

# FINNINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

*Minutes for the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on  
Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022  
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, Cllr P. Trew, Cllr J. Black  
**In attendance:** Miss J. Challis (Clerk), DC & CC Cllr Mellen, 1 member of the public.

**22.185 Visiting speakers**

Cllr Mellen sent his District and County Council reports in advance of the meeting, which can be found as addendums at the end of the minutes.

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.

**22.186 Contribution by Members of the Public**

The member of the public present reported that there are redundant Bird Flu zone signs lying in a ditch on the B1113, and that graffiti has appeared on the wall of a property in the village.

**ACTION – Clerk to report the signs to Suffolk Highways, and speak to the Suffolk Police Community Engagement Officer regarding the graffiti.**

**22.187 Apologies and approval of absence**

None.

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

None received.

**22.189 To consider requests for dispensations on agenda items**

None received.

**22.190 To approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

Cllr Arthur proposed approving the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022 as a true and correct record; seconded by Cllr Kilbee and approved unanimously with three abstentions (councillors who were not present at the meeting). The Chairman then signed the minute book.

**22.191 Matters arising from the Parish Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

The Clerk reported that the work to the trees on the green has been completed.

**22.192 Chairman's Report**

I should like to thank Miller Farms for their help in cutting the hedges on the Green and the Cemetery. Also, I should like to thank Cllr Nige Arthur for helping me try to make some sense of the cemetery map, in light of the difficulty I had with establishing the position of an unmarked grave.

Since then, I have had notification of a burial that is going to take place next Tuesday in a reserved plot. Fortunately, the plot is already marked so, it will not cause any problem to identify it. However, the map that I was using (dated 2003) is also not correct. All this underlines the necessity of clearing the cemetery and producing an up-to date definitive map.

I have been continuing my endeavours with the Church Authorities to establish in whose hand the maintenance of the Graveyard fence lies. So far, I have not received a satisfactory resolution. In anticipation of an unfavourable outcome, I have received a comparative quotation. Enquiries to other Fencing Contractors have been fruitless.

I have established that the PC Minute Book covering the period where there may be an entry regarding this issue is in the Suffolk Records Office. Unfortunately, I shall not be able to visit there to view this document until the New Year. As there is a considerable amount of public money involved in this project. I propose that we leave the final decision until I have had a chance to research this avenue.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support throughout this year and wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy 2023.

8:00pm Cllr Mellen arrived.

## **22.193 Clerk's Report**

**EN020027 East Anglia GREEN EIA Scoping Notification and Consultation** – the Parish Council's response was approved by councillors via email, and submitted prior to the 5th December 2022 deadline. In addition, Jo Churchill MP has advised that National Grid have now conceded that they did not include the viable alternative option of an offshore route in their initial non-statutory consultation earlier in the year. She therefore believes that it is inappropriate for the scoping consultation to be conducted at the present time at all.

Parish Council's response to the Planning Inspectorate:

*Finningham Parish Council strongly OBJECTS to the National Grid's East Anglia Green Energy Enablement proposal to reinforce the high voltage electricity network from Norwich main substation to Tilbury substation, by way of a new line of 400kv pylons. We do not believe, and have seen no evidence, that National Grid has considered the effects on the environment, visually significant open spaces, or cultural assets of Finningham, or neighbouring parishes. Suffolk County Council has also confirmed its intention to object to the proposals, stating its belief that there are better ways to meet the demands of energy projects, such as an undersea network, which it claims has not been fully investigated.*

*The value of the pylons does not supersede the value or importance of the environmental surrounds of Finningham, or its cultural and visual assets. The pylons will be hugely detrimental and have a negative impact on property values and businesses linked to tourism in the parish. We believe the environmental, visual, and cultural constraints of the proposed pylon route will ultimately be significantly higher than the alleged budget savings of an overland route. We do not believe the viable alternative options have been fairly or transparently presented for public consultation by the National Grid. In fact we are aware that National Grid have now conceded to this, and therefore we strongly believe that it is not appropriate for the Scoping Consultation to be conducted at all at this time.*

*National Grid has started to remove pylons and overhead cable as it heads towards the conclusion of its first Visual Impact Provision, to transform views of the Dorset AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). It is inconceivable that National Grid's Visual Impact Provision does not extend to East Anglia.*

8:06pm Cllr Black arrived.

Cllr Kilbee proposed returning to agenda item 1; Visiting Speakers. Approved unanimously.

(22.185. Visiting speakers)

Cllr Mellen read through his District and County councillor reports.

Cllr Charter asked Cllr Mellen if he had further information regarding a proposal to move the current constituency so Finningham would be included under Diss, rather than Stowmarket. Cllr Mellen advised that this proposal is the result of the recent Boundary Review. It would see a new 'Waveney Valley' constituency centred around Diss, which would include the northern part of Suffolk. The review will conclude in June 2023 when the Boundary Commission for England will publish their final recommendations.

