

## FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7 PM ON 19 JANUARY 2022 By Teams Video Conference

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**PRESENT:** Cllr S. Weeks; Chair. Cllr S. Bromley; Vice Chair.  
Cllrs E. Biskup; S. Bowers; R. Cundy; C. Driver; D. Cornish; B. Eytle;  
S. Gurney; G. Jukes OBE; S. McDonald; R. Margetts; R. Marshallsay; A Pearce;  
G. Veitch & R. Woof. J. May (part).

K. Dagnall, Clerk; C. Warke, Deputy Clerk.  
One member of the public.

#### **542/2022 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

All Councillors were present.

#### **543/2022 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

#### **544/2022 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 15 December 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 attended to observe the meeting.

#### **545/2022 CHAIRS REPORT**

- Cllr Weeks advised that the Government has recently announced that it will not bring in legislation to permit Councils to hold virtual and hybrid meetings. Organisations representing the sector continue to push for this and the Lawyers in Local Government and the Association of Democratic Services Officers are promoting a petition on the topic.
- Cllr Weeks, the Committee Chairs and the Clerk met on 12 January and discussed the 2022 Annual Gathering. Legislation requires the event to be held between 1 March and 1 June inclusive and the event is currently planned for 9 March 2022. It was agreed that the event should be postponed to late May or 1 June depending on venue availability.
- It was noted that Jim May is resigning from the Council as of 31 January 2022. At its December meeting the Council agreed that the honour of the Freedom of the Parish should be awarded to Jim May in recognition of his 15 years of service on the Parish Council, and for the contribution he has made to the Parish Council and the area.

A framed scroll was presented virtually and will be delivered in person by Cllrs Cundy and Weeks, along with a card and gift from the Council.

#### **546/2022 PROJECT AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATES**

##### **Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP)**

Cllr Cornish advised that a meeting took place on 14 January with the Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) Director of Place and Growth and members of the Planning Team. Cllrs Cornish, Jukes and Weeks and the Clerk attended, along with Mr Gibson, the Chair of the NDP Project Group.

The impact of the WBC Rooks Nest Farm development proposals on the NDP in terms of the site allocations proposed in the Plan was discussed. The NDP team has subsequently decided not to change any of the proposed site allocations in the Plan. The rejection by WBC of 6 of the sites proposed for Local Green Space designation was also discussed and WBC confirmed that further submissions relating to the rejected sites will be considered. WBC also committed to review the policies and proposals relating to green gaps and green wedges and to provide feedback to the NDP team.

The consultation report on the outcome of the second Regulation 14 Statutory Consultation on the NDP is currently being prepared and amendments to the Plan and Topic Papers will be made as appropriate. The Plan will then be forwarded to Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) for review.

Cllr Weeks advised that at the meeting of the Chair, Committee Chairs and Clerk on 12 January there was an initial discussion about integrating the NDP into the work of and future planning for the Council. It is proposed that this will be a discussion item at the March meeting of the Council.

### **Gorse Ride regeneration**

- Cllr Bowers advised that the Steering Group met on 11 January.
- A WBC Officer attended in relation to transport including future bus services.
- The Community House will be opening at its new location on Gorse Ride South at the end of January or early February.
- The last tenant has now moved out of the area forming the second phase of the regeneration, and the demolition of properties continues.

### **Arborfield Strategic Development Location (Arborfield Green and Finchwood Park)**

- A newsletter has been circulated.
- A planning application for the District Centre at Arborfield Green is expected in March 2022.
- The southern part of the Nine Mile Ride Extension is due to be completed this spring and will open to traffic in the summer.
- Reserved Matters applications are expected to come forward in the near future for several parcels at both Arborfield Green and Finchwood Park. The respective developers have been in contact offering presentations on the proposals, and this is being followed up by the Planning Committee Clerk.

### **547/2022 WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN UPDATE**

The current consultation on the Local Plan Update: Revised Growth Strategy runs to 24 January.

A draft response was circulated to Councillors. This focuses on the housing site allocations, including strong objections to the Rooks Nest Farm proposals. It also supports the designation of sites in Wokingham Town, Arborfield and Barkham and Finchampstead as Local Green Spaces, and provides additional information and evidence to support the designation of further sites in Finchampstead.

Cllr Cundy expressed thanks to Cllrs Cornish and Jukes and to members of the NDP team for their significant work on drafting comments which have formed the basis for the Parish Council response to the consultation.

The response was approved by the Council and will be submitted to WBC.

### **548/2022 BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR 2022/23**

Cllr Woof advised that the Finance & General Management Committee considered the draft budget and Precept at its meeting on 5 January and agreed to utilise £10,000 from the Council's reserves to balance the budget.

