

# FINNINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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

**Present:** Cllr A. Kilbee, Cllr L. Charter, Cllr J. Miller, Cllr P. Trew, Cllr J. Black

**In attendance:** Miss J. Challis (Clerk), CC & DC Cllr Mellen, Freddie Gulliver - Emergency Planning Officer Suffolk County Council, 1 member of the public.

## **22.235 Visiting speakers**

Cllr Kilbee introduced Freddie Gulliver, the Emergency Planning Officer from Suffolk County Council, and proposed moving to agenda item 11 to allow it to be discussed within the public participation session. Agreed unanimously.

Freddie Gulliver explained the way a Community Risk Register and Community Emergency Action Plans work. If the Parish Council were to proceed with a Community Emergency Plan, it would be held by MSDC (Mid Suffolk District Council), who would notify the Parish Council to take action if required in the event of an emergency, which would therefore negate any liability to the Parish council. Freddie Gulliver advised that if councillors wished to proceed, the next step would be to create a working party, with a nominated person acting as the main lead, to write a plan. This could be done jointly with a neighbouring parish to combine emergency assets, such as a village hall, although Finningham does have the Church which Freddie Gulliver said would suffice as a gathering place in an emergency.

There was a discussion with Freddie Gulliver saying he would forward a template for councillors' further consideration.

Cllr Kilbee thanked Freddie Gulliver for taking time to attend the meeting.

7:52pm Freddie Gulliver left the meeting.

Cllr Mellen sent his DC and CC reports in advance of the meeting which can be found as addendums at the end of the minutes.

Mr Aiken sent his Footpath Warden's report in advance of the meeting, which can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

## **22.236 Contribution by Members of the Public**

No contributions made.

## **22.237 Apologies and approval of absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Arthur (prior engagement), and Cllr Winter, (unwell), and approved unanimously.

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

None received.

## **22.239 To consider requests for dispensations on agenda items**

None received.

## **22.240 To approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

Cllr Charter proposed approving the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023 as a true and correct record; seconded by Cllr Miller and approved unanimously with one abstention (councillor who was not present at the meeting). The Chairman then signed the minute book.

## **22.241 Matters arising from the Parish Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

All covered elsewhere on the agenda.

## 22.242 Chairman's Report

A bit of good news. The replacement of the village sign (together with Gislingham's) at Rob Hall Corner is underway and the person responsible in SCC Highways (Andy Moore) has promised me that he will push it through the system as quickly as possible.

Also, Andy Mellen has undertaken to use some of his Highways Budget to have a survey conducted along Walsham Road as a precursor to applying for a 40mph limit to be imposed along that stretch of Road. Bacton were successful in their application for a similar limit to be introduced along the Haughley Road. This is the first step in achieving something that I started at least 10 years ago.

I have not been able to speak to you all regarding whether or not you are standing as candidates for the next Council. I sincerely hope that you are, as I feel that we have a good team and I should like to see it continue. As you know, we shall not need an election if there are no other candidates. We shall just have to wait and see. Jane has sent you all a timeline for the election on 4<sup>th</sup> May (these elections are for both the District and Parish councils) so please make sure that you pay attention to the cut-off dates. She has very kindly offered to deposit our forms to the Nomination Stations.

Finally, I should like to thank Councillor Trew for undertaking an impromptu survey of the salt bins in the village. Some of them require topping up so, I'll ask Jane to contact the relevant SCC department to have that done. There is another bin which was left off his survey and that is at Rob Hall Corner. I ask Councillor Miller to check that one and report back before Jane contacts the SCC.

7:59pm Cllr Mellen arrived.

Cllr Kilbee proposed returning to agenda item 1. Approved unanimously.

(22.235 Visiting speakers)

Further to Cllr Kilbee's report, Cllr Mellen said he has initiated the process to get the speed limit on Walsham Road reduced to 40mph. He said it is a lengthy process and certain criteria needs to be met.

Cllr Mellen also advised that he has spoken to Suffolk Highways regarding the footpath CIL bid to hopefully expediate the process.

Cllr Kilbee asked where the possible new joint depot for waste and building services, mentioned in Cllr Mellen's DC report, would be. Cllr Mellen said it had not been confirmed, but was likely to be close to Gt Blakenham.

Cllr Charter if Cllr Mellen is aware of plans to build a supermarket on the Jeffries of Bacton car sales site. Cllr Mellen said he was aware a planning application, (DC/23/00929), for change of use had been submitted for this site. It is currently awaiting a decision.

Cllr Trew said he had received a report of some very tall trees blocking light from a resident's garden, and could Cllr Mellen advise how to find out which department this report should be directed to. After discussing it was agreed for Cllr Trew to forward the location to the Clerk to investigate further.

8:12pm Cllr Black arrived.

