

FINNINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

*DRAFT Minutes for the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on
Tuesday 8th October 2024 in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham, starting at 7:30pm*

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

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

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

Cllr Kilbee welcomed everyone to the meeting, and apologies received from Cllr Trew were approved unanimously.

24.157 Visiting speakers

Cllr Mellen read through his reports, which can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes. He highlighted the 2026 changes to waste collections.

Cllr Davies reported that a traffic monitoring camera has been attached to the Parish Council noticeboard, and appears to be collecting data from the A143. He asked whether Cllr Mellen was aware of any reason for the camera which he was not. Cllr Davies will forward the contact details beside the camera for the Clerk to make contact with the company who installed it.

Cllr Kilbee asked Cllr Mellen if he has an update for the Finningham Green footpath. Cllr Mellen said he will know more following a site visit, which has been suggested by Darren Smith Suffolk Highways Design Engineer.

There being no further questions, Cllr Kilbee thanked Cllr Mellen.

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

24.158 Contribution by Members of the Public

No members of the public present.

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

None.

24.160 To consider requests for dispensations on agenda items

None.

24.161 To approve minutes of Parish Council meetings

Meeting held on 10th September 2024 – approval proposed by Cllr Charter, seconded by Cllr Kilbee and approved unanimously with two abstentions (councillors who were not present at the meeting).

24.162 Matters arising from the Parish Council meetings held on 10th September 2024

All covered elsewhere on the agenda.

24.163 Chairman's Report

I am afraid that I was unable to represent Finningham Parish Council at the Licensing of our new Incumbent, Rev Catriona Brinkley on 30th September at Walsham le Willows. I have since met her and I feel that she will be an asset to the Village. We can expect her occasional attendance at our meetings once she has settled in.

I am hoping that she may be able to help us resolve the issue of the Churchyard Fence.

The mowing season has now finished and I should like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have participated in the Mowing Rota. While on that subject, we shall need to find an alternative Honda Agent to service our machine for next year, as MKM Agriculture have ceased operations at their local branch. If anyone knows of a suitable company, please let me know.

Cllr Trew sent an email to our Clerk and me reporting that a Give Way sign on Westhorpe Road was in a dangerous state. I inspected it and agreed that it should be reported to Highways on their Reporting Tool. This was done by both Jane and me.

It made me consider the number of road signs in and around the village which had seen better days, usually because the poles had rusted away. We all know that Highways are not interested in replacing non mandatory signs but we need to find a way of replacing or repairing them. This should be part of our Village Maintenance plan.

I should like to resurrect the past tradition of holding a Lunch for the Parish Councillors and their wives or partners sometime around the turn of the year. This is hardly an Agenda item so, please let me know what you think.

24.164 Clerk's Report

- As already reported by Mr Aiken the replacement dog bin has arrived.
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are undertaking two separate consultations on the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 2 Development Plan Document Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and the Proposed Approach to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment from Thursday 22nd August until 4pm on Monday 30th September 2024. Full details sent to councillors.
- VE Day 80th Anniversary - 8th May 2025. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) met with county association officers, where plans for the upcoming 80th anniversary of VE-Day were a key focus. The meeting featured a special briefing from Bruno Peek CVO OBE OPR, the distinguished pageant master renowned for his leadership in national commemorations. Mr Peek provided an in-depth overview of next year's VE-Day events, emphasising the importance of local (parish and town) councils in leading these significant commemorations. Building on the success of this year's D-Day anniversary events, where many local councils played a pivotal role in organising community celebrations, Mr Peek urged councils to take the lead once again in 2025. He highlighted the unique opportunity for communities to come together and honour this historic milestone, reinforcing the importance of local engagement in national celebrations. This will be a future agenda item.

24.165 Cemetery plot record keeping

Cllr Kilbee, Cllr Trew and the Clerk still to arrange meeting to carry out review.

24.166 Finningham Green Footpath Update

Darren Smith, Suffolk Highways Design Engineer reports that a trial hole was undertaken at the southern end of the scheme (approx. 4m from the BT inspection chamber) to ascertain the depth and alignment of the underground services. The trial hole showed that the BT duct would be an adequate depth even when SCC has excavated the verge. However, BT Openreach state that they have already provided a design quote of £5,275.00 plus VAT, and will not revise this quotation until a design fee has been submitted.

He has also sent an enquiry to Anglian Water because a recent trial hole has identified a metal water pipe 200mm from the road edge. As already advised by Cllr Mellen, Darren Smith suggests an on-site meeting to discuss a strategy for moving forward.

There are no further updates from Denise Mortimer, Suffolk Highways Community works Project Manager.

24.167 Churchyard Maintenance responsibility update, including approval of expenditure for professional advice

Unfortunately, Suffolk County Council's legal department has said they will need 3-4 hours to research the Parish Council's position, which will exceed the amount agreed at the 12th September meeting. Cllr Mellen suggested contacting Mid Suffolk District Council to see if their legal team can assist, and offered to email them with an initial enquiry. The Clerk will also contact Community Action Suffolk for their advice.

