

# FINNINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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

**Present:** Cllr Kilbee, Cllr C. Winter, Cllr J. Charter, Cllr Trew, Cllr Davies, Cllr Black

**In attendance:** Miss J. Challis (Clerk), Cllr Mellen, 3 members of the public.

**23.160 Visiting speakers**

Cllr Mellen's reports can be found as an addendum 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.

**23.161 Contribution by Members of the Public**

A member of the public said they had some questions regarding the village green for the Parish Council, on behalf of Friends of Finningham. They asked if further thought had been given to a hard surface underneath the basketball hoop, whether the surfacing of the green could be improved to allow sporting events to be held such as rounders, and if consideration could be given to the installation of a graffiti wall.

Cllr Kilbee thanked the member of the public and said that the surface of the green will be looked at when quotations for grass cutting are sought, and that the Parish Council will be asking residents for feedback on improvements/future use of the green when the first copy of the newsletter is distributed.

A member of the public was present to discuss the recent flooding following Storm Babet, agenda item 18.

**23.162 Apologies and approval of absence**

None.

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

None.

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

None.

**23.165 To approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

Cllr Trew proposed approving the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023 as a true and correct record; seconded by Cllr Davies and approved unanimously with one abstention (Cllr who was not present at the meeting).

**23.166 Matters arising from the Parish Council meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

All covered elsewhere on the agenda.

**23.167 Chairman's Report**

First, a thank you to Catherine who, I understand, ran a very tight meeting in my place last month, with the business lasting just about one hour.

I should like to welcome Roger to his second meeting and is now a fully-fledged Parish Councillor and I'm sure will be a great asset to the Council.

Those of you attended the Wreath-laying ceremony at the War Memorial on Sunday last will know that, as usual, I laid a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.

We received notification from NALC that a salary increase has been awarded to Parish Clerks.

As usual, they were late in issuing this information, as the increase was awarded last April. This means that we shall have to make up Jane's payment this month to include this back pay.

Next month we shall be addressing the Budget for the coming year and we need to give it careful thought, as I fear that we are going to have to pay for quite a bit of tree surgery in the near future. Not forgetting the vexed Churchyard Fence issue.

Thank you all for your Bios and photographs for the Finningham Gazette, One "Mug Shot" was not quite as I had expected! Reuben is busy working on it and I still hope we can publish before Christmas. If anyone has got anything that want to offer, there is still time enough to submit it.

#### **23.168 Clerk's Report**

- The concerns raised by a resident regarding trees overshadowing their property on the unnamed road off Gislingham Road, have been shared with MSDC's Arboricultural Officer, Suffolk County Council, and the Environment Agency. They have all confirmed they hold no responsibility for the trees and suggest the land owner needs to be identified through the Land Registry.
- Recent Flooding: Suffolk County Council is designated as the Lead Local Flood Authority, with a duty to collect information about the impact of flooding including undertaking investigations into "significant" flood events. All affected residents are encouraged to report significant flooding to individual properties using the Highways Reporting Tool, or calling the SCC customer service number: 0345 606 6171. [Report a flood in Suffolk - Suffolk County Council](#)
- MSDC have sent an invitation to participate in a Consultation on Local Listed Building Consent Orders, which is open until 29th December 2023. The details have been shared with councillors. Cllr Davies suggested the consultation should be shared with owners of listed buildings in the parish. The Clerk will confirm with MSDC that it is a public consultation.
- NALC has advised that the LGA (Local Government Association) pay scales 2023/24 have now been agreed, and are backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.
- A complaint has been received regarding the condition of the railings/parapets of the bridge over the river Dove on the B1113. A report has been raised with Suffolk Highways who have replied to say that they do not have the budget to repaint them at the moment, but due to the galvanised paint used, they will respond well to being cleaned. Following a report of significant flooding on Eastlands bridge from Cllr Trew, they also advised that this bridge is not an asset managed by the Structures Team, and instead comes under the Drainage Team, with whom they have shared the report for their consideration and response.

#### **23.169 Finningham GREEN Footpath update**

No update.

#### **23.170 Annual Newsletter update, including consideration of printing costs**

No update on the printing costs. It was agreed to aim for the first newsletter to be ready to send at the end of December 2023 so that it does not coincide with delivery of the Friends of Finningham newsletter in the first week in December.

