FINNINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes for the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on
Tuesday 15th April 2025 in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham, starting at 7:30pm

Present: Cllr Kilbee, Cllr Davies, Cllr Charter, Cllr Winter, Cllr Trew, Cllr Black
In attendance: Miss J. Challis (Clerk), Cllr Mellen

25.74 Chair's welcome and to consider and approve apologies for absence
Cllr Kilbee welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Cllr Saunders were approved unanimously.

25.75 Visiting speakers
Cllr Mellen's reports can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

25.76 Contribution by Members of the Public
No members of the public present.

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

25.78 To consider requests for dispensations on agenda items
None.

25.79 To approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11th March 2025
Approval proposed by Cllr Kilbee, seconded by Cllr Charter and approved unanimously with one abstention (councillor who was not present at the meeting).

25.80 Matters arising from the Parish Council meetings held on 11th March 2025
All covered elsewhere on the agenda.

25.81 Chairman's Report
I am pleased to report that the Mower has been serviced and is back in operation. Unfortunately, it required a bit of repair due to the damage caused by striking a gravestone or perhaps the Ashes marker. I carried out the first cut on Saturday last and I realised that we had not done anything more to get the grass cuttings and other organic detritus removed from the Churchyard and the Cemetery. This is now becoming a bit of an issue especially as Mr. Smith has cleared the area next to his fence and it would be a good idea to keep it that way and not let the nettles take over.
I have spoken to Mid Suffolk Waste Management but they do not have the service we require. I cannot find any garden service who would do this work so, it may be that we will have to hire a skip and load it ourselves. Not an attractive proposal, I know but I cannot think of any alternative. The cost of a skip is anywhere between £274 and £415 plus VAT, depending on size.
I conducted Jane's annual appraisal a couple of weeks ago and the results are available for anyone who would like to see them.
We had a meeting this morning with Jodie from Wicksteed to discuss the Green Recreation Area. This is a subject in the Agenda.
We need to thank Andy for the sterling work he has done to get the B1113 repaired by the entrance to the Green, unfortunately it is still flooding and the other side of the road is in a dangerous and awful mess. I am not sure if this is scheduled to be addressed by SCC Highways Department.
You will see that Jane has circulated documents relating to the Neighbourhood Plan. It is a weighty document and too much to discuss here. Those of you who have been Councillors for some time will remember that, some years ago, we did discuss the development of a plan for Finningham but the cost then was prohibitive and the benefit minimal. Obviously, it is time to review that decision, as the Government's requirements could see our village altered beyond recognition. I propose this issue is discussed at a later meeting.

25.82 Clerk's Report

- A remittance advice has been received from MSDC confirming receipt of the first half of the precept payment; £5,422.50.
- Walsham Road flooding and repairs: Cllr Mellen has made continued reports to Highways regarding the road drains, and has now received an update from Highways Enforcement, advising that whilst under riparian ownership it is usually the responsibility of the landowner to keep the watercourses free flowing, Highways will clear the drain due to the large amount of silt. Hopefully the work will be caried out in the next 6 weeks. Cllr Mellen will also request the road be swept to remove the accumulated silt.
- Confirmation of locality funding of £2,000.00 from Cllr Mellen towards the new VAS devices has been received.
- Suffolk Highways have advised that the current temporary traffic management on Station Road in Bacton, will be removed for the period of the Easter bank holiday weekend.

25.83 Devolution – Government consultation on proposals to create a Mayoral Combined County Authority across Norfolk and Suffolk - update

The Parish Council's response to the consultation was approved by quorate email, and submitted by the 13th April 2025 deadline. The reponse can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.
SALC is seeking feedback from councils on the consultation, via their own consultation, which has been shared with councillors.

25.84 Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) EcoPower Suffolk – proposal for energy farm with solar PV and battery energy storage system (BESS) consultation

https://ecopowersuffolk.com/have-your-say/
The current non-statutory consultation on the proposal, which is situated on approximately 1,500 acres of land near Yaxley Substation, runs until the 22nd April 2025. There will be a statutory consultation in the autumn, prior to the application being submitted. After discussing, councillors agreed unanimously not to submit a response to the non-statutory consultation, but to make a more informed response to the statutory consultation later in the year.

25.85 Babergh and Mid Suffolk district Councils' 'Planning for the Future' briefing pack in response to the government's new housing requirements

The briefing pack has been prepared by BMSDC in response to the Government's new housing targets, and was shared with councillors prior to the meeting. It includes indicative new housing requirements over the next 20 years per parish. The figure for Finningham is 70 new houses, reduced to 53 taking into account the 17 already commenced. Information on the importance of Neighbourhood Plans is also in the briefing pack, and after discussing, it was agreed to look at this further at the next meeting.
ACTION – Clerk to add Neighbourhood Plans to the May Annual meeting agenda.

8:25pm Cllr Black arrived.

25.86 To discuss speeding issues on the B1113 and consideration of expenditure for Suffolk Highways to commission a speed survey

Suffolk Highways have advised that they can commission a speed survey in this location at a cost of £415.00. After discussing, it was agreed to defer a decision on this to the next meeting.
As already reported within the Clerk's Report, Cllr Mellen has kindly agreed funding of £2,000.00 towards one of the new VAS devices. It was agreed to proceed with the purchase of one new VAS device, plus the solar panel and mounting kit for the existing VAS now, and to look at funding options for the further two new VAS devices. Proposed by Cllr Charter, seconded by Cllr Trew and approved unanimously.
ACTION – Clerk as above.

