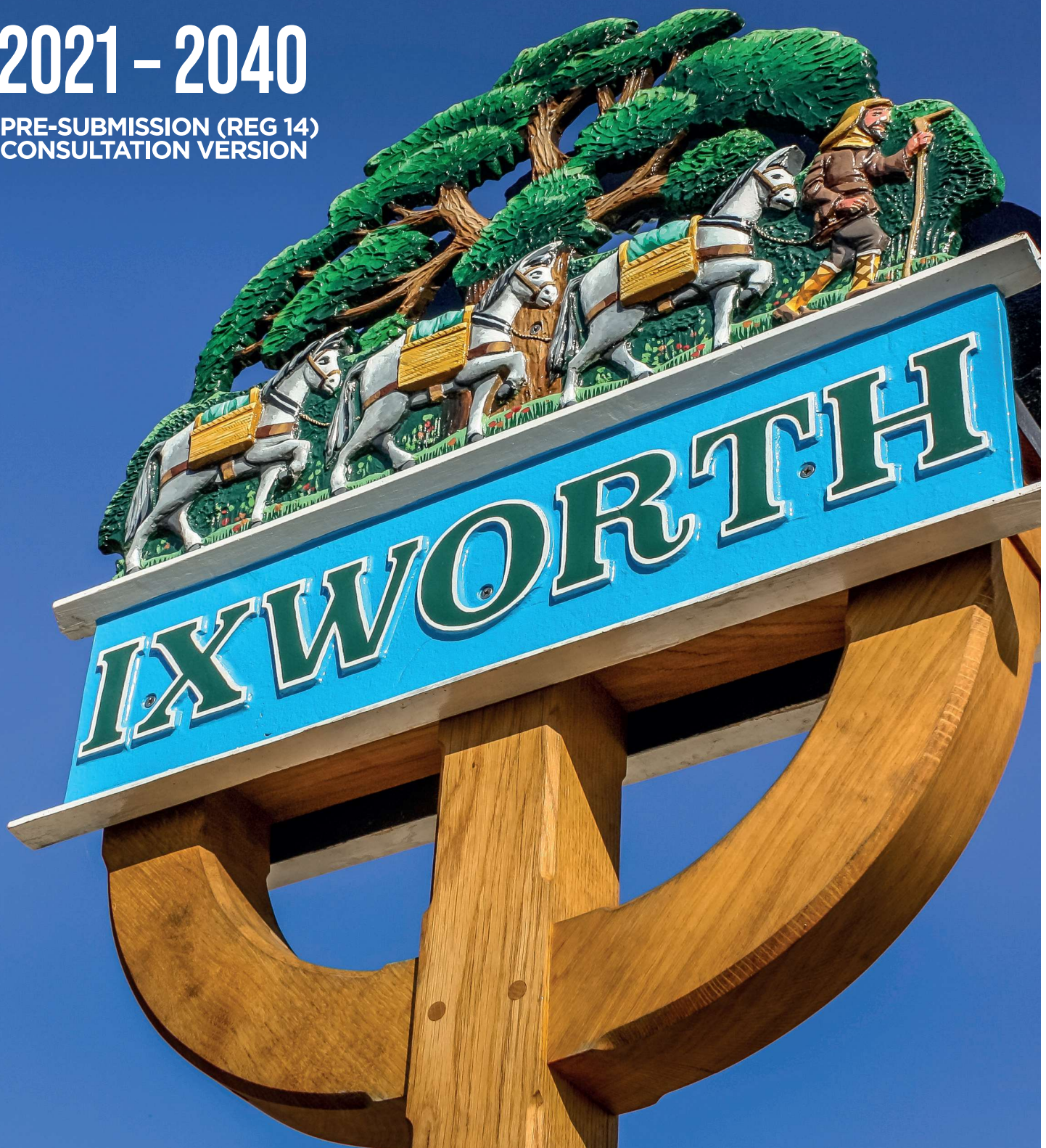


MAY 2023

# IXWORTH & IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2021 – 2040

PRE-SUBMISSION (REG 14)  
CONSULTATION VERSION





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# 1. INTRODUCTION



Image ©Ben Lord

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

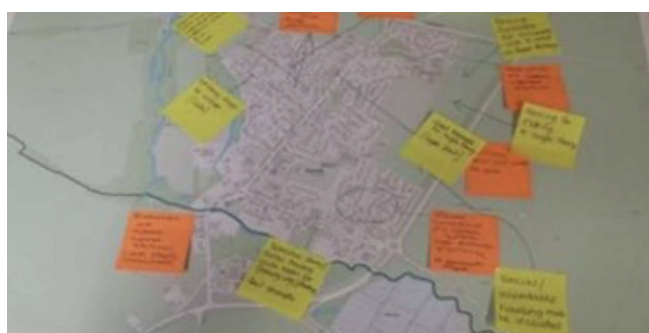
- 1.1** This is the Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe for the period 2022 to 2040. The document sets out a series of planning policies which represent the wishes of our residents regarding the future development of the Parish.
- 1.2** The Plan seeks to guide those wishing to submit planning applications for development within the Parish. There are also topics listed within a non-policy section which reflect the desires of local residents for their locality but which are not directly achievable by planning policy alone.
- 1.3** The idea of the Neighbourhood Plan giving local people greater influence over the planning matters that may impact their communities was introduced by the Government's Localism Act in 2012. Ultimately such plans are required to be developed in conformity with national planning policy, provided by the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Certain 'strategic' matters such as the number of new properties required to be built within any given parish are developed through district 'local plans'.
- 1.4** Within this process a neighbourhood plan must comply with the regulations set at national level. However once a plan is in place then it holds as much weight as a local plan in determining planning applications in the area.



## THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 1.5** The contents of this document have arisen entirely from the wishes of the people of Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe. Public consultation began in November 2018 with a parish-wide questionnaire aimed at establishing the general areas of concern and interest. Specific topics were refined at a series of 'drop-in' events at Ixworth Village Hall in March 2019 where residents could suggest new issues or express the level of their support for existing ones. Finally, workshop events were run for a limited number of residents to pin down the detail of key areas. The results of these workshops were presented to the public at the Annual Parish Meeting in April 2019.
- 1.6** Specific consultations were held with the pupils of both of Ixworth's schools in order that the opinions of a whole age-group should not be lost. Opinion as to the future of Ixworth's Village Hall and its sporting facilities was supplemented by the results of a consultation undertaken by the Jiggins Charity in 2017.

*Activity at the Workshop events, March 2019 (C Bowden)*





**1.7** Having taken the decision to make site allocation a part of the process it was essential to obtain evidence of housing need in addition to adopting the overall figure of dwellings to be built under the West Suffolk Local Plan. A full Local Housing Needs Survey was conducted in June 2019 under the auspices of Community Action Suffolk. The survey was preceded by a mailing to all residents from the Rt Hon Matthew Hancock MP.

**1.8** Throughout the process the public were kept informed of our progress via the Parish Council website and the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group's social media channels. There were a further two public engagement events between the establishment of the policy structure and the final completion of the Plan document.

