

IXWORTH & IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Councillor Ben Lord

Clerk: Claire Usher

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Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 11th March 2026
At Ixworth Village Hall

Councillors Present: Ben Lord (Chairman), Terry Lilley, Stephen Mann, Tony Molloy, Kate Rees and John Rowe

Others in attendance: Claire Usher (Clerk) and County Councillor Joanna Spicer and 4 members of the public.

110326/01 **Apologies for absence:** Sam Linton. All Councillors accepted the apology for absence.

110326/02 Declarations of Interest (DoI): None

Dispensation: Councillors noted no requests had been received and none were requested at the meeting.

110326/03 Minutes of previous meeting: All Councillors resolved to accept the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11th February 2026 as a true reflection of the decisions made.

Public Forum:

110326/04 The Chairman welcomed Mike Jones to the meeting. Mike attended to request financial support from the Parish Council for the Ixworth Youth Junction. He explained that the youth club is well attended by children from the village and the surrounding areas. The club provides a wide range of activities for young people aged 11 to 16 once a week, as well as support for their families.

Mike informed Councillors that they are currently applying for National Lottery funding and have already received financial contributions from Bardwell Parish Council and Thurston Parish Council. He was requesting £5,000 per year for the next three years from the Parish Council. The Chairman thanked Mike for attending the meeting.

Roger Spiller reported that the Community Action Group was due to formulate a plan of works shortly. As regards the development by Persimmon, Green Ixworth would be submitting their response to West Suffolk Council. The

response would include that the slight reduction in the number of houses was still causing a high density of housing at the southern end of the site, concerns with drainage, footpaths and proposed bridleways. He would copy his response to the Parish Council.

110326/05 **County Councillor Report:** Cllr Spicer informed Councillors that this would be her final meeting with the Parish Council, as she had decided not to stand as a County Councillor in the forthcoming County Council elections in May. The Chairman thanked Joanna for her support, noting that the Parish Council has been extremely fortunate to have such a dedicated County Councillor. She will be greatly missed. Joanna fully deserves our admiration and gratitude for all she has accomplished for the Parish Council.

Cllr Spicer would like to arrange a meeting with the Chairman and Clerk to hand over paperwork that would be extremely useful to the Parish Council.

Cllr Spicer informed Councillors that she was attending a meeting tomorrow with Suffolk County Council Highways to discuss the bridge over the A143. She was unhappy to see that the revised plans for the development by Persimmon were continuing to propose too many houses on this site, which was not in line with the District's Local Plan. Cllr Spicer was pleased that a meeting had taken place with Sizewell C in connection with the Pakenham Fen and was extremely happy to report that agreement had been reached to install a dry path across the site.

District Councillor Report: District Cllr John Griffiths had sent his apologies.

Planning:

110326/06 DC/25/0666/HYB – Hybrid Planning Application – Full application for the provision of 187 dwellings, access, public open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure and outline planning application (means of access to be considered) provision of 2.2 hectare site for primary school – Land off Crown Lane

Cllr Lord reported that the application continued to be for too many houses which is not supported by the District Council's Local Plan, the lack of 106 contributions and the footbridge still continued to be an area of concern. Following the Parish Council's last meeting the Clerk had obtained land registry plans that indicated that the land behind the current cemetery was owned by Persimmon which is against the information supplied by Persimmon.

The Chairman proposed to object to this planning application, which was seconded by Cllr Rees and supported by all Councillors for the following reasons:

Failure to Comply with Site Allocation Policy – Absence of Masterplan

The continued absence of a comprehensive masterplan represents a clear failure to comply with the requirements of the site allocation policy. A masterplan is not a discretionary document; it is a fundamental policy mechanism intended to ensure that the form, quantum and infrastructure requirements of development are properly coordinated and assessed. In its absence, it is not possible to conclude that the development has been planned in a coherent or policy-compliant manner. The application is therefore premature and fails to provide a sound basis for determination.

Overdevelopment Relative to Allocation

Notwithstanding the reduction of 28 dwellings (approximately 15%), the proposal continues to exceed the site allocation by approximately 29%. The Parish Council considers this to be a fundamental issue. An adopted Local Plan is intended to provide certainty, transparency and a plan-led basis for growth.

