

Finchingfield Parish Council Questions and Answers (August 2022)

1. There were six contractors bidding for this project. Who won this contract and where has this been communicated on your website as a detailed plan was promised on their appointment?

Five contractors were originally approached with a view to determining their interest to tender for the work at Finchingfield. Of these, two were taken forward to competitive tender for the design element of the work. The contract was awarded to Jackson and we are currently agreeing the programme, following which the website will be updated with key dates amongst other information.

2. Open Spaces Society - have they been informed about the village greens being de registered?

The Open Spaces society were consulted in March 2021. They advised that they would consult their local members and after a short period of time responded that they did not have any comments to make, at that time.

3. What's the timescale for the planning permission and when will the results be communicated?

We anticipate submission of the planning application in September and would expect a decision before the end of the year, 2022.

4. As part of your published project plan, you are due to decommission the bridge in December 2022 and begin construction work in Jan/Feb 2023 'subject to all necessary permissions'. What are these permissions and what progress has been made with them?

We have experienced some delays to the programme during the course of the year and now do not expect to be on site before June 2023.

Permissions include; Planning Permission, De-registration of the Village Green Areas, EA, licencing of land from third parties.

- The planning application is in progress and is expected to be issued in September 2022.
- The De-Registration application will shortly be issued to the PC's solicitors for their review and recommendation to the PC for acceptance/signature.
- With respect to the licencing, we have had early conversations and agreed in principle areas for licencing with certain third parties, however, are hoping to limit the amount of land licencing required by improved working practices. We should have received updated Site Plans from our Supplier, Jackson, in September, following which we will commence land negotiations.

5. Exploratory work is planned for October 22. What is the timescale for this? We have already had to suffer numerous ‘exploratory closures, since at least October 2019. Why is yet another necessary and who is the contractor carrying out the work?

There is a need to determine the extent of the foundations to the retaining wall above the pond to the East of the bridge. The need from this stems from the approach to the temporary support of the Greedy Duck building. This investigation has not been done previously. This is currently in planning, however, it requires an Environment Agency Flood Risk Activity Environmental Permit and this will take some time to obtain. We do not now expect to be on site in October.

In addition, we will need to determine the ground conditions along the soft areas of the temporary carriageway, this includes the green and pond. We will require permission from the Parish Council for this. This work will also feature in the Flood Risk Activity Environmental Permit.

Overall, we expect to need to be within the carriageway at the bridge for up to two days.

6. Once the project plan has been published and communicated how do you propose to continue working, for the duration of the project, with all community stakeholders?

We will determine with the Parish Council a sensible approach to stakeholder feedback and engagement. We currently envisage, to tie in with the web site update, a letter drop to the Parish.

Further key points where letters will be sent or web updates will be made;

- Planning Decision
- Plans to build trial brick panels for viewing
- Once final design drawings are ready
- Once construction programme is fully developed, key milestones will be shared.

7. Does the bridge really need to be rebuilt?

Taken from FAQ's 2020 Q1 [online](#).

It is an old bridge, some elements approximately 200 years old in a deteriorating condition. The bridge is also weak and cannot be strengthened to sustain the required loading. It is regularly struck by passing vehicles due to its narrow construction. These factors have been considered in opting to pursue reconstruction.

8. What is the chance no temporary bridge will be built?

We feel we have a strong case for the benefits of the temporary crossing, however, are not the authority determining the planning application. We do not know how likely the decision to support it will be.

9. Could possible damage to listed buildings prevent the building of a temporary bridge?

The planning authority may decide that this is the case and reject the application.

10. Could 5 M.P.H speed limit be placed on the whole of the temporary crossing?

We do not consider this necessary, or enforceable.



11. Are ECC in agreement to pay all FPC legal costs including the £4900 fee for deregistration of the Green?

Yes

12. We would like to understand what will happen to the flumes, coferdams and properties upstream if the pond and river should flood whilst work is taking place. there needs to be a fully rehearsed contingency plan in place that is shared between the contractor and the PC

The river fluming is still in design. The design will ensure that flooding of upstream properties does not occur as a consequence of the measures to control the river flows. There will be a management plan in place during the work which will include contingency planning for use in the event of a flood event.

13. Will the business all receive regular correspondence on when the bridge works will commence?

Yes, once we have agreed the programme for the design, regular parish, business and community updates will be published.

14. Archaeological requirements needed?

We intend to explore the need for archaeological digs. At tender, there were two defined hold points in the scheme for archaeological investigations. However, pending the planning response, we will consider further investigations within the village green areas.

We employed an Archaeologist during previous excavations at the bridge, findings were given to the Guild Hall Museum following this work. A similar approach will be followed.

15. Environmental impact assessment on the pond down by the EA and a copy sent to the PC.

Please explain this point. All environmental impact assessments affecting Parish Council property will be shared.

16. Can we have the current estimated timing for the project. i.e. start date and end date but also timing of the steps that need to be gone through before then, tendering, planning approval etc.

Yes, we will share this shortly.

17. Given that p7 of the Essex CC preapplication advice does not support a temporary bridge because of the risk of harm to historic buildings but that Essex Highways on p8 of their preapplication advice are in support of a temporary bridge, what is the likely outcome?

Refer to question 8 and its response.



18. The recent plans provided show a temporary bridge coming across the middle of the pond in a straight line down Church Hill. This removes the current natural chicane effect of the bends of the road. I understand traffic lights are planned for one way crossing of the bridge but when green, what other mitigations are in place to reduce the speed of traffic?

As you have stated, the essence of the temporary pond crossing is to maintain the single lane flow of traffic over the road in a similar fashion to that of the existing bridge.

