

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15TH MAY 2024 AT 7:30PM
FBC CENTRE, GORSE RIDE NORTH, FINCHAMPSTEAD RG40 4ES**

PRESENT: Councillors : S. Weeks (Chair), G. Jukes OBE (Vice Chair),
E. Allen, S. Bowers, S. Bromley, D. Cornish, R. Cundy, G. Evans,
P. Grainger, A. Grimshaw, S. Gurney (part), R. Marshallsay, C. Mortimer,
S. McDonald, G. Veitch, R. Woof

In Attendance : A. Everett (Clerk), K. Lang (Deputy Clerk)

46/2024 ELECTION OF THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr Weeks was unanimously elected to the role and a Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed.

47/2024 ELECTION OF THE VICE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr Jukes was unanimously elected to the role.

48/2024 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Eytle.

49/2024 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were received.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

*Three members of the public were present.
Cllr Weeks presented the Jones VC Trophy to Allan Gibson.*

50/2024 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 24th April 2024 were agreed as a true and correct record. There were two omissions which were duly added and the minutes were signed by Cllr Weeks.

51/2024 ELECTION OF THE CHAIR OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Woof was elected to the role.

52/2024 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR AND MEMBERS TO THE FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR 2024/25

The Finance & General Management Committee includes the Chair of or a representative from each of the four committees, and up to four additional members.

Cllr Jukes was elected the Vice Chair of the Finance and General Management Committee.

Membership was confirmed as follows.

Cllrs Allen, Bromley, Cornish, Cundy, Evans, and McDonald

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, each Committee may comprise up to eight councillors. In addition, the Chair of the Council reserves the right to participate as a member of any Committee upon their wish and Cllr Weeks confirmed his membership to the Finance & General Management Committee.

53/2024 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES FOR 2024/2025 AND THE APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF EACH COMMITTEE

All Councillors were consulted prior to the meeting and the following Committee memberships were confirmed.

Amenities Committee

Cllr McDonald was elected to continue as Chair and Cllr Bowers was elected to continue as Vice Chair of the Committee.

Members were confirmed as follows : Cllrs. Allen, Evans, Eyle, Grainger, Gurney and Veitch.

Planning Committee

Cllr Cundy was elected to continue as Chair and Cllr Marshallsay was elected to continue as Vice Chair of the Committee.

Members were confirmed as follows : Cllrs. Bromley, Cornish, Grainger, Grimshaw, Veitch and Weeks.

Rights of Way Committee

Cllr Cornish was elected to continue as Chair and Cllr Mortimer was elected to continue as Vice Chair of the Committee.

Members were confirmed as follows : Cllrs Grimshaw, Gurney, Jukes, Weeks and Woof.

Roads & Road Safety Committee

Cllr Bromley was elected to continue as Chair and Cllr Cundy was elected to continue as Vice Chair of the Committee.

Members were confirmed as follows : Cllrs Allen, Bowers, Grainger, Grimshaw, and Marshallsay

54/2024 WORKING GROUPS/SUB COMMITTEES AND MEMBERSHIP FOR 2024/25

Groups and membership were confirmed as follows:

Allotments
Cllrs. Cundy & Veitch
Business Continuity
Cllrs. Jukes & Woof
CEMEX
Cllrs. Allen, Jukes, Mortimer, Veitch, Weeks & Woof
Communications
Cllrs. Allen, Gurney, Jukes & Woof
Finchampstead Emergency Response
Cllrs. Grainger, Jukes, McDonald & Weeks
Finchampstead Village Club
Cllrs. Cundy & Weeks
Human Resources
Chair & Vice Chair of the Council & Committee Chairs
IT
To be decided
Neighbourhood Development Plan
Cllrs. Cornish, Cundy, Grainger, Jukes & Marshallsay
Risk Management
Cllrs. Cundy, Jukes, McDonald & Woof

55/2024 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS / WBC

Representatives were confirmed as follows.

