

Finchampstead Society Meeting 13-4-21 Planning & Environment Report

Planning Developments

- **Relocation of the War Memorial**: The Finchampstead park management committee have expressed a preference for the War memorial to be relocated to the roadside verge adjacent to the park. However, the feasibility study into the potential site near to St James' Church has now been completed and plans and illustrations have been received by the Parish Council for discussion/decision.
Neighbourhood Development Plan: The first round of public consultations has been completed and a full analysis of the results is now taking place.
- **Gorse Ride Regeneration**: Phase 1 covering Cockayne Court and part of Arnett Avenue is expected to be completed in June this year. This phase will comprise 46 homes. Planning permission has been agreed for Phase 2, a contractor has been appointed and work is expected to start later this year. This phase will comprise 249 homes.
- **Park View & Car Workshop**: An application has been made for a change of use to incorporate a car sales facility. The Parish Council has objected on the basis that the location is inappropriate for this type of business and there is inadequate customer parking, with the likelihood that customers would use the Memorial Hall car park.

Cemex/RSPB Nature Reserve

- Concern over the continuing lack of progress has resulted in the formation of a working group by the Parish Council, which will attempt to progress outstanding issues.

Barkham Solar Farm

- As part of its policy of achieving net carbon zero by 2030, WBC are proposing to construct four solar farms in the borough. A site for the first of the farms has been identified in an area of farmland of about 40ha to the north and south of Barkham Ride, which is owned by WBC. The proposal, which is out for consultation at the present time, includes extensive new tree and hedge planting to reduce visual impact and protection of public rights of way

Greyhound Pub & Restaurant

- The Greyhound has been leased by Brucaan Pubs who plan to reopen it as a pub/restaurant. It will include a coffee shop and retail outlet, but regrettably not a sub post office.

Wellingtonia Avenue

- Following completion of the pilot project involving eight trees towards the end of last year, a further 90 trees will now be surveyed starting on April 19th. As already stated, the ultimate objective is to raise awareness of the importance of the trees and to encourage landowners to look after them with support from the Parish Council.

Major Roads Programme

- **Barkham Bridge**: Opening of the new road is imminent and work is currently being focussed on the old bridge, which will be used solely by cyclists and pedestrians.

Road Closure

- **The Ridges:** It is probably generally known that the stretch of road between the War Memorial and Dell Road has been closed due to a collapsed section. What might not be known is that the road is likely to be closed for up to a year due to the investigations necessary to determine the extent of the work required for the repairs to be carried out. The investigations will look at the underlying road structure, drainage systems in the area and the underlying earth structure. A major complication is that the road is adjacent to a steep hill which is moving and could cause the road to collapse further.

Gordon Wrigley
24-4-21