



## About the Parish Council

Parish Councils are statutory bodies and are the first tier of local government, at the heart of the community. Finchampstead Parish Council is made up of 17 Councillors, supported by the Clerk and the Assistant to the Clerk. The Council also employs a Footpath Warden and two Litter Wardens, all working part time. The Parish Councillors are all volunteers, and the Council is not political.

Our activities fall into 3 main areas; representing the local community, working with partners to deliver services to meet local needs, and striving to improve the quality of life and community well being. We try and work with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) wherever possible to bring benefits to the Finchampstead community, but are not accountable to the Borough Council in any way.

The Council meets monthly and has five committees which meet regularly, covering Amenities, Finance & General Management, Planning, Rights of Way, and Roads & Road Safety. We have several Working Groups dealing with specific projects or activities and the Council also has representatives on a number of organisations from the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership to the Neighbourhood Action Group and the Gorse Ride Steering Group. Members of the public are always welcome to attend our Council and Committee meetings.

For more details please visit our website [www.finchampstead-pc.gov.uk](http://www.finchampstead-pc.gov.uk)

## Chairman's report

We have had another busy year continuing to work on your behalf to protect the character of the Parish and to ensure it remains a great place to live and work. We may not be responsible for the implementation of the larger projects in the Parish, but this does not mean that we cannot influence these. We are involved with the regeneration of the Gorse Ride Estate, the large developments at Arborfield Green and Finchwood Park, the new greenways and improvements to the California Country Park as well as other projects.

This year we have launched a new website, part of our commitment to improving our communications with residents. We have also formed a new working group to look at climate change and how we can help to address this at a local level. We continue to work closely with WBC and local organisations. Through working together we can make best use of resources to help maintain services and facilities for our residents. This report summarises our work over the last year and some of our plans for the coming year.

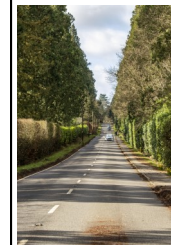
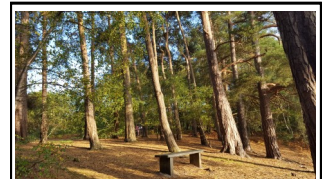
*Roland Cundy*

## Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

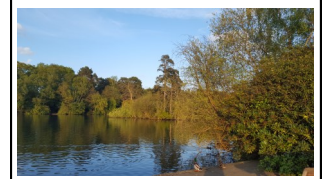
In the last year great progress has been made in the development of the Finchampstead NDP. A group of about twenty local residents and parish councillors have come together under the banner of 'Finchampstead Future' to construct this vital planning document that gives the residents of the parish a real voice in how it develops in the future. During the last year, working groups have been formed to tackle Housing and Commercial developments, to work on ideas to protect our valuable Green Spaces, to consider traffic and the issues of 'getting around' and to manage communications with our community.

We have conducted a very successful first consultation, to which over a thousand local people gave us some very helpful and informative views.

We have also been working with Wokingham Borough Council, as their Local Plan update develops, to make sure that we have a common understanding with them on the future of Finchampstead and the best way to protect ourselves from speculative development. If you are interested in helping us in anyway, no matter what your particular skills, please do contact us at [ndp@finchampstead-pc.gov.uk](mailto:ndp@finchampstead-pc.gov.uk)



We work to protect the character of our lovely Parish



## Finance & General Management

**Finchampstead Emergency Response**  
FER has been put in place to help in the first stages of a large scale emergency such as a hurricane. If you would like to get involved please get in touch.

This Committee is responsible for preparing and monitoring the annual budget and setting the precept - the amount collected from residents by Wokingham Borough Council as part of the Council Tax. In 2019/20 our precept was £153,698 and our budgeted expenditure was £159,806. The balance was met from income. Our budget and External Audit are published on our website.

The Committee also leads on the overall management and direction of the Parish Council including policies, procedures, staffing matters and risk management. Our Working Groups covering Communications and Consultation, Climate Change and Finchampstead Emergency Response each report to the Committee.

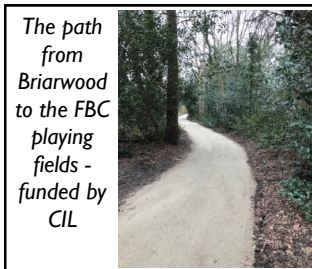
### Grants and donations

This year we have awarded over £40,000 to organisations providing support or services to our residents. Our largest donations are for the youth programme run through the FBC Centre, the Blackwater Valley Partnership, the Citizens Advice Bureau and Keep Mobile. Donations have also been made to our community halls, primary schools and St. James' Churchyard. We have awarded grants to ARC Youth Counselling, Finchampstead Community trips, the 1st Finchampstead Guides and Rangers, Gorse Ride summer holiday activities, Home Start, the Link Visiting Scheme, Me2 Club, MS Therapy, Wokingham Job Support Centre, Wokingham Poppy Appeal, the Volunteer Centre, the Friends of Finchampstead Ridges and the Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association.



### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

CIL is the contribution paid by developers towards local infrastructure improvements - including schools, roads and community facilities. The Parish Council receives 15% of all CIL contributions related to development in the Parish. This year we have contributed CIL funds towards improvements to Heath Ride (BW 24), the path from Briarwood to the FBC Playing fields and to facilities at the FBC Centre. One of our priorities is making sure that the CIL funds we receive are used to bring maximum benefits to the Finchampstead community.



