

Ixworth Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of Ixworth Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 17th April 2025 at 7.00pm at Ixworth SET School

Present were Cllr Ben Lord, Chairman of the Parish Council, D Cllr John Griffiths MBE, Mrs Mandy Adlington, Proper Officer of the Council, and ten residents.

Also present were representatives from Green Ixworth, Ixworth History Recorder, and Ixworth Village Hall.

The role of clerk for the purpose of recording the minutes of the meeting be undertaken by Mandy Adlington.

Minutes

After a small amendment to the date, the minutes were duly signed as a true record of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 19th April 2023.

Chairman's Report

Good evening everyone and welcome to the 2024 Ixworth Annual Parish Meeting hosted by the Parish Council.

Tonight's proceedings are relatively informal since this is not a parish council meeting where the formality provides the opportunity for accountability and provide an opportunity to not only hear what's going on within the various tiers of local government but also what is going on amongst the different community groups within the village.

On the subject of local government, I'd like to begin by thanking both our County Councillor, Joanna Spicer, and District Councillor John Griffiths for their collaborative efforts of support to both the Parish Council as well as to the wider Ixworth community.

Furthermore, we as Parish Councillors could not do what we do without the support and backup on a vast range of matters offered by our Clerk, Mandy Adlington so my thanks go to her as well for the great job she does for the Parish Council and indeed for the community as a whole.

The past twelve months have continued to bring a variety of issues for the Parish Council and I'll now give a synopsis of what we have been getting involved and dealing with:

- **Changes within the Parish Council**

Following on from the election almost a year ago, we've once again experienced some changes within the Parish Council. Shortly after co-opting two new members in November and welcoming John Rowe and Tony Molloy to the Parish Council, we were very sorry to lose Sophia Wilson who had been the longstanding Parish Councillor for Ixworth Thorpe for more than 20 years. The Parish Council have once more been given the ability to co-opt a new member to this vacancy. Since this is the seat for Ixworth Thorpe, we are actively pursuing the electorate of Ixworth Thorpe by writing to them and inviting nominations. If that does not yield a willing candidate for co-option, it is quite possible that someone from Ixworth could be co-opted into this seat. If anyone is interested to know more on this, myself or Mandy are available to talk to.

- **Neighbourhood Plan**

Having undertaken a major public consultation for our Neighbourhood Plan last Summer, we are now entering the final stages of the plan's evolution with it being submitted to West Suffolk Council and the National Planning Inspectorate for scrutiny and examination. Once this is completed, the Neighbourhood Plan will then go forward to a long-awaited referendum which we hope will be early Autumn. This has been a long time coming but with the emergence of the West Suffolk Local Plan will, its hoped, be worth the enormous amount of time and effort taken by a number of people throughout the process to help shape the future development of Ixworth for the next 15 or so years.

- **Hempyard Bridge**

Much was said on this last year and we are pleased thanks to the evolution of the Hempyard Bridge

Working Group co-ordinated by County Councillor Joanna Spicer that works will begin on repairing and restoring this bridge of huge historical importance in early July 2024. Unfortunately, a diversion to the areas affected by the footpath closure has not been able to be secured but we look forward to the footpath's reopening upon this work being completed in the Autumn.

- **Additional Community Defibrillator**

Thanks to some contributory grants from District Councillor John Griffiths alongside our own funding streams, we were pleased to work together with Suffolk Fire & Rescue Service to facilitate the provision of an additional community defibrillator to be housed at the Fire and Police Station. This was unveiled last week together with myself and the Chief Fire Officer and the whole crew here in Ixworth are really pleased to raise awareness of its existence and vital these pieces of equipment are in a life-threatening situation. Much like the defibrillators at the Village Hall and at Mulley's, they are accessible in the appropriate circumstances by a code from ambulance control during a 999 call.