This has now been reconsidered in view of the significant increase in the number of households in the Parish, and rates of inflation, and the current proposal is to utilise £2750 from the Council's reserves, giving a Precept of £184,615

This will mean that the annual Council Tax payable to the Parish Council by a Band D property would be £29.32. The equivalent figure for the current year 2021/22 is £27.93.

The net budget of £187,365 and a Precept of £184,615 was agreed by the Council.

## **549/2022 COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Cllr Woof reported on the financial position of the Council and current matters.

#### **Financial position**

- Unity Trust Bank £64,147.56
- CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund account £719,394.39
- CCLA Property Fund £25,000
- The above figures include £689,429 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts.

The schedule of payments totalling £18,008.48 was circulated to all Councillors. This included a provisional grant award of £920 to Link Visiting.

Cllr Woof proposed that the sum of £1170 for tree planting should be covered by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds. This, the grant and the remaining payments were approved by the Council.

Cllrs Bromley and Veitch agreed to authorise the electronic payments.

#### **Other matters:**

- The Committee met on 5 January; minutes of the meeting have been circulated. The draft budget and Precept Demand and the Link Visiting grant application were discussed as noted above.
- Projects for potential CIL funding were discussed.
  - A bid from WBC for funds towards an outdoor gym in a shipping container like structure, to be placed on the FBC Playing Fields, was rejected.
  - WBC submitted a proposal in relation to CCTV cameras to combat fly tipping. WBC has been asked for further information and an amended proposal.
  - A proposal to commit CIL funds to survey and design fees for the War Memorial junction is being discussed further with WBC.
  - A bid has been received from the Gorse Ride Schools for funds towards play equipment and outdoor shelters. Additional information has been requested before the bid can be considered in detail, but the principle of committing funds to appropriate projects in local schools was discussed. This was supported in principle and will be discussed further at the next Committee meeting.
- Staff appraisals are due in February and are now being arranged.

#### **War Memorial relocation project**

Cllr Jukes advised that the consultation period on the planning application closed on 31 December. A decision is expected in mid-February.

In the interim work is continuing on other aspects of the project including drawing up the contract and tender documentation.

Subject to planning permission being granted, the completion date for the project is expected to be

the end of June 2022.

### **AMENITIES COMMITTEE**

Cllr McDonald reported on current matters.

- The Platinum Jubilee Award is being widely promoted. Some nominations have been received but more are welcome.
- A further three trees were planted at Burnmoor Meadow on 4 January, these will be labelled to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee.
- The January issue of the Allotment Association newsletter has been circulated to Councillors. This includes an article written by the Clerk setting out how the Parish Council secured the site for the allotments and set it out, as well as covering the Council's continued involvement with the site.
- The next Committee meeting is on 26 January.

### **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Cllr Cundy advised that the Committee met on 12 January. Minutes of the meeting have been circulated.

- The Committee considered 19 applications and submitted objections to four development proposals, including the revised proposals for the former Xenuk Restaurant site at the California Crossroads.
- WBC has now issued all of the outstanding decision notices. 6 of the 25 decisions were contrary to the Parish Council's decisions.
- The Appeal relating to 11 The Rise has been allowed, and the Appeal relating to The Hansom Cab Inn, Lower Wokingham Road was dismissed.
- A new Appeal has been submitted in relation to Twin Oaks, Longwater Lane.

### **RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE**

Cllr Cornish reported on current matters.

- WBC has been asked to attend a meeting to discuss the next stage with the Rooks Nest access improvement project.
- A further batch of signs advising where paths should not be used by horse riders or cyclists has been purchased. These will be used to replace damaged signs and for new locations.
- Two quotes have been secured for works to alleviate the drainage problems on Bridlepath 24 and are now being considered.

Cllr Bromley advised that signs prohibiting the use of e scooters have been installed at the California Country Park and on the California greenway.

### **ROADS & ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Cllr Bromley reported on current matters.

- Roadside speed watch sessions were continuing weekly but are now on hold as Thames Valley Police has now introduced its new system and will no longer process the data from sessions run in the current format.
- Discussions are now taking place with Thames Valley Police to get the Finchampstead Speed watch set up on and compliant with the new system so that sessions can resume. This will involve the purchase of a new camera as previously agreed by the Council.

Cllr Driver raised the issue of the poor condition of Commonfield Lane. The Lane will be closed from 7-11 February to allow Thames Water to undertake works. The current WBC annual maintenance programme does not include any repair or resurfacing work to the Lane – this will be followed up by the Roads & Road Safety Committee.

