



Council news

- **New Councillor**

We are delighted to welcome Rebecca Margetts to the Parish Council. We now have our full complement of 17 Councillors, all working voluntarily to support the Parish and its community.

We would like to thank the other candidates for their interest and hope that they will come forward should we have any other vacancies in future.

- **Neighbourhood Development Plan: Public meetings 21 and 24 January**

Finchampstead is a great place to live and work now but what do you want it to be like in 5, 10 or 15 years time? The Parish Council is intending to work with the community to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan to map out the future of Finchampstead Parish and we need your help. If you are interested in finding out more about the Plan and how you could be involved please come along to one of our public meetings.

Monday 21 January at 7.30pm - California Ratepayers Hall, Finchampstead Road RG40 3RL
Thursday 24 January at 7.30pm - Memorial Hall, The Village RG40 4JU.

- **Youth activities in Finchampstead**

In our end of November 2018 newsletter we provided an update on the many grants and donations we awarded in 2018/19. We also provided £12,000 to the Finchampstead Baptist Church towards the activities it runs for children and young people.

The funds provided help the Church to run youth clubs for years 5 - 8 and for year 9 upwards, a drama club, assemblies and other work with local schools, and other activities. The funds also subsidise trips for young people who would otherwise not be able to afford to attend.

- **California Ratepayers Hall**

Many of you will take part in activities at the Ratepayers Hall and know what a valuable facility it is for the community. We are pleased to have been able to make a contribution of £6000 towards much needed improvements to the Hall car park and look forward to seeing the work completed in the coming months.

For more information about the Hall and its facilities, and about the wide variety of activities taking place please visit www.ratepayers.co.uk or contact secretary@ratepayers.com

- **Tree planting**

In early December we planted a further 3 English oak trees at Burnmoor Meadow, adding to those planted in previous years including those to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee and the 90th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

We also planted a hornbeam tree in the St James Churchyard to mark the centenary of the end of World War I.

- **Annual Gathering: 6 March 2019**

Our annual meeting for parishioners and those we work with will be held at the FBC Centre on Wednesday 6 March starting at 7pm. We hope that you will be able to attend to hear about our work over the past year and some of our plans for the future.

We will also have one or two short talks or presentations - details will be confirmed shortly.

There will be refreshments after the meeting and an opportunity to chat to Parish Councillors.



Local events and information

- **Wokingham Volunteer Centre**

WVC is one of the organisations we have given a grant to this year. It provides a range of valuable services for residents including transport to medical appointments and help with gardening through the Green 'n Tidy Scheme. It also runs a volunteer brokerage scheme - matching people wishing to volunteer to activities and organisations that may suit them. Find out more about WVC at www.wokinghamvolunteercentre.org.uk

The Centre is holding a Charity Volunteer Recruitment Fair on Saturday 19 January from 10am to 1pm at Wokingham Town Hall. Come and meet local charities and be inspired!

Community Navigation Scheme

This scheme is run by the charity Involve and is a free service for Wokingham Borough residents over the age of 18, providing information and sign posting to social or physical activities that may help to give a better sense of wellbeing, social inclusion and independence.

The service can direct residents to helpful services, support and information. This could be an elderly person or carer looking for support with managing a health condition or for new social networks to join. It could be a young parent looking for activities in the local area.

The Community Navigators will look in to a range of options for the individual to engage with, and will encourage and support them to attend or use groups, activities or services that can help them meet their needs and improve their health and wellbeing.

For more information visit www.involve.community/community-navigation/ or telephone 01344 304404.

- **Finchampstead Ridges and Simon's Wood**

We are fortunate to have these lovely areas in Finchampstead. The sites are owned and managed by the National Trust but the Friends of Finchampstead Ridges and Simon's Wood help out with regular work parties on the second and third Wednesdays in the month, meeting at 10am at the Simon's Wood car park off Wellingtonia Avenue.

A recent task for the Group was work around Spout Pond, including clearing the inlet to the pond and removing some trees and vegetation. The work has improved water flow and opened up the area allowing more light and air to reach the pond. The Group used the cut logs to start marking the developing 'Ridges Ramble' trail which will pass by the pond.

For more information about getting involved please contact David Kimber on 0118 973 6086

- **Allotments**

We have a few plots available due to the expansion of our site. For more information please contact the Clerk on 0118 9088164 or clerk@finchampstead-pc.gov.uk

- **Bottle banks**

Wokingham Borough Council provides bottle banks in the Avery Corner Car Park which are emptied weekly, and in the California Country Park where the banks are emptied every 8 weeks. If you have any suggestions for a location for a bottle bank in the south of the Parish please let us know and we will pass this on. If you see that a bank is full and overflowing please report it to WBC on 0118 974 6000 or at www.wokingham.gov.uk



ARBORFIELD GARRISON STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT LOCATION (SDL)

Over 200 new homes on the SDL are now occupied, with permission granted for over 600 more homes. Work continues to progress on various parts of the site with applications for approval for additional parcels coming forward regularly. Bewley Homes will shortly be consulting on proposals for Parcel X involving 70 dwellings adjacent to Biggs Lane.

The southern part of the development on the Hogwood Farm site is within Finchampstead Parish. Legal & General now own the site and we understand have named it Finchwood Park. The first phase of development of 178 dwellings was recently granted planning permission.

The interactive maps at the following link give a useful overview of how the development is moving forward. www.wokingham.gov.uk/major-developments/arborfield-garrison/

'HOMES FOR THE FUTURE' CONSULTATION

Wokingham Borough Council is carrying out a public consultation on its Local Plan which will guide development in the borough in the years up to 2036.

The consultation asks where you think development should go and whether there are locations suitable for higher densities or taller buildings. There are also questions about land for new employment centres. You can also see all of the sites put forward for development as part of the 'call for sites' process and can make comments on these.

All households should have received a 'Homes for the Future' brochure and all of the information can be found at www.wokingham.gov.uk/localplanupdate The consultation has been extended to 22 February 2019.

You can find out more and speak to WBC Officers at the drop in event at Henry Street Garden Centre, Swallowfield Road, Arborfield RG2 9JY on 30 January from 7pm to 9pm.

Finchampstead Parish Council will be submitting a detailed response to the consultation.

LAND ADJACENT TO SANDMARTINS GOLF COURSE, FINCHAMPSTEAD ROAD

WBC refused permission for the development of up to 80 homes on this green field and the developer, Gladman Land, has now appealed against this decision. A Public Inquiry will be held at the WBC Offices at Shute End from 12 February and is expected to run for 6 days. WBC Councillors, Parish Councillors and local residents from the 'Keep it Green' campaign will all be speaking at the Public Inquiry to express their opposition to the scheme.

Members of the public can attend the Inquiry and are encouraged to do so to show the Planning Inspectorate how much residents care about this important green space. For more information about attending the hearing visit www.facebook.com/groups/KeepItGreenFinchNorth/

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

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