There were no further questions and Cllr Kilbee thanked Cllr Mellen for his reports.

## **22.194 To consider and approve Budget 2023/24**

The Clerk had prepared a draft Budget for councillors' consideration prior to the meeting. After discussing, Cllr Arthur proposed approval of the Budget 2023/24; seconded by Cllr Trew and approved unanimously.

## **22.195 To consider and approve Precept 2023/24**

After discussing, and taking into account the approved Budget 2023/24, councillors agreed to keep the precept request the same as last year (2022/23).

Cllr Kilbee proposed a precept request for 2023/24 of £7,243.00; seconded by Cllr Black and approved unanimously. Cllr Kilbee (Chair) and the Clerk then signed the completed precept request form.

**ACTION – Clerk to submit precept request form to MSDC by 31st January 2023 deadline.**

8:30pm Cllr Mellen left the meeting.

**22.196 Finningham GREEN Footpath CIL bid application**

Still awaiting a response from Suffolk Highways regarding their part of the joint application. Cllr Mellen has said he will speak to Suffolk Highways as well to see if he can ascertain the reason for the delay.

**22.197 To discuss the emergency plan.**

Cllr Trew reported that he has spoken to a professional risk assessor, who has advised they would only be able to provide a generic plan, because the requirements are so specific, and therefore it would be better for the Council to write their own plan. Councillors discussed whether an Emergency Plan is really necessary, given the complicity and potential liability implications, and decided to seek advice from SALC. Cllr Charter said current legislation should also be checked because the parish is situated between two main roads and a railway line.

**ACTION – Clerk to check legislation and seek advice from SALC as above.**

**22.198 To discuss Annual Newsletter to everyone in the village**

Cllr Kilbee again reminded everyone again that he urgently needs their biographies for the newsletter, and any other information they may wish to be included. Cllr Kilbee suggested a publication date of 1st March 2023 which was agreed unanimously. The charge to produce the newsletters will need to be an agenda item for approval at the next meeting.

**ACTION – Councillors to send their newsletter biographies to Cllr Charter asap. Cllr Charter to progress Annual Newsletter.**

**22.199 To discuss purchase of a generator**

Further to the November 2022 meeting, Cllr Arthur provided the delivery details and engine makes (Honda) for the preferred generator previously discussed. There are two options available; one large generator, or three smaller ones which can be linked to work together. After discussing, councillors agreed the three smaller generators would provide more options for use and be easier to move around. The Clerk confirmed that MSDC Infrastructure have said CIL funds can be used to fund them. Cllr Arthur proposed purchase of the three small Honda EU22i generators totalling £3,220.00 plus VAT. Seconded by Cllr Trew and approved unanimously.

**ACTION – Cllr Arthur/Clerk to arrange purchase of the generators as above**

**22.200 Cemetery Winter Maintenance Working Party update, including one off clearance quotation**

Cllr Kilbee reported that he inspected the cemetery with Cllr Arthur, and there is a lot of clearance work required. The area is very overgrown with established brambles that need to be cut back. The work is further hampered by the number of mole hills and ant nests. After looking into contractors to carry out the work, only one quotation has been received; £200.00 for a one off clearance. After discussing, councillors agreed that as per Financial Regulation 10.3, the best available terms have been obtained, taking into account the nature of the work required and timescales. Cllr Trew proposed accepting the quotation; seconded by Cllr Kilbee and approved unanimously.

**Action – Cllr Kilbee/Clerk to arrange for work to be carried out as above.**

**22.201 To discuss churchyard fencing quotations**

Ongoing; two quotations have been received so far, however Cllr Kilbee and the Clerk are still trying to clarify whether as a closed churchyard, the responsibility lies with the PCC or the Parish Council. Under the Local Government Act 1972 s.215, there must be a formal Order in Council by the Church, before maintenance of an officially closed churchyard can be passed on. Currently no evidence of an Order can be found either in the PCC or Parish Council records.

**22.202 Church Green track**

A resident has requested that some tarmac planings be kept on the green so residents can fill any holes on the track as and when they appear. This request was originally made following repairs to the track in 2021 to prevent the track needing such work again. Councillors agreed that the planings should be arranged, noting that Highways had previously been asked without success. Cllr Arthur has already investigated the purchase of the planings and sourced the best price for local delivery; £67.00 for delivery of 80kg. Cllr Arthur proposed proceeding with the purchase of the planings; seconded by Cllr Kilbee and agreed unanimously.

**ACTION – Clerk/Cllr Arthur to arrange purchase and delivery of the planings as above.**

**22.203 Correspondence received**

A resident has asked if the broken bench on the right-hand side of the track on the green, as you approach the church, could be removed. Since the request was received it has already been removed by persons unknown.

