

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7.00 PM ON 15 APRIL 2021 by Zoom Video Conference

PRESENT: Cllr S. Weeks, Chair. Cllr S. Bromley, Vice Chair.
Cllrs S. Bowers; D. Cornish; R. Cundy; Mrs C. Driver; Mrs B. Eytle (part);
G. Jukes OBE; Mrs N. Jennings-Frisby; Mrs S. McDonald; Mrs R. Margetts; J. May;
R. Marshallsay; A. Pearce; R. Rampton; G. Veitch and R. Woof.

Mrs K. Dagnall, Clerk.

One member of the public.

154/2021 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Councillors were present.

155/2021 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were received.

156/2021 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17 March 2021 were agreed as a true and correct record. The minutes will be signed retrospectively as soon as circumstances allow.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

One member of the public was present to observe the meeting.

157/2021 CHAIRS REPORT

- The sad loss of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh was noted. A message of condolence has been posted on the website. Cllr Weeks will make an entry in the online condolence book on behalf of the Council.
- The Council's Planning Committee Clerk, Anna Kent, is leaving the Council on 27 April after almost 16 years. The Council expressed appreciation for her work and commitment during her time with the Council.
- The elections for the three Finchampstead Parish wards are uncontested and two new Councillors will be welcomed to the Council after 10 May.
- An update on the Greyhound public house has been circulated. The new lessee, Brucan Pubs, plans to open the venue in September with a pub / restaurant, a small shop and a café. There are no plans to open a Post Office – the Royal Mail is apparently still looking for a replacement venue for the Post Office formerly located at the Park View Village Stores which closed in 2020.
- It was noted that there was a fire at Millard Place, Arborfield Green on 15 April which has caused serious damage to 12 flats but no injuries. The cause of the fire is unknown.

158/2021 COMMITTEE REPORTS

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Cllr Veitch advised that the Committee met on 31 March. Minutes of the meeting have been circulated.

- The Committee and other interested Councillors had a training session on 6 March, delivered by the Hampshire Association of Local Councils. It was a useful session, and a further session may be held in the Autumn.
- Bloor Homes may be giving a presentation to the meeting on 28 April in relation to revised plans for 165 dwellings, open space and a car park on land west of Wokingham Road, Sandhurst.
- The Barkham Solar Farm application will be considered by the Committee on 28 April.

FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Woof reported on the financial position of the Council, the meeting held on 24 March (minutes have been circulated) and current matters.

Financial position

- Unity Trust Bank £21,738.78
- CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund account £714,225.89
- CCLA Property Fund £25,000
- The above figures include £672,667 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts.

The schedule of payments totalling £11,184.33 was circulated to all Councillors.

The payment schedule was approved by the Council. Cllrs Bromley and Woof agreed to authorise the electronic payments.

Other matters.

- The end of year accounts and other procedures are underway. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return will be presented to the Council at its June meeting.
- The Annual Report for 2020/21 has been published on the website and sent to those on the e distribution list. The household distribution of the report is underway. The distribution company cannot cover some of the more rural roads and volunteers will be asked to cover these.
- The Committee considered the draft Borough / Town and Parish Council Charter at its meeting and was broadly in support of the document. Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) has now formally approached the Council regarding signing up to the Charter and this will be considered at the May meeting of the Council.
- The Committee discussed refining the Project List, to make it more focused on projects the Parish Council can directly influence or deliver. Various policy updates were also discussed.
- Progress is being made with the new IT systems and it is hoped that more features of the software will be rolled out to all Councillors soon.
- The HR Sub Committee has met twice in recent weeks. The Deputy Clerk and Planning Committee Clerk vacancies are being advertised locally and there has been some interest in both positions.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE

Cllr Mrs McDonald reported on current matters.

- The Gorse Ride Schools and Finchampstead Primary School have accepted the offer of a defibrillator and these are due to be delivered next week. Nine Mile Ride Primary already has a defibrillator.