- **Roundabout Cleanliness**

For quite a few years now, the Parish Council have been actively lobbying Suffolk County Council as to the condition of our roundabouts and in particular, Mulley's Roundabout which is considered to be one of the main gateway's into Ixworth yet has been in a poor cosmetic condition for some time. After quite some protracted correspondence and negotiations, I am pleased to confirm the Parish Council have entered into an agreement with Marketing Force – the contractor for roundabout sponsorship – where over the next year or so, we will see an array of signage promoting the village (and its hoped this will extend to village businesses in due course) as well as proper landscaping of the roundabout with, for next year, spring planting. This particular project does demonstrate once more that, even if it takes years to resolve, the Parish Council does listen to what is brought to its attention and endeavours to do what it can to provide a solution and overcome issues.

- **Christmas Commemorations**

The Parish Council was very pleased to once more kick off Christmas celebrations in the village with a tree lights switch-on event held on 1st December and organised in the main by Cllr Vicky Sutton. This is the second time the Parish Council have held this and has proven to be a popular event. On the basis of the warm encouragement and feedback received, its intended to hold this once again to kick start this year's festive period.

- **Budget**

As with all local authorities, we continue to endure the various measures of mounting pressures on public services. Although, thanks to our financial prudence leading us to have a good level of financial reserves, the Parish Council has endured some increases to costs for the coming year and it was with reluctance that we had to increase our share of the council tax precept by approx. 5% for 2024/25. We always strive to provide quality services and we made this decision on the basis that it would not jeopardise what the community has become accustomed to in years gone by. One of our significant budget contributions in the last couple of years has been to the evolution of a youth club in the village provided by the Jiggins Memorial Trust which has been setup in response to a call for youth-related services to be provided within the village. A further important part of budget encompasses the cemetery in Crown Lane and I would like to record my thanks to our Cemetery Caretaker, Rob and to Jose Mendez Acosta who is our new contractor making a hugely positive impact on the ongoing ground maintenance of both our play area and the cemetery.

- **JayNic – Stanton**

For the last couple of years, the Parish Council have been a strong lobbying voice for the proposed

significant commercial development at Shepherd's Grove in Stanton. The extent of plans proposed forecast several hundred HGV's up and down our bypass on a daily basis. Alongside a number of other significant issues, where benefits were literally limited to the immediate vicinity of the proposed development and Stanton village itself, the Parish Council were a leading objector to this alongside other neighbouring parishes. We were delighted that two weeks ago, West Suffolk Council formally objected to this application and very much hope that more appropriately scaled developments are brought forward for consideration that are proportionate in size to the local area.

- **The year ahead.**

The coming year will no doubt see us handle, intervene or lobby on issues that have become somewhat thematic for a Parish Council. Following last year's Parish Council elections, the Parish Council have formulated a plan on what it hopes to achieve during this term until 2027. As each year passes, and with local development plans emerging in varying dimensions, it is quite clear that we will have to be braced for impact on planning applications that will be forthcoming for some of the most significant development Ixworth will have seen for a generation. We don't know exactly when that will be but we assure the community we stand ready to look over every detail and listen to every representation that the community brings to us in this respect ensuring that Ixworth's voice is heard loud and clear at whatever level it needs to be projected to.

Aside from this, we have plans afoot to continue enhancing the Play Area on the village green where a small working group has been established to take care of this facility in the village.

And aside from our own efforts, we continue to watch on, and where possible support, a litany of projects, events and organisations who continue to prosper within the community. We will no doubt be hearing more on some of those things reports from those attending here this evening.

It doesn't stop there though. Whilst we as Parish Council have interests and ideas on how to make Ixworth a better community and place for us all to live in, we always welcome any other ideas, issues or are happy to hear of any reflections that you, the residents may have. Some of them may be possible for us to explore and work through, others may not; there's no guarantees but if there are things you want to see addressed, be it positive or negative, please do come and reach out to us.

As I bring my report for this year to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on the Parish Council for the continued support to leading the community by example on a variety of matters; some of which you have heard of this evening. Each of us do what we do voluntarily at what feels a thankless task at times, in the hope that we make a positive difference in enriching our community. Thank you once again for being here this evening.

Report from District Councillor John Griffiths

D Cllr Griffiths thanked the Parish Council for their work throughout the year including all councillors, the work of the Proper Officer, Mandy, and the active Chairman, Cllr Lord. In addition, D Cllr Griffiths thanked the Community and all the organisations working tirelessly in his ward. Their communication, hard work and way they face the ever-present challenges of volunteering is excellent.