## PLANNING CONTEXT

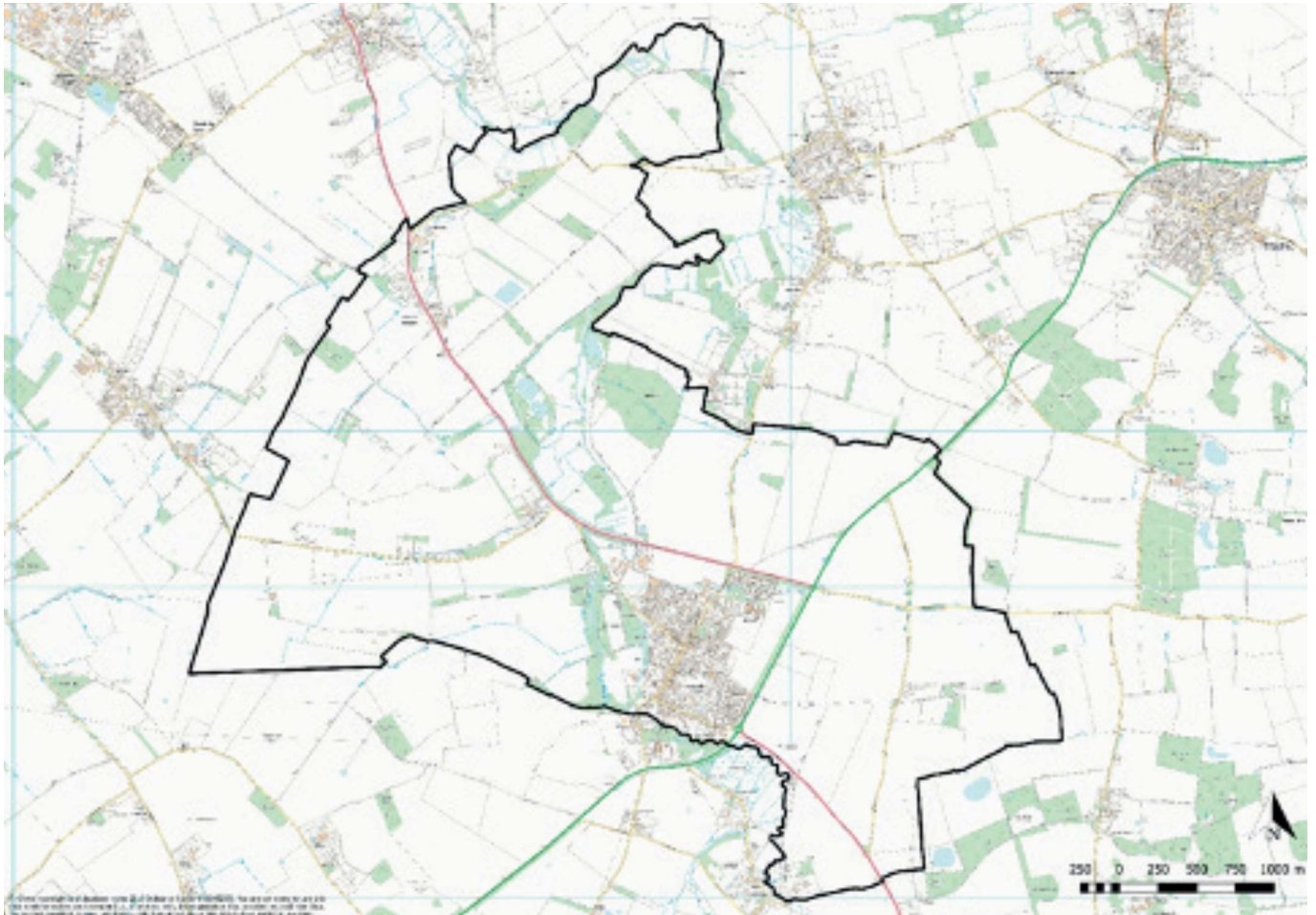
**1.9** West Suffolk Council is currently engaged in a complete review of the West Suffolk Local Plan. The target date for adoption of the revised plan is July 2024. As an early part of this process, West Suffolk Council were able to supply a working housing requirement to be fulfilled during the Neighbourhood Plan period.

**1.10** This Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended in 2015). The Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan Working Group has prepared the Plan to establish a vision for the future of the Parish and to set out how that vision will be realised through planning and controlling land use and development change over the Plan period.

**1.11** Map 1 shows the boundary of the Parish of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe and, therefore, the area of interest of this document. Following the required public consultation this area was designated for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan by St Edmundsbury Borough Council on 20 July 2017.

## MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE PLAN

**1.12** Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council is the body responsible for the creation and monitoring of the Plan. They will monitor the delivery of the policies as stated and will periodically review its contents to ensure that it remains relevant in the future. At an appropriate time (most likely within the first 5 years), the Parish Council may wish to undertake a review of the Plan.



**Map 1: Boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan Area**



# 2. LOCAL CONTEXT



## HISTORY OF IXWORTH AND IXWORTH THORPE

**2.1** Ixworth's origins lie in the Roman period. Around AD 61, following Boudicca's rebellion, the Roman road known as Peddar's Way was pushed through the heavily-wooded landscape of 'High Suffolk.' Where it crossed the river Black Bourn at Ixworth a fort was built. Although the fort had gone out of use by the end of the First Century, a settlement persisted at its location, based on the pottery trade. A villa was also established 800 metres to the east. However, one researcher (see David Ratledge & the Antonine Itineraries) has suggested that Ixworth is the previously lost Roman settlement of Sitomagus. Settlement continued through the Saxon era and the Village gained its name 'Gyxeweorde' or Gicsa's Place.

**2.2** Ixworth Thorpe's name suggests that it was established under the Danelaw during the Saxon period as a hamlet or secondary settlement to Ixworth. Ixworth Village and Ixworth Thorpe hamlet today differ enormously in size; however, in 1086 the Domesday Book records Ixworth Village as having 51 households while Thorpe (as it was named) had 31.