The housing numbers set out within site allocation policies are not arbitrary; they are the product of strategic assessment, public examination and consultation. If proposals are then permitted to exceed those allocations by such a significant margin without clear and compelling justification, the value and authority of the Local Plan are materially diminished. To allow this degree of overdevelopment would send an entirely wrong signal to local communities and would seriously undermine public confidence in the integrity of the development plan process. It would also weaken the strategic purpose of having an adopted Local Plan at all, if the scale of development identified through that process can be so readily exceeded.

No robust justification has been provided to support this level of overdevelopment, nor has it been demonstrated that the increased quantum can be accommodated without resulting in unacceptable impacts on infrastructure, highway safety, or local services. The proposal therefore conflicts with the spatial strategy and quantum envisaged by the development plan.

Inadequate Access Strategy and Highway Safety Impacts

The proposed reliance on a ghost island junction onto the A1088 remains a critical concern. The junction, granted at appeal, has not been reassessed considering:

materially different traffic flows and congestion patterns, particularly at peak periods;

cumulative development impacts;

and the introduction of additional school-related movements associated with both the proposed primary school and Ixworth High School.

Existing congestion on Walsham Road during school drop-off and pick-up periods is already severe. The proposed spine road is highly likely to function as an informal drop-off point for the high school, given its direct pedestrian

connectivity. This introduces a foreseeable and significant intensification of peak-time traffic using the ghost island junction. The Transport Assessment fails to robustly assess these dynamics. Instead, it relies on assumptions that do not reflect observed conditions or likely behavioural responses. In these circumstances, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed access arrangements would operate safely or efficiently, contrary to the requirements of national policy relating to highway safety and capacity.

Unsound Travel Plan Assumptions

The Residential Travel Plan relies on assumptions that are not evidence-based and are inconsistent with established travel patterns in a rural catchment. The assertion that walking and cycling will be the primary mode of travel to the proposed primary school fails to take account of:

the wide rural catchment served by local schools;

the established reliance on car and bus travel;

and the absence of supporting infrastructure to achieve meaningful modal shift. As such, the Travel Plan cannot be afforded significant weight in its current form and should be revisited using realistic, locally appropriate modelling.

Crown Lane Cemetery Land – Material Consideration

The inclusion of land long identified for the extension of Crown Lane Cemetery represents a significant and unresolved conflict with an established community need. This is not a new or speculative issue. The need for cemetery extension has been clearly expressed by the Parish Council over many years and was well understood by both the former landowner and the applicant. Despite this, the applicant has adopted an increasingly inconsistent position regarding the status and availability of the land in question.

On 22 October 2025, the applicant stated to the Parish Council:

“We discussed the aspiration for a new access for funeral traffic over Scott Road. We have received clarification over the land situation from Persimmon’s land team. The solicitor’s search showed this land as being unregistered. It is logical that it highways land, but not definitive. Persimmon has not obtained a formal plan from West Suffolk Council as works were not proposed in the subject land and a path would be provided to the boundary of the development site in any case, to facilitate pedestrian/cycle access to Scott Road. As such, there remains the challenge of delivering an access where there is no planning policy imperative to do so and could not be secured by the Section 106 Agreement and where a private agreement between Persimmon and the Parish Council would need to be entered-into by a third party. This does not rule out a separate land deal at a future date, and we can discuss this separately from this proposal.”

The Parish Council has since undertaken its own Land Registry searches and established that Persimmon Homes acquired full title to the land in question

from the former landowners on 4 July 2025. In other words, at the time those representations were made to the Parish Council, the applicant had already had full control of the land for more than three months. That evidence fundamentally undermines the credibility of the applicant's position. The Parish Council considers that those representations were, at best, seriously misleading and, at worst, an attempt to dismiss a long-established community need by presenting the matter as uncertain when it was not. Put plainly, the applicant appears to have expected the Parish Council to accept explanations that were contradicted by the title position of the land itself. In planning terms, the established need for cemetery extension is a material consideration. The apparent attempt to subsume this land within the development, without securing its delivery for community use, is unacceptable.

The Parish Council therefore objects in the strongest terms to the inclusion of this land within the application and considers that it should be secured for its intended purpose through a Section 106 obligation. In the absence of such provision, the proposal fails to address a known and longstanding infrastructure requirement.

Failure to Properly Address A143 Footbridge Requirement

The applicant has failed to demonstrate meaningful compliance with the site allocation requirement to assess the feasibility of a pedestrian footbridge over the A143. The approach taken appears to be one of avoidance rather than assessment, with no substantive evidence provided to demonstrate that the bridge is undeliverable. The offer of a landing point alone does not satisfy policy expectations and does not mitigate the severance and safety issues affecting both existing and future residents.