D Cllr Griffiths mentioned he is no longer leader of West Suffolk Council and it is now being run by a coalition who are finding their way and doing good for the community.

I have granted, through the locality budget, the following grants for projects in Ixworth, all of which I am delighted to hear have been delivered excellently for all to enjoy.

Date	Organisation	Project	Amount
5 December 2022	Green Ixworth	Local heat campaign	£600.00

14 February 2023	Ixworth Primary Toddler Group	Picnic Shed	£500.00
15 March 2023	Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council	Community defibrillator for Ixworth	£669.33
17 March 2023	Jiggens Memorial Hall	Kings Coronation Celebration event	£669.33
17 March 2023	Jiggens Memorial Hall	Improvements to the village hall	£669.33
12 July 2023	Wild Heritage Suffolk CIC	Let it Grow project	£333.00
6 December 2023	Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council	Christmas Lights Project	£500.00
29 January 2024	Jiggens Memorial Village Hall	Ixworth Events Christmas Fayre	£1,000.00
26 March 2024	Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council	St Mary's Church Tree Project	£500.00

I have a locality budget each year to assist any community groups, if your group may need assistance please contact me in the email below.

Once again thank you for coming along and if you need to contact me my email is –

john.griffiths@westsuffolk.gov.uk

C Cllr held a short question and answer session. One resident wished to discuss the reduction of bus services, including the cut of the service in and out of Ipswich. D Cllr Griffiths believes there had been a grant from the County Council to preserve rural bus routes and agreed to liaise with the County Councillor to see what could be done. He reassured the resident and all present that maintaining transport links is something both he and C Cllr Spicer are very passionate about.

A second resident asked if D Cllr Griffiths knew the whereabouts of a few pieces of decoration around the district, including some metal trees that had been in Bury St Edmunds and a metal archway that had been in place in the Village Hall until recycling lorries necessitated its removal. D Cllr Griffiths remembered the pieces the resident referred to but was unaware of their current locations. He will, however, make enquiries and let the resident know if he had any luck tracking them down.

Report from County Councillor Joanna Spicer (via email)

I am sorry to be sending my apologies for the meeting tonight. Firstly I would like to thank the chairman, members and clerk of Ixworth Parish Council for inviting me to attend their meetings over the last year. I pay tribute to the late David Reeve for his many years serving as chairman and a member of the parish council.

The county council has had a challenging year as we meet our statutory responsibilities caring for vulnerable older people, those with disabilities, children, special education and young people. About 79% of our total annual expenditure is on these services which are provided 365 days a year.

This year we have had to make difficult decisions over the level of council tax and we are making some significant savings involving service cuts and reducing staff numbers. Meanwhile we continue to ensure we have adequate budgets for the fire and rescue service, highways, trading standards, the environment and climate change, school support and libraries. The total budget for 2024-25 is an increase of 8.6% to £752.8million.

Since October 2023 the council has had a new contract for highway services with Milestone and we are cautiously pleased with how repairs and resurfacing is progressing.

We are currently consulting on the proposal from Government for a “Devolution Deal” for Suffolk which will bring investment in Suffolk of £480million over the next 30 years. In return for this new money and devolved decision making we will be required to have a directly elected leader of the county council from May 2025.

There have been several county council matters affecting Ixworth over the year. I am pleased to at last report that the repairs to Hempyard Bridge will start this July and preparation work has commenced. Inevitably this will mean a temporary closure of the bridleway there but hopefully the work will not be more than 2-3 months.

I have been working with the parish council to make progress with tidying up both roundabouts on the bypass and also in preparation for the closure of the A1088 at Stowlangtoft for bridge repairs in the summer. I have supported the parish council with the emerging Neighbourhood Plan especially in county council service matters (highways, the environment, schools and footpaths)

Joanna Spicer,
Councillor, Joanna.spicer@suffolk.gov.uk

County

The following reports were received by community groups within the Parish

Green Ixworth

Mr Roger Spiller gave the following report –

Climate change continues to threaten our world, in line with all predictions.

