FINNINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes for the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on
Tuesday 12th December 2023
in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham, starting at 7:30pm

Present: Cllr Kilbee, Cllr C. Winter, Cllr Trew, Cllr Davies, Cllr Black
In attendance: Miss J. Challis (Clerk), Cllr Mellen, 1 member of the public.

23.183 Visiting speakers
Cllr Mellen's reports can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.
Mr Aiken sent his apologies in advance of the meeting; his Footpath Warden's report can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

23.184 Contribution by Members of the Public
The member of the public was present regarding Eastlands bridge flooding, agenda item 20.

23.185 Apologies and approval of absence
Apologies were received from Cllr Charter. Approval proposed by Cllr Trew, seconded by Cllr Davies and approved unanimously.

23.186 To receive any pecuniary or non-pecuniary declarations of interest from Members and any Gifts of Hospitality.
None.

23.187 To consider requests for dispensations on agenda items
None.

23.188 To approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14th November 2023
Cllr Winter proposed approving the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14th November 2023 as a true and correct record; seconded by Cllr Davies and approved unanimously with one abstention (Cllr who was not present at the meeting).

23.189 Matters arising from the Parish Council meeting held on 14th November 2023
All covered elsewhere on the agenda.

23.190 Chairman's Report
I shall report on the meeting with the Church regarding the footpath under Section 15 of the agenda.
I attended a meeting of the Friends of Finningham a week ago yesterday where the sole item on the agenda was the Survey and the results.
At the Finningham Christmas Lunch on the Saturday before, I was told that the Friends of Finningham and the Parish Council seem to be pulling in different directions. I was taken aback by this remark and chose to wait until the meeting before I responded. I pointed out, in no uncertain terms that I felt that we did have not different agendas but, as owners (since the Act of 1964) of the Green, we had to make sure that it was fit for purpose by all members of the Community and that we were also restrained by the current Bye Laws but we are at liberty to revise these, should we feel that it is necessary. I think that it would be a good idea for us to review these Bye Laws in the New Year.
The question of another survey came up and they asked if we could publish the results of theirs in our questionnaire. That was to try and gauge the response to the suggestions made to FoF by a wider section of the Residents. Also, our Survey would include an opportunity for new suggestions to be offered.
Finally, I should like to thank you all for your work and support during the past year and I wish you a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.
In addition, Cllr Kilbee reported that Mr Miller has kindly said he will roll the surface of the Green.

23.191 Clerk's Report

- MSDC have sent details of their new COSY Home initiative which offers free home insultation for households which meet the criteria: https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/mid-suffolk/w/mid-suffolk-cosy-homes.
- MSDC have also launched a new grant to help communities tackle issues like social isolation and the need for warm spaces this winter: Mid Suffolk District Council Funding - Mid Suffolk District Council - Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils - Working Together.
- BMSDC have formally adopted the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan – Part 1 2018-2037, full details shared with councillors.
- Recent Flooding: All residents and businesses who have registered a flood on the SCC reporting tool are in the process of being contacted. This is to enable the grants and council tax discount (100% relief for 3 months minimum, and 100% on temporary accommodation if displaced) to be issued. All affected residents are still being encouraged to report significant flooding to individual properties, if they have not already done so, using the Highways Reporting Tool, or calling the SCC customer service number: 0345 606 6171. Report a flood in Suffolk - Suffolk County Council.
- MSDC have announced a Call for Land to help them to support nature recovery across their districts: https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/call-for-land-to-support-nature-recovery. The district's tree canopy cover is well below the national average and would need to be increased by at least 5% to get closer to that average. MSDC do not own enough land to do that, even assuming they could plant trees on all of it. Therefore, they need the help of other landowners wanting to plant trees on their land to meet this target. These landowners could be farmers, parish or town councils, businesses, or individuals, all wanting to do something with their land to benefit the natural environment and the wildlife this supports.
- The recently installed new Finningham/Gislingham sign on the B1113 has been damaged. Tyre marks suggest it has been caught by an agricultural vehicle. Cllr Trew said he would have a look at the sign with Cllr Kilbee, to see if it can be easily straightened.

