

Ixworth Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of Ixworth Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 18th May 2022 at 7.00pm at Ixworth Village Hall

Present were Cllr Ben Lord, Chairman of the Parish Council, C Cllr Joanna Spicer, D Cllr John Griffiths & thirty four residents.

Also present were representatives from Ixworth Primary School, Green Ixworth, Ixworth Recorder, Ixworth Patients Association, Rev Karen Burton (St Mary's) Ixworth Village Hall, Ixworth Patients Association, FOIL and GRACE.

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

Minutes

The minutes were duly signed as a true record of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 21st July 2021.

Chairman's Report

Good evening everyone and welcome to the 2022 Ixworth Annual Parish Meeting hosted by the Parish Council.

Tonight's proceedings are relatively informal since this is not a parish council meeting 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 welcoming our County Councillor, Joanna Spicer, and District Councillor John Griffiths and thank them both for the ongoing wealth 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.

Changes within the Parish Council

A variety of changes have occurred within the Parish Council over the past 12 months. A week ago, I was re-elected to serve once more as Chairman having handed the baton of leadership over to Ben Birrell this time last year. Being a Parish Councillor is a thankless task at the best of times, and as Chairman is even more thankless yet is a position of great privilege and is an honour to serve. Ben navigated the Parish Council through various nuances and challenges in that year and on behalf of the community and Parish Council, thank him for his candour and leadership over the past year. In reading Ben's report from this occasion last year, he acknowledged the local elections that had taken place in May 2021 and welcomed the two new Councillors who had been elected out of five candidates vying for the two available seats in what was the most contested election for the Parish Council for some years. Shortly after this in June 2021, a further by-election occurred following the resignation of Terry Lilley who had served as a valued member of the Parish Council for five years. Following that by-election, we were delighted to welcome Clare Black to the ranks who's already making a difference towards the upgrading of our Community Play Area and Platinum Jubilee Commemorations. Shortly after Clare's arrival, we were particularly saddened by the resignation of David Reeve. David has been a stalwart of the Ixworth community for many decades and was a Parish Councillor for some 45 years. Over that time, he served as Chairman and Vice Chairman as well as being an insightful knowledge on a variety of matters. I was particularly grateful of his support for me during my early years as Chairman and he was always hugely encouraging of seeing younger members of our community get involved in breaking the stigma that only elders become Parish Councillors – something we really should strive to aspire to more. In a further vacancy occurring, the Parish Council were able to co-opt a new Councillor to fill this vacancy and we were thrilled to co-opt Kate Rees to the Parish Council last November.

The past twelve months have brought a varying and fulfilling range of issues for the Parish Council and I'll now give a synopsis of what we have been getting involved and dealing with

COVID-19

Over the past few months, we've all seen how various aspects of life are emerging from the COVID pandemic. Ixworth's recovery from COVID has been one of trepidation and caution but met with swarms of optimism and there was no greater test of this than the Christmas Fayre held in early December. After a 20+ year absence from having been a regular fixture in the High Street each December, it was fantastic to see so many parts of the community embrace this event and the opportunity to rekindle with people after all the draconian impositions to our ways of life. Businesses in the High Street are performing well and most community groups of all ages have now restarted with attendance being at the same levels as they were pre-pandemic. The Community Response and Resilience Scheme that was setup by the Parish Council during the early onset of the pandemic was met with fantastic support by organisations and residents who weren't afraid to ask for support alongside those who were willing to support however they could. In my 11 years as a Parish Councillor, I think it's safe to say it remains one

of our greatest achievements – seeing how people of all ages and diversities came together in the name of a single, common cause to help another. Although the scheme was decommissioned within a few months, many people made friendships through connecting volunteers with those in need which is a great tribute to the success of the scheme. In addition to all those who volunteered, I am particularly grateful to the Ixworth Association for their help in publicising the details of the scheme and to Nick Laughton, Stephen Mann and Paul Cook who, alongside myself, helped ‘man the phones’. There was absolutely no blueprint to work from with this scheme yet it performed like a well-oiled slick machine that has already helped towards delivering a new Community Emergency Plan which the Parish Council has recently adopted.

