

1. Housing

- 1.1. Delegates were asked a series of questions and a summary of responses is provided below, along with general comments made.

What is the character of the best examples of housing in Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe?

a. Layout – fronts of houses, spaces between houses, roads and pavements, green spaces, landscaping

- The Thistledown development was suggested as providing a good layout of housing with housing that was not 'face-to-face' and providing a feeling a space. There were comments, however, which suggested not enough green space was provided here.



Spaciously placed houses in Thistledown, Ixworth

- Conversely, the flats on Thetford Road were felt to provide a poor layout which led to the feeling of there being a lack of space. Equally, the Micklesmere area was considered to feel overly dense.
- Housing design must include green spaces that are usable and people feel that they want to use them. The square field at Street Farm Lane, for instance, was not used and some delegates suggested that the provision of play equipment here might encourage this. Thistledown and Micklesmere were noted as new developments that had not provided sufficient public green space. Green roundabouts with trees on were noted as attracting children to play, although could be seen as slightly dangerous and a reason therefore to provide safer green spaces elsewhere. But trees were considered to represent an interesting feature which encourages play.
- The size of housing plots was discussed. Some felt that the larger plots, for instance at Stow Road (former council housing), with half an acre of land for growing, was a good model. Others felt that these were too big and in fact smaller properties and plots would be preferable, for instance at Copper Court.
- Parking was raised as important to address, particularly given the rural nature of the village and wider parish, which means that people are reliant on cars to get around.

Bigger driveways in new developments would offer space off-road for cars. Garages were not seen as helpful; Micklesmere, Street Farm and Thistledown all provide garages and these are rarely used. Car ports were felt to be a better alternative.

- Electric car charging points should also be incorporated to encourage take-up of less polluting vehicles.

b. Design – features of houses that make a house ‘an Ixworth house’, e.g. type of brick, style of design

- Lower Farm Drive is a good example of how materials can reflect the local character. The houses here are of a mix of styles and incorporate red brick and black wood, which are traditional locally. Other traditional local materials and styles include barn style, shiplap style (e.g. the black walls in Street Farm Lane); and flint and red brick as in Chalk Lane and along the High Street.



Flint walls along the High Street

- The colour of housing was noted as important. Examples given were High Path and Fordham Place, where a mixture of colours is used in a row. ‘Suffolk Pink’ as a main colour was cited.
- Terraced housing is a feature of Ixworth.
- Pargetting was noted as a traditional feature locally.



- It was felt that housing should be designed in a way that made people want to and proud to live in Ixworth, by reflecting the very character that makes Ixworth special.

Where are examples of good and poor design and layout of housing development in Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe? What makes them good or bad?

- ✓ Street Farm Lane and Chalk Lane - The planting of trees and provision of open green spaces is good. Also the use of traditional materials here – black wood and flint.



Use of flint and black wood in Chalk Lane

- ✓ Thistledown – good housing layout.
- ✓ Lower Farm Drive – good use of materials.



Use of colour at High Path

- ✓ High Path and Fordham Place – use of colour in housing.
- ✓ Stow Road former council housing – spacious housing and plot size (although some disagreement about whether this was too big for future developments).
- ✓ Stow Road – new development - good use of car ports here and in keeping design of housing.

- ✓ Chalk Lane – good use of green space within the housing development. Could incorporate play equipment?



Green space with planting in Chalk Lane

- ✗ Micklesmere – housing is too compact, not enough green space and insufficient off-street parking.
- ✗ Thetford Road flats – not a fitting design for the village because of lack of green space and absence of traditional, local materials.



Thetford Road flats – lack of traditional materials used in design

What types of housing are in short supply in Ixworth?

a. By type of occupier – first-time buyer, family, older ‘downsizers’

b. By specialist- sheltered housing, retirement housing, care home

- Ixworth village needs more flats, low-cost rental housing and starter homes.
- Housing to serve all age groups is needed.
- Houses for older people wishing to downsize.
- Sheltered accommodation is required, ideally bungalows with small gardens. There are examples of such accommodation having been lost to the village.
- Independent living for older, but still independent, residents.

