

FINNINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

*Minutes for the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on
Tuesday 23rd January 2024
in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham, starting at 7:30pm*

Present: Cllr Kilbee, Cllr C. Winter, Cllr Charter, Cllr Davies, Cllr Black

In attendance: Miss J. Challis (Clerk), Cllr Mellen, Mr Aiken (Footpath Warden)

23.212 Chair's welcome and to consider and approve apologies for absence

The meeting started at 7:39pm due to the late arrival of the Clerk. Cllr Kilbee noted the Clerk's apologies and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Cllr Trew; approval proposed by Cllr Kilbee, seconded by Cllr Winter and approved unanimously.

23.213 Visiting speakers

Cllr Mellen's reports can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

Mr Aiken present his Footpath Warden's report, a copy of which can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes. Cllr Kilbee thanked Mr Aiken for his report.

23.214 Contribution by Members of the Public

No members of the public present.

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

None.

23.216 To consider requests for dispensations on agenda items

None.

23.217 To approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12th December 2023

Cllr Winter proposed approving the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12th December 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).

23.218 Matters arising from the Parish Council meeting held on 12th December 2023

All covered elsewhere on the agenda.

23.219 Chairman's Report

First, if it is not too late, I should like to wish you all a Happy New Year and hope that you had a great Christmas.

I have a feeling that we have a tough year ahead of us with a number of issues that will probably stretch our finances so, we shall have to husband our resources carefully and even though we have approved an increase in our Precept, I do not think we shall be able to satisfy all demands. A great concern of mine which has recently risen to the fore is the negative vibes which have been circulating. You may have seen on the Church Notice Board that the Path has been removed because the Parish Council objected to it. Also, this rumour has been circulating around the village (although, I do not know how far it has spread). I asked you to give me your opinion on how to tackle this particular issue and I believe the consensus of opinion was that we should not enter into a slanging match and maintain our dignity. I agree with that but I we need to address it somehow. Unfortunately, there is no room in the Gazette to add any comments. We can discuss that later in the Agenda.

A post was recently put onto the Friends of Finningham website reporting a drain cover which had come off and left a gaping hole outside the entrance to Green Farm. There was a scathing comment directed against us that the problem had been reported to the "Council" (I do not know which one) and nothing had happened. Another post said that was to be expected (I paraphrase). Andy Brownlie has replaced the cover but the frame is broken. I had a look at it this morning and it certainly does not look as though SCC Highways would be interested as I do not think that it is

theirs; it is too far away from the road edge. The drain may be the responsibility of Anglian Water or of the householder of Green Farm. I shall investigate.

23.220 Clerk's Report

- MSDC are holding a Joint Local Validation List Consultation due to local validation list changes which runs from 22nd January to 4th March 2024. Full details sent to councillors.
- MSDC have sent through information on organising a spring litter pick.
- The Citizens Advice Bureau have sent an invitation to a 'Cost of Living Forum' being held via Zoom on 16th February 2024.
- The new Parish Council gov.uk email accounts and domain have been set up by Community Action Suffolk. They will be published once all councillors have confirmed they can access them.
- National Grid has emailed a newsletter update on their Norwich to Tilbury proposal, which can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.
- The complaint regarding trees on the river Dove is ongoing; Cllr Trew has forwarded correspondence between Suffolk Highways and a resident, which suggests Highways have previously indicated responsibility for the location.
- Cllr Davies asked the Clerk to look into whether planning permission had been sought for building work recently started on Station Road. This work is in relation to planning consultation DC/23/02133.
- Adam Ferguson has taken over from Stefan Henriksen as the Local Community Police Engagement Officer. He will be invited to be a guest speaker at the Annual Parish Meeting in May.

8:10pm Cllr Black arrived.

23.221 To consider and approve Precept request 2024/25

After discussing, it was agreed to request an amount of £10,025.00 to cover the Budget 2024/25 in full, (which was approved at the previous meeting). This is an increase on previous years' precept request, and will result in the Parish tax base increasing by approximately 36%. However, councillors were in agreement that the council's reserves should not be depleted further to account for the shortfall, as has happened previously, and noted that the 36% increase actually only equates to an additional amount of 0.24p weekly.

Proposed by Cllr Davies, seconded by Cllr Kilbee and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to send completed precept request form, signed by Cllr Kilbee and the Clerk, to MSDC by 31st January 2024 deadline.

23.222 Finningham GREEN Footpath update

Ongoing; Highways advised that they were due to complete trial holes on 15th January to survey underground services in the vicinity of the footpath, but have not updated further as yet.

ACTION – Clerk to pursue an update.

23.223 Finningham Green; basket ball hoop surfacing and quotations received

Cllr Kilbee is waiting for updated quotations for the work as the previous ones are now out of date. MSDC have confirmed that the work is eligible for a Capital Grant. If an application was to be successful, it could potentially cover 100% of the costs up to a maximum £10,000.00, but the council would not be able to submit another Capital Grant application for the following 3 application windows. To be carried over to the next meeting.