Neighbourhood Plan

Its almost 5 years now since the Parish Council commissioned a Neighbourhood Plan to succeed the Parish Plan that was adopted in 2005. Over the time that Parish Plan existed, Neighbourhood Plans were developed to have greater recognition and power to influence development in local communities. The evolution of our Neighbourhood Plan has taken a number of twist and turns over the time it’s been pieced together and in so many aspects of life, COVID-19 effectively pumped the brakes on its progress. Once the Parish Council were able to recommence its in-person meetings, it was in the Autumn that the Working Group once more convened to restart progressing from the hiatus caused by COVID. A draft of the plan was submitted to West Suffolk Council at the beginning of the year where feedback now has been provided to make some adjustments ahead of the final public consultation before it goes to formal submission and referendum. The Parish Council will ensure that the next public consultation is well publicised as it is critically important residents come and view what’s in the document and give their final opinion on it before the formalities take place. It is widely anticipated that will happen over the course of the Summer and that the referendum will take place in May 2023. Although the plan may be ready ahead of that, it makes sense to hold the vote at the same time as other local elections to maximise the turnout potential and by hosting the same day as local elections ensures that the costs of an election are not solely met by the Parish Council’s ever-limited budget.

Persimmon Homes – Crown Lane

This summer will mark 15 years since Persimmon Homes acquired the first phase of land off Crown Lane for development. In that time, a huge variety of issues have emerged and have to be responded to, at times with some vociferous efforts on our part given the hugely complex issues surrounding infrastructure and access to this development that is unfolding beyond what is in the adopted masterplans and concept statements for this site. With the latest planning application having been withdrawn over a year ago, we have no timescales as to when Persimmon will next make in-roads to developing on this site. Just before Christmas, somewhat of an impromptu exhibition for residents was hosted which was met with considerable concerns by the Parish Council, not least by them seeking to now develop the entirety of the whole site yet they have not completed any purchases of the rest of the site. None of the ambitious timescales that were cited at this event seem to have materialised to anything meaningful and demonstrable and, in close dialogue with planners at West Suffolk Council, the Parish Council are committed to closely monitoring this situation as part of its overwhelming desire to ensure that, whether it be on this or any other site, we see the right development with the right infrastructure mitigations and the right deal for the community delivered.

Hempyard Bridge

Towards the end of last year, and after perhaps five or so years of lobbying, Suffolk County Council announced funding had been secured to restore the ongoing deteriorations of Hempyard Bridge. Having lobbied strongly for this restorative work, the Parish Council have felt entirely compelled to support the planning applications necessary for this to be undertaken. In recognition for the strong lobbying for this long overdue work, the Parish Council also made strong representations following feedback from various members of the community as to how the aesthetic appearance of the bridge may look based on plans submitted. As statutory consultees to planning applications in the village, comments made by the Parish Council are always carefully considered by officers and pleasingly, a revised application was recently consulted upon where the rather ghastly equine barriers have now been removed from the scope of works. The Environment Agency enforces when such work can be undertaken and there is a limited period of approx. 3 months during the summer where this is permitted. Unfortunately, the opposition to the equine barriers have caused further months of delays and it is now believed this work will not be carried out until Summer 2023. We hope that the coming winter will not present too many challenges to deteriorate the bridge’s condition any further.

Village Maintenance

We were pleased to welcome our new “Village Keeper”, John who joined us to help with street cleaning and other village-related maintenance at the beginning of April. John is already showing his keen eagerness in making visible effects to keeping Ixworth clean and tidy and we thank him for the early efforts shown thus far.

S137 Contributions / Locality Budgets

We have continued to make various charitable donations on a case-by-case basis to local charitable efforts, projects and causes from our Section 137 budget and we are always particularly happy to support village causes. Additionally, we thank both John Griffiths and Joanna for various contributions from their locality budgets they have made towards village causes such as the Royal British Legion and the Ixworth Events Committee; without them we may not be lucky enough to boast the amount of facilities, clubs and organisations that we do.

Budget

As with all local authorities, we continue to endure the various measures of mounting pressures on public services. The Parish Council continues to feel that it cannot reduce its budget without jeopardising the quality and level of services that we carry out within the village. The ongoing cost of living crisis that continues to unfold is something that we are also feeling the effects of and is why we had no alternative but to increase our portion of council tax precept for the 2022/23 fiscal year. It's always a decision that is never taken lightly. After all, we are residents before we're Parish Councillors and we're just as affected by the decisions we make as everyone else. We don't like having to take those actions but feel this is the lesser of the two evils when considering how things would be if we start cutting back on service levels that the community continues to expect of us. And as is fundamental to our role as Councillors, we are committed to ensuring we deliver the very best value for money alongside ensuring optimum quality in the work and services carried out.

