

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 6.45 PM ON 23 FEBRUARY 2023 AT THE MEMORIAL HALL, THE VILLAGE, FINCHAMPSTEAD

PRESENT: Councillor S. Weeks; Chair. Councillor S. Bromley, Vice Chair.
Councillors R. Cundy; D. Cornish; B. Eytley; G. Evans; S. Gurney; G. Jukes OBE;
R. Marshallsay; C. Mortimer (part); S. McDonald; G. Veitch & R. Woof.

K. Dagnall, Clerk.
K. Lang, Deputy Clerk.

379/2023 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors S. Bowers and A. Pearce.

380/2023 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were received.

381/2023 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 25 January 2023 were agreed as a true and correct record and were signed by the Chair.

382/2023 CO-OPTION TO COUNCILLOR VACANCIES

The Council currently has two Parish Councillor vacancies. Three applications were received and candidates attended to meet and respond to questions from the Councillors. The Councillors voted through a ballot and selected two candidates to fill the vacant positions.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

No members of the public were present.

383/2023 CHAIRS REPORT

- The Boundary Commission is undertaking a review of Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) ward boundaries and has published its initial proposals following a consultation in October / November 2022. The proposals suggest changes to the existing Finchampstead wards, and it was agreed that a response to the consultation should be submitted by the deadline of 10 April. Cllrs wishing to be involved with drafting a response on behalf of the Parish Council should contact the Clerk.
- California Crossroads improvements: WBC has recently circulated an update on the improvement scheme, now due to be implemented in 2024. The Clerk has met WBC Officers to clarify certain points and a further update has been circulated to Councillors. The Parish Council is supportive of the scheme but is aware of some local concerns and a meeting will be arranged to discuss whether any action can be taken to help alleviate these concerns.
- Cllr Bowers has requested a leave of absence, initially until September 2023. This was agreed in principle and a formal proposal will be brought to the March meeting of the Council.
- Annual Gathering 2023 – the event will be held on 8 March at 7pm at the FBC Centre.

384/2023 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 Cornish provided an update on the current position.

- The independent examination is underway. Some initial questions have been received from the Examiner and the FNDP group has responded to these with assistance from the Parish Council's appointed planning consultant, Bell Cornwell. WBC has also received and responded to questions.
- The extent of the changes recommended in the final Examiner's report will determine the timescale for the next stages. It is hoped that the final Plan can be considered by WBC in March, and that WBC will grant approval to proceed with a referendum in April or May.

Gorse Ride regeneration

- Cllr Evans is now the Parish Council's second representative on the Steering Group, joining Cllr Eytel. The Group met on 14 February; going forward there will be an increased focus on integrating the existing and new communities.
- Enabling works on Phase 2 of the regeneration are underway, including infrastructure for services and construction of foundations. Work will soon begin on breaking up the old road and construction of the new road.

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.
- Crest Nicholson is planning to change the way Community Liaison Group meetings are held for Arborfield Green. These sessions will now involve the whole community, with discussions on a broader range of topics.
- At present it is unclear whether Cala Homes will be forming a Community Liaison Group to cover the Finchwood Park development.
- Ministerial approval has been granted for a 6th form at Bohunt School Wokingham. Temporary buildings may be used to allow the 6th form to open as soon as possible, pending a permanent extension to the School.

385/2023 WAR MEMORIAL RELOCATION PROJECT

A report on the current position was circulated to all Councillors.

- The project is now largely complete.
- Historic England is currently considering an application to relist the Memorial.
- All website information has been updated.
- The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents has been commissioned to review whether there are any safety issues to consider following the removal of a section of hedge on the boundary of the Memorial Park. A report is expected shortly.
- A small sign will shortly be installed near the former location.
- A local contractor will be appointed to undertake the maintenance of the Memorial Garden area from May 2023 when the current contract ends.

A breakdown of costs from 2020/21 to date was included in the report circulated, covering items from the initial site assessments and public consultation to the actual relocation. The total sum to date is £97,951. Outstanding costs are approximately £5000.

386/2023 FORMER WAR MEMORIAL JUNCTION (B3016/B3348) IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

A report on the current position was circulated to all Councillors.

- The Parish Council committed a provisional sum of £300,000 to the project in October 2022.

- WBC undertook traffic monitoring late January / early February 2023 and is now reviewing its preferred concept design.
- WBC will put a formal bid to the Parish Council for the funds in April 2023 as per the agreement over Community Infrastructure Levy funding.
- Timescales for the following stages to implementation are to be confirmed.

A WBC Ward Councillor has requested the WBC Highways department to undertake a safety audit at the junction to see if any measures are necessary or desirable to improve safety pending wider improvements to the junction. WBC Highways did not express any concerns when consulted through the planning application process relating to the relocation of the War Memorial. The Clerk will ask WBC for an update on the safety audit.

387/2023 TO CONSIDER THE AWARD OF GRANTS

Details of a grant application from the Wokingham Volunteer Centre were circulated to all Councillors.

It was agreed that a grant of £1500 should be awarded from the 2022/23 budget.

388/2023 COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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

Financial position

- Unity Trust Bank £78,361.87
- CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund account £1,363,530.58
- CCLA Property Fund £25,000
- The above figures include £1,344,361.02 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts.

The schedule of payments totalling £12,342.85 was circulated to all Councillors and was unanimously approved. Cllrs Bromley and Woof agreed to authorise the electronic payments.