- Tenures suitable for first time buyers and young families - shared ownership, affordable housing.
- Ixworth Thorpe has a shortage of all types of housing. There have been few newly built properties recently and the hamlet is struggling to attract new families and sustain local facilities. Could additional housing be provided here?
- Mixing the different types of housing was felt to encourage community spirit by having different ages of people living side by side.

2. Community facilities and High Street

What will bring people to the High Street in Ixworth more often?

- a. Could any of these types of services/activities be run by the community?
- b. Would improvements to the environment and access bring more people in?
How could these be achieved?

- A community café was suggested, which would be community-run, potentially as a social enterprise. A café has recently closed and this has left a gap in provision on the High Street. There was a suggestion that this café could be provided in the village hall.
- A call to protect the loss of retail to housing.
- Suggestion that the village could be more dementia friendly with training for local shopkeepers and others in front line services, way marking to ease navigation to key facilities.
- Better use of festivals to attract people to the parish -provision of a Christmas market (there used to be one), make more of the cycle race that comes through the parish – provision of pop-up street food, cycling equipment etc., a food market, farmers market.
- Invest in village pubs – is there a way to support existing pubs to enable them to offer additional services to the village?
- Provision of a post office in the village. The example of the community shop in Thurston was cited as a good example of this.
- Encourage West Suffolk College to use the Mere as a resource for environmental studies courses, which in turn would encourage students to use the village facilities.
- More could be made of the heritage and history of the village and wider parish. A visitor centre or information point/museum?

What community activities could happen in empty units in the High Street?

- Niche retail provision in the empty shops.
- Provision of local clubs – for instance a computer club, art workshops.
- Community café, ideally dementia friendly.
- Community-run exchange shop for toys, baby clothes etc.

Indoor community/sports activities (meetings, hall/function space, dance, indoor sports)

a. What activities are there currently in Ixworth which need more/better space?

b. What activities are lacking in Ixworth which people would like to see?

- A youth club is required.
- Could the former community centre be used for youth activities?
- Men and sheds – sharing skills. There are examples elsewhere of such schemes, including <http://www.cobtreemanorpark.co.uk/things-to-do/men-in-sheds>
- Other activities mentioned included snooker, adult education classes, boot (fitness) clubs. After school clubs, art/drama clubs for all ages.
- 'Meet the neighbour' events to encourage the community to get to know one another.
- Lack of provision for dog activities.
- Improvements to the Village Hall - the acoustics in the Cousins Room could be improved. In addition, the provision of a commercial kitchen as opposed to a bar. Finally, more parking at the village hall might help to reduce the number of vehicles parking on the High Street.

Outdoor community/sports activities (play areas, youth facilities, Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs)/Astroturf pitches, grass sports pitches – and associated changing facilities, green spaces)

a. What activities are there currently in Ixworth which need more/better space? Where could this be located?

b. What activities are lacking in Ixworth which people would like to see? Where could these be located?

- Could the football pitch be usefully moved to the free school? Or a multi-use sports facility sited here for community use.
- Cricket – there is currently a private club but this could be ideally developed into a club for all users.
- Other sports mentioned as potentials to offer included: tennis, skateboarding, BMX, basketball, netball, swimming.
- Could tennis courts be added to the bowling green?
- Provision of pop-up leisure facilities, for instance skateboarding.
- A MUGA, like that at Bardwell, would be good to have in the parish.
- Re-open the community hall at the Ixworth Free School site for public use, e.g. sports, youth club, classes etc.

3. Movement

Where are the most dangerous points for pedestrians? What is the nature of the danger, e.g. crossing the road, narrow pavement?