Furthermore, the significant reduction in requested Section 106 contributions—reportedly by 66%—is not proportionate to the modest reduction in dwelling numbers (15%) and raises serious concerns regarding the deliverability of necessary infrastructure. The Parish Council's position is clear: this critical piece of infrastructure must be secured through appropriate developer contributions.

Impact on Healthcare Infrastructure

The application fails to demonstrate that adequate provision has been made to address the cumulative impact on local healthcare services. Given the scale of committed and proposed development within the locality (circa 600 dwellings within a two-mile radius), the absence of robust, deliverable healthcare mitigation is contrary to the requirement to ensure sustainable development supported by adequate infrastructure.

Internal Site Access and Walsham Road Constraints

The proposed use of Walsham Road for bus access raises significant safety and capacity concerns. The road is constrained in width, subject to on-street

parking, and already operates under stress at peak periods. The introduction of additional bus movements serving both schools would materially worsen these conditions. No robust evidence has been provided to demonstrate that this arrangement can operate safely.

Deficiencies in Traffic Survey Data

The traffic surveys underpinning the Transport Assessment are inadequate. Survey periods appear not to include the critical morning peak (07:00–09:00) or align with school drop-off and pick-up times. As such, the assessment fails to capture the most acute traffic conditions affecting the site and surrounding network. This represents a fundamental evidential gap and undermines the reliability of the conclusions drawn.

Lack of Clarity on Footpath Diversion

The application fails to clearly identify the existing footpath along the boundary of Ixworth High School or demonstrate how it is to be diverted. This lack of clarity prevents proper assessment of pedestrian connectivity, safety, and the relationship between the school and proposed residential development.

Incomplete and Insufficient Supporting Information

The Parish Council notes that several statutory consultees have deferred their responses due to insufficient information, while others maintain holding objections. This reinforces the conclusion that the application, as submitted, lacks the level of detail and technical robustness required to enable proper assessment.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, the Parish Council considers that the application:
fails to comply with the development plan;
is not supported by adequate or reliable evidence; and
does not demonstrate that its impacts can be appropriately mitigated.

In its current form, the proposal is therefore unsound.

DC/26/0329/TPO – Tree Preservation order – One Walnut Tree – 3 Saddlers Yard

Councillors were aware that this tree was the only specimen in Ixworth, and the walnut it produced was known as the Ixworth Walnut. The Parish Council supported the application but would like to request that the tree is not felled until later in the year so that the tree can be harvested in the autumn, so to assist in producing some saplings.

Councillors noted that no planning decisions had been taken since the last meeting.

Finance:

110326/07 All Councillors confirmed receipt of the finance report for the period ending 28th February 2026.

110326/08 **Bank Reconciliation** – Councillors received a bank reconciliation report prepared by the Clerk, the Community Account as of 28th February 2026 £4,348.50 the Business Account as of 28th February 2026 £82,798.18, total £87,146.68.

110326/09 **Receipts:** The Clerk confirmed that no receipts had been received.

110326/10 **Payments:** All Councillors resolved to approve the following gross payments by internet banking confirming a full schedule, supported by invoices and receipts, had been received prior to the meeting:

	Payee	Details	£
110326/11	Claire Usher	Clerks Wage	1078.18
110326/12	R Pye	Caretaker Cemetery	164.90
110326/13	HMRC	PAYE	45.67
110326/14	Jiggins Trust	Room Hire	22.00
110226/15	Claire Usher	Clerk Expenses	160.80
110326/16	Jose Mendez Acosta	Cemetery Maintenance	783.74
110326/18	CloudyIT	IT	114.32
110326/19	Wave	Cemetery Water	52.55

110326/20 **Churchyard Maintenance:** The Clerk reported that she had received an email from the Rev'd Karen Burton regarding the wild area of the churchyard. Unfortunately, this was not being maintained as previously advised and was asking if the Parish Council could undertake 2 cuts of the 'wild' area throughout this year. The Clerk reported that she had contacted Jose Acosta to ask for a price to do these two extra cuts and had received a quote for £450.

All Councillors agreed that they would be happy to instruct their current maintenance contractor, Jose, to include these two extra cuts but asked the Clerk if she could negotiate a lower price.