Arborfield Green & Finchwood Park (Arborfield Strategic Development Location) Community Liaison Group
Cllrs. Bromley and Evans
Berkshire Association of Local Councils (BALC)
Cllr. Cundy
Blackwater Valley Partnership
Cllrs. Weeks and Woof
FBC Centre Advisory Board
Cllr. Cundy
Finchampstead NAG (Neighbourhood Action Group)
Cllrs. Bowers, Bromley, and Weeks

Finchampstead Park Management Committee
Cllr. Weeks
Finchampstead Village Club Trustees
Cllrs. Cundy and Weeks
Gorse Ride Regeneration Steering Group
Cllrs. Bowers and Grimshaw
WBC Borough/ Parish Liaison Forum
Cllr. Cundy. Standing Deputy – Cllr Bromley
Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association
Cllr. Veitch
Wokingham United Charities
Cllr. Veitch

56/2024 PROJECT AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Gorse Ride Regeneration

The move in date for properties 1 to 8 has been pushed back and is now scheduled for 8th July. The second tranche is scheduled for 28th July. This has been delayed due to bad weather. The apartment blocks are progressing well and are due for fitting out in the next few weeks. The main road is due for resurfacing. Approximately six houses in the community have been mothballed ready for demolition (mothballing involves securing and maintaining the structures to prevent deterioration, vandalism, or unauthorised access). Asbestos has been found in three of the houses but serves no risk to local residents. Completion of Phase 2A is anticipated for December 2025 with completion of the entire project expected 2027-2028. The footway for Billing Avenue will open at the end of July.

Arborfield Strategic Development Location – Arborfield Green and Finchwood Park

Nothing further to report at present. There are a couple of consultations in June so Cllr Evans hopes to provide an update at next month's meeting.

California Crossroads

The original end date for Phase 1 was 30th April; however, due to the additional drainage work, this has now been pushed back to 23rd May. At the request of Nine Mile Ride School, there was consideration to move this to 29th May (during the school half-term), but it was decided not to deviate from the revised date of 23rd May.

Access to Red Oak Store and Bob’s Fish & Chips has recently been changed back to Nine Mile Ride. Finchampstead Road is scheduled for resurfacing from Avery Corner Car Park to the old war memorial junction in August as part of the crossroads project. Clarity is needed regarding the type of resurfacing and whether potential future improvements at the old war memorial junction have been considered.

Maintenance work is scheduled in May for temporary repairs of the pull-in bays on Commonfield Lane, with full repair and formal pull-in bays scheduled for August (NB : Commonfield Lane is wholly in Barkham Parish).

Windsor Ride and Pine Drive are set for 'patch and repair' in Phase 2 of the project, but no dates have been provided. Regular newsletters and leaflet drops detail each phase. FPC councillors attend regular onsite and TEAMS meetings with WBC.

57/2024 STANDING ORDERS

Cllr Woof advised that the Standing Orders would be deferred until next month as further review is needed.

58/2024 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Cllr Woof reported that the Financial Regulations have been reviewed, updated, and endorsed by the Finance & General Management Committee (based on NALC's 2019 model Financial Regulations). A significant amendment includes the introduction of an approved list of regular payments, such as salaries, HMRC contributions, pensions, National Insurance, and other recurring contractual payments. This change allows the council to make these payments directly and then report to the council, eliminating the need for prior approval from the council for each payment. The updated Regulations received approval.

59/2024 COMPLIANCE WITH FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The continued use of Direct Debits, Standing Orders, BACS and CHAPS payments and internet banking transfers, reference Financial Regulations 6.7 to 6.10, was approved.

60/2024 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance & General Management Committee

The Finance & General Management Committee met on 8th May. Minutes of the meeting have yet to be published.

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

Financial Position

- Unity Trust Bank £272,282.15
- CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund account £2,365,263.47
- CCLA Property Fund £25,000.00

Schedule of Payments

Due to timing of the meeting, the schedule of payments is limited.

Payee	£ NET	£ VAT	£ TOTAL
Web Marketing Matters	194.00	38.80	232.80
Microshade	157.69	31.54	189.23
FBC Café	5.09	1.02	6.11
ASAP (laptop battery)	140.00	28.00	168.00
Jack Peachey (Memorial Park)	67.50	13.50	81.00
SLCC (training KL)	30.00	6.00	36.00
SLCC (training AE)	30.00	6.00	36.00
SSE (street lamp energy supply)	9.18	1.84	11.02

Cllr Woof provided an update on current matters.