#### **23.171 Churchyard Maintenance update**

The Diocesan Registrar has advised that neither the Diocesan Registry or Diocesan Office has a copy of the closure Order for Finningham Churchyard. They have said it needs to be obtained from the Coroners and Burials Division of the Ministry of Justice.

**ACTION – Clerk to request copy of closure Order as above**

#### **23.172 To discuss newly installed Church pathway**

Cllr Kilbee reported that the PCC have installed a new pathway from the existing one to the church porch. However, the quality of the finish is a concern as the slabs present a trip hazard because they do not sit level, and some rock when walked on. Cllr Kilbee has spoken to the Governance Manager and DAC Secretary who has advised that the PCC has not yet received a faculty from the Chancellor for the work, and no faculty will be issued until the church has addressed the concerns that have been raised. They will arrange for a site visit to take place to assess the work.

Councillors also discussed whether the work requires planning permission for the materials used, due to the church being listed. The Clerk will check with MSDC.

8:20pm Cllr Mellen arrived.

Cllr Kilbee proposed moving back to agenda item 1. Approved unanimously.

#### **(23.160 Visiting Speakers)**

Cllr Kilbee thanked Cllr Mellen for agreeing to fund the additional design costs for the footpath, and raised his concern that the additional work may lead to the overall cost being higher than initially quoted.

Cllr Mellen read through his District and County Councillor reports, highlighting the County Council's response to the recent flooding, and the financial assistance available from the government for any residents directly affected.

Cllr Kilbee thanked Cllr Mellen for his reports.

**23.173 To discuss quotations for works to trees on the green**

The Clerk has obtained three quotations for works to the trees on the green. The quotations vary in the work each contractor says is required. It seems there are two dead beech trees which need to either be felled completely or partially left as habitat poles, a horse chestnut with bleeding canker, and one or two ash trees which need some dead wood removing. The costs quoted are high and it is unclear how urgently the work is required. The Clerk suggested that Richard Parmee, MSDC Biodiversity Manager might be able to offer advice on what work is actually required and how urgently. Councillors agreed this to be the best way forward for impartial advice.

**ACTION – Clerk to contact Richard Parmee as above**

**23.174 To discuss Mid Suffolk District Council's Pride in Your Place Grant**

The Clerk has successfully applied for MSDC's Pride in Your Place grant of £250.00, which can be used on anything to improve the appearance and/or cleanliness of the parish, including things like cleaning the bridge railings/parapets mentioned in the Clerk's report.. The grant must be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and receipts must be provided. Cllr Kilbee asked councillors to consider the expenditure, to be agreed at the next meeting.

**ACTION – All councillors as above.**

8:40pm Cllr Black arrived.

**23.175 To discuss cemetery winter maintenance**

The contractor who provided a quotation to cut the grass on the green, also provided a cost to do a one-off cut of the cemetery grass. Councillors considered the cost and whether it would be better to proceed with a professional contractor, or arrange a working party. No decision was made and it will be discussed again at the next meeting.

8:48pm one member of the public left the meeting.

**23.176 To discuss cemetery costs**

The cemetery costs were last increased 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022. After reviewing and discussing the fees, it was agreed to keep them the same and review again November 2024.

**23.177 To discuss Eastlands bridge and village flooding**

Cllr Trew said he feels Eastlands bridge is unsuitable as evidenced by the recent flooding and that fact that it is historically a ford crossing. Future flooding could be prevented if the bridge were replaced with something that allowed unrestricted flow. At the moment Cllr Trew and the member of the public present regularly check the bridge and unblock the three pipes which are frequently blocked with debris.

Cllr Charter said that since the flooding has been addressed on Westhorpe Road there have been no further issues in that location.

As reported in 23.168, the Clerk has reported the Eastlands bridge flooding issue to Suffolk Highways, who have said it comes under the jurisdiction of the Drainage Team. The report has been shared with them, but no response received as yet. The member of the public said they have a direct contact for the Internal Drainage Board, which they will share with the Clerk.

9:14pm one member of the public left the meeting.

