

FINNINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

*Draft Minutes for the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on
Tuesday 11th April 2023
in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham, starting at 7:30pm*

Present: Cllr A. Kilbee, Cllr N. Arthur, Cllr J. Miller, Cllr P. Trew, Cllr J. Black

In attendance: Miss J. Challis (Clerk), CC & DC Cllr Mellen, 2 members of the public.

22.260 Visiting speakers

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

Mr Aiken's Footpath Warden's report can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

22.261 Contribution by Members of the Public

The member of the public reported that whilst litter picking in the parish, they found a quantity of large black bin bags containing sanitary waste which had been fly tipped. Cllr Kilbee asked the member of the public to confirm the location and said he would report them to MSDC.

22.262 Apologies and approval of absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Charter and Cllr Winter (both prior engagements). Approval proposed by Cllr Trew, seconded by Cllr Arthur, and approved unanimously.

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

None received.

22.264 To consider requests for dispensations on agenda items

None received.

22.265 To approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14th March 2023

Cllr Trew proposed approving the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14th March 2023 as a true and correct record; seconded by Cllr Kilbee and approved unanimously with one abstention (councillor who was not present at the meeting). The Chairman then signed the minute book.

7:32pm one member of the public joined the meeting

22.266 Matters arising from the Parish Council meeting held on 14th March 2023

All covered elsewhere on the agenda.

22.267 Chairman's Report

As this is the last meeting before the current council retires, it is an opportune moment for me to express my gratitude to everyone who has sat on this Council in an attempt to maintain the village infrastructure.

I know that it is sometimes an uphill task with very little acknowledgement from the residents for the work that you do. However, I hope that you have gained some measure of satisfaction from what we have achieved over the last four years.

To those who are not standing for re-election, I should like to thank them for the years they have given up their time to sit on this Council. Your contribution is much appreciated.

I am very pleased to note that there are some Councillors who are standing again and I thank them in advance for continuing in that role. Hopefully, we shall be able to conclude the projects that are in hand.

Finally, I should like to make a special mention of our Clerk, Jane. She has not been too long with us but during that time has proven to be a great asset to the Council and has, on occasions performed beyond the call of duty. Without her running around with the election forms, getting them registered and scrutinised, we would probably be without a Council after polling day.

As you all know, we have an allocation of 7 Councillors but with only 4 registered, there will not be an election. However, we shall be in the position to co-opt other members, as we shall have a quorum.

May I remind you to use your right to vote at the Mid Suffolk District elections on 4th May.

7:34pm Cllr Miller and Cllr Black arrived.

22.268 Clerk's Report

- Elections – the Clerk delivered the completed nomination forms to the mobile Electoral Stations in Eye and Stowmarket prior to the 4th April deadline. The subsequent Statement of Persons Nominated for Finningham confirms an uncontested election result, with three casual vacancies. On the 9th of May 2023, current councillors will retire, and new councillors take office.
- EN020027 East Anglia GREEN Update – National Grid have advised that during their late Spring/early Summer non statutory consultation, they will be including a draft indicative alignment which will show proposed positions for pylons and overhead lines. The exact date of the consultation is yet to be advised.
- The SAAA (Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd) have confirmed PFK Littlejohn will be acting as external auditor for the next 5-year period 2022/23-2026/27.
- BMSDC are holding a Formal Public Consultation on their Joint Local Plan Proposed Modifications between 16th March and 3rd May 2023. The details have been shared with councillors for any comments they may have.

ACTION – Councillors to advise the Clerk if they wish to make comment on the Joint Local Plan Proposed Modifications by 3rd May 2023.

