

# FINNINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

*DRAFT Minutes for the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on  
Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024 in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham, starting at 7:30pm*

**Present:** Cllr Kilbee, Cllr Winter, Cllr Davies, Cllr Trew, Cllr Charter, Cllr Saunders

**In attendance:** Miss J. Challis (Clerk), Cllr Mellen, PC Adam Ferguson, 1 member of the public

**23.294 Chair's welcome and to consider and approve apologies for absence**

Cllr Kilbee welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Cllr Black; approval proposed by Cllr Kilbee, seconded by Cllr Trew and approved unanimously.

**23.295 Visiting speakers**

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

**23.296 Contribution by Members of the Public**

None.

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

None.

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

None.

**23.299 To approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

Cllr Charter proposed approval of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 as a true and correct record; seconded by Cllr Davies and approved unanimously with one abstention (councillor who was not present at the meeting).

**23.300 Matters arising from the Parish Council meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

All covered elsewhere on the agenda.

7:32pm PC Adam Ferguson joined the meeting.

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

**(23.295 Visiting speakers)**

PC Adam Ferguson introduced himself as the new Local Police Engagement Officer, and explained his role within the parishes he manages. He advised that he is planning to hold monthly online meetings with parish clerks and councillors, to make it easier to share information and keep abreast of issues and concerns. He is already aware of the reports of graffiti in Finningham, and has been conducting extra nightly patrols. He has also contacted local businesses to request that they do not sell spray paints to minors. Graffiti reported by the White Horse public house has now been removed, and the bridge comes under the remit of the British Transport Police. PC Ferguson said he is very concerned about one of the beech trees on the green which has been spray painted with racist graffiti. The Clerk will speak to Top Garden Services to ask them if it can be removed without damaging the tree. If this cannot be done other options will be looked at to avoid the tree having to be felled. PC Ferguson said he has been conducting speed checks in the area and will send some information to the clerk on creating a community speed watch group. Cllr Kilbee thanked PC Ferguson for taking the time to attend the meeting.

**ACTION – Clerk to speak to Top Garden Services regarding beech tree on the green.**

7:52pm PC Ferguson left the meeting.

### **23.301 Chairman's Report**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> March we had the long-awaited Cemetery Work-party. It was so well attended that we were able to cut the long grass in the Churchyard as well. I have already emailed my thanks to those who took part and would like to have them recorded in the minutes. A special thanks goes to Cllr Charter for providing a startling number of strimmers for use by the members of the Party. I have requested that he makes a claim for the fuel and repairs to his machines.

With regard to the Graffiti, which has blighted the village on occasions, particularly during school holidays, I have spoken to the outgoing Chair of Friends of Finningham regarding the request for a Graffiti Wall that was made during their survey last summer. Unfortunately, the survey was anonymous but she does have a good idea who put forward the suggestion. This does not mean that these persons are responsible for the incidents of Graffiti spoiling our village. So, we cannot take any action against them.

As you are aware, next month's Council Meeting will be preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting and ours will be the Annual Parish Council Meeting. If I am re-elected, I shall accept but I feel that I could only remain on the Council for another year. During which time, my successor could be found.

### **23.302 Clerk's Report**

- A remittance has received from MSDC advising that the first half of the precept payment, £5,012.50, has been paid.
- The locality funding application to Suffolk County Council for the emergency work to fell the two dead beech trees on the green, has been submitted, and a reply received confirming that it has been successful. The funds will be transferred to the council shortly.
- The Police & Crime Commissioner Election is due to be held on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024: [2024 Election » Suffolk PARO \(onesuffolk.net\)](#)
- An email has been received from Bron Curtis, MSDC Principal Planning Officer, asking Parish Councils to share their community's position on National Grid's Norwich to Tilbury Statutory Consultation.

### **23.303 National Grid Norwich to Tilbury**

Details of the Statutory Consultation which runs from 10<sup>th</sup> April to 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024 have been received today. Full details are available on National Grid's website, with dates and locations of all their public information events; [Norwich to Tilbury | National Grid ET](#). The consultation will be included on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024 Annual Parish and Annual Parish Council Meeting agendas.

### **23.304 Finningham GREEN Footpath update**

Still ongoing; Highways have advised they are due to reattend within the next 2-3 weeks in order to complete the trial holes, which they were unable to do on 15<sup>th</sup> January due to adverse weather conditions.

**ACTION – Clerk to pursue update.**

### **23.305 Finningham Green; basketball hoop surfacing and quotations received**

After discussing it was unanimously agreed to wait until the Village Survey results have been received, in order to look at improvements to the play area as single project, rather than separate projects. Funding assistance is likely to be required, and most grants will only allow one application per project. MSDC are yet to confirm Capital Grants 2024/25, but have sent details of Community Development Grants, which are available to cover up to 100% of project costs to a maximum of £20,000.00. However, applicants cannot apply for a Capital Grant against the same project. Grant suitability will be discussed further, once the improvements have been agreed.

### **23.306 Churchyard Maintenance update**

No further updates at the moment. Cllr Trew said that he has spoken to the resident whose property is adjacent to the church, with the fence in need of replacement, and he is aware of the reason for the delay regarding this.

**ACTION – Clerk to seek further advice from SALC.**

8:15pm Cllr Mellen arrived.

Cllr Kilbee proposed returning to agenda item 2 again. Agreed unanimously.