23.224 To discuss Annual Newsletter progress

Cllr Kilbee presented a draft copy of the newsletter, and will share a digital copy with councillors for their feedback.

ACTION – Cllr Kilbee as above

8:20pm Cllr Mellen arrived

Cllr Kilbee proposed returning to agenda item 2 Visiting Speakers; approved unanimously.

(23.213 Visiting Speakers)

In addition to his reports, Cllr Mellen shared an update on the Eastlands Bridge flooding issue, advising that he has raised a report which has been forwarded to the Highways Structures Team, and is awaiting their response.

Cllr Kilbee thanked Cllr Mellen for his reports.

23.225 Churchyard Maintenance update

The Clerk is still waiting for a copy of the closure Order for Finningham Churchyard from the Coroners and Burials Division of the Ministry of Justice. Cllr Kilbee has received correspondence from the resident with the section of fencing that needs replacing between their property and the Church. They have increased the amount they are willing to offer in contribution, which councillors noted with thanks.

ACTION – Clerk to pursue closure Order.

8:30pm Cllr Mellen left the meeting.

23.226 New church pathway update

The rescheduled site visit with members of the Diocese including the Governance Manager and DAC Secretary was held on 15th December 2023. They shared the Parish Council's concerns that the new pathway presented a health and safety risk, and were also unhappy with the change in style and colour of the additional slabs used. They made a request for the PCC to lift and re-lay the slabs evenly without any trip hazards or rocking slabs. Following this however, the Churchwarden made the decision to completely remove all of the slabs, leaving bare earth which has been reseeded with grass. The Parish Council had not requested the slabs be removed completely, and councillors were surprised that this action had been taken.

23.227 To discuss quotations for works to trees on the green

The Clerk has asked for the quotations to be amended to include the work to the horse chestnut tree. Councillors discussed the three quotations received to fell the two dead beech trees, agreeing that this work needs to be carried out as soon as possible due to the health and safety implications, and noted that a Locality Award application has been submitted to MSDC for the work by the Clerk, (MSDC previously confirmed that the work is eligible due to it not being considered routine or maintenance). After discussing, it was agreed to ask Top Garden Services to carry out the work. Proposed by Cllr Kilbee, seconded by Cllr Davies and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to advise Top Garden Services as above.

23.228 To discuss quotations for cutting the grass on the Green

Deferred to a future meeting; still waiting for all requested quotations to be received.

23.229 Mid Suffolk District Council's Pride in Your Place Grant

After discussing the expenditure, for which anything that improves the appearance and cleanliness of the parish is eligible, councillors agreed to purchase a new sign in the playground area on the green, and cleaning supplies for the play equipment and parapets/railings on the bridge over the river. A working party will be arranged to carry out the cleaning work.

ACTION – Clerk/Cllr Kilbee to arrange purchases as above.

23.230 To discuss cemetery winter maintenance

Cllr Kilbee will speak to residents who currently volunteer for the mowing rota, to see if they would be happy to include work to the cemetery on it. Cllr Kilbee also reported that one of the graves in the cemetery has sunk. He will speak to the funeral company concerned before any action to rectify it is taken.

ACTION – Cllr Kilbee as above.

23.231 Eastlands bridge and village flooding

In addition to the update received from Cllr Mellen, the Clerk has been advised by Suffolk Highways to report any blockages of the pipes under the bridge using the reporting tool:

[Report a highways issue - Suffolk County Council](#)

They further advise that constructing a new bridge at this location is difficult to prioritise, due to the backlog of outstanding maintenance and strengthening works on their existing bridge assets. Councillors will wait for a further update from Cllr Mellen.

23.232 Correspondence received

None.

9:08pm Mr Aiken left the meeting.

23.233 Finance

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

Balances as of 29/12/2023

Community Bank Account

Balance as of December 2023: £13,055.97

Deposit Account
Balance as of 29th December 2023: £3,365.06

b. Requests for payment

Clerk admin payment January 2024	£365.04
Clerk January 2024 expenses	£20.61
HMRC January 2024 PAYE/NIC	£91.26
SALC (Suffolk Association of Local Councils) – new cllr training for Cllr Davies	£72.00
Community Heartbeat – defibrillator pads	£68.34

Cllr Davies proposed authorisation of the above payments, seconded by Cllr Black and approved unanimously.

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

23.234 Planning

- a) **To consider applications – none.**
- b) **Decisions & to consider planning matters coming forth**
 - 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 – **GRANTED.**
 - 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 – **AWAITING DECISION.**
 - 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.**

23.235 To discuss date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 13th February 2024 at 7.30pm, in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham.

23.236 Questions to Chairman

None.

23.237 Items to be discussed at the next meeting and included in the February agenda.

Policy review, Annual Parish Council and Annual Parish (Village) meeting arrangements.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:12pm.