**2.3** Robert le Blund was granted the manors of Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe by William the Conqueror and it was his family that established an Augustine Priory at Ixworth in the Twelfth Century. Suddenly there was an institution that required the support of artisans and traders and which would manage the running of the estate lands. The Roman road came into its own too as a medieval trading and droving route, further supporting growth. Ixworth Village's wider local significance started in 1384 when Richard II granted the Village a market and two annual fairs. Without the benefits of the Priory and the road, Ixworth Thorpe hamlet did not develop although it retained its own identity and had its own parish boundary up until it combined with Ixworth Village in 1966.

**2.4** The establishment of the Turnpike through Ixworth Village in 1769 gave a further boost; now there was a need for a coaching inn and a place to change horses. That inn became an administrative centre for the surrounding parishes including as host for the Magistrates' Court; ultimately a proper court building was constructed nearby. For the next two centuries Ixworth Village was known for its long, straight High Street with nearly every building hosting a commercial enterprise of some kind. This was a home to tanning, malting, cart building, linen production and, ultimately, a cider factory. There was some spread of the settlement over time including the building of the first council houses ever to be commissioned by a British rural authority in 1893. More council building was to follow before a flowering of private housing estates from the 1960s to the 1980s. The major restriction was the famous High Street with its two junctions directing traffic to all points of the compass in ever-increasing quantity. Modern traffic, particularly heavy lorries either articulated or laden with sugar beet, was struggling to make progress and causing structural damage and so a long-held desire to bypass the Village was finally realised in 1986.



*Ixworth High Street circa 1910 (Farrington series postcard)*



## THE SETTLEMENTS TODAY

**2.5** As at the 2011 Census the population of Ixworth Village was 2,255. It was declared a Key Service Centre in the Rural Vision 2031 document adopted by St Edmundsbury Borough Council in September 2014. This identified Ixworth Village as having a good range of services and facilities making it suitable for a certain level of additional growth. Housing development has continued to expand towards the new geographical boundary of the bypass and further housing is already at the planning stage. At the same time the commercial life of Ixworth Village has declined somewhat with, a café and the Post Office closing. However, there remain a general store, butchers, two public houses serving food, a restaurant, Chinese take away, fish and chip shop, dressmaker and upholsterer, two hairdressers, women's boutique, beauty parlour, two vehicle repair shops with servicing facilities, funeral Parlour, two churches and a chapel. A new community café opened in 2019 at the Pykkrrrell while, as of Autumn 2021, the old café was for sale.

**2.6** Recently two new businesses have located into Ixworth Thorpe. 'Appetite Me' is a company specialising in rural retail and hospitality development. MKM is a lawn and garden machinery specialist.



*Ixworth 1882 (National Library of Scotland)*



*Ixworth 2019 (OS mapping)*

**2.7** The population of Ixworth Thorpe hamlet stood at 67 in 2011; with the exception of the once-a-week bus service, all of its services have been lost with the Royal Oak public house being the last to go in 2008. This is reflective of Ixworth Thorpe's role as a hamlet supporting agriculture with manpower giving way to ever more sophisticated machinery and modern farming techniques. For centuries it has been a home to two large farms. Those farms were combined into one business when the Ixworth Thorpe Estate was sold in 1962.

**2.8** A significant proportion of Ixworth Village is designated as a Conservation Area (see Map 2). The 2010 Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan<sup>1</sup> notes that there are a variety of different ages and uses of buildings in the Conservation Area, with no one style being typical. It also notes the importance of the natural environment, with mature trees giving an attractive backdrop to many street views and playing an important role in giving the area its special character and appearance.



*Map 2: Ixworth Conservation Area © Crown Copyright and database rights 2017 OS 100023282*

1. St Edmundsbury Borough Council (2010) Ixworth Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.



# PROFILE OF IXWORTH PARISH

## POPULATION

**2.9** In 2011 the population of Ixworth Parish was 2,365. The age distribution generally reflected that of St Edmundsbury District and Suffolk County, although a general trend showed that the district and county areas had a higher proportion of young people. Notable differences are seen in the larger proportion of ‘younger retirees’ (residents aged 65+) in Ixworth Parish (Figure 1).