- The High Street is dangerous for pedestrians because of the amount of parked vehicles along the road, which are often parked partly on the pavements. The area near to the Beeches was singled out as a particularly bad example.
- The junction between the High Street and the village hall.
- The junction between the High Street and Commister Lane is dangerous. There was a suggestion that traffic could be one-way here (reversed).
- The pedestrian crossing was noted as dangerous because it is hard to see people crossing as a result of the parked cars.
- There is no pavement in Crown Lane, which makes that area difficult to navigate for those on foot, particularly parents taking their children to school. Crossing the bypass is difficult here too.
- Stow Road only has a narrow pavement on one side.
- Crossing the bypass is dangerous.
- Speeding was highlighted as a problem, particularly in the High Street. Suggestion that 20mph limit could be incorporated in the village, to which the Community Infrastructure Levy could contribute, for instance towards the cost of signage. Alternatively other traffic calming measures could be introduced.

What are the destinations and routes where improvements to pedestrian walkways and crossings would encourage people to walk?

- The route through Fordham Place could be encouraged for those wishing to get to the school.
- Walkways, particularly by the river, could be improved. A suggestion that the Suffolk Wildlife Trust might provide a useful partner for this.
- The provision of circular walks would encourage people to walk more.
- At Crown Lane there is currently no path across the A143.
- The various routes to the schools could be improved. Currently crossings are difficult and paths can be narrow.
- New developments should not incorporate barriers that reduce the flow of people from one area to another.

What are the Public Rights of Way and footpath routes into the countryside that should be improved? Are there other walks that should be opened up?

- The bridleway should be reinstated between Troston and Ixworth.
- A new foot/cycle path linking Ixworth to Ixworth Thorpe would be welcomed.
- Connect Ixworth to the Great Barton cycle route, which in turn would connect to Bury St Edmunds.
- Car parking to be provided near to Hempyard Bridge.
- Permissive way footpaths should be made permanent, with a possible new bridge over the A143.
- Improved signage for the underpass near to Mulley's to enable access to the mere.
- Open up Woolpit and Wood Street for walking.
- Provision of a cycle route into Bury St Edmunds.
- Reopen the footpath to Bangrove Wood.
- A bridge is required to link Crown Lane to Wood Street.
- Public access to be introduced to the River Black Bourn.
- Improve access to Old Stanton Road and make a new path to circle back to Crown Lane.
- More permissive walks are needed from the river, including circular paths. At the moment, only access for fishing is allowed. An example given for a potential path was from Commister Lane over Hempyard Bridge.
- Reinststate access to Clay Lane to create a circular path from Abbey to the Mill.
- The A1088 has a right of way that has been blocked off (see map) and the footpath sign has also been removed.
- There needs to be better signage to the footpath across to Mickle Mere.
- At the junction of Thetford Road and The Langridge, the grassy track from the Round House to the bridleway should become a legal right of way.
- The footpath along Stow Road needs to be improved, including step access.
- Could there be an additional car park on Commister Lane (see map).

How should residential off-street parking provision best be made?