The Clerk is following up the supplier's offer to provide basic training for the schools on the use of the defibrillators. It was noted that the two first aid / defibrillator training sessions the Parish Council had arranged for 2020 were cancelled due to the pandemic, but these will be rearranged as soon as circumstances allow.

- The new play area at the California Country Park is due to open after the Easter school holiday, with a booking system in place.
- Information on the dam improvement works at the Park has been circulated, the works are due to start next week.
- The Wellingtonia Avenue tree surveys start on 19 April. Permission has been granted to survey all but 24 of the trees – there are 110 in total of which 8 have already been surveyed under the pilot survey which took place last year.

Cllr Veitch advised that when the surveys are complete it is intended that a seminar type event will be held for residents to discuss the overall findings and give further guidance on measures to ensure the health and longevity of the trees.

RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE

Cllr Cornish reported on current matters.

- The 'no cycling/no horse riding' signs for footpaths have been received and locations for these are being considered, including FP16, FP29 and P54. The Clerk has asked the Footpath Warden to report particular problem areas.
- The consultation on proposed access improvements to Rooks Nest Woods has now closed and the responses are being considered.
- The new Working Group formed to try to progress the various issues relating to the future nature reserves on land at Fleet Hill and Manor Farms and other matters relating to Cemex UK Ltd. land has met and agreed the next stages. Due to the wide remit of the Group it will be reporting to the Finance & General Management Committee.
- The link paths to the California Greenway have finally been completed.
- Cllrs Cornish and Margetts met representatives from Sand Martins Golf Course and a WBC Officer on 14 April to discuss the potential for using some of the paths on the site as part of a cycle route to Wokingham. It was a positive meeting and WBC will now be drawing up a brief for a feasibility study on the potential upgrade of the paths.
- There is still no progress with the request to WBC to consider a crossing on Biggs Lane, and to improve the paths across Hazebrouck Meadows, to facilitate use by young people cycling to and from Bohunt School. This matter has now been escalated within WBC.
- WBC is consulting on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and a response will be submitted shortly.

ROADS & ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Cllr Bromley reported on current matters.

- The installation of gateway signs at entrances to the Parish is finally underway.
- Traffic volume and speed monitoring is on hold due to issues with downloading the data.
- WBC has confirmed that The Ridges will be closed for a year while investigations take place into the collapse of the road. Works to resolve the problem are due to start in Autumn 2021 but may not be completed until Spring 2022 depending on the scale of work required.

The closure of the Road is causing issues with other roads including Dell Road, Cricket Hill and Lower Sandhurst Road being used as detours. This is a particular problem due to the high level of use of these roads by walkers and cyclists.

Cllr Weeks confirmed that plans are being drawn up by WBC to allow access for residents but not for through traffic.

- Gorse Ride, Carolina Place and adjacent roads are increasingly being used for parking by visitors going to the California Country Park who wish to avoid parking charges at the Park. The issue is even greater when the FBC Centre car park is closed at weekends due to its use for COVID-19 testing.

159/2021 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY EXPENDITURE (CIL)

Cllr Woof advised that the current balance of CIL funds is £672,667 and that current commitments are:

- Up to £3000 for defibrillators for local schools.
- £100,000 to the California Crossroads improvement scheme.
- £12,510 for the Wellingtonia Avenue tree surveys

Proposals for additional expenditure:

- As noted above gateway signs are currently being installed at various locations in the Parish. The cost of the signs will be up to £4000, depending on how many can be installed.

It was proposed that expenditure of up to £4000 on the signs be covered by CIL and this was approved by the Council.

It was noted that the Finchampstead Park Management Committee (FPMC) is proposing improvements to the tennis courts at the Memorial Park and is currently fund raising for the balance of funds required. At present FPMC has no information on the number of users of the courts or where they come from, so it is inappropriate for the Parish Council to contribute as this would be contrary to its policy. However, it has been made clear to FPMC that an application for funds towards future improvements will be welcomed when information on usage is available.