Water

Closer to home, in the UK it has been the wettest 18 months on record causing real damage and significant change. In addition, due to the extremes of heat, hosepipe bans are also on the horizon. These two facts in conjunction shows that our climate is changing to extremes of weather like we have never know before.

In our own area, we remain lucky in the Anglian Water have been working on halving the amount of water they use as well working on the River Black Bourn, which has been the subject of a river restoration project over the last couple of years.

Water concerns remain high in Green Ixworth's priority list as, despite these efforts from Anglian Water, they are shortly going to need to use more water as we move into summer and experience those extreme dry periods, perhaps undoing the good work they have managed to achieve. They are, however, investing in new supply lines to ensure robust supply chains to all new builds in the area.

With these concerns in mind, Green Ixworth intend to run a campaign supporting residents to use water more efficiently and thoughtfully in their homes to lessen the impact on the water supply and preserve natural rivers.

Other

Mr Spiller reported Matt Hancock MP had suggested the A143 becomes designated as part of the strategic road network. Many issues can arise from extra traffic in a rural area such as Ixworth including air pollution.

Some land near Mulleys yard has been having some soil dumped in the area, which is being cleared away but no waste licence can be found for the land owner. A gate has now been installed yet no planning application has been seen to allow for access to the main road in that location. Mr Spiller will be attending Pakenham Parish Council to discuss with them as it sits in their Parish.

Green Ixworth would also like to see some work done in Ixworth Parish around access to the countryside with Public Rights of Way being formalised and protected. The organisation intends to liaise with the Parish Council, the County Council and West Suffolk Council where needed.

Mr Spiller also added that it was a pleasure to see the three government bodies working so well together.

Ixworth History Recorder

Mrs Sue Spiller gave the following report;

At the present time, I am seriously thinking about whether or not to continue as the History Recorder for Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe. Suffolk County Council's short-sighted decision to close the Record Office in Bury St Edmunds and move our local records to The Hold in Ipswich will make it exceedingly difficult for me to access local history records and carry out research in the future.

The annual report on Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe for 2022 which I wrote last year included reports from 25 village organisations, and I am extremely grateful to everyone who contributed. The resultant 47-page report reveals just how much goes on in Ixworth and was highly praised by Suffolk Local History Council.

My reports for the last five years are currently available in West Suffolk Archives, but after the closure, they will be relocated to The Hold in Ipswich. If you wish to view them, you will need to book an appointment a week in advance and order the items using the correct reference numbers, which could be a problem because the chances are that it will not have been catalogued since fewer than half of the archives have been catalogued so far.

Fortunately, in Ixworth, we still have a library, so I can deposit a second copy of my report there, but not all history recorders are so lucky.

In addition to writing my annual report last year, I wrote articles for *Ixworth Newsletter* and *Ixworth Magazine*, and for a local history journal called *Suffolk Review*.

I wrote and delivered a *Welcome to Ixworth* pack to around 20 new residents in Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe and am happy to deliver a copy to any newcomers who have been missed.

I have sold out of the 100 copies of the history of *The Pykkerell*, but *Talk and Teas*, the history of Ixworth WI, has not sold well and my efforts to restart Ixworth WI were unsuccessful. I am very grateful to Ixworth Association for the grant towards the publication of these books.

My first book, *Bertuna's Children*, the history of Great Barton School, has sold really well and I also receive fees every time a copy is borrowed from a library.

My latest project involves the history of libraries in Bury St Edmunds, and I am working hard to carry out my research in the Bury Record Office before all of the information is relocated to Ipswich.

I have a collection of documents and small items relating to the history of Ixworth which I had intended to donate to West Suffolk Archives when I retire as the History Recorder but now I don't know what I will do with them.

I am sorry to sound so negative, but as you can tell, I am very angry about the closure of Bury Record Office. I feel passionately about local history and sad that future generations in West Suffolk will be unable to benefit from having a local record office. Whilst talking to local residents in January about the proposed closure of the Bury Record Office, I was very heartened to hear so many stories from people who had visited it in the past and had benefited from it. The strength of local feeling against the closure was evident in the fact that around 100 people in Ixworth signed the petition asking Suffolk County Council to rescind the decision, but unfortunately we live in a county where the county councillors are more concerned about party politics than about local history.