- CIL bids received from WBC.
 - Resurfacing of Roman Ride – request for £65,000. Rights of Way Committee to discuss.
 - Renovation of path surface linking bridleway to Vermont Woods / California Country Park – request for £50,000. Cllr Cornish to speak with Andy Glencross.
 - Woodmoor Play Area – request for £24,400. Request for more information before considering.
- An internal audit was conducted on 9th May 2024. The auditor reported that the financial records are well maintained and the control systems and procedures remain efficient and effective. Recommendations were made to improve compliance with the Transparency Code, specifically regarding the disclosure of expenditure exceeding £500. Although this information is currently detailed in meeting minutes, the Code recommends that it also be available as a separate document on our website. Additionally, the investment strategy needs to be updated annually, and our CIL policy requires review. We also need to submit an annual return to the Charity Commission concerning the Finchampstead Village Club.
- The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) will be presented to the Council at its meeting on 27th June 2024.
- The Committee will be meeting on 10th July.

Amenities Committee

Cllr McDonald provided an update on current matters.

- California Country Park lakeside improvement project: Nothing new to report at present.
- The Jones VC Trophy was awarded to Allan Gibson. The process, nomination criteria, and timings will be reviewed at the next Amenities Committee meeting.
- Cllr Veitch provided an update regarding the allotment improvements. Phase 2 which includes the installation of solar panels has commenced ahead of the scheduled date in June.
- A meeting has been arranged with Raymond Barry to discuss the Finchwood Park / Arborfield allotments.
- Cllr McDonald provided an update on the D-Day 80 commemoration on 6th June.
- FBC play area / lottery bid has been delayed due to discussions regarding proposals to redevelop the FBC carpark.
- The Committee will be meeting on 12th June.

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee met on 17th April. Minutes of the meeting have been circulated.

Cllr Cundy provided an update on current matters.

- The Planning Committee will be considering 11 planning applications and reviewing 7 decisions.
Notable applications include:
 - Revised plans for the Land to the rear of 240 Nine Mile Ride, which the Committee objected to previously. The revised plans show amendments to the proposed landscaping, layout, and addressing consultee comments in respect of tree planting, hard landscape, highways, drainage and open space.
 - Revised plans for the 49-bed hotel at West Court which the Committee previously had no objections to. The revised plans show a new boundary to incorporate more land around the hotel and the site access.

- We have received notification of 3 new appeals. There have been no appeal decisions.
- There were 2 applications for works to protected trees but nothing of concern.
- The Planning Clerk continues to report and monitor breaches of planning with the case officers at WBC planning enforcements.
- The next Planning Committee will be on 16th May.

Rights of Way Committee

Cllr Cornish reported on current matters.

- Cllrs Cornish and Mortimer will collaborate with the Clerk to review the project list, identifying key priorities such as FP33 (Longwater Lane), BW/FP (Vermont Woods), and the St. James Church path. They will then work with WBC to determine how FPC can advance these projects. This includes understanding the necessary parameters and logistics to ensure progress.
- Cllr Jukes inquired about the status of the replacement bridleway through the CEMEX land. Although signs have been erected, it has not been adopted or opened. It is necessary to ask WBC if they plan to adopt the bridleways and footpaths on this land.

Roads & Road Safety Committee

The Roads & Road Safety Committee met on 1st May. Minutes of the meeting have been circulated.

Cllr Bromley reported on current matters.

- Cllrs Grimshaw and Allen were co-opted to the committee.
- PSIDs continue to be deployed.
- The design for the old War Memorial Junction is due for completion imminently. It was noted that FPC have not approved spend for this project as they are still awaiting design and quotes.
- The Committee will be meeting on 11th September.

61/2024 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- Cllr Weeks provided an update on the **Finchampstead Park Management Committee**. Neil Doody was re-elected as Chairman, Steve Bromley was re-elected as Vice Chairman, and Bev Kemp stepped up to serve as both Secretary and Treasurer. There has been no further progress on securing funding for the replacement of buildings such as the storage hut and changing rooms. The planning permission had lapsed after three years and the sports club has successfully got new planning permission. FPC is prepared to consider contributing towards the costs, but the project's progress depends on funding from the Football Foundation. Meetings will be held quarterly.

62/2024 FORUM

- Cllr Weeks thanked Cllr Grainger for producing the Parish Newsletters in the absence of a Clerk.
- Cllr Evans confirmed his status as Borough Councillor and will continue to serve as a Parish Councillor.

63/2024 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The next Main Council meeting will take place on Thursday 27th June 2024.

Meeting concluded at 9.12pm.

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