160/2021 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES ON RECENT MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Borough Parish Liaison Forum 12 April

Cllrs Bromley and Cundy attended the meeting. Presentations were given on changes to the planning system, the Climate Emergency Action Plan, grass cutting and biodiversity, waste and recycling, and the WBC Active Travel Plan. Minutes and presentations will be circulated when available.

It was noted that future meetings may be held at venues other than Shute End, subject to availability.

161/2021 STANDING ORDERS

The Council's Standing Orders have been reviewed and one amendment was proposed to section 5 Ordinary Meetings. This formerly stated that Main Council meetings would be held at the FBC Centre or the Memorial Hall. This has been amended to permit the Council to meet virtually, and the updated document was circulated to Councillors.

The amendment was approved and the updated Standing Orders were adopted by the Council.

It was noted that the Government had decided not to extend the regulations put in place in April 2020 which permitted Local Councils to meet virtually. However, the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 and the Local Government Act 1972 do not specifically prohibit virtual meetings. In the light of this, and Government guidance that 'meetings where local authorities deem that in-person attendance is not required should continue to be held virtually', the Parish Council will continue to meet virtually until it considers it safe to meet in person. This decision will be reviewed in 3 months.

The Council will be responding to the current Government consultation over future legislation relating to virtual meetings.

It was agreed that a working group should be formed to discuss how the Council could function with a mix of virtual and in person meetings, and the potential for holding hybrid meetings.

162/2021 PROJECT AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

Cllr Cornish advised that the Regulation 14 consultation has now closed, and the responses are being considered.

- Meetings have taken place with WBC Planning Officers and with the Planning Consultant to review the current position in the light of some of the consultation responses, and particularly due to the fact that the proposal for a major development at Grazeley is not going ahead and WBC therefore need to find alternative development sites from across the Borough.
- The Steering Group is considering whether to continue with the draft Plan as it is or to vary the Plan and include development sites, and the implications of either approach.
- If the Group does decide to vary the draft Plan this will require the approval of the Council.

Cllr Jukes provided an update on the Local Green Space designation process.

- In June 2020 the Parish Council and the NDP Group collated a list of 20 sites which the Parish Council submitted to WBC for designation as Local Green Spaces in the Local Plan Update. These sites also formed the basis of the Local Green Spaces Topic Paper which supports the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan and was part of the Regulation 14 consultation.
- Following further research the NDP Group has now refined the list down to 14 sites. However, as part of the Local Plan Update process WBC has now started consulting landowners on the original list of 20 sites put forward by the Parish Council, along with all others put forward across the Borough. This has caused some concern or confusion and any queries should be directed to Cllrs Cornish or Jukes or the Clerk.

Gorse Ride regeneration

- Cllr Bowers advised that the Steering Group met on 13 April.
- Wates Construction Ltd. is the appointed contractor for Phase 2a which includes 100 new homes plus public open space. The Company has now appointed a Community Liaison Officer.
- The Contractor has been invited to the June Council meeting to speak about their plans for community engagement.
- The demolition of 3 properties in Dart Close has commenced and people are gradually moving out of other properties.

- Phase 1 at Arnett Avenue is currently ahead of schedule with the houses due to be occupied or ready for occupation by the end of May, and the apartment blocks by the end of June.

Arborfield Strategic Development Location (SDL)

- A reserved matters application for parcel V1S has now been submitted by Bloor Homes.

163/2021 FINCHAMPSTEAD WAR MEMORIAL

- The Council previously considered four potential locations for the Memorial within or adjacent to the Memorial Park. These were 'shortlisted' to two locations, on the verge adjacent to the Park and a location close to memorial trees at the north of the Park.
- The Finchampstead Park Management Committee has considered these two locations and has agreed that the location on the verge adjacent to the Park could be considered.
- The Parochial Church Council of Finchampstead and California agreed that a site near St. James' Church could be considered as an alternative location. Information and visuals were circulated illustrating how the Memorial would look on this site near the Church when seen from various directions / viewpoints.
- The relocation of the War Memorial will be subject to public consultation. The Council agreed that should the relocation of the Memorial proceed, its chosen location would be the verge adjacent to the Memorial Park.
- As previously agreed, a Working Group will be formed to progress the project to the next stage.

