

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7.30 PM ON 30 NOVEMBER 2023 At the Memorial Hall, Finchampstead RG40 4**

PRESENT: Councillor S. Weeks; Chair
Councillors E. Allen; S. Bowers; S. Bromley; D. Cornish; G. Evans; A. Grimshaw; S. Gurney; G. Jukes; R. Marshallsay; C. Mortimer; R. Woof & G. Veitch.

262/2023 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs R. Cundy; B. Eytle; P. Grainger; S. McDonald

263/2023 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Non-pecuniary declarations of interest were received as follows:

Cllr Bromley: California Ratepayers Association; Finchampstead Park Management Committee.

Cllr Woof: Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership.

Cllr Weeks: Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership; Finchampstead Park Management Committee.

264/2023 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 25 October 2023 were agreed as a true and correct record.

265/2023 CHAIRS REPORT

Cllr Weeks reported on current matters.

- The funeral of Katy Dagnall our parish clerk took place on 22 November and was attended by 12 parish councillors, 2 past parish councillors, our planning clerk, 2 past Finchampstead Parish clerks and 8 clerks from other parishes and towns across the borough.
- A partnership working presentation is to be arranged in the next fortnight, between Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and the Parish Council, with the WBC Leader presenting.
- Thanked Earley Town Council for kindly loaning us their Finance Officer for 1 or 2 days each month to assist with our current lack of resources.
- Thanked all staff and councillors for the inevitable additional demands on their time, following the sad loss of our experienced parish clerk.

266/2023 PROJECT AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Gorse Ride regeneration

Cllr Bowers reported on the current position.

- Planning and construction is going well, the contractors are currently working on plots 1 – 47.
- Piling and sheeting for the swale is complete.
- A Topping out ceremony took place this morning, which was attended by the WBC Deputy Major Cllr Mather, Wates (the contractors) and Cllr Bowers from Finchampstead PC.
- The stairs, windows and roofs are now installed.

- Cllr Bowers is attending Gorse Ride School tomorrow to listen to the children sing a song that has been written about Gorse Ride. The Council would like to invite the children to sing it at the Annual gathering.
- Wates are organising a cooking course for residents where they will be giving away some cooking appliances.

Arborfield Strategic Development Location (Arborfield Green and Finchwood Park)

- The planning application for Sainsburys has been submitted.

267/2023 TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGMENT COMMITTEE

The following items were agreed by the Council.

Grants

- Me2Club £750
- Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership £4,000

Community Infrastructure Levy expenditure

- California Gardeners Club – An application was submitted for £798 towards an overhead projector and a laptop. The Committee recommended that an Overhead projector is purchased and kept at the Ratepayers Hall so that the Gardeners club and other members of the community can use it. The council have asked for confirmation of how much the club need for a laptop and approved the purchase of a projector for the Ratepayers Hall at a cost of up to £300.
- California Association a contribution of £17,337 for solar panel installation at the Ratepayers Hall.

268/2023 COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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

The committee met on the 22/11. The minutes of the meeting have not yet been circulated.

- The first draft budget for 2024/25 has been completed and was reviewed at the meeting. A final draft will be presented to the Finance Committee at the meeting on the 9th of January.
- A working group has been set up to discuss IT matters including security and improving file access for Councillors.

Financial position

- Unity Trust Bank £727,096.27
- CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund Account £1,816,663.82
- CCLA Property Fund £25,000
- The above figures include £1,080,229 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts from 2023/24.

The schedule of payments totalling £45,186.46 was circulated to all Councillors and payments were unanimously approved. Cllrs Jukes and Veitch agreed to authorise the electronic payments.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE

Cllr Bowers reported on current matters.

A Meeting was held on 4th October, minutes have been circulated.

Remembrance Parade

- This was well attended despite the weather and ran smoothly.

- Cllr McDonald will coordinate the event in future and has a comprehensive list of all the relevant contacts.
- The Parish Council paid for the hire of the Memorial Hall and the cost of the Bugler.
- Donations were made to the Royal British Legion and the Barkham Hookers.

California Lakeside Improvement Project

The project meeting scheduled for the 14th November was postponed again by WBC. A new date has not yet been scheduled.