Other matters

- Following Council approval of the 2023/24 budget at the previous meeting, the Precept Demand has been submitted to WBC.
- The internal auditor made an interim visit on 23 February to review procedures.
- The HR sub committee will be meeting on 2 March as part of a meeting of the Council Chair and Committee Chairs.
- The Committee meeting planned for 16 March will now be rescheduled to April. This meeting will include consideration of grant applications received to date for 2023/24, and a review of the Council's project list and priorities.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE

Cllr McDonald reported on current matters.

- 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 Clerk will be meeting WBC Officers shortly to discuss the current position with and funding for the California Country Park lakeside improvement project.
- A first aid / defibrillator training session is being arranged for 24 April.

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

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Cllr Cundy reported on the meeting held on 15 February and current matters.

- Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February have been circulated.
- 11 planning applications were considered, there were no objections to any application.
- 13 decisions made by WBC were reported, all but three were in line with the Committee's views.
- The WBC Planning Committee has approved proposals for land at the rear of 6 Johnson Drive. The Parish Council objected to the proposals.
- Cllr Marshallsay attended an informal hearing on 14 February in relation to Heartwood Lodge, Sandhurst Road. The hearing was adjourned after 3 days and will continue in June.
- Details of three new Tree Preservation Orders have been received, and one application for works on a protected tree.
- The enforcement sub committee met on 26 January to discuss ongoing issues.
- Cllrs Cundy, Marshallsay and Veitch met on 23 February to collate a response to the Government consultation on reforms to national planning policy.

RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE

Cllr Cornish reported on current matters.

- Access improvements to Rooks Nest Woods – the footbridge and gate are now in place with some minor additional works to be completed.
- WBC has published a new online rights of way map, produced following detailed surveys by the local Ramblers group.
- WBC officers have agreed to meet to discuss the current position and next stages with the Cemex UK Ltd sites at Fleet Hill and Manor Farms. A meeting will be arranged and a meeting with Cemex UK Ltd representatives is also being planned.
- The Committee will be meeting on 21 March and will be reviewing its project list and looking at its next priorities.

ROADS & ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Cllr Bromley reported on current matters.

- Community speed watch sessions resumed at the end of January and continue on a weekly basis subject to volunteer availability. More volunteers are required.
- The traffic speed and data monitoring units are now fully functional and are in use.
- The portable speed indicator device has been returned from the manufacturer following a software update and will be back in use in the near future.
- Arborfield & Newland Parish Council has advised that it will be undertaking in person traffic surveys in February and March.

389/2023 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

No reports were presented.

Cllr Cundy noted that while progress is being made with the improving the management of the Berkshire Association of Local Councils (BALC), there are concerns over the performance of the Hampshire Association of Local Councils which provides services to BALC members.

390/2023 FORUM

Cllr Gurney advised that the WBC Standards Board is reviewing disciplinary procedures relating to breaches of the Code of Conduct.

391/2023 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 29 March 2023.

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

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL - PAYMENT LIST 23 FEBRUARY 2023

UNITY TRUST BANK ACCOUNT 10/02/23			£78,361.87
CCLA DEPOSIT ACCOUNT 31/01/23			£1,363,530.58
CCLA PROPERTY FUND 31/03/22			£25,000.00
INCLUDING CIL RECEIPTS TOTAL £1,344,361.02			
TOTAL FUNDS			£1,466,892.45
	NET	VAT	TOTAL
Outstanding payments not yet cleared			
Total payments outstanding			£0.00
Payments already approved and paid			£0.00
PAYMENTS FEBRUARY 2023			
Staff costs			£7,448.39
Other costs			
ASAP COMPUTER SERVICES - IT SUPPORT	253.52	50.70	304.22
MICROSHADE- REMOTE HOSTING	77.20	15.44	92.64
WEB MARKETING MATTERS SUPPORT/HOSTING	157.55	31.51	189.06
RIALTAS ALLOTMENT SOFTWARE LICENCE/SUPPORT	248.55	49.71	298.26
RIALTAS ASSET SOFTWARE LICENCE/SUPPORT	256.95	51.39	308.34
SSE STREET LIGHT ENERGY	75.89	3.78	79.67
BRITISH TELECOM - TELEPHONE/BROADBAND	47.68	9.53	57.21
FBC CENTRE OFFICE SERVICE CHARGE JAN-MARCH	1,296.00	0.00	1,296.00
FBC CAFÉ CHARGES	20.33	4.07	24.40
FINCHAMPSTEAD MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION	10.00	0.00	10.00
SIGNS OF THE TIMES - WAR MEMORIAL SIGN	295.55	59.11	354.66
Allotment costs			
FAA SUBSCRIPTIONS X 2	20.00	0.00	20.00
Neighbourhood Development Plan costs			
BELL CORNWELL CONSULTANCY SERVICES	300.00	60.00	360.00
Grants and contributions - subject to final approval by Council where required			
WOKINGHAM VOLUNTEER CENTRE	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00
TOTAL FEBRUARY PAYMENTS	4,559.22	£335.24	£12,342.85
TOTAL REMAINING			£1,454,549.60
FEBRUARY PETTY CASH / CARD PAYMENTS	Net	VAT	Total

TOTAL CARD PAYMENTS (CLERK)	76.95	15.39	92.34
TOTAL CARD PAYMENTS (FOOTPATH WARDEN)	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	£76.95	£15.39	£92.34
CARD PAYMENTS DETAIL	Net	VAT	Total
WBC PARKING - KD	0.67	0.13	0.80
PRINT ME A SHIRT - SPEEDWATCH JACKETS	76.28	15.26	91.54
	£76.95	£15.39	£92.34