

GREAT FINBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Great Finborough Parish Council meeting held in the Upper room of the Pettward Hall on Monday 11th November 2024 at 7.30pm.

Present:

Councillors: J.Spencer (Chair)
A.Mann (Vice Chair)
L. Morgan
S.Waspe
R.Burton

In Attendance:

Cllr Penny Otton
Cllr John Matthissen
L.Luther (Clerk)
9 Members of the public

GFPC/58/24/25 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Barron. Apologies were accepted.

GFPC/59/24/25 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

Cllr Mann declared an interest in DC/24/04231 Finborough School

GFPC/60/24/25 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th October 2024 be approved as a true record and were signed by the Chair. Proposed by Cllr Spencer, seconded by Cllr Morgan and all were in favour.

GFPC/61/24/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

A member of the public thanked the council for clearing the growth at the edge of their garden and were very appreciative of the council's efforts in getting that done.

A member of the public advised that they had moved forward with the Good Neighbour Scheme. Work had progressed so that they now had the beginnings of a steering committee and chosen a name, which is GIFT – meaning “Great in Finborough Together.” They had created a database of things people might want help with, which will be added to in time. They intend to do a survey to identify if what they are offering is ok, they have joined Suffolk Good Neighbour Scheme, which enables them access to policies, DBS checks and insurance and so on. Cllr Matthissen suggested some locality budget may be available to help with start-up costs. GIFT had not yet decided when to launch. They hoped they had the support of parish council and may come to request funding. Hopefully by Christmas or new year, they will have something ready to go, they have had volunteers apply already and as soon as they are ready to go, they will get going.

Chairman advised the members of the public that they wanted to wait for Cllr Matthissen to arrive before discussing point 8a.

GFPC/62/24/25 CLERK'S REPORT

- a) Clerk reported that all donation requests would be considered in the February meeting, so the request from the East Anglian Air Ambulance would be deferred to February.
- b) Clerk advised that the national Joint Council had agreed on pays scales for 2024/25 and advised that Council needed to decide if it would be approving the increased pay scales for the Clerk's wages. **It was AGREED** to approve the pay scale increase for 24/25.
- c) Clerk advised a request for a donation had been received from the Citizens Advice Bureau and reported this would be deferred to February's meeting for discussion and decision then.
- d) Clerk reported that she needed to request approval for overtime requests, and as she had recently gone on holiday, requested a week's overtime – equal to 8 hours pay, as the work had still been completed, despite being entitled to paid holiday so was requested to be paid for the additional time. **It was AGREED** to approve the overtime of 8 hours. Cllr Spencer proposed, Cllr Morgan seconded, and all were in favour.

GFPC/63/24/25 TO RECEIVE THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Otton advised that council were hoping that the government were going to do a back turn on closing the winter fuel payments. Cllr Otton's group submitted a motion to Council about footpaths and payments, saying that the work done is insufficient, and needs to be looked at. Cllr Otton hoped that that Parish Council would continue to have a good relationship with the school now that it had changed owners.

Cllr Otton advised that money that had been allocated for repair and remedial work following storm Babet but was prioritised to villages where there were 5 or more properties that were flooded and there is a list of over 50 villages requiring flood relief work.

Cllr Otton reported that she had still not had a positive response regarding the problem at the property in Buxhall, where water was egressing along the road.

Cllr Mann asked if it would be possible to apply for an extension of the 30mph zone down valley lane. Cllr Otton responded that realistically it would not happen, as so many other similar requests have been turned down, and there is a large amount of cost involved, to establish if a speed reduction is valid or not.

Councillors reported that local landowners had expressed an interest in having alleviation lakes dug and asked if Cllr Otton's locality budget could possibly help with the cost of digging such lakes. Cllr Otton replied negatively, saying that previously she had tried to get money for that purpose, and it was denied, such a project would need to be done on Parish Council land for the work to be paid for by locality budget or even with Parish Council funding. Cllr Otton did advise she would speak to Matt Hullis concerning the matter, to establish if there is another source of funding that could be utilised.

GFPC/64/24/2 HIGHWAYS

Only outstanding issue was already addressed in Cllr Otton's report. No further issues.

GFPC/65/24/25 FINANCE

- a) It was AGREED to defer approving the Bank Reconciliation until the next meeting, when Cllr Barron would be present. Clerk read out the Finance Report to Council.

b) Payments and receipts were discussed and approved.

