

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7.30 PM ON 25 JANUARY 2023 AT THE FBC CENTRE, GORSE RIDE NORTH, FINCHAMPSTEAD

PRESENT: Councillor S. Weeks; Chair. Councillor S. Bromley, Vice Chair.
Councillors R. Cundy; B. Eytley; G. Evans; S. Gurney;
G. Jukes OBE; R. Marshallsay; C. Mortimer; A. Pearce & G. Veitch.

K. Dagnall, Clerk.

355/2023 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors S. Bowers; D. Cornish; S. McDonald & R. Woof.

356/2023 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Cundy declared an interest in the Finchampstead Primary School grant application.

357/2023 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21 December 2022 were agreed as a true and correct record and were signed by the Chair.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

No members of the public were present.

358/2023 CHAIRS REPORT

- The two Parish Councillor vacancies are now open for co-option, there have been two applications to date and additional expressions of interest. It is intended that candidates will be invited to meet the Council at its meeting on 23 February 2023.
- Interviews for the position of Deputy Clerk have taken place. The selected candidate has accepted the post and will be starting with the Council in late February.
- Annual Gathering 2023 – the event will be held on 8 March. The Chief Executive of Citizens Advice Wokingham will be giving a presentation.

359/2023 PROJECT AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP)

The Plan and associated documents can be viewed on the Council's website at

<https://www.finchampstead-pc.gov.uk/community-projects/neighbourhood-development-plan/documents>

Cllr Jukes provided an update on the current position.

- Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) has appointed an independent examiner to review the Plan and the examination is underway. Some initial questions have been received and the FNDP group will be responding to these with assistance from the appointed planning consultant, Bell Cornwell.
- The response from the examiner and therefore the level of changes which need to be made to the Plan will determine the timetable for the final stage for the Plan – the referendum.
- It was noted that at a recent training session held by WBC for its Members, the Finchampstead NDP was singled out as a Plan which included a housing allocation, and which is therefore an example of good practice for an NDP.

Gorse Ride regeneration

- Steering Group meetings will resume in February.
- Works on Phase 2 of the regeneration are underway but have been delayed by the recent adverse weather conditions.

Arborfield Strategic Development Location (Arborfield Green and Finchwood Park)

- A planning application for the Arborfield Green District Centre is expected to be submitted in March 2023.
- The Arborfield Aces are leading on a bid to get the proposed Arborfield Green Sports Pavilion changed to a charitable Community Sports Hub. A detailed proposal has been submitted to WBC.
- There are some concerns over how WBC is dealing with the new allotment site to be created at Finchwood Park. This is being followed up.

360/2023 TO CONSIDER THE BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR 2023/24

The draft budget was circulated to all Councillors.

Cllr Jukes advised that the Finance & General Management Committee is recommending a net budget of £196,035 and a precept of £192,154. This involves utilising £3881 from the Council's general reserves.

A precept of £192,154 will mean that the annual Council Tax payable to the Parish Council by a Band D property would be £29.32. This is the same as in the current year 2022/23.

The net budget of £196,035 and a Precept of £192,154 was agreed by the Council.

361/2023 TO CONSIDER AN INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND RESERVES POLICY

A draft document was circulated to all Councillors.

Cllr Jukes advised that while it is not mandatory for the Parish Council to have such a strategy due to the level of investments held, it is considered good practice given the level of funds held by the Council.

The Council approved the Investment Strategy and Reserves Policy.

362/2023 TO CONSIDER THE AWARD OF GRANTS

Cllr Jukes advised that at its meeting on 4 January the Finance & General Management Committee considered two grant applications. Details of the applications were circulated to Councillors.

Recommendations from the Committee were circulated to Councillors and agreed as follows:

- Link Visiting Scheme – grant of £1000.
- Finchampstead CE Primary School – grant of £40,000 towards multi use games areas and a trim trail. The grant to be covered by Community Infrastructure Levy funds and to be released on or near the commencement of the works, expected to be Easter 2023.

363/2023 COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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

Financial position

- Unity Trust Bank £85,593,89
- CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund account £1,360,018.28

- CCLA Property Fund £25,000
- The above figures include £1,345,549 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts.

The schedule of payments totalling £11,488.71 was circulated to all Councillors and was unanimously approved. Cllrs Jukes and Weeks agreed to authorise the electronic payments.

Matters discussed at the meeting held on 4 January 2023 are covered under agenda items above.

A report from the War Memorial Working Group has been deferred to the February meeting of the Council.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE

- Cllrs Veitch and Weeks and the Clerk met on 20 January to discuss the WBC draft Tree Strategy. A response to the consultation has been submitted.
- The 2023 Community Litter Pick will be held on Sunday 26 March. Participation from the larger groups – the Finchampstead Baptist Church; the Scouts and The Village has been confirmed. Other arrangements will be confirmed nearer the event.
- The trees planted by the Parish Council in 2022 have been recorded under the Queens Green Canopy Scheme. Information on this has been circulated.

The Amenities Committee meeting planned for 1 February has been cancelled and will be rearranged. The Committee will be discussing plans for the coronation of King Charles III in due course.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Cllr Cundy reported on the recent meeting and current matters.