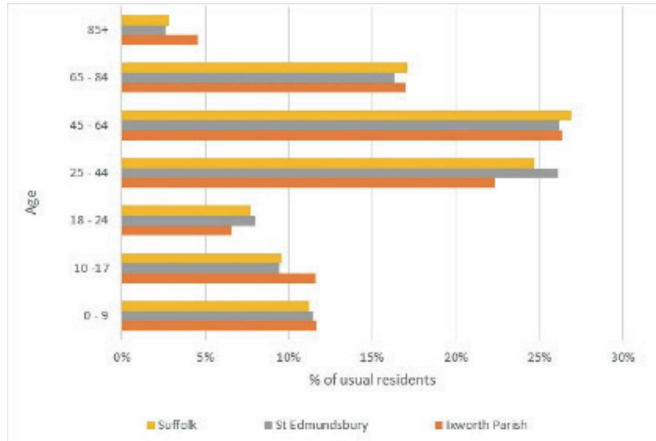


Figure 1: Population, 2011 (Census 2011)

**2.10** Since 2001, the population of Ixworth Parish has grown by 6% (or 132 persons). By contrast, growth was higher in St Edmundsbury District at 13% and Suffolk County at 9%. Figure 2 shows that, between 2001 and 2011, all areas saw significant growth in those of retirement age (65 and over). This trend is most prominent in Ixworth Parish which has seen a 71% increase in residents over 85. By contrast, there was slow growth in the population of Ixworth Parish aged 18 to 24 when compared to the district and county level. This suggests that many people, when reaching young adulthood, leave Ixworth Parish. It is likely that some will leave to undertake further or higher education but also it is likely that the high cost of housing will be a barrier to staying in the parish.

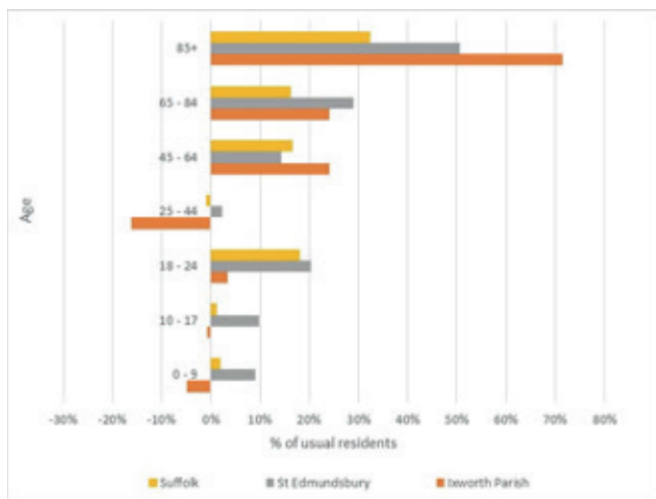


Figure 2: Change in population, 2001-2011 (Census 2011 and 2001)

## TYPE OF DWELLING

**2.11** The housing stock of Ixworth Parish primarily comprises detached properties (58%) followed by terraced properties (28%) and semi-detached properties (23%). The proportion of flats and converted or shared houses is very low. This is shown in Figure 3.

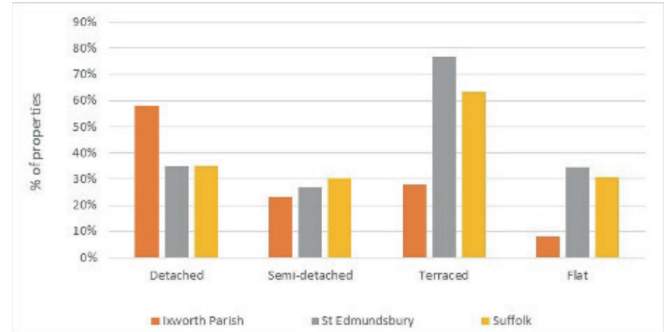


Figure 3: Type of dwelling, 2011 (Census 2011)

## OCCUPANCY RATING

**2.12** The occupancy ratings show a broad trend among all levels, but Ixworth Parish (50%) has a noticeably higher occupancy rating of +2 or more (meaning a household has two more bedrooms than is recommended for the number and composition of people living in the household) and a lower occupancy rating of 0 when compared to the district and county levels, reflecting the prominence of large, detached homes in the area coupled with the high proportion of retirees. This suggests that a greater proportion of smaller housing would better meet the needs of the community. This is shown in Figure 4.