	Payments	Amount		Receipts	Amount
18/10/2024	HMRC Tax Payment	£312.80	14/10/2024	CIL Money Receipt	£ 5,426.39
18/10/2024	Top Garden 4 Months Invoices	£1,152.00	29/10/2024	Bank Interest	£47.24
18/10/2024	Cilca Intro Training Module Payment	£16.00	11/11/2024	Locality Funding	£300
20/10/2024	Bank Charges	£8.00			
31/10/2024	Litter Pick Salary	£26.00			
31/10/2024	Litter Pick Salary	£39.00			
31/10/2024	Clerk Salary Oct	£387.34			
13/11/2024	Gipping Press - Magazine	£225.00			

GFPC/66/24/25 BUDGET

It was AGREED that the Budget Sub Committee consisting of Cllr Spencer, Cllr Mann, Cllr Burton and Cllr Barron would meet separately to discuss the budget on a line-by-line basis.

GFPC/67/24/25 VILLAGE MAINTENANCE AND OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

- a) Working party update given by Cllr Mann, the previous Saturday work was undertaken at Woodpecker hill, back paths were cleared along with a lot of rubbish. The most recent Saturday just gone saw the allotment working party take place, a lot of clearing was achieved and overall it was a successful meeting.
- b) Cllr Mann reported that planned work around the play park had been pushed back to the end of November or start of December.
- c) Cllr Morgan mentioned that the village Marquee is significantly damaged and so requires replacement. **It was AGREED** that Cllr Morgan would apply for locality funding for the marquee to be replaced by a second-hand marquee, that would be stored in the Pettiward Hall and would be loaned out with a nominal fee to keep the marquee covered under the insurance premium. **It was AGREED** that Clerk would check the marquee was covered under the insurance premium.
- d) Council discussed the funds raised earlier on in the year, with the event held around the time of the D Day Landings anniversary. Cllr Morgan proposed that Council purchased two Tommy figures from the RBL website, and some large display poppies to be put on display next year during the two weeks leading up to Remembrance Day. Cllr Morgan proposed, Cllr Spencer seconded, and all were in favour. **It was AGREED** that two Tommy figures and Large Poppies would be purchased using the money raised and any remaining funds would be donated to the RBL.
- e) Cllr Morgan reported that the village bench was currently being painted and should be ready for the 1st of December. The existing bench would be relocated to Woodpecker Hill.
- f) **It was AGREED** that Clerk would send a letter of thanks to Gareth Hart, who cut the wildflower meadow for the Council for no charge.

GFPC/68/24/25 CIL EXPENDITURE

Cllr Morgan would be attending the upcoming webinar on CIL money and hoped that that would feed further discussion on what money could be spent on.

GFPC/69/24/25 FOOTPATHS

Cllr Mann reported that a potential candidate for the Footpath Warden role had felt overwhelmed by the responsibilities of the position. Cllr Burton proposed himself for the position, which was accepted by the rest of the council. A member of the public mentioned they knew of a council who had a strong system of organisation with their footpath monitoring, including a traffic light system. The condition of footpaths within the village was discussed and it was felt that some footpaths around the church and the golf club were below standard and required attention. Cllr Mann pledged to meet with the Golf Club Manager to discuss concerns around the footpaths. Furthermore, it was reported that lots of footpaths around Middlefield drive and towards the football pitch had been improved with chippings being placed on the ground to reduce the impact of the wet months.

GFPC/70/24/25 BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

Councillors discussed the lack of progression with the Biodiversity Action Plan. Cllr Mann agreed to speak to a resident of the village to see if they would be willing to assist with the development of an action plan.

GFPC/71/24/25 EMERGENCY PLAN

Councillors decided to defer the emergency plan discussion to the next meeting in December.

GFPC/72/24/25 GREAT FINBOROUGH PLAY AREA

Clerk reported that since the owners of Finborough School had changed, she got in touch with the previous owner, James Sinclair, to establish what the future held for the play area in terms of regular inspections, and James advised that the school would continue to support these.

GFPC/73/24/25 MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

It was reported that the church had invited a member of the Parish Council to do a reading at the Christmas service to be held in December. Cllr Burton proposed himself to do the reading.

Cllr Spencer requested that the Flood Working Group be put on the next agenda and mentioned that the council should focus on items that can be achieved.

A resident has expressed an interest in joining the council and asked for the necessary forms to be sent to them.

Cllr Mann requested that a colour leaflet be inserted into the Parish magazine to increase revenue for the magazine and put in some photos that were taken in and around the village in the magazine. Item to be added to the next agenda.

Cllr Waspe had sent a photo of a tree lying across a ditch, at the bottom of the golf course, reporting that it needed to be cleared. Cllr Mann advised he would speak to management at the Golf Course regarding this.

20.30 hrs Cllr Matthissen arrived.