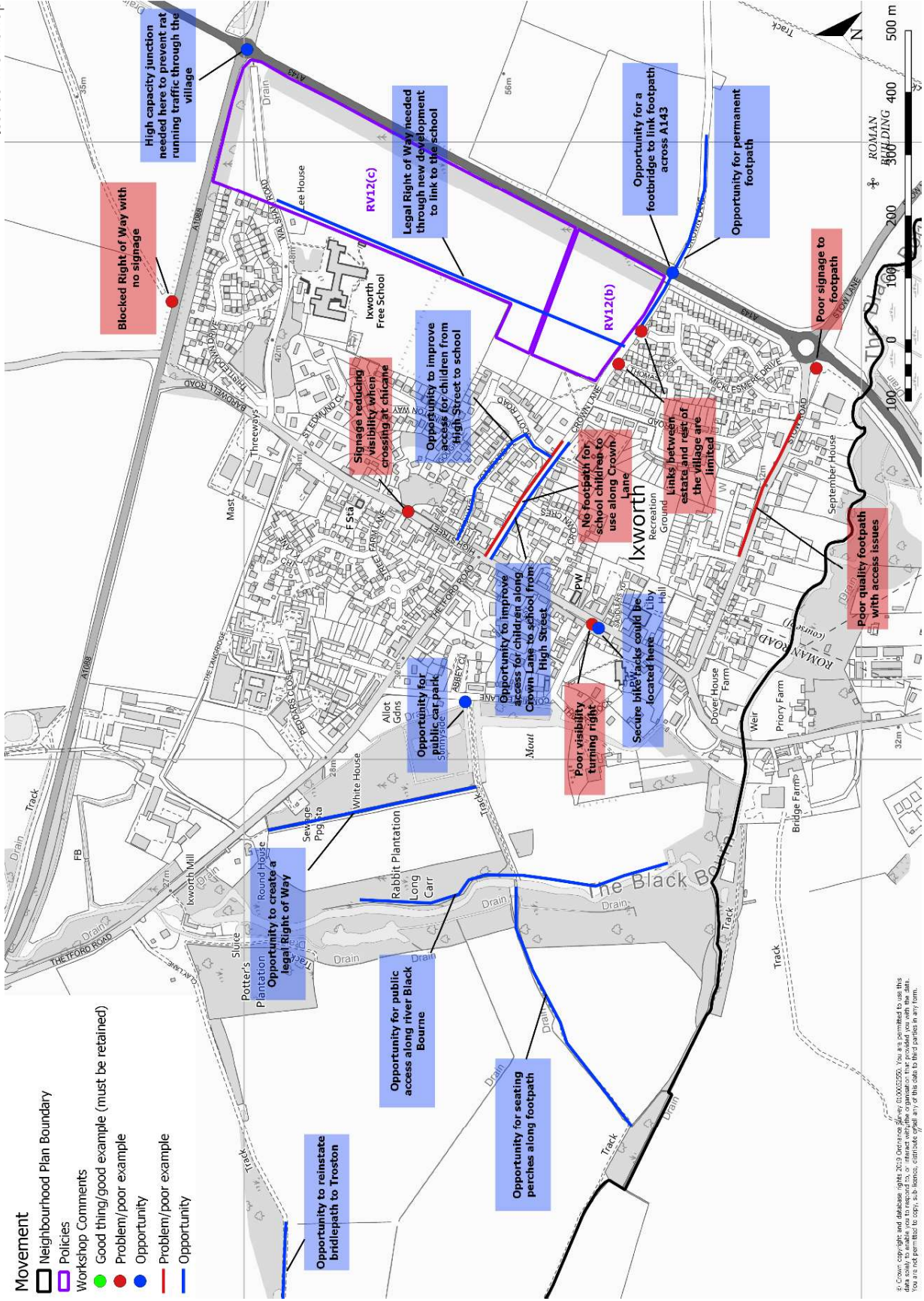
a. Garage versus car port

b. Parking courts – if you were designing a parking court, where would you place it to serve new housing?

- Off-road parking is essential for all housing because the area is rural and people are reliant on cars to get further afield.
- Where off-road parking is provided, there is a preference for car ports as opposed to garages and if provided communally, these should be located near to the houses they are serving.

Other issues

- The new development proposed to the east of the village should incorporate a new high capacity junction so that traffic does not need to be channelled back through the village centre, causing congestion.
- New development should be linked by foot and cycle paths to the village centre. Micklesmere is an example of where this has not happened – there are only two links from this estate to the village. Another example is Crown Lane, which provides the sole access to Scott Road estate and New Road estate.
- Cycle racks to be provided outside the Village Hall.



Annotated map from the Movement theme – Ixworth village

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4. Environment

What green spaces – formal or informal - in Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe are special and why?