8:13pm Cllr Black arrived.

23.192 To consider and approve Budget 2024/25

Following a Budget meeting with Cllr Kilbee, the Budget was prepared by the Clerk and presented to councillors. After discussing, approval proposed by Cllr Trew, seconded by Cllr Davies and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to update and publish.

8:20pm Cllr Mellen arrived.

23.193 To consider and approve Precept request 2024/25

Deferred until the next meeting, to allow the Clerk to seek advice from MSDC regarding the implications of an increase to the Precept on resident's council tax.

Cllr Kilbee proposed returning to agenda item 1. Approved unanimously.

(23.183 Visiting speakers)
Cllr Mellen read highlights from his District and County Council reports.
Cllr Kilbee thanked Cllr Mellen and proposed moving to agenda item 18, to allow the flooding to be discussed before Cllr Mellen had to leave the meeting. Approved unanimously.

(23.202 To discuss Eastlands bridge and village flooding)
Cllr Kilbee gave permission for the member of the public to participate in the discussion of this item.
Cllr Trew and the member of public advised that they regularly have to maintain the area around Eastlands bridge, removing any debris to ensure the water can flow freely. Cllr Trew explained that Eastlands Bridge was originally a ford. Since being changed to a bridge with pipework underneath to allow water flow, it floods because the pipes are insufficient to allow the water to flow, and regularly become blocked. He suggested that the bridge either needs to be redesigned and opened up to allow unrestricted water flow, or reinstated as a ford with a footbridge. The member of the public said he agreed with Cllr Trews assessment. Cllr Mellen said that the footbridge would be the more economical option for the council.
After discussing further, Cllr Mellen said he would follow the issue up on behalf of the Parish Council. The Clerk and the member of the public will both raise further reports with Suffolk Highways. Cllr Kilbee thanked Cllr Mellen for his support.
ACTION – as above.

23.194 Finningham GREEN Footpath update
Update requested from Suffolk Highways, but not received as yet.

23.195 Annual Newsletter update, including consideration of printing costs
Cllr Kilbee advised that the first issue will not be ready to publish until the new year now. A draft should be ready for councillors' consideration at the next meeting. Cllr Kilbee has obtained quotations for printing of 250 copies, from three different companies which range between £117.59 to £218.28. After discussing, Cllr Kilbee proposed proceeding with Vista Print who provided the quotation for £117.59. Seconded by Trew, and approved unanimously.
The Village Green survey needs to be agreed for inclusion.

23.196 Churchyard Maintenance update
No update; still waiting for a copy of the closure Order for Finningham Churchyard from the Coroners and Burials Division of the Ministry of Justice.

23.197 New church pathway update
A site visit with Cllr Kilbee, Cllr Trew, the Clerk, and members of the Diocese including the Governance Manager and DAC Secretary, was arranged for 1st December 2023. Unfortunately, the Diocese members did not arrive due to unexpected closure of the Orwell bridge. The meeting has been rescheduled for 15th December 2023.

23.198 To discuss quotations for works to trees on the green
The Clerk and Cllr Kilbee met with Richard Parmee, MSDC Biodiversity Manager, for his assessment of the work required to the trees, on 28th November 2023. Richard agreed that two beech trees need to be removed, dead wood needs to be removed from two ash trees, and in addition advised that the large horse chestnut tree, which is recovering from bleeding canker, would benefit from a small reduction of no more than 10%, to help the healing process. The Clerk will ask for the quotations to be amended to include the work to the horse chestnut tree. The Clerk has also spoken to MSDC to see if any grants for the work are available, and has been advised that tree work which is not considered routine or maintenance, would be eligible for support through the District Council Locality awards. Cllr Mellen indicated that he would support an application.
ACTION – Clerk to complete grant application as above, and request update quotations.