ACTION – Cllr Mellen/Clerk as above.

24.168 Annual Village Maintenance Plan

Ongoing.

ACTION – Clerk to progress.

24.169 Hedge cutting; cemetery hedge and Station Road hedge

Cemetery hedge: awaiting submission of expenses from the volunteers who kindly cut the hedge back. Councillors expressed their thanks and agreed the hedge now looks much improved. Top Garden Services have provided a quotation to cut the hedge as and when needed, whilst they are cutting the grass on the green.

Station Road: the Clerk has contacted the resident who owns the hedge requesting they cut it back by an agreed date, after which the Parish Council will arrange for it to be done in the interest of public safety. As yet no response has been received, however councillors reported that the hedge does appear to have been cut back. Cllr Kilbee will have a look at the hedge to ensure the VAS device is no longer obscured,

ACTION – Cllr Kilbee as above.

24.170 Village Flooding

Cllr Mellen reported that the River Dove Group were active at the weekend. The drains on Station Road are full up with silt due to the drainage system in this location not working properly. He will request Andrew Moore from Suffolk Highways looks at it.

24.171 Trees along byway by River Dove

Andrew Moore from Suffolk Highways has conducted a site visit and reported that the trees are not situated on land owned by SCC. In addition he confirmed that the recent works within the byway carried out by SCC, were to cutting back works to allow members of the public to walk safely, and are not indicative of responsibility for the trees.

The arboriculturalist from MSDC has also conducted an assessment of the trees, and confirmed that they are not in a dangerous condition. Therefore, they do not invoke SCC's duty to ensure that any trees on or adjacent to a public right of way do not inconvenience the path user. The report also confirms that falling pollen and blocking out light to nearby properties are not considerations to determine whether a tree is dangerous.

Councillors discussed the reports and agreed that unless the trees become dangerous, there is nothing further the Parish Council can do. The Clerk will request a report to send to the resident who has made the complaint against the trees.

ACTION – Clerk as above.

24.172 Correspondence

None.

24.173 To consider purchase of new Parish Council laptop

The PC owns a netbook which is now out of date and quite inefficient. After discussing, councillors agreed unanimously that a new laptop should be purchased. Quotations will be sought for consideration and approval at the next meeting.

24.174 To discuss parking arrangements of visiting fish and chip van

Cllr Kilbee reported that he has received a complaint regarding the chip van using the layby by the old school.

Cllr Winter said that the chip van has historically used another layby in the village, before moving to the White Horse car park, and suggested contacting nearby residents to see if they would have an issue with this location being used again.

8:36pm Cllr Black arrived.

Cllr Davies said the Chip Van owner has already decided not to continue visiting Finningham. After discussing further it was agreed to contact him to see if he would reconsider if a suitable location could be agreed.

ACTION – Clerk as above.

24.175 Finance**a. RFO's report (bank balance, receipts, and payments)****Balances as of 29th May 2024**

Community Bank Account: £14,103.53

Deposit Account: £3,377.64

b. Requests for payment

Clerk admin payment October	£412.71
Clerk expenses – mileage (Sept PC meeting & Oct agenda meeting)	£21.42
HMRC October2024 PAYE/NIC	£104.43
T. Kilbee expenses – Remembrance wreath	£24.49
Top Garden Services, inv 2527	£144.00
Top Garden Services, inv 2526	£144.00

Cllr Charter proposed authorisation of the above payments, seconded by Cllr Davies and approved unanimously with one abstention against T. Kilbee's expenses (Cllr Kilbee).

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

24.176 Planning

- a. To consider applications – none.
- b. Decisions and to consider planning matters coming forth:
 - DC/24/02588 - Application for Outline Planning Permission (Access Points to be considered, all other matters reserved) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) - Erection of 1No. detached (self-build) two storey dwelling and garage. Land South of Patcham House, Station Road, Finningham, Stowmarket IP14 4TH-**REFUSED.**

24.177 Policies & Documents

- **Asset Register**
- **Expenses Policy**
- **Sickness & Absence Policy**
- **Health & Safety Policy**

The above documents and policies were circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. After discussing, the Expenses Policy, Sickness & Absence Policy, and Health & Policy were approved unanimously, with the next scheduled review date set as October 2026.

The Asset register was approved unanimously, but will be reviewed in October 2025 due to it being one of the council's core documents.

ACTION – Clerk to update and publish the above.

24.178 To discuss date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 12th November 2024, at 7:30pm in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham.

24.179 Questions to Chairman

Cllr Davies said that one of the VAS batteries is not working. He will arrange purchase of a new one to ensure both devices are fully operational, and submit an expenses claim for approval and reimbursement at the next meeting. He also reported positive feedback from residents in the vicinity of the device on the A413 by the turning to the church. This location is currently one of the ones the second VAS device is rotated between, and the residents have asked whether a fixed device could be considered here instead. To be a future agenda item.

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

No new items.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:00pm.