## 22.243 Clerk's Report

- EN020027 East Anglia GREEN Update – Essex Suffolk Norfolk Pylon Group have advised they recently held a meeting with James Cartlidge MP and Sir Bernard Jenkins MP; OffSET (East Of England MPs task force headed by Sir Bernard Jenkins MP) are pleased to hear that the ESO (Electricity System Operator) are holding a review to consider offshore routes for electricity transmission in East Anglia. Following this review a comprehensive cost benefit analysis of offshore vs on shore will be available, which will look at the benefit and cost of both options, whereas to date National Grid have only looked at the cost.
- Footbridge Eastlands Lane – Following the report made to Suffolk Highways, they have advised that the footbridge has now been closed off, although they cannot confirm timescales for repairs or replacement.

## 22.244 Finningham GREEN Footpath CIL bid application

Roy Emmerson, from the Infrastructure Team at MSDC, had a meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023 as previously advised, with officers from Suffolk County Council's Public Rights of Way and Highway departments. During the meeting he shared the current list of footpaths, cycleways, etc, CIL funding applications, and the Active Travel schemes listed within the BMSDC Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) document, which SCC are now going through. There is a further meeting due to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023 following which Roy Emmerson hopes to have an update, which he would like to hold a meeting to discuss.

**ACTION – Clerk to arrange meeting as above**

**22.245 To discuss the emergency plan.**

Discussed as above within public participation. Cllr Trew made further comment that it seems as if the Emergency Plan is for MSDC rather than specifically for the parish, and as Finningham does not have assets such as a village hall it may not be worth pursuing. It was agreed to look at the template from Freddie Gulliver once received, and include as an April agenda item for a decision to be made.

**22.246 To discuss Annual Newsletter to everyone in the village, including approval of printing costs**

Cllr Charter has been working on the newsletter, but after consideration suggested it might be beneficial to create a joint newsletter with the FoF (Friends of Finningham). Cllr Kilbee said representatives from FoF had indicated their intent to attend the next meeting to discuss the King's Coronation, which would provide an opportunity to discuss the newsletter with them too.

**22.247 To consider formal request from Finningham PCC for the Parish Council to take on maintenance of the churchyard**

A formal request has been received from the PCC for the Parish Council to take over maintenance of the churchyard, as per s.215 of the Local Government Act 1972. Within the request the PCC state that is their position that the responsibility has vested in the Parish Council for a great many years, as evidenced by custom and practice, together with previous correspondence on the matter. However, as minuted at the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023, there is no record in either the Parish Council or PCC historic minutes, of a formal Order passing on maintenance of the churchyard to the Parish Council.

Councillors discussed the request, but raised concerns regarding the liability implications, and decided they need more information before making a decision.

Cllr Kilbee advised that the Land Registry document obtained regarding the churchyard fencing, does not unfortunately confirm ownership of the fence. Councillors noted that this cannot be progressed anyway until a decision has been made regarding the churchyard maintenance.

**ACTION – Clerk/Cllr Kilbee to look at liability implications for next meeting, as above**

**22.248 Playground Improvements, including approval of purchase of play bark**

The Playground Inspection Report dated 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023 identifies that the loose fill surfacing (play bark) is too low under the slide and climbing frame/activity equipment.

Cllr Arthur has calculated that five bags of play bark are needed to top it up to the required level, and has obtained pricing details from three suppliers. After discussing councillors agreed their preferred supplier at a cost of £75.00 per bag including delivery.

Cllr Trew proposed approval of expenditure up to a maximum of £450.00 to purchase the play bark. Seconded by Cllr Black and approved unanimously.

**ACTION – Cllr Kilbee/Clerk to organise purchase.**

**22.249 To discuss a permanent VAS device on Station Road**

Suffolk Highways have confirmed that they do not allow permanent VAS devices, however they do permit them to be permanently installed either battery or solar powered, on the provision that they are switched off for a minimum of one week, after a three-four-week operational period.

Cllr Trew has reported that the batteries in the current device do not seem to be charging properly. Cllr Kilbee has been in contact with Elancity who have provided some advice regarding the voltage which he asked Cllr Trew to check. In the meantime, Cllr Kilbee will find out the cost for replacement batteries. Councillors discussed leaving a VAS in position on Station Road as per the operational instructions from Suffolk Highways, and purchasing a second device to be moved between the other approved locations.

**ACTION – Clerk to seek quotations for a second VAS device. Cllr Kilbee to find out cost of replacement batteries.**

**22.250 Elections 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and arrangements for the Annual Parish Council and Annual Parish Meetings**

As advised at the 14<sup>th</sup> February meeting, Town and Parish Council elections are being held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Anyone wishing to stand for election must complete and hand in a Nomination Form by 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Due to it being an Election year, the Annual Parish Council meeting must be held within 14 days of 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

After discussing, it was agreed to hold the Annual Parish Meeting at 7pm on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023, followed immediately by the Annual Parish Council Meeting at 7:30pm.