General Issues

In addition to some of the issues I mentioned earlier, we continue to observe, and receive concerns of a plethora of issues within the village including:

- Adverse Highway Conditions
- Parking Problems / Congestions
- Speeding

Taking each one of those in turn:

- Just like many parts of Suffolk and across the country even, the conditions of our roads continue to be a regular topic of discussion with the County Council. Despite the best of intentions from our County Councillor, we do find ourselves raising the bar in terms of lobbying in ensuring that the concerns brought to us are dealt with in the best possible way. Recently, this has included issues in Chalk Lane and Street Farm Lane which remain ongoing. Occasionally, this can get quite contextually detailed as has been experienced in the ongoing safety concerns of the A1088 and where we hope to have some meaningful dialogue very shortly with heads of Highways to deal with the ongoing difficulties along this stretch of road.
- There probably isn't a metre of road in the village that is not affected by problems with parking or congestion. Whilst we don't like to appear defeatist, it is an issue which is increasingly difficult to find solutions to – whilst it's a common problem across the parish, each area seems to have nuances which individualises the difficulty in finding solutions. As with any issue, where we can do our utmost to find a solution but with limited resources executed ultimately by volunteers, we sadly can't make promises or guarantees.
- Having had complaints over the last few years with speeding, many of you will have seen the VAS (Vehicle Activated Sign) that encourages speed awareness to motorists as it rotates in different parts of the village where it is permitted to display such a sign. Of course, this isn't the only measures that can be taken and besides our own collective and individual responsibility to be observant towards the speed limit, there remains opportunities to resurrect the Community Speedwatch which previously operated in Stow Road should any willing volunteers come forward.
- It is rare now for us each month to not have residents come and speak to the Parish Council about issues they have and we are always available to hear from anyone with any issues they think we can help with. Even if you can't come to one of our meetings, you can always call or ask for someone to come and visit you as I have done on a few occasions in the past year. We can't promise to help with everything but

where we can we will and where we can't, we will do our best to signpost to an appropriate stakeholder who may be better placed to assist.

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 concerns that you, the residents, would like us to look into. 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, be it tonight at this meeting, or any other of our monthly meetings – it would be great to see more of you interact with us and get involved in community matters!

In the next couple of weeks, the Community will come together to commemorate the historic occasion in celebrating Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. A decade ago, Ixworth held a street party in the High Street which was the largest in Suffolk and reported to be the third largest nationally for the Diamond Jubilee. Two decades ago, in preparation for the Queen's Golden Jubilee, Ixworth was spoilt to a glimpse of the flypast that took place over The Mall and Buckingham Palace when Concorde and the Red Arrows flew over the village in rehearsal. The community has always thrown their collective might behind commemorating the monarch's jubilee's ever since the Silver Jubilee in 1977 and it's an occasion which we should all look forward to being a part of in what will truly be a once-in-a-lifetime occasion. On Monday afternoon, the Festival of Suffolk's Platinum Jubilee Torch Relay came through the village and I was humbled beyond measure to have been nominated to be the torch bearer for the village in recognition of my ambassadorial role for atrial fibrillation where, in neighbouring Stanton and Botesdale, I led a piece of work that detected 130 people who were oblivious to having this condition where they were at a 500% risk of suffering a devastating stroke. From one end of the High Street to the other, it was overwhelming to see so many people line the route in support in what was truly an unforgettable moment. We shall look forward to hearing from the Ixworth Events Committee what our weekend of jubilee commemorations shall entail.

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 ongoing, steadfast dedication 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 in the hope that we make a positive difference on the lives of our community. Despite the hustle and bustle of modern life, we really are incredibly fortunate to live in a beautiful part of the country, and no matter how near or far my travels overseas take me, there's nowhere else that feels more home to me than Ixworth; something which I hear said to me by so many, not just living here but throughout the county as well. In itself, a proud testament of just how special our village is.

Thank you once again for coming out this evening.

Report from County Councillor Joanna Spicer

C Cllr Spicer stated she was very honoured to be re-elected as the County Councillor for this Ward and she has now been served for thirty three years.

C Cllr Spicer wished to thank the Parish Council for their support over the last year and also the support of Mandy the Parish Clerk. C Cllr Spicer also thanked D Cllr John Griffiths for his support and conversations through the year.

Many issues have been dealt with over the year and Suffolk County Council are adapting after Brexit and how it effects the Council work.

It has been a very difficult year for Suffolk County Council to manage demands on highway issues, flooding lights and general quality of life within the County.

In Ixworth, with the help of the Parish Councils Safety and Accessibility Working Group have been looking at street lighting and the possibility of additional dropped kerbs.

All are working on the Parish Councils Neighbourhood Plan and West Suffolk are working on an updated Local Plan and encouraged all to take part in any consultations available on the plans.

