pm

FOOTPATH WARDEN'S REPORT

On footpath no. 5 (west of Finningham Hall): I am pleased to say that instead of replacing the broken treads, a completely new bridge has been placed here.

I was informed that the dog bin and adjacent finger post adjacent to the concrete pad on Eastlands Lane, had been struck and bent over. I took an initial look, and then returned a few days later with postcrete etc to remedy the situation. The dog bin had already been straightened, so I removed the finger post completely, deepened the hole and concreted the post in place.

I am thankful for whoever straightened the dog bin post? A gentleman who lives in the cottage against the railway line, said that some four wheel drive vehicles had been driving around in the field there recently venturing off the Byway. I believe the field belongs to Jim Miller (Miller Farms) Finningham. It seems that this Byway is a target for those that wish to test vehicles and cause damage/deep ruts.

Other than this we all can look forward to the Spring growth and trust that mowing of our designated footpaths by SCC are more timely this year.

DOUG AIKEN.

District Councillor's Report for Parish Councils - February 2023

Councillor Andy Mellen, Bacton Ward (Bacton, Cotton, Finningham, Westthorpe and Wyverstone)

Budget Proposals for 2023/4	<p>The district council's finances are split into two parts: The general fund, which is in very good shape, and the ring-fenced Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – which is not. The council will debate the 2023/24 budgets for both parts on the 23rd Feb. The administration is proposing a council tax freeze for residents. There will also be a reduction of up to 100% for residents with the lowest income and a simplification of the existing Council Tax reduction scheme for residents on Universal Credit. There has been an overspend of £893k on last year's budget but we are still able to put around £3m into reserves.</p> <p>Despite the difficulties of the most vulnerable, there is a proposed increase in council house rents by 7% to meet the rising costs of the Housing Revenue Account. This is less than the rate of inflation.</p>
Housing issues	<p>MSDC referred themselves to the Regulator of Social Housing because there were found to be some issues relating to health and safety compliance. The RSH reported their findings and will continue to monitor the Council's housing until the issues are resolved. An action plan has been agreed to ensure that our housing becomes compliant in a timely manner.</p>
Gateway 14	<p>Construction of Suffolk's largest shed - a state-of-the-art distribution unit for retailer The Range is officially underway at Gateway 14, after a ground-breaking ceremony at the end of January. Gateway 14 Ltd will provide a new base for manufacturing, logistics and R&D businesses with a particular focus on innovation and sustainability, as well as providing space for smaller and start-up businesses. There is a lot of interest as the site is part of Freeport East, an onshore tax haven.</p>
Houses for Homes	<p>Babergh and Mid Suffolk are aiming to reduce the number of long-term empty properties, and bring them back into use. There are currently an estimated 600 empty homes across the two districts. Houses for homes is a re-branding of the service in the hope that people will engage better with the Councils to bring these homes into use. If you know of any empty properties please let me know and the team will investigate.</p>
SHELF project	<p>MSDC Cabinet have approved the next phase of the business case for the Stowmarket wellbeing and leisure hub. Since the initial plans were drafted last year the project now intends to include a new sports pavilion, a multi-use games area, four indoor sports courts and a multi-agency wellbeing hub.</p>
Elections in May	<p>The local elections for parishes and the district council are taking place on 4th May. The pre-election restriction period will begin on 23rd March.</p>

	<p>This year for the first time voters will need to bring photographic ID when they attend a polling station to vote. Details of the types of ID which are acceptable can be found at https://www.babergh.gov.uk/elections/voter-id/ . Residents who do not have any form of acceptable ID need to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate or they can apply for a postal vote – where no ID is required.</p>
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Cllr Andy Mellen

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07790 992619

Parish Report – February 2023

Councillor: Andy Mellen

Division: Thedwastre North

Councillor Contact Details

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For information on local support during the Cost-of-Living Crisis, visit:

www.suffolk.gov.uk/CostOfLiving

Cllr Graham Newman

Residents may have seen the sad news that Cllr Graham Newman, until recently chairman of Suffolk County Council, passed away recently after a short illness. Cllr Newman was a Conservative Councillor for Felixstowe and served his division since 2005.

SCC Financial Budget

SCC is currently going through the process to approve the budget for 2023/24. At the beginning of January, the Scrutiny Committee examined the proposals in preparation for them to go to Cabinet and then Full Council. The Conservative administration's budget proposes a 3.99% increase in tax, broken down into a 2% rise in the Social Care Precept and a 1.99% increase in the general tax. The Council aim to make most of its savings through transformation schemes, as well as taking savings from ongoing unfilled vacancies amongst the Council's workforce.

Our opposition group have proposed an additional rise of 0.89% to improve services, and have tabled this as a budget amendment – to be discussed at a full council meeting on Thursday 9th Feb.

GLI Budget Amendments – Funding Vital Services

Our proposal of a 0.89% increase would generate an extra £3.3m of income for the council. For a Band B property this equates to a £9.94 annual rise, or 19p per week..

Currently, SCC is not on track to achieve Net Zero by 2030. Our Group proposes to invest in a Carbon Budget Officer, to help develop a clearer pathway towards Net Zero. In addition, we propose to facilitate a county-wide review into Suffolk's speed limits, in the hope to provide residents with a clearer path to more appropriate travel in their communities.

On the frontline, we will use £1m to actively recruit Occupational Therapists and Social Workers, as well as invest more into Suffolk Libraries to help maintain their necessary services through the cost-of-living crisis. In addition, we would invest £1m in providing wider capacity of community transport to be used to help achieve Net Zero.

Carbon Budget – SCC is Not on Track

At the beginning of January, the Scrutiny Committee met to examine the Carbon Budget. This document attempts to calculate the amount of carbon SCC emits through its services. More importantly, it shows the Council's progress towards achieving Net Zero by 2030.

This year's carbon budget shows that SCC is not on track to reach Net Zero by 2030. Current forecasts show that SCC will still be producing 10,000 tonnes of CO₂ in 2030 – that's still half of what we are emitting now.

Our Group believes more needs to be done to improve the accuracy of calculating all of SCC's emissions, which is why we have proposed employing a Carbon Budget Officer to provide a sole focus on improving the reporting of carbon emissions.

SCC's Further Investment in Trees & Hedgerows

SCC are planning to invest £110,000 in managing and inspecting trees and hedgerows. The money will be used to ensure that trees and hedgerows are given the best chance to thrive.

Currently, the Council has planted around 50,000 trees and hedging plants this planting season. This comes as the latest science indicates trees can capture nearly twice the amount of carbon as previously thought. Our Group believes this highlights the greater need to plant more trees, and more importantly how crucial it is to not unnecessarily cut trees down.

For more info, visit: <https://phys.org/news/2022-12-uk-woodlands-carbon-previously.html>

A14 Re-surfacing work

Work by Highways England to replace the concrete road surface on the A14 between Woolpit and Stowmarket was due to start this month, initially with overnight closures to start setting up the contraflow. Last week it was announced that the work programme is postponed and there appears to be some confusion about what is happening. The latest information I have been able to find is that the work is only being pushed back by a few weeks. The whole project is expected to take around 18 months to complete. Further information is available at www.nationalhighways.co.uk/A14concrete

Bus work

As part of ongoing work aiming to restore some of the lost bus services, it has been identified that Vertas (the council's wholly-owned facilities subsidiary) has some vehicles available during the school day, and some work is being done to see if there a service could be provided to villages in the west of the county using this resource.