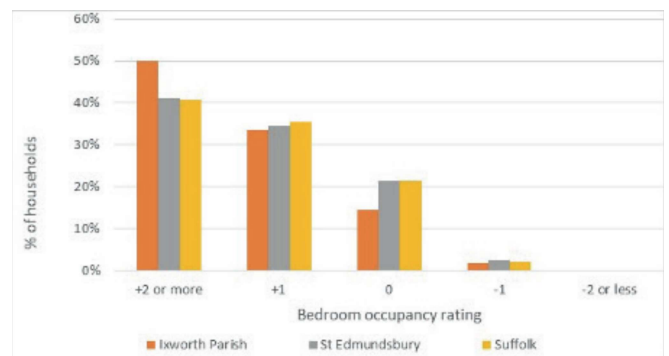


Figure 4: Occupancy rating, 2011 (Census 2011)

**2.13** The average house price in November 2019 for the IP31 postcode (which includes Ixworth Parish but excludes Bury St Edmunds) was £362,000 (source: mouseprice.co.uk). This represents a price/earnings ratio of 14.18, well above the national ratio of 12.82. In other words, the average property in Ixworth is more than 14 times the average earnings of a local household. This demonstrates that affordability is a significant issue in Ixworth.



## ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

**2.14** The population of working age (16 to 74) in Ixworth Parish shows a slightly higher proportion of people in full-time employment and a lower proportion of unemployed residents of working age when compared to St Edmundsbury District and Suffolk County as a whole. There is a similar proportion of those employed part-time and retirees, comprising the next highest proportion of residents aged 16-74. This is shown in Figure 5.