If anyone would be interested in taking on the role of History Recorder for Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe or knows of anyone else who might be, then please contact me. The only obligation is to write the annual report. Apart from that, it is up to you.

Sue Spiller (History Recorder for Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe)

Following this report, Cllr Lord wished to add his personal feelings that Mrs Spiller's contributions as our History Recorder were very appreciated and her work was much admired. He echoed her concerns around the archives loss but wished Mrs Spiller to know her own reports are wonderfully unique, personal to the village and hoped she would continue so the Parish can still enjoy them year on year.

D Cllr Griffiths wished to echo Cllr Lord's comments, thanking Mrs Spiller for her years of service as History Recorder and hoped the archives decision would not deter her as Mrs Spiller's abilities were invaluable to the community.

Ixworth Patients Association (via email)

The following report was submitted by email to the Clerk

Ixworth Patients' Association is a registered charity - formed in 1986. The the aim is to benefit the health and wellbeing of patients registered with Ixworth Surgery by:

1. Providing a **transport service** to enable patients who would otherwise find it difficult to attend appointments.
2. Arranging **educational events** on relevant aspects of health and wellbeing.
3. Funding **initiatives** that would not otherwise be provided by the statutory authorities.

The transport service is run by volunteers who take some 20 patients every week to and from appointments. A small donation is expected to cover expenses. We are always seeking volunteers to help - so don't hesitate to talk to the Practice Manager Josh Williams.

The GPs are very busy and time to prepare and run educational sessions has dwindled. The Association has been talking to the other GP Practices in our Primary Care Network (Botesdale, Woolpit and Stanton) to organise webinars on health topics. Sessions on heart disease and dementia support were well attended but hindered by data protection legislation in contacting patients who might have been interested.

Using the information from Suffolk Public Health on their place-based needs analysis, a number of initiatives were identified that the Association might usefully address. Hypertension is high in our area and so the Association decided to help fund the Health Kiosk in the Surgery to measure blood-pressure and calculate BMI. Atrial Fibrillation monitors are being proposed. (The place-based needs also showed asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (bronchitis & emphysema) are relatively high compared to the rest of Suffolk - and cancer detection and prompt treatment).

Volunteers from the Association also helped conduct a survey of patient satisfaction with the services offered by the Surgery. The survey was part of a Suffolk-wide analysis of how easy (or not) it is to book appointments with GP Practices. Ixworth Surgery are in the process of installing a new phone-system with call-back facilities and hiring a "care navigator" to assist the triaging of requests to the relevant Doctor, Nurse Practitioner, Pharmacist, Physio or Mental Health Counsellor.

It is the policy of the Surgery that when a person reaches sixteen-years old they become responsible for their own medical record. They can make their own appointments and decisions about their care. Health professionals are no longer allowed to release medical information to their parents or guardians without written consent. To help young people, a guide to the wide range of health and wellbeing services that are available in our area has been documented in a booklet @16. A social media version is being planned.

The Association also continues to support the "*Let it Grow*" gardening sessions at Langham Walled Garden to support those with depression and anxiety; and the "*Healthy Together*" programme to assist people with long term mental health issues to get regular check-ups.

In the future it has been suggested the Association might run workshops for patients on how to use the NHS App on their smart phone?

If you would like to know more about the activities of the Association please don't hesitate to contact the Surgery. You are welcome to come to the next meeting in the Surgery **14.00 8th May**.

Jiggins Memorial Village Hall & Playing Fields

Mr Stephen Mann gave the following report;

The Jiggins Trust is currently in the process of updating its financial organisation with new software and a new accountant so a full report isn't available at present but all is well. They will be ready in time for the Jiggins Trust AGM, which will be advertised in due course.

The Youth Club has been renamed as the Youth Junction with the age limit having been lowered slightly. The membership continues to go from strength to strength.

In the coming year, the Jiggins Trust intends to make better use of the excellent green space they have. Current suggestions include a new football club but it's important not to build on the green space or exclude anyone else so this will take time to get right.

It's also possible there may be some changes to the recycling provision from the District Council, which may lead to changes to the recycling at the Village Hall but these will not be instant.