110326/21 **Management Agreement – Jiggins Trust**

Cllr Rowe reported that he had met with Ben Birrell to discuss the agreement. The Jiggins Trust were looking to amend the agreement by increasing the rent for the land that contained the play equipment for use by residents of the village. Ben had initially suggested increasing the rent from £100 to £1000.

Cllr Rowe had advised that £1000 may not be achievable and had suggested £700 per annum for the next 3/5 years. He had also suggested that a new rental agreement be prepared by the Parish Council.

Some Councillors were very unhappy that an increase was being considered for the renting of this piece of land that provided play equipment and exercise equipment for parishioners and felt that as the rent would be coming from the Council's precept, residents were already paying for the provision of this equipment and were fundamentally being taxed to access an area that residents have an automatic right to accessing under the terms in which this area of land was left to the parishioners for recreational purposes. The Parish Council maintains this site and manages the upkeep of all the equipment and questioned what this extra money would be used for.

Only a small section of the play area was currently fenced and felt that the whole site should be fenced to increase safety especially from dogs and dog fouling. The Parish Council had already received a number of concerns from parents of children who use the play area especially around the issues of dog fouling close to play equipment. It was felt that the rent increase proposed should include fencing being installed and paid for by the Jiggins Trust.

It was proposed by Cllr Rowe and seconded by Cllr Lilley that the Parish Council accepts the £700 per annum rent for 5 years and a new rental agreement be prepared by the Parish Council, but the Jiggins Trust provide the necessary fencing around the play area which is currently unfenced. A vote was taken: 4 Councillors were in favour and 2 Councillors against. The decision was carried. It was also agreed that the Clerk obtain a quote for the fencing around the play area taking into consideration, the type of fencing, gate accesses and height of fencing.

110326/22 **Ixworth Youth Junction:**

Councillor Mann declared an interest as a trustee of the Jiggins Trust and left the meeting whilst the matter was discussed.

Councillors had heard from Mike Jones earlier in the meeting and it was felt that £5000 for the next three years was a huge commitment. The Clerk advised that this money had not been included in the Precept for 2026/27 and therefore would have to come from the Council's reserves, of which there was no reserve for this purpose, so therefore the money would have to come from general reserves. It was felt that the Youth Club should be supported and this grant would help the youth club obtain funding from other organisations.

Cllr Molloy expressed concern that the £1 entrance fee per child might be too low and suggested it should be reviewed. However, it was explained that this decision rests with the Youth Club rather than the Parish Council. The Parish

Council recognises the importance of supporting families and providing opportunities that are accessible to all children in the village.

Cllr Lilley proposed to grant £5000 for 2026/27 and this be reviewed annually by the Parish Council. Seconded by Cllr Molloy. 2 Councillors were in favour, 1 abstention. The motion was not carried. Cllr Rees proposed a grant for £5000 for the next two years. Seconded by Cllr Rowe. This was not supported by any other Councillor. Again, it was proposed by Cllr Lilley and seconded by Cllr Molloy that a grant of £5000 for 2026/27 financial year and this be reviewed annually by the Parish Council. All Councillors supported this motion, and it was carried.

110326/23 **Outstanding Actions:** All Councillors had received a copy of the report prior to the meeting.

Item – Play Inspection Report – The wooden train in the children’s play area needed some work and this had been highlighted in the play inspection report. The Council’s Health and Safety Officer, Cllr Lilley, had carried out a risk assessment and it was felt that the train was safe for children. The Clerk was seeking a quote for repairs to the train.

110326/24 **Health & Safety Update:** Cllr Lilley had no further updates.

110326/25 **Chairman’s Report:** The Chairman had met with County Cllr Spicer, the head of the primary school regarding the development by Persimmon and what this means for provision of a primary school.

110326/26 **Councillor’s Reports:** Cllr Rees would like to wish the new owners of The Pykkerell good luck at their imminent reopening. Cllr Molloy asked if the Clerk could circulate the Parish Council’s Emergency Plan.

110326/27 **Correspondence:** The Clerk had no correspondence to report.

110326/28 Any other Council business for information to be noted or for inclusion in a future agenda: None

110326/29 All Councillors noted that the next meeting of the Parish Meeting will be at 7.30pm on Wednesday 8th April 2026 at the Village Hall.

110226/31 The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.45pm

Signed

Date