### **(23.295 Visiting speakers)**

Cllr Mellen read through his District and County Council reports.

Cllr Kilbee thanked Cllr Mellen.

**23.307 To consider an annual village maintenance survey**

The Clerk presented a suggestion for an annual village maintenance survey, to look items including bridge parapets, church track planings, beacon and flagpole, litter/dog/grit bins, picnic tables, signage, hedges, grass cutting. It would be a more proactive approach, incorporate the annual play inspection report, and help with budget setting. After discussing, councillors agreed unanimously to proceed.

**ACTION – Clerk to draw up a draft survey plan for next meeting.**

**23.308 To consider annual play inspection report and any expenditure requirements**

The 2024 report, was circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Kilbee said that although all items reported are low risk, they do need to be addressed. One item needing attention is the surfacing underneath the climbing frame and slide, which is lower than the recommended depth specified in BS EN1176. This has also resulted in the timber edging becoming a trip hazard. After discussing, councillors decided to seek advice from ROSPA (Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents) regarding the surfacing, and ask whether they would be able to conduct a risk assessment. Councillors will also arrange to meeting at the play are to look at the items on the report.

**ACTION – Clerk to contact ROSPA as above. Cllr Kilbee to arrange a meeting with councillors to look at the items reported.**

**23.309 To consider surfacing of the path between Church Meadow and the Churchyard**

At the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024 meeting, a member of the public asked if bark chip could be added to this path as it has become very muddy. The Clerk obtained pricing for bark chip which was presented to councillors at the 12<sup>th</sup> March meeting, but concern was raised regarding wheelchair access, which may be restricted by this type of surfacing. Cllr Trew said that the path is usually accessible for wheelchairs, but the amount of rainfall over winter has resulted in it becoming very muddy. In addition, the ground is uneven and there are tree roots affecting the accessibility. After discussing, it was agreed to speak to the footpath warden, and look at alternative options to bark chipping.

**ACTION – Cllr Kilbee to speak to Mr Aiken, as above.**

**23.310 Eastlands bridge and village flooding**

Cllr Mellen shared an update from Suffolk County Council prior to the meeting. Regarding Cllr Mellen's request for clarification on whether the dutch ford holds back the flow of water, so that it backs up in to the village, SCC Drainage & Structures Team have advised that when the pipes are exceeded, the water flows over the road, which means that any backing up would only occur when the water flow is too great for the pipes, but not yet great enough to flow overflow the road. They go on to say that they suspect the main factor is the increased volume of water in the river that occurs due to the increase in rainfall due to climate change. They also advise that there is no funding available for a new bridge.

Cllr Trew reported that there is a huge log wedged against one of the pipes, which he will attempt to remove with Cllr Charter, and a large limb from a tree further up the bank has fallen into the river. This also needs to be removed before it reaches the pipes, to avoid it causing significant flooding. Again, Cllr Trew and Cllr Charter will attempt to remove it. Cllr Trew also noted the work conducted by the River Dove Group to keep the river clear.

**ACTION – Cllr Trew and Cllr Charter as above.**

**23.311 To discuss graffiti in the village**

Already discussed as above.

**23.312 Correspondence received**

An email has been received from Holloway Jennings Lofthouse, asking for information regarding the approximate age of the water tower adjacent to Station Road, as they are conducting an assessment of the structural condition of the building. The Clerk will advise them to contact the relevant water company.

**ACTION – Clerk as above**

**23.313 Finance**

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

**Balances as of 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**Community Bank Account: £9,256.74**

**Deposit Account: £3,377.64**

## b. Requests for payment

Clerk admin payment April, & holiday pay 2023/24	£623.25
Clerk expenses – mileage (March PC & April agenda meeting)	£20.61
Clerk expenses – copy paper/notebook	£6.25
HMRC April 2024 PAYE/NIC	£155.81
R. Dimech expenses – Vista Print (printing of survey to go in newsletter)	£61.58
Community Action Suffolk – Addition mailbox for Cllr Saunders	£18.00
SALC – annual subscription	£262.03
Cllr Charter expenses – petrol, oil, strimmer cord & recoil starter	£42.97

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

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

**R. Dimech expenses payment request raised on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2024, and paid online (dual authorisation). Expenditure already authorised at the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 meeting.**

## c. To agree Internal Auditor 2023/24

After discussing, Cllr Kilbee proposed instructing SALC to conduct the 2023/24 internal audit. Seconded by Cllr Charter and approved unanimously.

**ACTION – Clerk to instruct SALC as above.**

## d. Review of Parish Council Reserves

Deferred.

### 23.314 Planning

a) **To consider applications – none**

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

- DC/24/00567 Proposal: Householder Application – erection of timber framed cartlodge (following the demolition of existing outbuilding). Yeoman House, Church Green, Finningham, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 4HU – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- 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.**

### 23.315 New Councillor training; to consider feedback to SALC

Cllr Charter and Cllr Trew reported that the training sessions they recently attended were very disappointing, and not as informative, or engaging as expected. After discussing, and taking into account that sessions are paid for from the council's precept, it was agreed to share this feedback with SALC.

**ACTION – Clerk to word email to SALC, for councillor's approval, prior to sending.**

### 23.316 To discuss date of the next meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024, at 7pm in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham. It will be followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting at 7:30pm, although the start time may be delayed slightly if the Annual Parish Meeting finishes late.

### 23.317 Questions to Chairman

None.

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

Covered on the agenda.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:08pm.