164/2021 CORRESPONDENCE.

Correspondence has been circulated by email and / or noted under agenda items above.

165/2021 FORUM

- It was noted that this was the last meeting for Cllr Mrs Jennings - Frisby and Cllr Rampton who are standing down from the Council. Cllr Weeks thanked the Councillors for their work and commitment during their term of office.
- The FBC Centre will be staffed from 9am to 5pm from 19 April and activities for children and young people will be restarting. Adult activities are due to restart from 17 May depending on circumstances around the pandemic. The café will gradually be moving its services to within the building, including limited seating in the building.

166/2021 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 19 May 2021 at 7pm.

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting of the Council.

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL - PAYMENT LIST 15 APRIL 2021

UNITY TRUST BANK ACCOUNT 10/04/21			£21,738.78	
CCLA DEPOSIT ACCOUNT 31/03/21			£714,225.89	
CCLA PROPERTY FUND 31/03/20			£25,000.00	
INCLUDING CIL RECEIPTS TOTAL £672,667.70				
TOTAL FUNDS			£760,964.67	

	NET	VAT	TOTAL	
Outstanding payments not yet cleared				
None.				
Total payments outstanding			£0.00	
Payments already approved and paid				
CASTLE WATER (2020-21)	463.55	92.71	556.26	738877027
CLIFTON INGRAM LLP (2020-21)	250.00	50.00	300.00	248012611
FB CHURCH - YOUTH WORK (2020-21)	3000.00	0.00	3000.00	210853308
IBS OFFICE SOLUTIONS (PRINTER) (2020-21)	78.00	15.60	93.60	505684782
2021-22				
BRITISH TELECOM	47.49	9.49	56.98	BT DD 1
KARE GROUP LTD (ANNUAL REP DISTRIB)	573.31	114.66	687.97	541191150
WBC FOOTPATH SIGNS	301.00	0.00	301.00	515376754
PAYMENTS APRIL 2021				
Staff costs			£6,957.43	
Other costs				
SSE STREET LIGHT ENERGY	28.19	1.40	29.59	SSE DD 1
WEB MARKETING MATTERS	157.55	0.00	157.55	574184585
ASAP COMPUTER SERVICES	234.80	46.96	281.76	606023989
JAY PRINTERS (ANNUAL REPORT)	633.00	0.00	633.00	154408785
FBC CENTRE OFFICE RENTAL	1,221.25	0.00	1221.25	221449553
FBC CENTRE OFFICE SERVICE CHARGE	1,082.75	0.00	1082.75	"
CPRE SUBSCRIPTION	36.00	0.00	36.00	135987811
INFORMATION COMMISSIONER	35.00	0.00	35.00	ICO DD
CLOUDY GROUP IT TRAINING	225.00	45.00	270.00	
HALC PLANNING TRAINING	400.00	80.00	480.00	87495746
Allotment costs				
CASTLE WATER AS ABOVE				
Neighbourhood Development Plan costs				
None				
Grants and contributions - subject to final approval by Council where required				
FBC YOUTH WORK AS ABOVE				
TOTAL APRIL PAYMENTS		£173.36	£11,184.33	
TOTAL REMAINING			£749,780.34	
APRIL PETTY CASH / CARD PAYMENTS	Net	VAT	Total	
Total petty cash payments	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total Card payments (Clerk)	44.81	6.41	51.22	
Total Card payments (Footpath Warden)	0.00	0.00	0.00	
TOTAL	£44.81	£6.41	£51.22	