I and my husband have been very pleased to host a family from Ukraine and I would like to say how this has changed our life. I would like to thank Mrs spiller for all the help she has given us.

I would like once again to thank everyone and if you have any queries or questions relating to Suffolk County Council please contact me.

joanna.spicer@suffolk.gov.uk

Report from District Councillor John Griffiths

D Cllr Griffiths also thanked all for attending and how good it was to see everyone and it shows what a good community we have.

West Suffolk assisted in processing 78.2 million grants through the Covid 19 pandemic.

West Suffolk are currently in the process of updating the Local Plan and encouraged all to submit comments. All comments received on the plan will help shape the future of our area on such things as housing, schools, transport and the environment. If we work together then we will achieve more and make sure any changes are good our community.

West Suffolk planning department have dealt with and accessed many applications this year and they continue to have dialogue with the developers of the Crown Lane Development.

West Suffolk are also continuing to work with the Parish Councils Neighbourhood Plan Working Group to assist in shaping the plan and the two parties do seem to be working well together.

Once again thank you for inviting me and my thanks go to the Parish Council, Mandy the Clerk and C Cllr Spicer for their help and assistance over the year.

The following reports were received from the various groups attending

Ixworth Church of England Primary School

Lyndsey Allsopp, Had Teacher of the school gave the following report –

The school and pupils have had a very busy year. The school held three sporting events and all the pupils loved the chance to take part and this helped with the pupils self-esteem and confidence.

The whole school has been taking part in banner printing project and have created 135 piece square panel to celebrate the Queens Jubilee.

The school has seen a large increase in families needing support, the school helps with well-being advice and listens to pupils and parents who are struggling.

The school is really excited as we are developing many extra after school groups such as singing, art, cooking and sport. If there is something that you are passionate about and are able to help set up a group to teach our pupils please contact me to discuss further.

I am very lucky to have a good balance of staff, some old and some new and we have also some early careers teachers working with us.

The school numbers have fallen recently and we are hoping the numbers will rise again over the coming year.

The school has also held a pre-loved school uniform sale and we have a food bank in school as well.

One further item is while we have a small but committed team of Governors, we do still have some vacancies and are looking for additional members with perhaps funding or business experience to join us. If interested please contact to discuss further.

Thank you for inviting me to let you know what a great school I have the honour of being the Headteacher.

Youth Club

Mr Mike Jones then gave the following update on the Youth Club;

- Volunteers were needed to assist, the more we have will make this project a success
- SET Ixworth have offered the Youth Club a room to use at the school
- The Youth Club team are hoping with more funding they will be able to open more than one night a week and funding options were being looked at
- Qualified staff were being sought to run the club
- Updates would be given over the coming months

Green Ixworth

Mr Roger Spiller gave the following report –

Green Ixworth is proud of its achievements in 2021, the year of COP 26 in Glasgow.

The past year has been occupied with some important planning issues: Persimmon and Hempyard Bridge. Persimmon engaged with Green Ixworth with the result that in the Master Plan being discussed with West Suffolk, instead of destroying most the A143 boundary they have retained all of it and the 7m wide bramble bank on Crown Lane. We have also asked for the trees growing in the field, where possible, to be transplanted into the bramble hedge. We have planted some 600 trees and shrubs on the privately owned verges on Crown Lane and from the responses by walkers, human and canine, much appreciated.

We have also made the case for supporting the bridge across the A143, a campaign led by Ben Lord which we much appreciate. However we would like to see some greater ambition and the bridge made dual purpose to enable wildlife as well as humans to cross safely. This would comply with Suffolk County Council's new Biodiversity Policy. When public money is being spent, it should produce the maximum benefit for the expenditure. More details are available on our stall at the back.

Hempyard Bridge: We objected to the proposal to include Equine Barriers and asked for conditions to be established to improve the riverbed and bank. WSC now looks to approve the revised plans so we shall have a bridge restored next year much as it was nearly 500 years ago

More wildflower patches are appearing in local gardens.

We have developed a close working relationship with SWT and West Suffolk Planning and Environment Offices. Both the Primary School and SET are now working with us on projects which they have developed such as the Eagle class presentation asking that the Parish Council develop a policy to help reduce Global Warming which is now underway. The PC has supported the need for an Environmental Policy and set up a working group to draft it led by Cllr Reay which we all hope will be soon adopted.

We have created a campaign for carbon saving and advice to householders on Heat Pumps, Solar Panels and most importantly Insulation. We have already conducted some experimental work with a heat camera, loaned to us by WSC to detect heat leakage from houses. A service for residents is to be launched by Green Ixworth in the late

Autumn.