23.199 To discuss quotations for cutting the grass on the Green
Deferred to a future meeting, once all requested quotations are received.

8:47pm Cllr Mellen left the meeting.

23.200 To discuss Mid Suffolk District Council's Pride in Your Place Grant
Deferred to next meeting: Cllr Kilbee asked councillors to consider the expenditure.
ACTION – All councillors as above.

23.201 To discuss cemetery winter maintenance
Cllr Kilbee asked whether it would be better to proceed with a professional contractor, or arrange a working party. There was a discussion on including a request for residents to join a working party in the newsletter, or whether to ask residents who currently volunteer for the mowing rota. Cllr Kilbee will ask the current volunteers.

23.202 To discuss Eastlands bridge and village flooding
Discussed as above.

23.203 Defibrillator cabinet
Cllr Trew has oiled the lock, and it is now working ok. Cllr Winter reported that the pads need to be replaced before March 2024, at a cost of approximately £50.00. After discussing, approval to purchase, due to this being emergency equipment which needs to be ordered and received as quickly as possible, was proposed by Cllr Winter, seconded by Cllr Kilbee and approved unanimously.
ACTION – Cllr Winter to order defibrillator pads as above.

23.204 Correspondence received
None.

23.205 To approve Internal Audit 2022/23 comments
Deferred.

23.206 Finance

a. RFO's report (bank balance, receipts, and payments)

Balances as of 29/11/2023
Community Bank Account
Balance as of 29th November 2023: £13,524.13

Deposit Account
Balance as of 29th August 2023: £3,353.38

b. Requests for payment

Clerk admin payment December 2023	£316.37
Clerk December expenses	£32.13
HMRC December PAYE/NIC	£79.09
CAS (Community Action Suffolk) gov.uk mailboxes/domain	£306.00

Cllr Davies proposed authorisation of the above payments, seconded by Cllr Winter and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Cllr Kilbee and either Cllr Winter or Cllr Trew to pay the above approved payments, (dual authorisation).

22.207 Planning

a) **To consider applications –** none.

b) Decisions & to consider planning matters coming forth

- DC/23/04908 – Application for planning permission. Proposal: Householder Application. Erection of timber framed two bay cartlodge. Location: Willow Drive, Gislingham Road, Finningham, IP14 4HZ – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- DC/23/04466 – Proposal: Application for the Modification of a Section 106 Planning Obligation - Variation of S106 legal agreement dated 11.12.2019 relating to DC/17/06190 (affordable dwellings). Location: Green Farm Wickham Road Finningham Suffolk IP14 4HT – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- DC/23/01300 - APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - Proposal: Householder Application - Erection of single-storey rear extension. Location: Yew Tree House, Church Lane, Finningham, IP14 4JB – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- DC/23/01301 - APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT - Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent - Erection of single storey rear extension and associated internal and external alterations as per Schedule of Works. Location: Yew Tree House, Church Lane, Finningham, IP14 4JB – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- DC/23/04137 - APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT - Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent - Erection of single storey side garden room extension (following demolition of existing). Location: The Cottage, Church Green, Finningham, Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4HU – **GRANTED.**
- DC/23/04625 - APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - Proposal: Householder application - Erection of single storey side garden room extension (following demolition of existing). Location: The Cottage, Church Green, Finningham, Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4HU – **GRANTED.**

22.208 Training

New Councillor training sessions have been booked for Cllr Davies on 31st January and 7th February 2024.

22.209 To discuss date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 23rd January 2024 at 7.30pm, in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham, in order for the Precept request 2024/25 to be approved and submitted prior to the 31st January 2024 deadline.

22.210 Questions to Chairman

None.

22.211 Items to be discussed at the next meeting and included in the January agenda.

Precept request 2024/25.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:25pm.