- The Committee met on 18 January. Minutes of the meeting have been circulated.
- 11 planning applications were considered, with objections submitted for two applications.
- 11 decisions made by WBC were reported, all but four were in line with the Committee's views.
- Details of one new Tree Preservation Order have been received, and two applications for works on protected trees.
- Cllr Marshallsay attended the WBC Planning Committee meeting on 11 January and presented the Parish Councils' objections to the latest application for Twin Oaks, Longwater Lane, and to proposals at 6 Johnson Drive.
- Crest Nicholson has issued an updated Vision Document for a potential development of up to 1000 dwellings at Barkham Square. Barkham Parish Council has requested a meeting with Finchampstead Parish Councillors to discuss the development proposal and this is being arranged.
- Cllr Marshallsay will be speaking on behalf of the Parish Council at the informal hearing on 14 February relating to an appeal in relation to Heartwood Lodge, Sandhurst Road.
- The enforcement sub-group will be meeting on 26 January to discuss current issues.

The Government is currently consulting on reforms to national planning policy which could mean that the number of homes required to be built in Wokingham is reduced. The consultation closes on 2 March. The Planning Committee will discuss this and will submit a response to the consultation on behalf of the Parish Council.

RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE

Cllr Jukes reported on current matters.

- Access improvements to Rooks Nest Woods – the footbridge is now in place with the gate to follow shortly.

- Cllrs Cornish, Jukes, Weeks and the Clerk walked the Cemex UK Ltd. former gravel extraction sites at Fleet Hill and Manor Farms in December with WBC Cllr Ian Shenton, the Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure. The aim of the visit was to raise awareness of the sites and their importance as nature reserves, and as local amenities with new rights of way linking to the wider rights of way network. The Parish Council will now try and engage with WBC Officers to seek more involvement with the sites.
- Cllr Mortimer was welcomed to the Committee.

ROADS & ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Cllr Bromley reported that the Committee met on 12 January. Minutes of the meeting have been circulated. The current difficulties in progressing highway projects with WBC were noted.

Community speed watch sessions will resume at the end of January.

Information from WBC on the California Crossroads improvement scheme has been circulated to all Councillors. The detailed design has been finalised and addresses comments and concerns previously submitted by the Parish Council. The information circulated outlines the projected timescale and plans for stakeholder engagement.

364/2023 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no matters to report.

365/2023 FORUM

Cllr Weeks noted that WBC has adopted the Joint Minerals and Waste Plan for Central and Eastern Berkshire.

Cllr Gurney noted that the WBC Standards Board will be meeting soon and will be reviewing disciplinary procedures.

366/2023 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 23 February 2023.

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

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL - PAYMENT LIST 25 JANUARY 2023

UNITY TRUST BANK ACCOUNT 10/01/23			£85,593.89
CCLA DEPOSIT ACCOUNT 30/12/22			£1,360,018.28
CCLA PROPERTY FUND 31/03/22			£25,000.00
INCLUDING CIL RECEIPTS TOTAL £1,345,549.02			
TOTAL FUNDS			£1,470,612.17
	NET	VAT	TOTAL
Outstanding payments not yet cleared			
BOHUNT WOKINGHAM (GRANT)	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
Total payments outstanding			£1,000.00
Payments already approved and paid			
ROSPA - MEMORIAL PARK SAFETY AUDIT	1,188.00	237.60	1,425.60

SLCC ENTERPRISES - VACANCY ADVERTISING	211.00	42.20	253.20
PAYMENTS JANUARY 2023			
Staff costs			£7,237.99
Other costs			
ASAP COMPUTER SERVICES - IT SUPPORT	268.20	53.64	321.84
ASAP COMPUTER SERVICES - SECURITY	103.72	20.74	124.46
MICROSHADE- REMOTE HOSTING	77.20	15.44	92.64
WEB MARKETING MATTERS SUPPORT/HOSTING	157.55	31.51	189.06
SSE STREET LIGHT ENERGY	84.97	4.24	89.21
BRITISH TELECOM - TELEPHONE/BROADBAND	47.68	9.53	57.21
FBC - OFFICE RENTAL	1,221.25	0.00	1,221.25
S. WEEKS - CHAIRS EXPENSES	12.15	0.00	12.15
WEL MEDICAL - DEFIBRILLATOR PADS	245.75	49.15	294.90
JAY PRINTERS - PROMOTIONAL LEAFLETS	98.00	0.00	98.00
HEARTWOOD - TREE MAINTENANCE	750.00	0.00	750.00
Allotment costs			
NONE			
Neighbourhood Development Plan costs			
NONE			
Grants and contributions - subject to final approval by Council where required			
LINK VISITING SCHEME	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
FBC YOUTH WORK	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00
TOTAL JANUARY PAYMENTS	4,066.47	£184.25	£11,488.71
TOTAL REMAINING			£1,458,123.46
JANUARY PETTY CASH / CARD PAYMENTS	Net	VAT	Total
TOTAL CARD PAYMENTS (CLERK)	156.14	6.49	162.63
TOTAL CARD PAYMENTS (FOOTPATH WARDEN)	14.18	2.83	17.01
TOTAL	£170.32	£9.32	£179.64
CARD PAYMENTS DETAIL	Net	VAT	Total
NALC WEBINAR (CLERK)	32.44	6.49	38.93
GIFTS AND DONATIONS	106.00	0.00	106.00
GREYHOUND RoW EVENT	16.25	0.00	16.25
WBC GREETINGS CARD	1.45	0.00	1.45
CRESSWELLS FUEL	14.18	2.83	17.01
	£170.32	£9.32	£179.64