

FINNINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

*DRAFT Minutes for the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on
Tuesday 12th November 2024 in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham, starting at 7:30pm*

Present: Cllr Kilbee, Cllr Winter, Cllr Davies, Cllr Saunders, Cllr Trew, Cllr Black

In attendance: Miss J. Challis (Clerk), Cllr Mellen

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

Cllr Kilbee welcomed everyone to the meeting. Approval of apologies received from Cllr Charter were proposed by Cllr Saunder, seconded by Cllr Davies, and approved unanimously. Apologies for late arrival recieved from Cllr Black were also noted.

24.182 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.

24.183 Contribution by Members of the Public

No members of the public present.

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

None.

24.185 To consider requests for dispensations on agenda items

None.

24.186 To approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8th October 2024

Approved unanimously with one abstention (councillor who was not present at the meeting).

24.187 Matters arising from the Parish Council meetings held on 8th October 2024

All covered elsewhere on the agenda.

24.188 Chairman's Report

24.189 Clerk's Report

- The traffic monitoring camera placed on the Parish Council's noticeboard is collecting data for a third party on behalf of National Grid, in relation to their Norwich to Tilbury proposal. No permission has been given by Suffolk County Council who were unaware of the camera. The permission was cited as being provided by Norfolk County Council, however they have confirmed that they did provide permission, with it being outside of their jurisdiction. The third party has now removed the camera. Cllr Kilbee has checked for damage to the noticeboard and reported that it is all ok.
- Whilst it does not affect Finningham directly, there is a proposal from a company called Field for a 200MW battery storage facility in Yaxley. A public consultation event will be held on Thursday, 5th December, at Mellis Memorial Hall, from 2pm to 7pm:
<https://www.fieldyaxley.co.uk/>.
- MSDC are running two CIL webinar briefings open to councillors and Clerks. Full details sent to councillors. Cllr Davies requested to attend both webinars.
- Richard Parmee, MSDC Biodiversity Manager, has advised that the Free Trees, Hedgerows and Wildflowers Scheme, which has been running since 2021, will continue for 2025: <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/trees-and-wildflowers-scheme>.
- The LGA pay increase for 2024/25 has now been agreed, and is backdated to 1st April 2024.

24.190 EN0110003 – White Farm Solar Farm – EIA Scoping and Consultation and Regulation 11 Notification

Full details of the scoping consultation received were shared with councillors prior to the meeting: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN0110003>

After discussing, councillors agreed to submit the following concerns to the Planning Inspectorate:

- The loss of farmland and subsequent impact on food security as a result of this proposal.
- The lack of transparency regarding construction routes which are not included the scoping document.
- The lack of transparency regarding impact on public rights of way; footpath numbers 5, 16, 45 & 3 are mentioned in the construction phase, but there appears to be no information within the scoping document as to if, or when, they will be reinstated.
- Councillors would like the report to contain information regarding the number of jobs created, before, and after the construction phase
- Councillors would like to see independent, detailed ecology reports including mitigation against the impact on wildlife; the scoping report admits badgers, bats, otters, water vole, reptiles, amphibians and birds may be killed. Deer may also be corralled within the site as it will be fenced when finished. This is completely unacceptable.
- Councillors would like to see full details of community benefits/payback should the proposal be approved.
- Councillors would like to know what is being done to mitigate glare from the sun on the panels.

ACTION – Clerk to submit concerns to the Planning Inspectorate as above.

24.191 Cemetery plot record update, and approval of expenditure for additional reserve markers and new row markers

Cllr Kilbee, and the Clerk carried out a review of the cemetery on the 28th October. The details are being added to a digital plot record. It was also ascertained that additional markers are needed for the reserved plots, and also markers for the rows, to help with identification of the plots. The plot markers were originally purchased from Perfitts Stone Masons, however they are no longer in operation so quotations are being sought elsewhere for comparable markers, and hope to be received in time for the next meeting.

ACTION – Clerk to obtain quotations as above.

24.192 Finningham Green Footpath Update

No Further updates. The site meeting with Suffolk Highways is yet to be arranged.