22.269 Finningham GREEN Footpath CIL bid application

Cllr Kilbee and the Clerk attended a Teams meeting with Roy Emmerson from the Infrastructure Team at MSDC, Katherine Davies MSDC's Sustainable Travel Officer, and Cllr Mellen, on 21st March 2023. Katherine Davies reported that Claire Dickson, Suffolk County Council Area Rights of Way Manager, has agreed to visit the site to ascertain whether the footpath could be progressed as a Rights of Way project rather than a Highways project. From the Teams meeting it seems that the project has stalled because Highways collaborating with parishes on a joint CIL bid is new, and CIL can only be used where it supports active travel (walking & cycling etc.). The Clerk has previously sent a statement to Highways on behalf of the PC, detailing why the footpath is needed and how it supports active travel, alongside testimonials of support from residents. It was agreed at the Teams meeting that these should be reviewed and resent to Highways. Councillors discussed the application with Cllr Trew advising that the school bus has now changed its route to prevent children having to use the footpath, which they consider is too dangerous. Subsequently the bus takes a much longer route to collect and drop off children at school times. It was agreed for the Clerk to amend the statement from the PC to include the information about the bus route, and how the footpath would therefore reduce such journeys which obviously have a negative environmental impact. It was also agreed to look at conducting a survey on the number of people using the footpath after the Easter holidays.

ACTION – Clerk to amend the PC's statement as above

22.270 To discuss the emergency plan

Following the last meeting, Freddie Gulliver the Emergency Planning Officer from Suffolk County Council, sent a template for a Community Emergency Plan, which was shared with councillors. Following a discussion, councillors agreed unanimously that they feel an Emergency Plan would be more beneficial to the County Council than to the Parish Council, and that as the village does not have any assets such as a village hall, they do not wish to proceed with an Emergency Plan.

ACTION – Clerk to thank Freddie Gulliver for his time, but advise that the PC does not wish to proceed with an Emergency Plan.

7:47pm Cllr Mellen arrived

Cllr Kilbee proposed returning to agenda item 2. Approved unanimously.

(22.260 Visiting speakers)

Cllr Kilbee commented on the Community Infrastructure Levy Expenditure Framework included in Cllr Mellen's District report, which relates to the Footpath CIL bid application.

A member of the public asked if anything can be done to make road closure signage clearer.

There being no further questions or comments Cllr Kilbee thanked Cllr Mellen for his reports.

22.271 To discuss Annual Newsletter to everyone in the village

Following Cllr Charter's suggestion at the last meeting that it might be beneficial to create a joint newsletter with the FoF (Friends of Finningham), it was hoped that representatives from FOF

would be in attendance to discuss this further. Unfortunately, they were unable to join the meeting, so this item will be deferred.

22.272 To consider formal request from Finningham PCC for the Parish Council to take on maintenance of the churchyard

Following the formal request received from the PCC for the Parish Council to take over maintenance of the churchyard, as per s.215 of the Local Government Act 1972, at the March meeting, SALC have provided advice regarding liability implications in the form of NALC's LTN (Legal Topic note) 65, which was shared with councillors prior to the meeting.

Paragraph 9 of LTN 65 states: *'The onus is on the PCC to ensure that the churchyard is in decent order and its walls and fences are in good repair before responsibility passes to the Parish Council or chair of the parish meeting'*.

Paragraph 13 of LTN 65 states: *'There is no statutory guidance on the appropriate standard to which a closed churchyard should be maintained'*.

After discussing, Cllr Kilbee proposed the Council agree to take on maintenance of Finningham churchyard, with the caveat, that as per NALC's LTN 65, the churchyard is in decent order, and the walls and fences are in good repair before the responsibility passes to the Parish Council. Seconded by Cllr Arthur and approved unanimously. Cllr Kilbee asked the Clerk to arrange a meeting with the PCC to advise them of the decision, and discuss the current level of repair of the walls and fences.

ACTION – Clerk as above

22.273 Playground Improvements

The play bark has been ordered and a working party will be organised to install it prior to the King's Coronation weekend, and the Annual Flower Festival.

22.274 To consider and approve a new VAS device, and approve purchase of new batteries for existing device

Cllr Trew has obtained three quotations for new batteries for the existing device. After discussing and agreeing on the preferred supplier, at a cost of £54.14 per battery, Cllr Kilbee proposed ordering the four batteries required. Seconded by Cllr Arthur and approved unanimously. The preferred supplier accepts payments by account or card only, so Cllr Trew offered to purchase the batteries and submit an expenses form for reimbursement. Approved unanimously.