- The Play Meadow/Recreation Field are vital to safeguard. It is an area that is very important for sporting activities, for children for play (there are swings etc. here), adults for exercise, dog walking and socialising. It is the main green space in the village, is dog and child friendly, used for football matches and other community activities.
- The green space on the layby in Ixworth Thorpe. The hedge here is a useful barrier to traffic.
- Robins Copse - as a village amenity and area for wildlife. The area to the far right of this site could be a community garden/allotments.
- Commister Lane and the surrounding bridleways are important green spaces for health and wellbeing.
- The wooded area north of Walsham Road is privately owned but used frequently by children for exploring and biking. Could it be made safer?
- The new development area (to the east of the village) is currently used by walkers and access here should be retained.
- Chalk pit (?) – this area is historically a wildlife area. There is no access but it could be retained for its biodiversity value.
- New Road green space has been laid to grass with some mature trees and is well-used by children for playing.
- Green space between Stow Road, New Road and Carpenter Close is currently laid to grass but is well-used by children and could house play equipment.
- Bowling Green is an asset to the community. Could we add tennis courts here?

What aspects of the local environment are important in making Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe an attractive environment?

- The wooded area and moats either side of the bridleway in Commister Lane near to the Abbey and the river were felt to be important features of the natural landscape. These should be maintained as they are useful habitats for flora and fauna, including wild fowl.
- The bridge is in need of repair.
- The wooded area and moats to the west of the village has no public access. The water in the river here is very dirty and the water levels are often low. This could be improved to encourage wildlife, potentially with public access and a nature trail.

- More needs to be done with the green space to the west of Chalk Lane.
- The wetlands between Stow Road and the A143 could be made into a nature reserve, with board walks installed to enable pedestrian access.
- Hempyard Bridge is in need of repair. Riverside seating could be installed here.

Should housing be designed to encourage more wildlife? If so, what types of features should be included (e.g. hedgehog-friendly fencing, bird and bat boxes, ponds)

- Support for bird boxes. In particular, swift boxes were suggested as Ixworth has a notable summer swift population.
- Hedgehog-friendly fencing received support in-principle reviews, although a concern was raised about the impact of hedgehogs on the eggs of ground-nesting birds.
- 'Intelligent' lighting is required if ecology is to be allowed to thrive.
- A better balance between green and hard (non-permeable) surfaces is needed.
- Green spaces generally should be encouraged to support wildlife.
- Where possible, existing trees should be retained as part of new developments.
- Bricks for solitary bees.
- Planting trees and shrubs as part of new developments is very important.
- All new development should be encouraged to incorporate open, green spaces for walking and so forth. Walking routes in areas to be developed should be retained, including routes that are not permissive but regularly walked.

Should the community look to produce more of its own renewable energy, e.g. through a solar installation or wind turbine(s)?

- Some participants stated a preference for any solar energy to be undertaken through the provision of a field of panels (solar farm) rather than on rooftops, which they felt were unsightly. Others disagreed, stating that Wilbrahams Solar Farm is not an attractive example of a field of solar panels. There was also a concern as to where such a field might be located.
- Concerns were raised about air quality in the area and it was felt that more studies should be undertaken to assess the current levels. Sources could be from farming (through crop spraying/pesticide use) and from traffic, particularly along the High Street and the A143.
- Wind farms were felt to be intrusive by some, although others stated that they would not be unsupportive of them, particularly if community owned.

- Schemes for sustainable/renewable energy to provide for the energy needs of the village could be supported.
- The eco-friendly housing in Swaffham ('Swan's Nest'), complete with solar panels, was highlighted as a good example.



Swan's Nest eco-development, Swaffham

How could the community be encouraged to grow more locally? Is this through more space for allotments (is there currently a shortage? how well located are they?) or through other approaches such as community growing spaces or community gardens? Where should any provision be located?

- The existing provision of allotment space is sufficient, although more space may be required as the population grows. There was a suggestion of a 'buddy system' for newcomers to maximise space. Also the involvement of school children in maintaining allotments was felt to be helpful.
- A percentage of space in new development should be set aside for growing food. It was also suggested that a single area in the village could be identified and set aside for such space as the village and community grow.
- The community gardens at places such as Blackbourne View/Ixworth Court could be used for growing by residents and visitors. The Orchard at Ixworth Free School could also be utilised for this.
- The area to the far right of Robins Copse could be a community garden/allotments.
- The allotment at Thetford Road is well-used and has a waiting list. This should be retained.