**22.251 King's Coronation May 2023, including approval of expenditure for commemorative item**

Councillors discussed options for a commemorative item, deciding that their preferred option to be a paperweight with the official King's Coronation logo, made by the company who supplied the Queen's Platinum Jubilee mugs last year. Cllr Trew proposed proceeding with the paperweights up to an overall spend of £2,750.00, to include an inscription to say 'presented by Finningham

Parish Council'. Seconded by Cllr Miller, and approved unanimously. Cllr Kilbee will confirm the total number of paperweights required upon receipt of the most recent electoral register which the Clerk has requested. They will be presented to residents at the beacon lighting on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May. Councillors also agreed to see if a mobile caterer could be found to attend the beacon lighting as well.

**ACTION – Cllr Kilbee/Clerk to arrange order of the paperweights**

9:19pm Cllr Mellen left the meeting

**22.252 Correspondence received**

An email has been received from a resident asking if the Parish Council can do anything about Network Rail cutting down the trees on the railway bank. Councillors took note of the resident's concerns but the trees have already been cut down, so there is little the council can do retrospectively.

An email has been received from a resident advising that the VAS device on Westhorpe Road is not working. This is due to the issue with the batteries not holding a charge properly, and will be rectified as soon as possible.

**22.253 To consider and approve Risk Assessment and Management Policy**

Prepared by the Clerk and circulated to councillors prior to the meeting.

Approval proposed by Cllr Charter, seconded by Cllr Kilbee, and approved unanimously.

**ACTION – Clerk to publish**

**22.254 To consider and approve Reserves Policy**

Prepared by the Clerk and circulated to councillors prior to the meeting.

Approval proposed by Cllr Trew, seconded by Cllr Miller, and approved unanimously.

**ACTION – Clerk to publish**

**22.255 Finance**

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

**Balances as of 27/02/2023**

**Community Bank Account**

**Balance as of 27 February 2023: £26,145.92**

(Balance as of 29 Dec 2022: £27,491.98)

Receipts (since 29 Dec 2022): £0.00

Payments (since 29 Dec 2022): £1,346.06

**Deposit Account**

**Balance as of 27 February 2023: £3,333.32**

**General funds: £9,334.36**

**Reserves (1/2 of precept & election costs): £4,258.71**

**Restricted funds (CIL & grants not spent): £15,886.17**

**b. Requests for payment**

Admin J. Challis - £261.43

HMRC J. Challis - £65.40

Clerk expenses (J. Challis mileage) - £20.61

A. Kilbee expenses (Land Registry document) - £19.95

A. Brownlie (cemetery clearance) - £200.00

D. Aiken expenses (postmix) - £12.90

**TOTAL payments - £580.29**

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

**ACTION - Cllr Kilbee and Cllr Winter to pay the remaining above approved payments by bank transfer (dual authorisation). Cllr Black to confirm when he has access to online banking.**

**c) Review of reserves**

Councillors discussed the reserves, which do not currently show a breakdown to include earmarked reserves such as the footpath project. The Clerk will prepare a breakdown of available funds/reserves for councillors' approval at the next meeting, for transparency and as per the Reserves Policy.

**d) Appointment of Internal Auditor 2022/23**

Councillors agreed unanimously for Andrew Strickland to conduct the internal audit for 2022/23 as previous, and noted that PFK Littlejohn have been appointed as the external auditor for the next 5-year period.

**e) Bank account signatories**

Cllr Kilbee, Cllr Winter and Cllr Black are currently signatories on the bank account, but only Cllr Kilbee and Cllr Winter have access to the online banking facilities, and there is a need for additional signatories in the case of absence etc.

Cllr Trew indicated that he would be happy to act as a fourth signatory and follow the procedure to register for access to the online banking. Approved unanimously with one abstention (Cllr Trew).

**ACTION – Cllr Trew to complete mandate from Barclays**

**22.256 Planning**

a. To consider applications – None received

b. Decisions & to consider planning matters coming forth

**DC/23/00337 APPLICATION FOR OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION**

Application for Outline Planning Permission (all Matters Reserved) Town and Country Planning 1990 (as amended) – Erection of 4 No. detached chalet bungalows. Location: Land Adjacent, White Horse Inn, Station Road, Finningham – **AWAITING DECISION**

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

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023 in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham.

**22.258 Questions to Chairman**

The member of the public advised that there is a tree down near the bridge on Church Lane. Cllr Trew said he will have a look and report it to Highways if necessary.

**22.259 Items to be discussed at the next meeting and included in the April agenda.**

Nothing received.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9:43pm