The same resident has also asked if maintenance of the long grass in the churchyard could be considered. They advised that a wildlife survey of the churchyard was carried out some years ago by Suffolk Wildlife Trust, which recommended a maintenance regime for the enhancement of the wildlife and plants. The resident is concerned that this maintenance regime is no longer being

taken into account. After discussing councillors agreed that they are happy for the long grass to only be cut once a year, and asked the Clerk to contact SWT to see if they can supply signage to explain the reason for this maintenance regime.

**ACTION – Clerk as above**

9:36pm the member of the public left the meeting.

**22.204 Finance**

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

**Balances as of 29/11/2022**

**Community Bank Account**

**Balance as of 29 November 2022: £29,477.45**

(Balance as of 28 Oct 2022: £30,004.71)

Receipts (since 28 Oct 2022): £0.00

Payments (since 28 Oct 2022): £527.26

**Deposit Account**

**Balance as of 29 November 2022: £3,331.46**

**General funds: £12,665.89**

**Reserves (1/2 of precept & election costs): £4,256.85**

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

**b. Requests for payment**

Admin J. Challis - £255.72

HMRC J. Challis - £64.00

Clerk expenses (J. Challis mileage) - £20.61

BTS (tree works)- £1,612.80

HL Perfitt (plot markers) - £144.00

**TOTAL payments - £2,097.13**

Cllr Kilbee proposed authorisation of the above payments; 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.**

**22.205 Planning**

a. To consider applications - None

b. Decisions & to consider planning matters coming forth.

- DC/22/04486 – Application for Planning Permission – Householder application – Erection of three bay cartlodge with home office over. Black Horse Barn, Walsham Road, Finningham, Stowmarket, IP14 4JN – **WITHDRAWN**.
- DC/22/05051 (received after publication of the agenda) - Householder application - Replacement and resiting of oil tank. Green Hall, Wickham Road, Finningham, Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4HT – **GRANTED**.

**22.206 To discuss date of the next meeting**

The next meeting be held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 7:30pm, in St Bartholomew's Church.

**22.207 Questions to Chairman**

None.

**22.208 Items to be discussed at the next meeting and included in the November agenda.**

None.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9:44pm

## **FOOTPATH WARDEN'S REPORT**

Well, we have certainly had our water butts topped up over the last month or so, so with this wet spell our footpaths have just been a little stickier, but as far as I have seen, there is no real problem.

On footpath 14 within the churchyard at grid ref. TM 06652 69362, I did find the directional fingerpost broken and fallen down, so I have squared off the base of post, treated it with oil and placed it in a fresh hole there. Yes, it is slightly shorter, but will last us a little longer.

Also at that area, it was pointed out to me that some sawn down Ivy stems were encroaching on to the footpath, so I have cleared these to the corner of the churchyard, near a fence bordering Green Hall, Finningham.

I believe it is common knowledge, but there is quite a build up of old branches etc. laying at this corner, and I do wonder if this could be another task for our village Maintenance Working Party, although it may require a skip or large trailer for it's removal?

I am pleased to report that all of the newly placed dog bins have been used. Sadly though, we still have a need it seems, to educate dog owners to clear up properly after their pet! I will endeavour to place some more signage in this regard.

Doug Aiken

# District Councillor Report: Bacton Ward / Cllr. Andrew Mellen

December 2022: Bacton, Cotton, Finningham, Westhorpe and Wyverstone

Exemplar Housing scheme proposal for Elmswell	The council has put forward proposals for an exemplar housing scheme in Elmswell. Unfortunately the way it was publicised led to the community feeling it was a <i>fait accompli</i> . For a variety of reasons the Green and Liberal Democrat Group have called in the decision for scrutiny because we believe the decision making process was flawed and not all information was brought before the Cabinet. This means that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will discuss this and may make recommendations for the Cabinet to consider when they discuss it again.
Road closures	The next few months will see various road closures relating to the various housing developments in Bacton and beyond. Turkey Hall Lane will be closed from 12 <sup>th</sup> December and when this reopens there will be a closure of Church Road by The Bull. There are also other closures further away but on routes that residents may use regularly: School Road in Elmswell and also the road through Hunston.
Locality grant	I have allocated £1200 from my locality budget to support the “warm hub” initiative at Bacton church and at Wyverstone, as well as other various amounts to other projects across the 5 villages.
Water quality and planning	At the last Council meeting we discussed a motion regarding water quality and the prevalence of wastewater discharges into our rivers and waterways. The motion was agreed by all councillors and recommended that this issue will be discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and that planning officers will request more information from Anglian Water when considering the impact of new large developments.
End of term report	Mid Suffolk’s end of term report has been published on the website <a href="https://www.babergh.gov.uk/the-council/performance/what-have-we-done-for-you-report">https://www.babergh.gov.uk/the-council/performance/what-have-we-done-for-you-report</a>
Standards of social housing	Following the tragic death of a toddler in Rochdale, Mid Suffolk and Babergh are undergoing a full diagnostic review of Building Services. This picked up the need to increase our input into resolving issues around mould and damp. We have acted on these recommendations. More officers are now able to deliver damp and mould treatment and employed a Damp Specialist Surveyor
County Deal for Suffolk	The Chancellor announced a new county deal for Suffolk, which hopes to deliver decades of significant investment for the area. The model is based on having a directly elected Leader for Suffolk County Council (who will not be a mayor) and the current leader/cabinet model will continue. We are still unsure exactly what this will mean for us as a District.

