

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD AT
7.15 PM ON WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2023
At the FBC Centre, Gorse Ride North, Finchampstead.**

PRESENT: Cllr S. McDonald, Chair.
Cllrs E. Allen; B. Eytle; S. Gurney & G. Veitch.

K. Dagnall, Clerk.

82/2023 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Committee members were present except Cllr Bowers who has been granted a leave of absence.

83/2023 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were received.

84/2023 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2022 were approved as a true record and were signed by Cllr McDonald.

85/2023 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

247/2022 Platinum Jubilee

The four trees planted for the Jubilee have now been registered for the Queen's Green Canopy scheme.

It was agreed that a potential scheme to informally recognise residents who have made a significant contribution to the community would be discussed at the October meeting of the Committee.

It was agreed that the sum of £5000 provisionally allocated for a community gift to mark the Jubilee and subsequently the coronation should no longer be held. Any suitable project will be considered as and when it comes forward.

Public Participation Session

No members of the public were present.

86/2023 INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2023/24

Details of expenditure on the allotments; community activities and community health were circulated. No issues were raised.

87/2023 TELEPHONE BOX AT THE CALIFORNIA CROSSROADS

The red telephone box at the California Crossroads was purchased by the Parish Council in 2017 and was used as a book swop until 2020 when it became unmanageable due to misuse.

The Committee had previously agreed that the box could be used as an information feature with images and possibly text of historic and current features in the Parish.

A proposal was presented showing how the box could be used to display artwork of historic and natural features of the Parish in a way which would complement the artwork to be used in features in the Crossroads improvement scheme which will be implemented in 2024.

It was agreed that this would be an ideal use for the box and that a bid would be put to the Finance & General Management Committee for a sum of up to £5000 from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds. If agreed by the Finance & General Management Committee the bid will still be subject to the approval of the Council.

88/2023 ALLOTMENTS

The Finchampstead Allotments are running smoothly. Tree works have been completed recently and two water troughs have been replaced. New plot markers have been supplied for the Allotment Association to install.

The Clerk will arrange a visit to the allotment site for Councillors.

Potential gate replacement

- The site gates are currently secured by a heavy duty 5-digit combination padlock. These repeatedly fail, involving ongoing costs for replacement.
- An alternative option is a double-sided digital lock fixed to the gates, but the existing gates cannot accommodate this without significant adjustment.
- Quotes have been obtained for new gates and for refurbishment and adjustment of the existing gates.

It was agreed that the gates should be replaced, subject to the Finance & General Management Committee and the Council agreeing to commit £2600 in CIL funds to the project.

Plot rental charges for 2023/24

Plot rents have only been increased once since the site opened in 2012 and have remained the same since 2019/20. The current rent is £63 for a full plot (125m²), or £89 for a non-resident.

It was agreed that plot rents should be increased to £66 for a resident and £93 for a non resident, subject to the approval of the Council.

Finchwood Park allotments

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) has still not provided any information on how and when the new allotment site will be delivered. Cllrs Allen and Veitch and the Clerk are meeting at the end of June to consider the current position and the way forward.

89/2023 LITTER WASTE AND RECYCLING

Litter Wardens

The two part time Litter Wardens have been working since April, following a period from June 2022 to March 2023 when only one Warden was active.

Work carried out from April 2023 to date and previous years is summarised below.

	HOURS	SACKS COLLECTED
2019/20 TOTAL	326	323
2020/21 TOTAL	483	485
2021/22 TOTAL	496	465
2022/23 TOTAL	404	361

2023/24 TO DATE	83	70
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Adopt a Street

Approximately 45 volunteers are now involved, covering 40 roads in the Parish.

The next stage is to develop closer links with Wokingham Borough Council as it has Finchampstead residents signed up to its own scheme, and these residents may prefer to collect supplies locally. It will also be helpful to know which roads in the Parish are being covered by those volunteers signed up through the Borough Council.

90/2023 UPDATES ON OTHER MATTERS

Defibrillators

- The 5 community defibrillators are fully operational and are checked monthly by Cllr Grainger. The Circuit, the National Defibrillator Network, is updated after each monthly check.
- A first aid / training session was held on 24 April and a further session has been arranged for September 2023.

California Country Park lakeside improvement project

Cllrs McDonald and Veitch and the Clerk are on the WBC Project Group and a positive meeting was held on site in early May. The Parish Council's priorities were discussed and a revised proposal is expected shortly.

Tree related projects

It is hoped that an oak can be planted near St. James' Church to mark the coronation of King Charles III. This is subject to tree availability, and permission from the Parochial Church Council.

There has been no progress with WBC over suggested planting in Warren Wood and on various highway verges in the Parish.

Cllr Veitch has identified Moor Green Lakes and the Fleet Hill and Manor Farm reserves as potential sites for planting in future years.

Wellingtonia Avenue

A summary of the information and statistics for all the trees in the Avenue, for example average height and total carbon storage, will be produced.

It was intended that a seminar type event for the tree owners would be arranged but an event for a wider audience is now being considered. This could be run in conjunction with the Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association, and could include presentations on the value of the Avenue as a national asset and the responsibility residents have in protecting the trees. This will be progressed in due course.

Cemex Woodland adjacent to Longwater Road

Cemex UK Ltd. has now cleared some of the old guards but not the derelict fencing.

WBC tree initiatives

Tree Strategy: The draft strategy was due to be considered by the WBC Executive in November 2022, and if approved this would be followed by an 8-week public consultation which residents, Town and Parish Councils and other stakeholders will be able to respond to. There has been no further news on this.

91/2023 FORUM

No matters were raised.

92/2023 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next Committee meeting will be held on 4 October 2023.

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

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS 14 JUNE 2023 – AMENITIES COMMITTEE

MINUTE REFERENCE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
85/2023	Discuss a potential a scheme to recognise residents making significant contributions to the community. October meeting	Clerk
87/2023	Telephone box proposal / bid for CIL funds to F & GMC and Council.	Clerk
88/2023	Allotment gate replacement bid to F & GMC for CIL funds	Clerk
88/2023	Allotment plot rental for 2023/24. To Council for approval Advise FAA of increase	Clerk
88/2023	Arrange Councillor visit to the allotments	Clerk
88/2023	Finchwood Park allotments – GV/EA/KD to meet to discuss the current position	Clerk
88/2023	Pass on waiting list for Arborfield Green allotments.	Clerk
89/2023	Adopt a Street – liaise with WBC to align schemes	Deputy Clerk
90/2023	Work with WBC to progress California Country Park lakeside improvement project	Clerk
90/2023	Oak tree to be planted near Church, investigate availability, and obtain permission from PCC	Clerk
90/2023	Look into opportunities for tree planting / continue to liaise with WBC over planting of street trees and at Warren Wood	Clerk/All
90/2023	Consider options for event for Wellingtonia Avenue tree owners and the wider public and arrange event	Clerk/GV
92/2023	Look into costs for purchase / hire / installation of Christmas lights and likely energy usage re future provision at the Crossroads post improvement. For discussion at the October meeting.	Clerk