25.87 To discuss plans for VE day 80th Anniversary – 8th May 2025, including approval of expenditure

The Chair of Friends of Finningham will forward a copy of their events insurance and risk assessment prior to the 8th May. Cllr Kilbee reported that Miller Farms has kindly offered to provide and load the firewood for the beacon, which will be lit at 9:30pm. There is no expenditure to be approved. The Clerk will ask Top Garden Services to cut the green before the event.
ACTION – Clerk to speak to Tom at Top Garden Services.

25.88 Approval of quotations for additional cemetery plot reserve markers and new row markers

Quotations have been sought from four stonemasons but only two received, which were shared with councillors. After discussing, Cllr Davies proposed proceeding with the quotation received from Bierton & Woods Ltd for 24 markers at a cost of £25.00 each plus VAT. Seconded by Cllr

Kilbee and approved unanimously. Cllr Charter requested the cemetery fees be an agenda item for the next meeting.
ACTION – Clerk to order markers from Bierton & Woods Ltd as above, and add the cemetery fees to the May Annual meeting agenda.

25.89 Churchyard Maintenance responsibility update
The Clerk has received an email from Birketts Solicitors, who are representing the Diocese, and will report back further at the next meeting once a telephone meeting has been arranged.
ACTION – Clerk as above.

25.90 Village green improvements quotations
Cllr Kilbee and the Clerk had a site meeting this morning with Jodie Midlane from Wicksteed, to discuss the agreed improvements to the play equipment. Jodie has subsequently sent through quotations to surface the area underneath the basket ball hoop, replace the surfacing around the slide, with an option to turn the slide so that it faces in towards the green, and options for a new multi activity piece of equipment. The details were shared with councillors at the meeting, and the full details will be emailed. A further quotation has been requested to replace the metal slide with a non-metal alternative to remove the issue of it becoming too hot in the sun. It was originally orientated to face north towards the road, to remove the risk of burns from the metal heating up in the sun.
After discussing, it was agreed to seek the required additional comparable quotations, and look at funding options. Councillors will come back to the Clerk with any queries/concerns after reviewing the quotations from Wicksteed in full.
ACTION – Clerk/Councillors as above.

25.91 Mower servicing; approval of additional repair costs
Cllr Trew proposed approval of the additional £60.00 for repair work required to the front cover. Seconded by Cllr Kilbee, and approved unanimously.

25.92 Correspondence
The resident who previously raised concern regarding the newly planted hedge on Gislingham Road, has asked for an update. The Clerk will follow up the report submitted to Suffolk Highways.
Cllr Davies has received copies of the letters reportedly sent to the Clerk by Barclays Bank regarding his complaint over the handling of his mandate change request. The Clerk will speak to the Royal Mail sorting office in Diss in case there is an issue, but has received Barclays most recent letter, advising that they have upheld Cllr Davies's complaint, and will add £200.00 to a bank account of his choice as a gesture of goodwill. Cllr Kilbee thanked Cllr Davies for securing the goodwill gesture, which Cllr Davies will request is added to either of the PC's Barclays accounts.
ACTION – Clerk/Cllr Davies as above.

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

Balances as of 29th March 2025
Community Bank Account: £104.38
Deposit Account: £10,458.00

b. Requests for payment

Clerk admin payment April (5 weeks)	£506.88
Clerk April expenses mileage (March PC,April agenda& Wicksteed meeting)	£31.32
HMRC PAYE/NIC April	£126.72
T. Kilbee expenses – mower fuel	£21.13
D& S Mowers – mower service and additional repairs	£270.00
SALC – annual subscription	£259.68

Cllr Davies proposed authorisation of the above payments, seconded by Cllr Winter and approved unanimously with 1 abstention against T. Kilbee expenses (Cllr Kilbee).
ACTION – Cllr Kilbee and either Cllr Winter , Cllr Davies or Cllr Trew to pay approved payments above, online, (dual authorisation).

Cllr Davies is now fully set up as an additional bank signatory, and has access to the online payment services (dual authorisation).

c. To approve councillor to conduct internal account checks

It was agreed unanimously for Cllr Saunders (non-signatory) to conduct the check, subject to his agreeance.

25.94 Planning

- To consider applications:
- **DC/25/00881 Re-consultation** - Full Planning Application - Construct new access entrance on land adjoining Green Lane Farm including gate.Land Adjacent Green Lane Farm, Green Lane, Finningham, Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4TJ.. **Reason(s) for re-consultation: Amended red lined Site Location Plan and Block Plan.**

Councillors agreed unanimously that they have no objection to this re-consultation.
ACTION – Clerk to update MSDC Planning Portal as above.

Decisions and to consider planning matters coming forth:

- **DC/25/00081** Householder Application - Erection of two storey rear and single storey side extension including double garage (following demolition of conservatory and existing garage). Wychwood, Gislingham Road, Finningham, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 4HY – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- **DC/24/05458** Householder application – Replacement of existing static unit for continued use as annex to Green Lane Farm, Green Lane Farm, Green Lane, Finningham, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 4TJ – **AWAITING DECISION.**

25.95 To discuss date of the next meeting
The Annual Parish meeting will be held on Tuesday 13th May 2025, at 7:00pm in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham. It will be followed by the Annual Parish Council meeting at 7:30pm.

25.96 Questions to Chairman
None.

25.97 Items to be discussed at the next meeting and included in the May agenda.
Neighbourhood Plans.
Cemetery fees.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:26pm.