The results of the initially year long and now permanent survey which we requested from West Suffolk shows Nitrous Oxide levels at Mulley's Roundabout and the High Street are below the UK limits but above that of the W.H.O recommendations.

In the Autumn we published our Vision for the Black Bourn which was well received and produced among others, a very thoughtful and helpful response from the Ixworth Angling Club. Following through with the vision requires accurate recording of the river, its banks and the Flora, Fauna and Funga associated with it. We have worked with the Rivers Trust and Anglian Water through the new catchment body improving water supply and quality. Our next big project is mapping the river within Ixworth. Following a suggestion from John Rowe at the Abbey, we have engaged an expert (used by SWT) in drone technology. We have a local team of IT and special experts who will be trained in new software so they can draw up a multi layered map using drone footage and individual observations. We hope this will encourage more residents to take a direct interest in Ixworth's river and to report interesting finds for inclusion. We shall be informing Riparian owners when Drone activity is expected to take place, at a minimum of 50m height and more likely twice that. There will be no hovering, as some folks are understandably concerned about possible disturbance to their animals.

We should like to pay tribute to John Sharpe who has retired from his role as Parish Tree Warden. His work for the village has included being a Parish Councillor for many years and Chair of the Parish. John was responsible for the planting of much of the A143 boundary woodland and GI is pleased, on their present proposals, to have persuaded Persimmon to retain it all. His expertise will be sadly missed.

Finally we have recently appointed Jenny Chantler as GI's Tree Officer, she has already completed essential courses provided by Suffolk Tree Wardens Network.

We are very grateful to John Griffiths and Joanna Spicer for their continuing financial and practical assistance.

The Green Ixworth table at the back contains information in which you may be interested: Black Bourn Vision, Why a Green Bridge, heating and insulation in Ixworth and an opportunity to sign up for our free regular Newsletter. Copies of everything and more are available on :- greenixworth.org.uk.

Ixworth History Recorder

Mrs Sue Spiller gave the following report;

I have been the History Recorder for Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe for just over three years and am one of nearly 250 recorders appointed by Suffolk Local History Council, which aims to have one recorder for each of the 484 Suffolk parishes. It is a voluntary post with a minimum job description but with wide ranging opportunities – it's up to each of us what we do, as long as we write an annual report.

Whilst compiling my report I learnt two things about Annual Parish Meetings.

1. They are a completely separate organisation from parish councils and their minutes are recorded separately. They are a legacy from the Middle Ages when local Councils did not exist and all local decision making was carried out by meetings of the whole community.
2. Under the Local Government Act 1972, 'a parish poll may be demanded before the conclusion of an Annual Parish Meeting on any question arising at the meeting'. This must be held (a) if it is demanded by no fewer than 10 electors or one-third of those present, whichever is the less; or (b) if the person chairing the Meeting consents to a poll. The question must be unambiguous and worded in such a way that only a 'yes' or 'no' answer can be given. The poll must take place between 14 and 25 days after the poll was demanded and will be paid for by the Parish Council.

As far as I can discover, no-one has ever called for a poll at a parish meeting in Ixworth, but last year, Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council made history when it was the first parish in Suffolk to hold a public consultation, the equivalent of a parish poll, on the subject of street lighting. I am very proud of the part I played in that.

In addition to writing a 20-page, fully illustrated **report on Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe** for 2021, I carried out a wide range of other activities.

- I wrote two articles for *Suffolk Review*, the quarterly magazine of Suffolk Local History Society.
- I wrote 12 articles about Ixworth buildings, people and events for *Ixworth Magazines and Newsletters* and particularly enjoyed researching the street names of Ixworth and finding out about Ixworth Workhouse. I welcome suggestions by members of the public about new topics to research.
- I taught myself how to edit articles on Wikipedia so that I could update Ixworth's page and add notable Ixworth residents to the page. Since the current list includes only seven men, I would welcome suggestions for notable female residents.
- I helped people with research about the history of their house.
- I helped people to research their family history.
- I added to my collection of memorabilia relating to the history of Ixworth, including postcards, photographs, newspaper cuttings, leaflets, artefacts and old minute books, which last year included records from Ixworth Playgroup from 1969 to 1985. I am always on the lookout for more items.
- I added to my collection of local history books and bought a beautiful copy of the 1849 Proceedings of Bury and West Suffolk Archaeological Institute, which includes an article about Suffolk antiquities, written by Joseph Warren, an important Ixworth collector of archaeological objects, including the Ixworth Cross, which was later donated to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. I am happy to lend this book and others in my collection.
- I wrote *Talk & Teas*, the story of the First Ixworth Women's Institute from 1918 to 1964, which was published in May 2022 and is my third and final local history book. It is full of information about Ixworth during the first half of the twentieth century, as well as descriptions of the activities of the WI and the life stories of some of the women who organised them.