WBC has provided an update on the timescale for works at The Ridges. Design work will be

completed at the end of March / early April. The timescale for the tender process and actual implementation of the works has not been confirmed.

The impact of the closure of The Ridges on local roads was noted. The increased level of traffic on roads including Dell Road and Lower Sandhurst Road has resulted in damage to the verges and significant reinstatement will be required. The completion of the broadband installation on part of Dell Road cannot be completed until The Ridges reopens.

**550/2022 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

**Farley Hill School consultation.**

As discussed at the previous meeting, Cllrs Cundy, Eytle and Margetts and the Clerk met to consider a response to the consultation on the proposals to increase the catchment area and the intake for 2022/23.

A response has been submitted supporting the change to the catchment area but expressing serious concerns over the negative impact of the increased intake on our local schools. The need to increase to a two-form entry in 2022 rather than in 2024 as originally planned has been questioned.

In her capacity as a WBC Councillor, Cllr Margetts has written to the WBC Head of Children’s Services expressing concerns over the impact on local schools.

**Associations of Local Councils**

Further to discussion at the previous meeting the Clerk has circulated a briefing note on the Associations and related bodies. The current position will be discussed at the February meeting of the Council.

**551/2022 FORUM**

- The possibility of holding the February meeting of the Council in person was discussed. This will be reviewed nearer the time depending on circumstances and Councillor preferences. Any comments or views should be forwarded to Cllr Weeks or the Clerk.
- An Extraordinary Meeting will be held on Thursday 27 January 2022 at 9.30am to ratify certain Council decisions.

**552/2021 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 24 February 2022.

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

**FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL - PAYMENT LIST 19 JANUARY 2022**

<b>UNITY TRUST BANK ACCOUNT 10/01/22</b>			£64,147.56
<b>CCLA DEPOSIT ACCOUNT 31/12/21</b>			£719,394.38
<b>CCLA PROPERTY FUND 31/03/21</b>			£25,000.00
INCLUDING CIL RECEIPTS TOTAL £689429.10			
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>			<b>£808,541.94</b>
	<b>NET</b>	<b>VAT</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Outstanding payments not yet cleared</b>			
<b>Total payments outstanding</b>			<b>£0.00</b>

<b>Payments already approved and paid</b>			
SSE STREET LIGHT ENERGY	27.55	1.37	28.92
BRITISH TELECOM	48.24	9.64	57.88
<b>PAYMENTS JANUARY 2021</b>			
<b>Staff costs</b>			
<b>Total staff costs</b>	<b>£7,992.32</b>		<b>£7,992.32</b>
<b>Other costs</b>			
ASAP COMPUTER SERVICES-SUPPORT	284.20	56.84	341.04
MICROSHADE REMOTE HOSTING	77.20	15.44	92.64
WEB MARKETING MATTERS	157.55	0.00	157.55
WBC - NO CYCLING SIGNS	225.00	0.00	225.00
HEARTWOOD TREE MAINTENANCE	750.00	150.00	900.00
HEARTWOOD 3 TREES _BURNMOOR (CIL)	1,170.00	234.00	1,404.00
ABRACADABRA LEAFLET DISTRIBUTION	1,019.79	203.96	1,223.75
SHAWS -SCROLL & FRAME	230.95	46.19	277.14
CHAIRS EXPENSES	51.64	9.70	61.34
FINCHAMPSTEAD MAGAZINE	10.00	0.00	10.00
FBC CAFÉ	4.18	0.52	4.70
JAY PRINTERS	399.00	0.00	399.00
<b>Allotment costs</b>			
FISHER GERMAN ALLOTMENT LEASE	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00
<b>Neighbourhood Development Plan costs</b>			
NONE			
<b>Grants and contributions - subject to final approval by Council where required</b>			
LINK VISITING SCHEME	920.00	0.00	920.00
FBC YOUTH WORK OCT-DEC	3,000.00	£0.00	£3,000.00
<b>TOTAL JANUARY PAYMENTS</b>		<b>£716.65</b>	<b>£18,008.48</b>
<b>TOTAL REMAINING</b>			<b>£790,533.46</b>
<b>JANUARY PETTY CASH / CARD PAYMENTS</b>	Net	VAT	Total
Total petty cash payments	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Card payments (Clerk)	85.20	17.04	102.24
Total Card payments (Footpath Warden)	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£85.20</b>	<b>£17.04</b>	<b>£102.24</b>
<b>CARD PAYMENTS DETAIL</b>	Net	VAT	Total
908 LTD TREE LABELS	85.20	17.04	102.24
	<b>85.20</b>	<b>17.04</b>	<b>102.24</b>