Cllr Andrew Mellen

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# Parish Report – December 2022

**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](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/CostOfLiving)

## Full Council Dec 1<sup>st</sup> – Motions on refugees / public transport / support for carers

Council met on the 1st December and amongst other business considered three motions: The administration had a motion thanking Suffolk households who are hosting Ukrainian refugees, and calling for more hosts to come forward – this received cross-party support. Our opposition group submitted a motion calling for an improved Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), including prioritising Demand-Responsive & Community Transport for Suffolk rural communities. The motion was debated but voted down. The Labour group put forward a motion on providing further support to carers, proposed by former Ipswich MP Sandy Martin – this issue was featured widely on TV and in the press, but again was not voted through.

Council leader Matthew Hicks also made a statement regarding the proposed devolution “county deal” for Suffolk, under which further resources would be allocated to Suffolk’s local authorities. The price of this is that there will have to be a **directly-elected council leader** (but not a mayor) who would lead and choose the cabinet for the County Council. Apparently this would not result in an extra tier of bureaucracy but at present it is not clear how this would be achieved.

## Cabinet 8<sup>th</sup> November

The Cabinet met to discuss the second quarter forecasts for the Council’s budget (June to Sept). Currently, there is a worry as they have reported a £12.2m budget gap – largely due to inflation and energy prices. The Council will use Reserves to cover this cost. However, this cannot be a long-term solution. There is concern that the Council will not be fully funded by this Government to deliver the same services to residents.

The Cabinet also met to agree a new road enforcement scheme, and to apply for new Government powers to penalise drivers who commit offences affecting buses. The trial for the scheme has selected four sites in Ipswich for a cost of over £200,000. Our Group believes this money could’ve been spent more appropriately on bus priority measures, new bus lanes, and maintaining rural services.

## By-election result

There was a by election in Beccles on the 17<sup>th</sup> November to replace Green Councillor Peggy McGregor who stood down. The result was that the Green Party candidate Ash Lever retained the seat with a huge majority. This leaves the overall political situation on the County Council unchanged: Conservative 55 councillors; opposition GLI group 15 and Labour 5.

## SEND Services – Update on Lincolnshire Report

Last year, Suffolk CC's SEND services were criticised in a review conducted by Lincolnshire Council. We recently received an update outlining the progress our SEND services have made to implement the report's recommendations.

We were told 22 of the 32 recommendations have been actioned, and the remaining 10 will be completed by the end of 2022. The delivery of 1317 new specialist school places by 2026 has been agreed and 826 of these places are now open. The number of Education Health Care Plans (EHP) has increased to 6847 in September 2022, from 5849 in September 2020.

### **Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan – Update**

The Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group met to update leaders on the progress of the county's action plan to achieve net zero by 2030. A new Suffolk Climate Emergency Dashboard has been set up to display the latest data and performance measures, as well as other action such as a successful communications campaign, additional match funding, homeowner support services, and a Net-Zero knowledge hub to educate businesses.

Next steps include investments in EV charging infrastructure and developing a community energy sector. The Leaders Group agreed to release £923,458 of previously allocated funding to further implement actions. The next review will be in Spring 2023.

### **Suffolk looks for more hosts**

New hosts coming forward to help accommodate guests from Ukraine that are already in Suffolk can sign up via the Suffolk County Council website, by [completing our online form](#) or emailing [refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk).

Accommodation must be available to guests for a minimum of 6 months. Hosts will be eligible to receive the £350 thank you payment for up to 6 months or more, depending on the date your guests arrived in the UK (12 months starting from the date your guests first arrived in the UK).

If you know anyone that might be interested, please encourage them to visit [Ukraine: Could you help a family in need? | Suffolk County Council](#)

### **Buses in our community**

I attended a meeting in Woolpit on the 30<sup>th</sup> November where representatives from several parishes met to discuss what could be done to provide a local bus service in some form to serve our communities. Various options were discussed, there are several logistical and legal hurdles to be overcome but the group has asked the district council to help with surveys of the need.