**23.178 Defibrillator cabinet**

Cllr Trew has looked at the lock, and confirmed it does work, but could do with oiling. He will do this and see if it makes a difference.

**ACTION – Cllr Trew as above**

**23.179 Correspondence received**

None.

**23.180 To approve Internal Audit 2022/23 comments**

Deferred.

8:13pm Cllr Black arrived

**23.181 Finance**

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

Balances as of 29/08/2023

Community Bank Account

Balance as of 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023: £12,221.76

**Deposit Account**  
**Balance as of 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023: £3,344.42**

**b. Requests for payment**

Clerk admin payment November 2023, including backdated LGA pay increase.	£444.80
Clerk November expenses	£33.32
HMRC November PAYE/NIC	£111.20
T. Kilbee expenses (remembrance wreath)	£31.48
Top Garden Services (emergency work to tree in cemetery)	£480.00
SALC (budget training)	£36.00
SALC (new councillor training)	£36.00

Cllr Winter proposed authorisation of the above payments, seconded by Cllr Davies and approved unanimously, with one abstention against T. Kilbee expenses (Cllr Kilbee).

**ACTION – Cllr Kilbee and either Cllr Winter or Cllr Trew to pay the above approved payments, (dual authorisation).**

**23.182 Planning**

**a) To consider applications**

- DC/23/04908 – Application for planning permission. Proposal: Householder Application. Erection of timber framed two bay cartlodge. Location: Willow Drive, Gislingham Road, Finningham, IP14 4HZ.  
After discussing, councillors agreed they have no comment against this application.
- DC/23/04466 – Proposal: Application for the Modification of a Section 106 Planning Obligation - Variation of S106 legal agreement dated 11.12.2019 relating to DC/17/06190 (affordable dwellings). Location: Green Farm Wickham Road Finningham Suffolk IP14 4HT.  
After discussing, councillors agreed that they object to this application for the following reason: The original application, DC/17/06190, was supported in principle by the Council due to the inclusion of the 5 affordable homes. The parish has an aging population which is significantly higher than the average for England, as evidenced by the State of the District Report 2023, and the affordable homes are necessary to enable younger buyers to purchase properties in the parish. Furthermore, as the affordable housing element was part of the original planning application, its removal should require a new application to be submitted for the whole development, as it is more than just a modification.  
Proposed by Cllr Kilbee, seconded by Cllr Trew and approved unanimously.

**ACTION – Clerk to add comments to MSDC Planning Portal as above**

**b) Decisions & to consider planning matters coming forth**

- DC/23/01300 - APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - Proposal: Householder Application - Erection of single-storey rear extension. Location: Yew Tree House, Church Lane, Finningham, IP14 4JB – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- DC/23/01301 - APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT - Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent - Erection of single storey rear extension and associated internal and external alterations as per Schedule of Works. Location: Yew Tree House, Church Lane, Finningham, IP14 4JB – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- DC/23/04246 - APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - Proposal: Householder application - Erection of Cartlodge. Location: Last Oak, Westhorpe Road, Finningham, Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4TW – **REFUSED.**
- DC/23/04137 - APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT - Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent - Erection of single storey side garden room extension (following demolition of existing). Location: The Cottage, Church Green, Finningham, Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4HU – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- DC/23/04625 - APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - Proposal: Householder application - Erection of single storey side garden room extension (following demolition of existing). Location: The Cottage, Church Green, Finningham, Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4HU – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- DC/23/04036 – Application for Planning Permission. Proposal: Householder Application - Erection of two storey extension (following removal of single storey extension). Location: 7 Westhorpe Road, Finningham, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 4TN – **GRANTED.**

**23.183 Training**

Approval for Cllr Davies to attend SALC New Councillor training over two online sessions, at a total cost of £120.00 plus VAT. Approval proposed by Cllr Kilbee, seconded by Cllr Charter and approved unanimously with one abstention (Cllr Davies).

**ACTION – Clerk to send training dates to Cllr Davies.**

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

The next meeting will be held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 7.30pm, in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham.

**22.185 Questions to Chairman**

None.

**22.186 Items to be discussed at the next meeting and included in the December agenda.**

Budget 2024/25 and Precept request 2024/25.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:38pm.