- I produced a Welcome to Ixworth pack in English and Ukrainian, which includes a brief history of Ixworth, written by Steve Wilson. I produced an English version, which is available to residents in return for a donation to the British Red Cross Ukrainian Appeal.
- I sold books on the history of Ixworth at Ixworth's Christmas Fair and have booked a stall at the Jubilee Fun Day to sell copies of the six published books on Ixworth's history. I am proud of the fact that we now have six published books and booklets on the history of Ixworth and am grateful to Ixworth Association for their support.

My annual reports, book collection, memorabilia and artefacts will eventually be donated to Ixworth Library or Suffolk Archives when I retire as the History Recorder for Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe.

We live in a village which is full of history and I am always open to ideas from residents about ways of sharing its history with others.

Sue Spiller (ixworthrecorder@hotmail.com)

Rev Karen Burton – St Mary's Church

Rev Burton thanked the Parish Council for inviting her to give an update on St Mary's. After Covid things at the Church are beginning to get back to normal and we can all meet again and at Easter we were able to sing together again. The Church is able to celebrate family events again. The Church has just hosted their first wedding since lockdown and more are scheduled.

The Flower Festival will be held soon with lots of tea and cake being served. The Flower Festival is a reflective event to take time to remember people who we may have lost and to give thanks to friends and family. I would like to say a special thanks to all who supported the Church, residents, friends and neighbours through the difficult time of the Covid lockdown.

Good news is the Church is once again a 'messy church' where children and families can create and play together.

Thanks also go to The Royal British Legion for once again organising the Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service, even though it was held outside last year it was good to be together and gather around the War Memorial to remember the fallen of the Parish.

Once again thank you for inviting me and all are welcome to visit the Church at anytime or come along to one of our Services.

Ixworth Patients Association

Mr Graeme Norris gave the following report

A Bit of History

As you probably know the Patient Association was formed way back in 1988 by a group of volunteers to support the work of the GPs by organising discussions about medical concerns and raising money for equipment or services not covered by the NHS.

Over the years far more information on health care is available on TV and magazines. Interest in volunteering has waned. However, the Association has continued to provide a successful transport service to enable frail patients to visit the Surgery - this has reduced the demand for staff to spend time travelling to make house calls and so have more time to treat patients. The Association has some 20 volunteer drivers and their efforts are much appreciated by all.

The Association is supported by ad hoc patient donations and the occasional charitable contribution from some local Parish Councils.

Population Patient Profile?

Currently, about 9,000 local people are registered with Ixworth Surgery with an approximate 50/50 split male/female. Approximate percentages by village are:

Ixworth 22 Stanton 10 Honington 9 Bardwell 7 Walsham 6 Gt Barton 5

Pakenham 5 Thurston 5 Barningham 4 Troston 3 The Rest* 24

The wide spread of “The Rest” is part of the complexity in serving a rural community: Ampton, Badwell Ash, Barnham, Coney Weston, Euston, Fakenham Magna, Gt Ashfield, Gt Livermere, Hepworth, Ingham, Ixworth Thorpe, Little Livermere, Market Weston, Norton, Sapiston, Stowlangtoft, Tostock, and Wattisfield.

The planned buildings of many thousands of new homes in this area will add pressure to our GP Practice.

But where are we now?

As to be expected, Covid restrictions on meeting people and running community events has limited Patient Association activities. Initiatives to: encourage balance and strength classes to help prevent osteoporosis; fund musical events in Care Homes; and support trials of AF monitors to reduce the incidence of Stroke; have all rather foundered.

However, the sessions to help young people with anxiety and depression have continued and the volunteer drivers remain active - but not used as often as the past. Most of the drivers are retired and regarded as in the vulnerable category.

Over the last two years, the Surgery has had to limit face-to-face contact with patients where possible and telephone consultations have become the norm. The inevitable delays in the triaging of requests for appointments, of course, has led to complaints. Gone are the days when patients could just arrive and queue in a crowded waiting room.

Despite what appears to be an empty Surgery, our doctors and nurses have continued to be as busy as ever treating the same number of patients as before the pandemic. Indeed, dealing with the long term effects of Covid and the complex illnesses the virus can exacerbate has consumed much of our GPs' time. *(As can be imagined, Government announcements that GPs should just work even longer hours has gone down particularly badly!)* Organising the vaccination programme and chasing supplies of vaccine has also stretched the staff - as well as needing to isolate when they detect symptoms or go ill for weeks themselves.