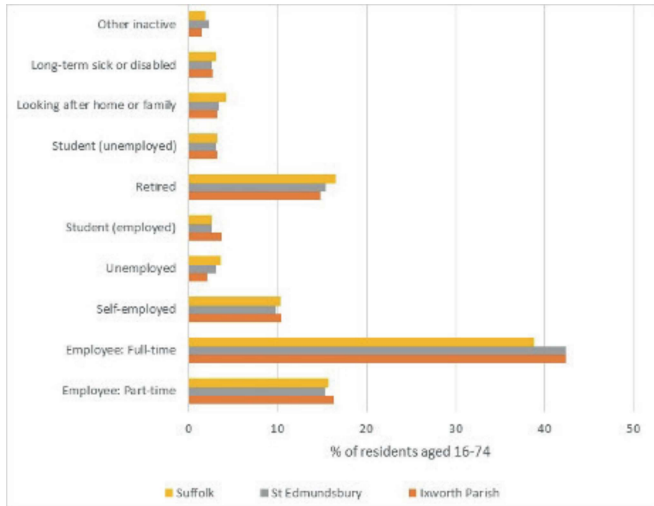


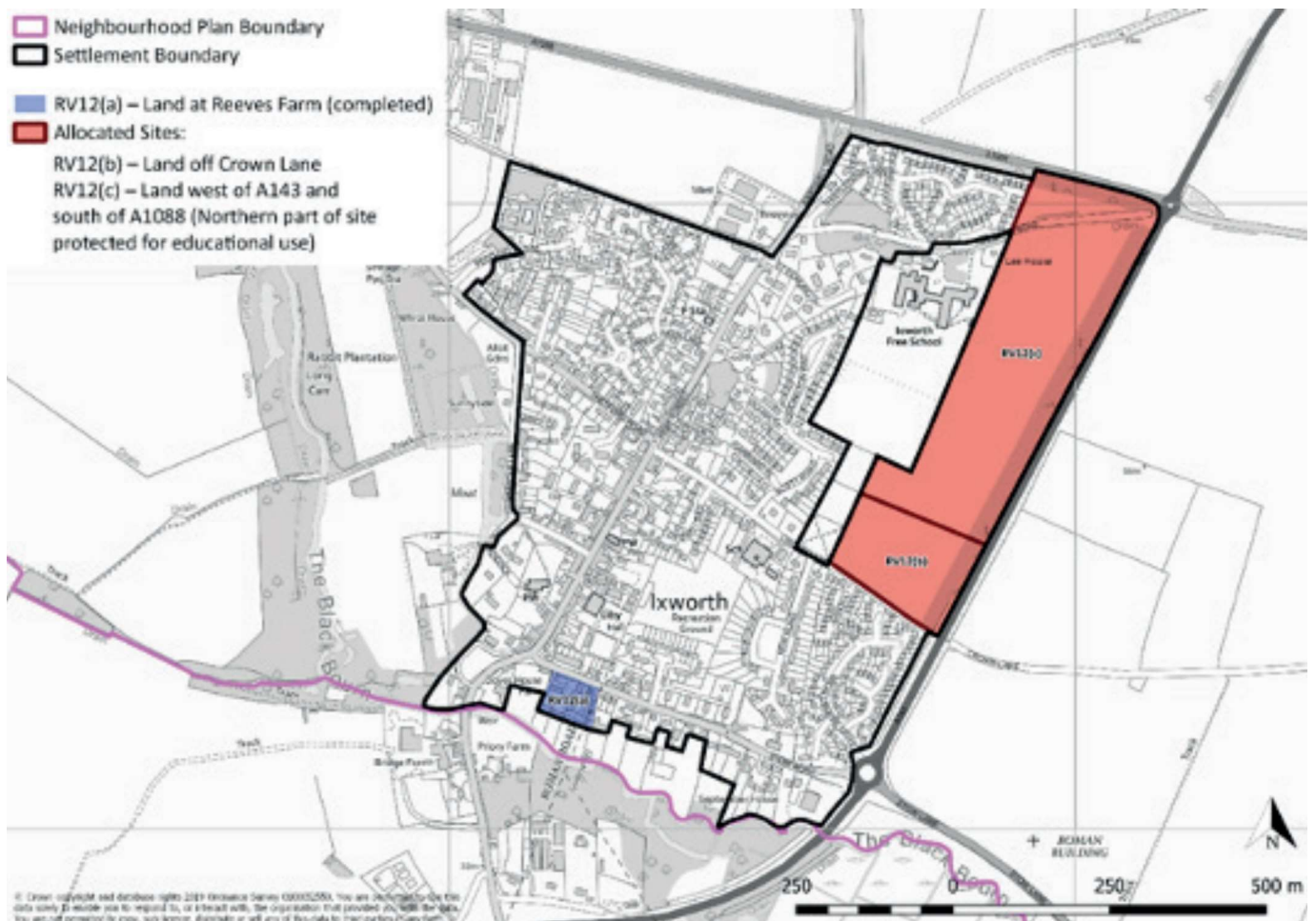
Figure 5: Economic activity, 2011 (Census 2011)

## DEVELOPMENT IN THE PLANNING PIPELINE

**2.15** The St Edmundsbury Rural Vision 2031 allocated three sites for development in Ixworth Village:

- Land at Reeves Farm (allocated for 20 dwellings) has been developed for 16 dwellings.
- Land off Crown Lane (allocated for 90 dwellings).
- Land west of A143 and south of A1088 (allocated for 80 dwellings plus land reserved for educational use, relating to a new primary school).

**2.16** This is shown on Map 3.



Map 3: Site allocations in St Edmundsbury Rural Vision 2031



# LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

## TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

**2.17** Following the building of the bypass at Ixworth Village there was a noticeable increase in road traffic along the A143 between Diss and Bury St Edmunds; this was ascribed to a willingness of people working in Bury St Edmunds and Cambridge to commute from further north once the problems of the congested High Street had been eliminated. Residents are concerned that further development at Ixworth, combined with that at Stanton, might overload the existing highway structure. There are also concerns about the use of 'ghost' junctions being used to access the Village from the bypass. These junctions are not easily visible, particularly at night, and several accidents have been recorded. Access to the developments shown on Map 3 has been a cause for dispute between the developer and local authorities and there has been a long delay to development as a result. The Parish Council strongly seeks to uphold the method of access to development into sites RV12b and RV12c through a modification to the northern roundabout of the A143 bypass creating a fifth-arm exit.

**2.18** Within Ixworth Village the High Street remains a major source of concern to residents. Speeding is frequently observed, parking restrictions often ignored and sight-lines for pedestrians are poor. The entrance to Crown Lane is very narrow and, due to the position of historic buildings, is incapable of remedy. The pedestrian safety aspect of this junction, particularly for primary school pupils, has been recognised by the installation of a safe-walking route through Fordham Place supported by a zebra crossing in the High Street.