20.33 hrs Cllr Mann left the meeting room.

GFPC/74/24/25 PLANNING

Council discussed the points that were made in the previous month's meeting, and had deferred this point of discussion until Cllr Matthissen had arrived, so that it could be clearly understood why the proposed extraordinary meeting to be held on Monday 18th November was no longer needed. Cllr Matthissen reported that the planning officer had informed him that there were already enough concerns from professional consultees that would mean that changes would be required to be made to the planning application before it could proceed. Therefore, the planning officer had advised Cllr Matthissen that a decision either way from the Parish Council, at that point in time, was not necessary, but a list of concerns and observations from the Council would be useful. Cllr Matthissen advised that the current application was not likely to proceed to a decision, as the objections outweighed anything else. However, there is a requirement placed on the planning department to look for ways of permitting sustainable development, so they will continue to find ways to modify the application to gain approval.

Councillors went on to discuss what was discussed at the previous meeting, to summarise and put together a document that would provide a list of their concerns and interests in the application.

Clerk had put together a basic outline of concerns and interests from the last meeting, that Councillors were discussing. At the start of the meeting the document read as follows:

Negative

1. Impact of the new building on the setting of the Church. Impact of proximity of building to the church – will quiet reflection be interrupted?
2. Impact on landscape views from Buxhall.
3. Reroute of footpath would be longer and more hilly, how would it be landscaped? The quality of the footpath – would it be improved?
4. Traffic in Church Road needed addressing.
5. Access from B1115 into the school needed improvement.

Positive

1. The land to be acquired by the school is intended to be incorporated into the village as part of the school, therefore should add value to the village.
2. The school is a successful business and has always worked hard to engage the village in all its projects. A different landowner in the future may not be so engaging, considerate or want to provide cost free facilities to the village.
3. The project is all part of helping the school to thrive and survive in a challenging environment. If in the future the school were to close, the village would suffer – objecting to this project could have an impact, making that a possibility.
4. The improvements to the footpath would involve better landscaping, improving the quality of the path, and more views are enjoyed whilst on the new footpath route.

Councillors added to the negative concerns, with the points around the access to the reservoir being opened up and creating greater risk of accidents. Secondly, councillors

added the issue of the actual development being outside the village boundary, and therefore it needed to provide community benefit.

By the end of the meeting, the document that would be submitted to the Planning Portal read as follows:

As a result of discussion which took place between councillors at the meeting of Great Finborough Parish Council on Monday 14th October 2024, please find below a list of discussion points that were observed by Councillors concerning the planning application from Finborough School Ltd. DC/24/04231

Positive

1. The land that is intended to be acquired by the school is anticipated to be incorporated into the village as part of the school, therefore may add value to the village.
2. The village and surrounding villages benefit from a strong school, including the jobs and economic activity that are created, which are community benefits.
3. The project is all part of helping the school to thrive and survive in a challenging environment. If in the future the school were to close, the village would suffer adversely, and the project not going ahead could increase the chance of the school closing.
4. The developments to the footpath could involve better landscaping, improve the quality of the path, and provide more views, not previously available along the existing path. The village would benefit from more facilities.

Negative

1. Impact of the new building on the setting of the Church is significant. Impact of proximity of the dormitory building to the church has created concerns that quiet reflection risks being spoiled.
2. Substantial impact on the landscape, including views from Buxhall.
3. The rerouting of footpath would be longer and have a steeper gradient. Are there any guarantees as to the quality of the landscaping along the new route?
4. Concerns already excessive traffic on Church Road will be exacerbated.
5. Increased traffic and access to and from the B1115.
6. The opening up of land around the reservoir presents increased dangers.
7. The actual development is outside the village settlement boundary – so needs to bring significant community benefit.

21.28 hrs Cllr Mann returned to the meeting.

GFPC/75/24/25 TO RECEIVE THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Matthissen had circulated his report prior to the meeting, but reported that the top item he wants everyone to be aware of is the new bus service funded by the Council. Anyone who used the bus service was requested to send any feedback to Cllr Matthissen. Cllr Burton to talk to the Chestnut Horse owners, to see if they could benefit from the living well in winter grant.

Cllr Matthissen reported that the council would like to give grants to shop owners in Stowmarket to improve the appearance of some of the shops, but the landlords are often absentee and it has proved difficult to get in touch with them.

21.42 Cllr Matthissen left the meeting.

**GFPC/76/24/25 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – Monday 9th December 2024 at 7.30pm
in the Upper room of the Pettiward Hall.**

The meeting closed at 21.45hrs.

Chairman: Dated:.....