The good news is that for many minor illnesses the pharmacy has stepped up its role in providing advice as well as dispensing prescriptions. On-line advice from artificial- intelligence systems like e-consult have proved popular - to some. A fear is that underlying serious conditions are not being spotted and some patients are just “struggling-on” not wanting “to bother the doctor....”

Staff at Ixworth have administered over 17,000 COVID vaccinations and 3,000 flu vaccinations since January 2021. And here we go again! As vaccine effectiveness wears off, boosters are needed. As per previous doses, the Surgery will be putting on extra clinics when stock becomes available. *(It seems as Suffolk is seen by Central Government to be relatively healthy we appear to be at the back of the queue?)*

Research Activities

The Surgery has also been enrolled in three research studies. One is called “Active Brains” - a cohort of 425 randomly selected 60–85-year-olds to investigate healthy lifestyle changes and activities that can help to keep their brain fit. The second is called “The Immune Defence Study.” Its aim is to reduce colds, flu and similar infections and investigate the use of nasal sprays to prevent infections. Dr Raj is overseeing the surgery's contribution to the SAFER stroke prevention study which aims to help improve outcomes for patients with undiagnosed arterial fibrillation.

Naturally, patient data is only given to the research team when the patient's themselves provide it when signing up for the research.

What does the future hold?

Probably more of the same problems - indeed, qualified staff are hard to attract, and more staff are choosing to retire early. Ixworth Surgery continues to be stretched to meet the increasing demand for medical care. Fortunately, unlike some neighbouring Practices, it has been able to recruit GPs, nursing staff and pharmacists. Despite trials and tribulations, the Surgery is rated “Good” by the Government's Healthwatch.

The Surgery has also been awarded Veteran Friendly Status in recognition of the extra support it can provide to ex-military personnel - in particular in tackling the mental and family problems faced by young early-leavers from Army life.

The “big issue” is probably the proposed change in the organisation of the NHS next month intended to better integrate physical and mental health care - and social services. Sounds a good idea. The Clinical Commissioning

Groups run by GPs is to be replaced by Integrated Care Boards - and a plethora of alliance relationships, funding regimes, locality committees, networking arrangements and admin liaison roles... perhaps not such a good idea?

To Be a Voice?

An idea might be to run regular feedback events in the various villages around Ixworth to seek the experience of patients and their families of the new organisation - perhaps as an item on your Parish Council Agenda? Our feedback may help our GPs develop their plans and funding proposals?

If you would like to know more about the Association - and perhaps take an active role - please contact me:
graemenorris46@gmail.com

From Dr Graeme Norris, Chairman of the Patient Association

Jiggins Memorial Village Hall & Playing Fields

Dr Stephen Mann welcomed all to the Village Hall for this meeting. The village Hall has been present in Ixworth since 1937 and in that time the remit of the hall has not changed.

All bookings are nearly back to normal after Covid and if anyone wishes to book the hall please contact the bookings clerk.

The Village Hall has had electric charging points installed for residents to use and a small green area has been created to grow herbs for all to use.

During the creating of the Neighbourhood Plan there has been early discussions with the landowner and the Jiggins Trust about the possibility of being offered a piece of land to construct a new Community Centre. If this was to come forward then fund raising would need to be completed and a consultation with residents. A team with expertise such as planning and fundraising would need to be put forward to take this possible opportunity forward.

If you would be interested to join the team please contact me.

Ixworth Events Team

The events team are working on various events for the coming year, below are events coming up;

Jubilee Weekend –

- Saturday 4th June there will be a Funday on the village playing fields with all sorts of fun for all the family
- Sunday 5th June there will be a road closure along the High Street in place for a Jubilee Picnic. All are invited to bring along tables and picnics to make this event a second funday for all the family

Ixworth FOIL (Friends of Ixworth Libraries)

The following report was received from FOIL;

Ixworth Library is one part of forty libraries run by Suffolk Libraries. The library serves the local and surrounding communities. As well as the usual books lending, the library also has online services and various groups such as a baby toddler group meet there on a regular basis.

The library has volunteers as well as paid staff to assist in the running but more volunteers are always welcome. The film nights have now been re-instated after Covid restrictions and regular coffee mornings are held and all are welcome. The library also has book sales and an active Facebook page.

An Annual Reading Challenge is about to be launched and we are looking for volunteers to listen to the children. If you are interested in this project please contact the library.