## Planning

**Our Planning Committee has considered 173 new planning applications in 2019/20 including some applications in adjacent Parishes which may have an impact on Finchampstead**

Wokingham Borough Council is the Planning Authority and makes the decisions on planning applications. However we are notified of every development application submitted within the Parish and our Planning Committee considers

and comments on all the applications - whether for a tree house or a development of several new properties. If WBC refuses permission for a development the applicant may appeal against the decision,

which often leads to a Public Inquiry. We have attended several Public Inquiries to express the Parish Council's opposition to proposals including those at land north of Nine Mile Ride and land to the rear of Johnson Drive.

### Wokingham Borough Council Local Plan Update

WBC is putting together a new Local Plan, which will guide where development can and cannot take place across the Borough in the years to 2036. As well as housing the Plan will also guide employment, schools, roads, parks, community facilities and sport and leisure centres. We continue to liaise with WBC over the Plan and have commented on proposals at various stages, including responding to the consultation opened in February 2020. We will continue to work with WBC to do what we can to ensure the best outcomes for our Parish.



## The Arborfield Garrison Development (SDL)

We continue to closely monitor progress with the development and are represented on the Steering Group and the Community Liaison Forum.

Most of the new homes at Arborfield Green are within Barkham Parish but there now around

150 in Finchampstead. The first homes on Finchwood Park, the southern part of the development which all lies within our Parish, were occupied in December 2019, and eventually there will be up to 1500 homes, a community centre,

primary school, country park and allotment site. We have submitted detailed comments on the proposals for the new Arborfield Green primary school, and continue to press for healthcare provision on the development.



*There will be 3500 homes on the development including around 1750 in Finchampstead.*

## Amenities

Our activities this year have included:

- ◇ Roadside litter collections by our two part time Litter Wardens with an average of 30 bags collected each month

- ◇ Co-ordinating the Community Litter pick - with 380 volunteers involved
- ◇ Planting more trees at Burnmoor Meadow
- ◇ Holding our sixth tidy up session at the

- California Crossroads and providing floral displays for the area
- ◇ Organising a first aid training session
- ◇ Installing a third recycled plastic Parish noticeboard



*Our allotment site is thriving*



*The telephone box book swop*

## Rights of Way

Our activities this year have included:

- ◇ Continuing to help monitor the 21 miles of rights of way in the Parish, supporting WBC which is responsible for the network
- ◇ Regular maintenance

- by our Footpath Warden
- ◇ Funding improvements to part of Heath Ride Byway 24
- ◇ Improving the Briarwood to FBC Centre footpath
- ◇ Starting work on our

- new footpath map
- ◇ Pushing for the completion of the new nature reserves at Fleet Hill and Manor Farms and the new paths on the sites
- ◇ Working on plans for cycle routes to Wokingham



*We have supported the Ridges Ramble*

## Roads & Road Safety

Our activities this year have included:

- ◇ Holding weekly speedwatch sessions and reporting speeding to Thames Valley Police (TVP)
- ◇ Using our two pole mounted Speed Indicator Devices

- (SID) to remind drivers of the speed limits
- ◇ Monitoring traffic volumes and speeds, providing the data to TVP and WBC to inform traffic management and

- enforcement activities
- ◇ Continuing to push WBC to improve the maintenance of roadsides - including clearing debris and vegetation from our pavements and fixing road signs



*We have advised other local Town and Parish Councils on speedwatch - encouraging a collective approach*



## Our plans for 2020/21

### We are focusing on priorities identified by our residents:

- ◇ Footpaths, cycleways and bridleways
- ◇ Roads and road safety schemes
- ◇ Parks open spaces and play areas

### We are also aiming to:

- ◇ Improve communications with Residents
- ◇ Use CIL funds to provide or support local infrastructure
- ◇ Protect our green spaces from development

### Our priorities for 2020/21 include:

- ◇ Gorse Ride Estate regeneration
- ◇ Provision of affordable housing
- ◇ The developments at Arborfield Green and Finchwood Park
- ◇ The Neighbourhood Development Plan
- ◇ Challenging inappropriate development proposals
- ◇ Climate change projects and raising awareness of the issue
- ◇ Reducing litter and waste and promoting recycling
- ◇ Speedwatch
- ◇ Parish gateway signs with speed limit reminders
- ◇ Improving the condition of our roadsides and pavements
- ◇ Planning cycle routes to Wokingham
- ◇ Improvements to Bridlepath 26
- ◇ New nature reserves and rights of way at Fleet Hill and Manor Farms, and Footpath 33 improvements
- ◇ Completing the new Parish rights of way map
- ◇ Protecting and planting trees including the Wellingtonia Avenue surveys
- ◇ Reviewing our staff resources and IT support to ensure we can manage our expanding activities

### Wokingham Borough Council - different ways of working

*We are looking forward to a better working relationship with WBC in the coming year and to seeing the new WBC 'Localities' programme bring positive benefits to Finchampstead.*

*We continue to liaise with WBC aiming to ensure that local services and facilities are maintained.*



*Protecting and planting trees is one of our priorities*

*We hope you have found this report interesting. If you would like to receive our regular e newsletters please visit our website [www.finchampstead-pc.gov.uk](http://www.finchampstead-pc.gov.uk) or email [clerk@finchampstead-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@finchampstead-pc.gov.uk)*

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## FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

**Chair: Councillor Roland Cundy      Vice Chair: Councillor Steve Bromley**

### Councillors:

Steve Bowers; David Cornish; Chris Driver; Becky Eytel; Nancy Jennings-Frisby; Graham Jukes OBE; Sylvia McDonald; Rebecca Margetts; Roger Marshallsay; Jim May; Andy Pearce; Richard Rampton; Gordon Veitch; Simon Weeks; Roger Woof.

**Clerk: Katy Dagnall BSc (Hons), FSLCC. Assistant to the Clerk: Anna Kent.**



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