

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7.30 PM ON 29 MARCH 2023 AT THE FBC CENTRE, GORSE RIDE NORTH, FINCHAMPSTEAD

PRESENT: Councillor S. Weeks; Chair. Councillor S. Bromley, Vice Chair.
Councillors E. Allen; S. Bowers; R. Cundy; D. Cornish; G. Evans; P. Grainger;
S. Gurney; G. Jukes OBE; R. Marshall; C. Mortimer; A. Pearce & G. Veitch.

A. Gibson, Chair, Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan Project Group.

K. Dagnall, Clerk.

K. Lang, Deputy Clerk.

414/2023 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors B. Eytle, S. McDonald and R. Woof.

415/2023 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were received.

416/2023 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 23 February 2023 were agreed as a true and correct record and were signed by the Chair.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

No members of the public attended.

417/2023 CHAIRS REPORT

- The sudden passing of Reverend Doctor Onugha of the Parish of Finchampstead and California was noted. Condolences have been sent to his family.
- The Annual Gathering on 8 March went well despite low attendance due to the weather. The Councillors were thanked for their reports and support for the event. The date for next years' event has been confirmed as 6 March.
- The Community Litter Pick on 26 March was successful. Cllr Weeks thanked the Councillors who took part as well as residents across the Parish. Approximately 150 people were involved in total, collecting around 100 sacks of rubbish plus various waste items.
- Cllrs Weeks and Cornish updated on the current position with Rooks Nest Farm. Wokingham Borough Council has now shelved the proposals for 270 homes on the site and is now progressing plans for a Special Needs School on the site.

WBC is also planning to plant a Covid Memorial Wood on the site, and the Feely Fruity organisation will be creating an orchard tree nursery on the site.

Work on the solar farm is due to start in autumn 2023 with completion in 2024.

418/2023 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 and Mr Gibson provided an update on the current position.

The 'fact check' report has now been received from the Independent Examiner. The Examiner made many constructive and positive points about the Plan. However, while judging that the Plan meets all legal requirements and can proceed to a referendum, this is subject to significant amendments being made to the Plan.

The required amendments include the omission of two small housing allocation sites, the omission of two proposed Areas of Separation, and the removal of four sites proposed for Local Green Space designation. The options are to make the changes and allow the Plan to go forward to WBC for approval and then on to a referendum, or to withdraw the Plan.

The Project / Steering Group is disappointed with this outcome and met on 28 March to discuss the way forward. It is understood that Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) is similarly concerned about the Examiner's findings. The Plan was due to go to the WBC Executive Committee on 20 April for approval but this has now been deferred.

The next stage is to meet with appropriate WBC Councillors / Officers to clarify their position, review the situation and agree the next steps. Following this a report will be presented to the Parish Council for it to consider and agree how to proceed.

Gorse Ride regeneration

Cllrs Bowers and Evans reported on the current position. A recent WBC newsletter covering the project has been circulated.

- The Steering Group met on site on the 21 March.
- The initial blockwork and foundations are in place for 16 homes and the first bricks have been laid. Work has also started on the new roads.
- Wates Construction Ltd. is promoting community engagement, particularly with local schools.
- A project has started involving residents and children with writing a song about Gorse Ride; a musician will be visiting next week to start work on this.
- There have been reports of anti-social behaviour, primarily involving motorbikes. This has been reported to Thames Valley Police.

Arborfield Strategic Development Location (Arborfield Green and Finchwood Park)

- Recent updates from Crest Nicholson have been circulated.
- A planning application for the District Centre is now expected to be submitted to WBC on 6 April 2023.
- Crest Nicholson has reviewed the purpose of the Community Liaison Group and it will now have a wider remit. The next meeting is due to take place in May.

419/2023 TO CONSIDER A COUNCILLOR REQUEST FOR A LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Cllr Weeks advised that Cllr Bowers has requested a leave of absence from the Parish Council for a period of 6 months to September 2023.

It was unanimously agreed that the request be granted and Councillors expressed their thanks to Cllr Bowers for his input to the Parish Council.