Waverley Way play area

Work is now completed, and the park is now open.

FBC play area and WBC lottery Bid

Cllr McDonald sent the Councils response on the refurbishment to WBC last month.

Jones Trophy

The Finchampstead society is formally closing on the 31st of December. It is therefore unlikely that we will be in a position to award the Trophy at our annual Gathering on 6th March.

D- Day 80 - 6th June 2024

The church has confirmed they will light the beacon and hold some kind of celebration. Details still to be finalised. The PC will promote the event and make a small financial contribution.

Allotments

The new gates are being fitted W/c 27th November.

Cllr Veitch carried out the annual inspection on 24th October and identified a number of areas requiring maintenance.

Finchwood Park - Cllr Veitch met the borough officer responsible for this. More houses are going to be built on the proposed allotment site. Crest have agreed to an alternative site which will be handed over to WBC ready to rent including fencing, gates, water, toilets and marked out allotments.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Cllr Marshallsay reported on current matters.

- The Committee met on Wed 15 November at the FBC Centre, and the minutes were circulated on Friday 24th November.
- 16 applications were considered. 3 were objected to.
- Revised plans were considered for 56 dwellings at 33 Barkham Ride. This site, together with 31 Barkham Ride, was treated as one entity in the FNDP 'call for sites', but the combined total of dwellings across these sites now exceeds original numbers. We submitted additional comments to WBC highlighting this overdevelopment, along with traffic and safety concerns in relation to the additional access points along Barkham Ride.
- Revised Matters plans were considered for Parcel P1 at Hogwood Farm, Sheerlands Road, comprising of 256 dwellings. No objections were raised.
- Reserved Matters plans were considered for 32 dwellings at Land to the rear of 240 Nine Mile Ride. We objected due to the inadequate parking, access and pedestrian safety concerns.
- 10 WBC decisions were noted and all but 2 were in line with our comments.
- Plans for the new Sainsbury's at Arborfield Green have been submitted to WBC and await validation. The development promises to create 75 jobs and to deliver a much-needed retail food amenity for local people. The planners will be issuing a newsletter to around 350 properties surrounding the site.

- There were no new TPO's, but 4 applications for works to protected trees were received – 3 of these involved felling, so were considered by our TPO sub-committee and no objections raised.
- The bar & Café next to Xenuk Tandoori has been officially named the 'Finches Café & Bar', so we hope to see some activity there soon!

The date of the next meeting is the 13th of December.

RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE

Cllr Cornish reported on current matters.

- Cllrs Cornish and Evans met with WBC with Highways representatives from WBC to discuss White Horse Lane and the concept of quiet lanes. These are roads which can be used by walkers, cyclists and horses. White Horse Lane will be shut during the California Crossroads project which gives an opportunity to see what can be done to facilitate this.
- The WBC rights of way team are discussing opening up the use of some footpaths as bridleways.
- The next committee meeting is on 6th December.

ROADS & ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Cllr Bromley reported on current matters.

- No Roads meeting since the last main Council.
- Speed watch sessions continue and are averaging 20 vehicles per session.
- There is a new Speed watch volunteer who started training today.
- Parking at California Crossroads during building at Nine Mile Ride Primary School has finished which frees up the 4 bays that they had been using.
- California Crossroads improvement scheme
 - The drilling of the trial holes is complete, the next step is to review the results before construction works commence in Feb-March.
 - Traffic management plans are being worked on currently and a public meeting with WBC for businesses and residents has been scheduled on the 19th of December at the Ratepayers Hall. There will be two sessions on the day, one at 12-2pm and another at 5-7pm.
 - Local businesses are concerned about access disruption during the works as they could lose revenue.
 - Concerns were raised over the use of Avery corner car park during the works, these will be raised with WBC.
- Further to the meeting with residents at Court Cottage near Jubilee Road, the residents have asked WBC to instal a concealed entrance sign just before the property. There should also be a reduction in speed limit to 30mph whilst works are being carried out at the memorial junction.
- The date of the next meeting date is the 31st January 2024.