However, with the removal of the bend and hump of the existing bridge, it is important that the speed of traffic is controlled as it uses the temporary crossing. And whilst various method of speed reduction / traffic calming have been considered, the best solution is the use of “intelligent” traffic signals, with the distance between the signals being kept to a minimum (as this will give the maximum flow of vehicles, with the minimum delay / queues).

These intelligent signals should ensure that approaching traffic only see a red light, which causes them to slow down, which then changes to green as they near the signals (as long as nothing is coming the other way) and then back to red once the vehicles have gone. These signals will also adjust the amount of green time to suit the volume of traffic travelling in each direction.

19. The current drawings take the road incredibly close to Bridge House and Brick House. I understand that Highways commissioned an independent surveyor who produced a report stating the potential for damage to these buildings. The proposed route would appear to represent a risk to pedestrians as well as the houses themselves and possibly the occupants. In 2015 a map proposing a different route for the temporary bridge was talked about. This looks far safer for pedestrians, for the historic buildings and has a slight curve which should slow traffic a little. Why is this route not being proposed? It looks a much better solution.

The temporary carriageway running past Brick House shall be a minimum of 3.3m away from the railings of the property, this will widen as the road travels west. This is substantially further away from the road than is already experienced by properties further up Church Hill.

With respect to pedestrians, the width available to pedestrian will be similar to that currently available along Bridge Street, once parked cars are considered. However, there will be barriers segregating the public from the vehicles which will also offer protection.

With respect to the arrangement shown on Drg. No. BR0026-00-0913 (the 2015 drawing referenced). This was an early arrangement which had not benefited from the fine tuning that the current proposal has. Sight lines and current standards were not considered in depth for instance and fell short of standard for vehicles driving West from Church Hill. This earlier arrangement would have required the widening of the traffic signals to include the B1057 from the North, requiring three- way signals and resulting in longer queues and greater loss of parking for the nearby residents. In addition to these factors, the level differences would have required a higher carriageway level crossing of the pond which would not be consented to by the Environment Agency. They have indicated that higher levels could increase potential flood risk. As with many things, the design of the temporary crossing of the pond has been reviewed in the time since the earlier outlines were prepared with a view to improving end user safety. We consider the current arrangement to be a well-considered proposal which offers the safest solution to the problem of closing the road above the existing Finchingfield bridge.



20. Have any studies been done measuring traffic volumes to gauge likely build up of traffic either side of the bridge at different times of the day, but specifically at peak times? If southbound traffic is backed up the hill, is northbound traffic going to be able to get through without a lot of reversing involved? Difficult to reverse a lorry if you've got other vehicles behind you.

Our designers have reviewed Traffic data from 2015 and 2021, these have indicated that the signals will work. The available width for traffic at Church Hill is limited, the signals will be set to limit queues on Church Hill.

21. The desire of the local community seems very much in support of a temporary bridge. In the event however that eventually it was decided a temporary bridge would not be provided, that presumably would save quite a bit of money on the project. Is there any mechanism available for using that to grant fund the local business that suffer reduced turnover?

Taken from FAQ's 2020 Q13 [online](#).

We will work with local stakeholders to try to minimise the impact on businesses and residents by completing the work without delays. However, when a highway authority or statutory undertaker carries out works under its statutory powers of duties, it is not liable to pay compensation for loss of trade. Traders have no right to any particular level of passing trade: business may fluctuate for a number of reasons.

Highway works benefit the whole community, including businesses and others who, while they might be adversely affected in the short term, will benefit in the long term. The highways authority has a statutory obligation to maintain the highway to a reasonable standard for the benefit of all road users.

22. With the extra width of the new bridge will there be a design on the ground so that people and cyclists don't travel on that. ie stones in the concrete to act as a deterrent?

We are currently considering the introduction of granite setts on the verges.

Photograph below is similar in appearance to our intention. The surface will be uneven and the mortar joints recessed as shown.



23. Will there be a weight limit on the temporary bridge?

No. However, during our meeting there was significant discussion/concern raised by the PC regarding the large vehicles which pass through the village and that this might become more of a problem during the



scheme. We have agreed to consider the viability of diverting large vehicles away from the site, however note that this may not be enforceable and could have wider impacts than the large through traffic mentioned.

24. What is the temporary bridge made up of?

The temporary crossing of the pond will feature a series of pipes with road construction above them. The solution has been selected to minimise the height of the road level, reducing flood risk.

25. We need agreement that when the temporary bridge is removed within the agreed period to be certain that the completion deadlines are met and that the temporary bridge does not become a semi-permeant structure like Petches Bridge became.

The temporary crossing of the pond and approach roads will be removed once the road above the permanent bridge has been opened.

26. We must also stipulate that the greens are restored to their original state using the topsoil and turf that already exists on each site.

We have considered different options with regards the Greens, core amongst this is their appearance and availability for use following the work. We have already investigated and identified the species of grass within the Greens and are planning to further investigate with a view of growing new turf of site.

We had considered lifting the existing turf, caring for it whilst the works are underway and re-lifting, however it was not considered viable. The concern being that the turf would not survive lifting for the second time.

We currently plan to replace all affected turf to the design specification and will be discussing with the Parish Council whether to widen this to include the whole of the Green west of the pond. Noted in the meeting that a view from the PC would be to see how it looks and take a view on the situation.

27. Are you also corresponding with other local PCs ie Wethersfield and Great Bardfield as these villages will be affected by the works.

We will be. Once we go live with the coming web update, letters to the Finchingfield Parish, we will then write to the other nearby parishes.