Mr Mann announced he will be standing down as chairman of the Jiggins Trust and wished all well.

The Royal British Legion Ixworth & District Branch

The following report was received from The Royal British Legion Ixworth & District Branch;

The past year has been quite an active one for our branch. Shortly after these proceedings last year, we were delighted to be a part of the village's commemorations for the Platinum Jubilee. This included us hosting a lighting of our beacon as part of a sunset ceremony that was replicated across the country. At sunset on 2nd June (69 years to the day following the coronation of Her Majesty The Queen), the beacon was lit by our President – Dr John Cannon and was attended by around 200 residents. On the Sunday of the extended bank holiday weekend, the branch participated in a civic parade and church service of thanksgiving for Her Majesty The Queen.

Expecting that the next civic outing for our branch would come as has been tradition since 1921 at Remembrancetide, we very much played our part in the events that surrounded the death of our Patron – Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, just 95 days later. Other than the scouting movement, Her Late Majesty was only patron of one other organisation for the entirety of her reign that being the RBL. Our Branch's Union Standard was provided to the Church as part of the civic protocol in Operation London Bridge. We also held a special Remembrance service in tribute to The Queen on the Friday before her state funeral which included lying a Poppy wreath in her memory. For the Proclamation of His Majesty King Charles III, in the absence of a proclamation ceremony occurring within the branch's patch, our Branch Standard was deployed to a proclamation ceremony in Framlingham. The RBL's National Festival of Remembrance, attended by representatives of our Branch and in the presence of The King just two months after the death of the Queen very proudly paid tribute to the support given by The Queen over 70 years to the RBL. As of yet, we await to hear news of who will succeed Her Late Majesty as patron.

Ordinarily, many people generally associated themselves with "the Legion" during the Poppy Appeal and Remembrancetide each Autumn. However, whilst that maybe when things are most prominent in the public's minds, our work goes on all year round – and Remembrance is never confined to just a seasonal two-week window each year.

Membership of our branch remains healthy compared with our neighbouring county branches with approximately 50 members. Many continue to think that a criteria for membership is that you have had to be serving or have served within the armed forces. Whilst that historically was a criteria, that has not been the case for many years, and we would therefore strongly encourage anyone who would like to support the legion on a local branch level to get in touch where we can signpost you to becoming a member. As a branch, we meet on the last Thursday of every month in the Greyhound from 7:30pm.

We have once again held our Winter Games night tournament – a programme of pub games where neighbouring branches come along and compete in a series of friendly games that shall culminate in a social presentation evening next week. Many of our branch members, some of which have included veterans of the armed forces living in the village, have done a fantastic job in renovating the telephone kiosk in Stow Road. We're quite keen to get some ideas from the community on what the telephone kiosk could be used for now that would be different to what other communities have used theirs for. So far, we've not received much by way of suggestion but remain very open to hear of any novel ideas that we could consider as to a future use.

2022 saw the return of the Poppy Appeal to full strength following the pause and interruption caused by the pandemic. Co-ordinated with grateful thanks to Maxine Kasicki, and with the return of doorstep collection, our branch contributed to £3,992.27 to last year's Poppy Appeal – a considerable increase on what was raised during COVID.

In recent years, Remembrance has had a particular following in the village with swells of people gathering along the High Street and attending the church service on Remembrance Sunday. Last year saw that return to its pre-pandemic extent and saw standing room only in church.

Thank you to everyone across the community for their continued support and we hope to meet more of you and welcome any of you who might like to become members in due course.

Community Recognition Awards

One nomination had been received but it was not yet clear if the nominee wished to accept the award. If they should do so, this will be announced in due course.

Ixworth Association

Before closing the meeting, Cllr Lord wished to highlight the work of the Ixworth Association and the hard work they do producing the Newsletter. Only £2 a year to have it delivered is incredibly good value and he encouraged all to support the magazine.

Paul Cook, representing the association, wished to thank Cllr Lord for his support and mentioned that revenue was down slightly, which may lead to changes in how the magazine is produced.

With no further business the meeting closed at 8.10pm.

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Signed

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Date