Cllr Kilbee obtained three quotations for a new VAS device. It is intended for this one to be rotated between locations, whilst the current device becomes permanently installed on Station Road, and switched off for a minimum of one week, after a three – four week operational period, as per Suffolk Highway's guidance. After discussing, councillors agreed their preferred device from Elancity, which is the same as the current one, at a cost of £2,580 plus delivery and VAT. Cllr Kilbee proposed ordering the preferred device, seconded by Cllr Black, and approved unanimously. The Clerk confirmed that CIL funds can be used.

ACTION – Cllr Trew to order new batteries, and Clerk to arrange order/payment of new VAS device, both as above.

22.275 King's Coronation May 2023, including approval of any additional expenditure

The paperweights have been ordered and delivery will be in time for the 6th May 2023. Cllr Miller will make sure the beacon is made ready for lighting on Sunday 7th May 2023.

It was not possible to find a mobile caterer available to attend the beacon lighting, so councillors agreed to invite residents to bring their own food and drink for a 'DIY picnic on the green', alongside the lighting of the beacon, between 4-6:30pm. The commemorative paperweights will also be handed out, and the beacon will be lit at 6:30pm. Cllr Kilbee will create some posters to advertise the event, and source some bunting to cordon off the beacon. Cllr Trew will complete a risk assessment.

ACTION – Cllr Kilbee as above

22.276 Correspondence received

A resident has emailed requesting copies of Parish Council meeting minutes relating to historic planning applications. The Clerk has provided copies and directed the resident to the Parish Council's website where minutes can be found.

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22.277 Finance

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

Balances as of 29/03/2023

Community Bank Account

Balance as of 29 March 2023: £25,265.63

(Balance as of 27 February 2023: £26,145.92)

Receipts (since 27 February 2023): £0.00

Payments (since 27 February 2023): £880.29

Deposit Account

Balance as of 29 March 2023: £3,337.46

General funds: £8,454.07

Reserves (1/2 of precept & election costs): £4,262.85

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

b. Requests for payment

Admin J. Challis - £264.28

HMRC J. Challis - £66.10

Clerk expenses (J. Challis mileage) - £31.20

SALC (Annual subscription) - £242.76

Gear GB (3 x linked Honda generators) - £3,864.00

Perfitts (Plot markers) - £144.00

N. Arthur expenses (5 x play bark) - £374.75

TOTAL payments - £4,987.09

Cllr Trew proposed authorisation of the above payments, seconded by Cllr Black and approved unanimously with one abstention against N. Arthur's expenses (Cllr Arthur).

ACTION - Cllr Kilbee and Cllr Winter to pay the remaining above approved payments by bank transfer (dual authorisation).

c) Review of reserves

Deferred; Clerk to send breakdown to councillors.

d) Bank account signatories

Cllr Black confirmed that he will telephone Barclays again to activate his access to the online banking facilities. Cllr Trew completed a mandate to be added as a signatory, which was counter signed by Cllr Kilbee and Cllr Black.

ACTION – Cllr Black to activate online banking, and Clerk to submit completed bank mandate

22.278 Planning

a. To consider applications

- DC/23/01226 Proposal: Full Planning Application - Erection of 1no. detached dwelling and garage with new vehicular access (following demolition of existing single storey dwelling), Ivy Place, Wickham Road, Finningham, Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4HT.

A member of the public advised that they were attending the meeting regarding this application. Cllr Kilbee gave permission for them to speak at this point, and they provided a brief summary of the application. Councillors discussed the application, agreeing unanimously that they have no objection.

ACTION – Clerk to add no objection comment to MSDC planning portal

b. Decisions & to consider planning matters coming forth

- **DC/23/00337 APPLICATION FOR OUTLINE 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 – **REFUSED**

22.279 To discuss date of the next meeting

The Annual Village Meeting will be held on 9th May 2023 at 7pm, followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting at 7:30pm, in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham.

22.280 Questions to Chairman

No questions.

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

Nothing received.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:46pm.