420/2023 COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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

Financial position

- Unity Trust Bank £20,033.26
- CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund account £1,367,666.98
- CCLA Property Fund £25,000
- The above figures include £1,304,065 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts.

The schedule of payments totalling £18,163.83 was circulated to all Councillors and was unanimously approved. Cllrs Weeks and Jukes agreed to authorise the electronic payments.

Other matters

- The internal auditor made an interim visit on 23 February to review procedures and has submitted a clear report. The next visit will be after the year end accounts have been prepared and will include a review of the accounts, and of the risk management arrangements.
- The Committee meeting planned for 20 April has been cancelled and the next meeting will now be on 3 May.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE

Cllr Bowers reported on current matters.

- The 2023 Community Litter Pick was covered under item 417/2023 above.
- The WBC Anti-Social Behaviour team has recently put fly tipping warning signs up in Dell Road, Lower Sandhurst Road and Park Lane.
- The Parish Council's second Litter Warden is now back at work.
- The California Country Park lakeside improvement project is now moving forward. A Project Group including Cllrs McDonald and Veitch and the Clerk is being set up by WBC.
- A first aid / defibrillator training session has been arranged for 24 April and is now fully booked with a waiting list.
- The Parish Council will be supporting St. James Church with its Big Picnic Lunch taking place on 7 May to mark the coronation of King Charles III. The Council will also be promoting the Big Help Out, encouraging people to participate in volunteering.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

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

- Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March have been circulated.
- 16 planning applications were considered, there were no objections to any application.
- 9 decisions made by WBC were reported, all but two were in line with the Committee's views.
- The WBC Planning Committee has approved proposals for 3 flats at the former Bathroom Concepts premises at the California Crossroads.
- 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 the meeting held on 21 March. Minutes of the meeting have been circulated.

Following completion of a number of projects, the focus of the meeting was a review of the Project List and discussion on the next priorities for the Committee. These were agreed as follows.

- The Cemex UK Ltd sites at Fleet Hill and Manor Farms. The Working Group met recently and plans to encourage and support WBC in seeking completion of the sites as nature reserves, and securing their future management. A meeting with Cemex UK Ltd. representatives has also taken place.
- A cycle route to Wokingham via Nashgrove Lane.

- Reinstatement of the 'missing link' between bridlepaths 34 and 26 (Wick Hill to the Devils Highway).
- A path alongside Fleet Hill (B3348) linking Fleet Lane (Footpath 29) and the Tally Ho.
- Smaller items relating to access and surface improvements on various paths.

Cllr Jukes advised that Cemex UK Ltd. has unblocked the culvert which was causing flooding on Footpath 33 near Longwater Lane.

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 California crossroads improvement project is currently out to tender with a contractor due to be appointed by WBC in June 2023. A steering group will then be convened including representatives from the Parish Council, WBC, the contractor, local businesses, Nine Mile Ride Primary School and other stakeholders. It was noted that lack of communications from WBC regarding the project has caused some concerns among local businesses and residents, largely due to the published information being out of date. This information has now been updated on the WBC website.

421/2023 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Borough Parish Liaison Forum – 6 February.

Cllr Cundy advised that minutes of the meeting have been circulated. The agenda included an 'open forum' on Town and Parish Council issues which included discussions on safety outside schools, and how to attract new Councillors. WBC gave presentations on improving partnership working; the climate emergency and the enforcement and safety service.

Efforts are being made to improve the effectiveness of the forum which may improve attendance.

Blackwater Valley Partnership Annual General Meeting – 24 February.

Cllrs Weeks and Woof attended the meeting. The Partnership's Annual Report for 2022 has been circulated.

In addition to looking after the 23 mile Blackwater Valley Path, the Partnership now looks after 24 SANGS (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) which has helped bring in income and put the Partnership in a stable position.

FBC Advisory Board – 13 March.

Cllr Cundy advised that the meeting included an update on work with Bohunt School, the budget and funding and staffing at the Centre.

