

GUIDANCE FOR RESIDENTS WISHING TO ATTEND AND SPEAK AT PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Parish Councils are statutory bodies that are notified of every planning application submitted within their area, they are not the decision makers. The decision maker is the Planning Authority, for Finchampstead this is Wokingham Borough Council (WBC).

Finchampstead Parish Council's Planning Committee consists of up to 8 Councillors and has delegated powers to comment on planning applications on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Planning Committee meets every four weeks when it considers applications for development within Finchampstead Parish. Details of meetings can be found at www.finchampstead-pc.gov.uk or by contacting the Council at planning@finchampstead-pc.gov.uk

The Committee takes into account the views of local residents when formulating its opinion, including viewing any comments published on the WBC website. The Committee may also send representatives to WBC's Planning Committee meetings to speak on applications and provide a local perspective.

- Residents, and applicants for planning permission, are welcome to attend Planning Committee meetings held either in person or by video conferencing. They may speak at the meeting if they wish, whether in support of or against an application.

At some meetings there may be confidential business to be discussed, for example in relation to enforcement matters. This will generally be dealt with after the main part of the meeting, and under the Local Government Act 1972 & Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960 the press and public may be excluded from this part of the meeting as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

- It is helpful if the Parish Council is informed if a resident or applicant wishes to attend a meeting by contacting planning@finchampstead-pc.gov.uk If a virtual meeting the meeting link will need to be requested.
- The Committee meeting will commence with the required formalities and will then move to a Public Participation Session.
- During this session the Chair of the meeting will invite residents or applicants present to speak in turn for up to 5 minutes in relation to a planning application to be considered at the meeting, or on another planning related matter. If present, the applicant will generally be invited to speak first, followed by any others present to support the application, and then those against the application.

If a group of residents attends in relation to a planning application they should nominate one person to speak on their behalf.

- Parish Councillors may ask questions to clarify any points raised.
- After the Public Participation session residents or applicants attending the meeting may only speak if invited to do so by the Chair of the meeting. They may leave the meeting at any time.
- The Committee will then consider the current planning applications and wherever possible will hear those applications of interest to residents / applicants attending the meeting first.
- The Committee will make comments which will be forwarded to Wokingham Borough Council, the Planning Authority, who will take into account comments from the Parish Council, residents and other parties before making their decision.