Foil assisted in the community garden in the village hall car park and also established a seed exchange.

Ixworth Library is a friendly happy place to visit so please come along and see what we have to offer.

Grace Langan (Support Ukraine)

A representative of Ixworth Support Ukraine Group gave the following report;

The group has already donated £1000 to the Ukraine Disaster Fund which was raised through donations and a coffee and cake event. The group are hoping to hold more events to continue to raise money and will have a table at the Village Fun Day on 4th June to assist in fundraising. The group have created a Facebook page to update all on the progress of the group and advertise any fundraising events.

I would like to thank all the community help and support received.

The Royal British Legion Ixworth & District Branch

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

At this occasion last year, the effects of COVID-19 were continuing to affect our branch which was preventing us to restart our branch meetings and activities. Thankfully though, our 'Lords and Masters' at RBL HQ gave the green light for our branch meetings to restart on a cautious and steady basis at the end of July 2021 and we were delighted that so many of our members were keen and eager to get back together after a 16-month hiatus.

At our AGM in October, Colin Calver became our Branch Chairman, taking over the baton from Martin Waterman who had been our Branch Chairman since October 2019. Colin has been a stalwart supporter of the RBL for many years playing pivotal roles in our committee as well as our branch's Deputy Standard Bearer.

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 and has had a small increase on our report last year with 55 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.

Each year our members look forward to our Winter Games night tournament – a programme of pub games where neighbouring branches come along and compete in a series of friendly games that then culminates in our Presentation Dinner Dance that is also held as a further gesture towards the anniversary of the branch. We were able to hold this popular event in April given the imposed pause caused by COVID where we were able to come together to recognise how the community has had an active RBL branch in Ixworth for 38 years since 1984. During this occasion, the Branch Committee has an award that was donated to the branch several years ago by our late village butcher – Dave Sim. The definition of this award could not be more potent in reflecting how Dave was the epitome of a communitarian. Though he came to Ixworth to run his business, he very much became part of the community fabric way beyond that of a humble butcher. When he donated this trophy to the branch, the committee decided it should be awarded to someone who is somewhat unsung in their contribution to enriching the life and values of the RBL across our branch. In years gone by, recipients have not always been members but have nonetheless been recognised for their contribution to the branch echoing the now century-long legacy of Earl Haig, one of the original co-founders of the British Legion who immortally stated that the organisation should "always put duty before self." This year's recipient could not fit the definition of this award and that legacy any more if they tried. Over the past couple of years, our activities have been enormously curtailed – we couldn't hold all the pomp and ceremony of our traditional Remembrance Sunday, nor could we host all the plans we had made to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War in 2020, the pinnacle of which had been securing a Lancaster Bomber from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight to fly over Ixworth. The 100th anniversary of the Royal British Legion occurred during a period of imposed measures all of which meant that whilst these occasions felt very sacred to the branch and to the legion as a whole, any commemorations would need to be scaled back to an almost non-existent level. However, despite the rules and regulations, it was through that community spirit that we found ways to adapt to these challenges to ensure that we still carried out periods of reflection and remembrance on those occasions. In working collaboratively, we were still able to honour the 55 veterans from our village who never came home, each one eternally marked on our war memorial whilst also expanding those thoughts of reflection to veterans beyond our community as well as those active serving personnel in our armed forms today. Probably the most palpable contribution that they have made so far was in a display of remembrance and reflection that came during the Remembrance Sunday service in 2019 where a unique but solemn demonstration of how war affected those on the front line and at home has gone down as being a Remembrance Sunday service that surpassed memories of any earlier services in years gone by and has set a huge benchmark in just how it struck a chord with so many in the congregation. In reflecting on this and how so soon after arriving in the village all

routines and traditions had to be shelved that the committee could think of no better recipient than Rev Karen Burton.

Later this year, we're hoping to resume our popular trips and embark upon a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. We're also exploring options of travelling over the Channel for the first time since the Autumn of 2019 to visit the Menin Gate in Ypres and participate in the daily Last Post Ceremony which is always a poignant occasion.

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 was a marked improvement on 2020 even though services had to be held outdoors. In the meantime, some of our willing and retired volunteers are looking forward to finally being able to kickstart the refurbishment project of the telephone kiosk in Stow Road after gratefully securing further funding from our District Councillor, John Griffiths.

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.

The Chairman, Cllr Ben Lord, thanked everyone again for attending and to all the groups who gave a report on their group or organisation. The evening has been great for us all to get together and realise what a great village we all live in and we hope to see you all next year.

With no further business the meeting closed at 9.55pm.

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Signed

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Date