Community Futures event – 6 March.

Cllrs Jukes and Veitch and the Clerk attended the event organised by WBC and its consultant New Local. A presentation on the session outcomes has been circulated.

The event was part of the Borough Council's latest effort to work better with partners, and to develop a shared future vision for the Borough.

422/2023 FORUM

Cllr Gurney noted that the Independent Remuneration Panel has recently produced a report. The Clerk advised that this will be discussed at the next Finance & General Management Committee meeting and the Council will then be updated.

423/2023 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 27 April 2023.

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

March 2023 Payments List

UNITY TRUST BANK ACCOUNT 27/03/23			£20,033.26
CCLA DEPOSIT ACCOUNT 28/02/23			£1,367,666.98
CCLA PROPERTY FUND 31/03/22			£25,000.00
INCLUDING CIL RECEIPTS TOTAL £1,304,065.47			
TOTAL FUNDS			£1,412,700.24
	NET	VAT	TOTAL
Outstanding payments not yet cleared			
Total payments outstanding			£0.00
Payments already approved and paid			
SLCC - MEMBERSHIP K. LANG	189.00	0.00	189.00
SLCC - ILCA COURSE FEE	120.00	24.00	144.00
R COLLARD - SKIP (ALLOTMENTS)	239.00	47.80	286.80
FINCHAMPSTEAD CE PRIMARY SCHOOL	40,000.00	0.00	40000.00
Total approved and paid			£40,619.80
PAYMENTS MARCH 2023			
Staff costs			£8,743.96
Other costs			
ASAP COMPUTER SERVICES - IT SUPPORT	268.20	53.64	321.84
MICROSHADE- REMOTE HOSTING	77.20	15.44	92.64
WEB MARKETING MATTERS SUPPORT/HOSTING	157.55	31.51	189.06
IBS SOLUTIONS - PRINTER CHARGES 9-12/22	92.14	18.43	110.57
IBS SOLUTIONS - PRINTER CHARGES 01-03/23	194.19	38.84	233.03
SSE STREET LIGHT ENERGY	73.87	3.68	77.55
BRITISH TELECOM - TELEPHONE/BROADBAND	47.68	9.53	57.21
FBC - CATERING FOR ANNUAL GATHERING	250.00	50.00	300.00
FBC - CATERING FOR LITTER PICK	150.00	30.00	180.00
FBC CAFÉ - MEETING REFRESHMENTS	6.58	1.32	7.90
S.P. WEEKS - ANNUAL GATHERING EXPENSES	120.62	8.12	128.74
LYRECO - STATIONARY	29.67	5.93	35.60
WESTCOTEC - SID SIGN REPAIR	134.00	26.80	160.80
WBC - ROOKS NEST BRIDGE & GATE	4500.00	0.00	4500.00

Allotment costs			
CASTLE WATER JAN-JUNE	20.77	4.16	24.93
COLLARD - SKIP AS ABOVE			
Neighbourhood Development Plan costs			
NONE			
Grants and contributions - subject to final approval by Council where required			
FBC - YOUTH WORK JAN-MAR	3000.00		3000.00
FINCHAMPSTEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL GRANT AS ABOVE			
TOTAL MARCH PAYMENTS	£9,122.47	£297.40	£18,163.83
TOTAL REMAINING			£1,394,536.41
MARCH PETTY CASH / CARD PAYMENTS	Net	VAT	Total
TOTAL CARD PAYMENTS (CLERK)	146.56	29.30	175.86
TOTAL CARD PAYMENTS (FOOTPATH WARDEN)	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	£146.56	£29.30	£175.86
CARD PAYMENTS DETAIL	Net	VAT	Total
AMAZON - KEYBOARD & MOUSE	23.32	4.66	27.98
PAYPAL - ZOOM ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION	119.90	23.98	143.88
WBC PARKING	1.67	0.33	2.00
WBC PARKING	1.67	0.33	2.00
TOTAL	£146.56	£29.30	£175.86