24.193 Churchyard Maintenance responsibility update

Further to the November meeting, Mid Suffolk District Council's legal team have been in contact following the initial inquiry made by Cllr Mellen. They are unable to act for the Parish Council due to a conflict of interest, but have advised that if the closure Order for the churchyard has been made, there are three routes to obtain a copy: the Diocese, the Ministry of Justice, and the Gazette which is the official record keeper. The Clerk has already contacted all three without success, so at the moment it appears that there is no record of the closure Order being made. The Clerk has contacted Community Action Suffolk who have requested further details in order to see if they can provide any pro bono legal assistance as to what to do next.

ACTION –Clerk to pursue with CAS as above.

24.194 Annual Village Maintenance and village green improvements

The village maintenance plan needs details of any annual works relating to the green and/or play area to be fed into it. Councillors discussed how to proceed with improvements to the green, and whether to look at it in parts, or as a whole, which will have an impact on the types of funding available. After consideration, and taking into account the results of the village survey, items identified in the Play Inspection Report, and previous feedback from Friends of Finningham, it was agreed to look into updating the surfacing underneath/around the play equipment, the possibility of rotating the slide, the basket ball area, and a new climbing frame to replace the current one. Councillors felt this would also preserve the integrity of the space as a Village Green. This will be done as a single project.

ACTION – Clerk to obtain quotations for the works listed above, and look at eligible funding sources.

24.195 To discuss Parish Council online and social media platforms

Cllr Saunders said that he felt the current social media platforms could be used as a better tool to improve communication and the relationship between the Parish Council and residents. After discussing it was agreed for Cllr Saunders and the Clerk to work on updates and regular posts on the council's Facebook page. Councillors were mindful that the Facebook Page should remain a

point of information about the Parish Council's activities, and anything relevant to the parish, rather than an interactive community noticeboard.

ACTION – Cllr Sauders/Clerk as above.

24.196 Village Flooding

Councillors noted that the River Dove group continues to actively work to keep the river clear.

As mentioned within Cllr Mellen's report, Suffolk County Council have announced additional funding to carry out works identified by flood inspectors following Storm Babet.

Anyone with a watercourse on their property has responsibilities to ensure it is maintained and free flowing, under riparian ownership: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/flooding-and-drainage/maintenance-of-ditches-and-other-watercourses/riparian-ownership-in-suffolk>.

24.197 To consider and approve quotations for purchase of new Parish Council laptop

Deferred to next meeting.

24.198 To approve purchase of new defibrillator pads

Cllr Winter reported that the defibrillator pads need replacing at a cost of £69.54 including VAT and delivery. Approval proposed by Cllr Trew, seconded by Cllr Davies and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange purchase.

24.199 To consider and approve Budget 2025/26

The Budget 2025/26 was prepared by the Clerk and circulated to councillors. After discussion, approval was proposed by Cllr Davies, seconded by Cllr Trew, and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to update and publish.

24.200 Correspondence

None.

24.201 Finance

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

Balances as of 29th October 2024

Community Bank Account: £13,790.74

Deposit Account: £3,377.64

b. Requests for payment

Clerk admin payment November, including LGA backdated pay increase	£652.46
Clerk expenses – mileage (Oct PC meeting & Oct cemetery review)	£21.42
HMRC November 2024 PAYE/NIC	£148.86
R. Davies expenses – new VAS batteries x 2	£105.98
Community Heartbeat Trust – defib pads	£69.54

Cllr Kilbee proposed authorisation of the above payments, seconded by Cllr Saunders and approved unanimously with one abstention against R. Davies's expenses (Cllr Davies).

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

24.202 Planning

a. To consider applications – none.

b. Decisions and to consider planning matters coming forth:

- DC/24/04443 - Application for listed building consent – internal works to re-instate pre-existing internal doorway between The Old House and The Cottage as detailed within the Heritage Design and Access Statement. The Old House and The Cottage, Church Path, Finningham, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 4JD – **AWAITING DECISION**

8:57pm Cllr Mellen arrived.

Cllr Kilbee proposed returning to item 24.182. Approved unanimously.

(24.182 Visiting Speakers)

9:02pm Cllr Black arrived.

Cllr Mellen read through his reports.
Cllr Kilbee thanked Cllr Mellen.

24.203 To discuss date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 10th December 2024, at 7:30pm in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham.

24.204 Questions to Chairman

None.

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

No new items.

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