269/2023 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Borough Parish Liaison Forum

- There has not been a meeting.

FBC Advisory Board

- There has not been a meeting.

Finchampstead Park Management Committee

- Rental rates have been realigned.

- Football parking continues to be a problem which raises complaints.
- FPMC will ask the nearby car sales company who are using car park spaces to stop doing so.

Councillor Forum

The Chief Constable at Thames Valley Police presented to the Council 2 weeks ago, part of this was shown on BBC news.

The Wokingham area has reported 8.700 crimes up 13% on last year. Of these, domestic abuse was up 15%, burglary up 6% to 280, (less than half of these were residential), 750 incidents of violence with injury which is up 4%, 270 sex offences a 3% increase, and 42 incidents of knife crime which is down 16%.

Speeding across the Thames Valley - traffic officers issued 49,000 speeding tickets followed up by 39,000 with cameras. This is a 91% increase.

Thames valley police are considering the issue of points and fines to parents of teenagers using Escooters without a licence on a public road or footpath.

There has been a huge increase in shoplifting in the Borough with gangs targeting shops and clearing shelves.

270/2023 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 20 December 2023.

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

NOVEMBER PAYMENT LIST

UNITY TRUST BANK ACCOUNT 10/11/23			£727,096.27
CCLA DEPOSIT ACCOUNT 30/10/23			£1,816,663.82
CCLA PROPERTY FUND 31/08/23			£25,000.00
INCLUDING CIL RECEIPTS 23/24 TOTAL £1,832,866.65.			
TOTAL FUNDS			£2,568,760.09
	NET	VAT	TOTAL
Outstanding payments not yet cleared			
Total payments outstanding			0.00
Payments already approved and paid			
SIMON WEEKS	50.00	0.00	50.00
PEACH TREE GARDENING	67.50	0.00	67.50
MEMORIAL HALL	40	0	40
SSE	75.71	5.18	80.89
KATY DAGNALL - HOLIDAY PAY	2350.74	0	2350.74
HMRC - ADDITIONAL FOR HOLIDAY PAY	1893.6	0	1893.6
BERKSHIRE PENSIONS - ADDITIONAL FOR HOLIDAY PAY	1348.67	0	1348.67
TOTAL APPROVED AND PAID	5826.22	5.18	5831.40
PAYMENTS NOVEMBER 2023			
Staff costs			
C.L.CORDELL	1002.21	0.00	1002.21
K.E. LANG	1743.33	0.00	1743.33
J.D. ALEXANDER - FOOTPATH WARDEN	244.50	0.00	244.50
J.D.P. AGUIRRE - LITTER WARDEN	298.45	0.00	298.45
M.BIBBY - LITTER WARDEN	99.69	0.00	99.69
HMRC	912.73	0.00	912.73
BERKSHIRE PENSION FUND	1122.27	0.00	1122.27
Total staff costs	£5,423.18	£0.00	£5,423.18
Other costs			
WEB MARKETING MATTERS	157.55	31.51	189.06
WEB MARKETING MATTERS - DOMAIN NAME RENEWAL	36.98	7.40	44.38
ASAP COMPUTER SERVICES	278.90	55.78	334.68
MICROSHADE	119.37	23.87	143.24
BT - PHONE AND INTERNET	48.60	9.72	58.32
WBC - WAVERLEY WAY	14000.00	2800.00	16800.00
FBC CAFÉ CHARGES	8.83	1.77	10.60

KRYSTAL HOSTING - DOMAIN RENEWAL	80.00	16.00	96.00
Allotment costs			
Grants and contributions - subject to final approval by Council where required			
ME2 CLUB	750	0	750
BLACKWATER VALLEY COUNTRY PARK	4000	0	4000
CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION	17,337	0.00	17337
TOTAL NOVEMBER PAYMENTS	42240.41	2946.05	£45,186.46
TOTAL REMAINING			£2,523,573.63
NOVEMBER PETTY CASH / CARD PAYMENTS			
TOTAL CARD PAYMENTS (FOOTPATH WARDEN)			0.00
TOTAL	0.00	0.00	0.00
CARD PAYMENTS DETAIL			
			0.00