High Street traffic

**2.19** Ixworth Village is less well served with buses than it was in 2010. The main service runs between Diss and Bury St Edmunds, passing through the Village approximately eight times per day in each direction from Monday to Friday, less frequently on Saturdays. There are no evening or night buses and no service on Sundays and Bank Holidays. School buses operate into Ixworth from neighbouring Villages in support of SET Ixworth School and out of Ixworth to Thurston Community College. Additionally, SET Ixworth School operates a minibus service for pupils from Stowmarket and Thetford.

**2.20** Ixworth Thorpe hamlet has a single bus service which runs to and from Bury St Edmunds once on a Wednesday to allow people to visit the street market. The timing allows passengers just over five hours in Bury St Edmunds.

**2.21** There is no safe link between Ixworth Village and Ixworth Thorpe hamlet for cyclists and pedestrians and the presence of the river and the bypass make residents of Ixworth feel that they are cut off from easy access to the surrounding countryside. A distinct shortage of rights of way in the Parish is much regretted.

## VILLAGE FACILITIES

**2.22** As befits its status as a Key Service Centre, Ixworth Village plays host to a range of public facilities unusual for a village of its size. There are worries locally about the ability of these facilities to cope with the expansion of the village. The GP surgery is of particular concern as it serves several settlements which exceed Ixworth in size, both of which are growing rapidly.



Ghost junction on Bypass



## EMERGENCY SERVICES

**2.23** Ixworth Fire Station is of 1970s design but since extended to house a water-tender Fire Appliance and a Command Support Unit. Both vehicles are operated by on-call crews as part of the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service. The Station's training room is available to the local community for small-scale meetings.

**2.24** Ixworth Village's stand-alone Police Station was demolished in 2013 and replaced with an annex to the Fire Station. This is an unstaffed station which no longer operates a desk for public contact. There is an emergency contact telephone affixed to the outer wall of the building.



*Ixworth Fire Station*



*Ixworth Police Station*

## EDUCATION

**2.25** Ixworth Church of England Primary School has occupied its current site in Crown Lane since 1969; it has an associated nursery facility. It has been renovated several times over the years and, along the way, lost its swimming pool. It can accommodate 236 pupils from ages 3 to 11. The need for a larger primary school has already been recognised and this will be provided for in the development adjacent to the existing school site, as shown on the Policies Map.

**2.26** As at 2020/21, numbers of pupils on the school roll had fallen since the school was made an Academy. Nevertheless, further growth in Ixworth Parish, as proposed through the site allocation in this Neighbourhood Plan and those in the Rural Vision, mean that there is sufficient demand to justify delivery of new primary school provision in Ixworth.



*Ixworth Primary School*



*SET Ixworth School*

**2.27** SET Ixworth School is housed in the former Ixworth Middle School building in Walsham Road. The site was taken on by the Seckford Education Trust in 2014 as Ixworth Free School. The school can take up to 500 pupils from ages 11-16. The school together with the Jiggins Trust achieved a successful grant from the Garfield Western Trust for the newly-built Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) which is available for community use as are the school's sporting facilities. The school regularly hosts events such as the Annual Parish Meeting. A building adjacent to the school has undergone refurbishment with a view to providing special needs support as well as hosting the youth club.



**2.28** As of September 2021/22 the school's pupil role was oversubscribed.



*The MUGA and Tennis Courts*



*SET School Playing Fields*

## HEALTH

**2.29** Ixworth Surgery was built in 1971 and extended to its current size in stages between 1985 and 2011. It incorporates a pharmacy and a range of treatment rooms. The Practice offers specialist respiratory care, a dietician, physiotherapy, an orthoptic clinic, counselling services and carers' sessions. The Pharmacy has gained in importance in recent years and has undergone a physical expansion and a great improvement in technological support. It is not possible to extend the surgery building further on its current site.

**2.30** The Practice also operates a secondary surgery at Stanton and is a member of the Eye Primary Care Network. There are over 9000 people registered with the Practice under the care of two full-time and four part-time GPs and a six-strong nursing team. Patients are drawn from 28 villages within a radius of seven miles of Ixworth Village. Two of these villages are a cause for concern for the future of the Surgery: approximately 13% of the

population of Thurston and 30% of the population of Stanton are registered with the Practice. In the last ten years around 1800 dwellings have been either built or planned for at Thurston; in the case of Stanton the figure is 750. With poor public transport, travel to the surgery is a concern for frail patients.

**2.31** Following the formation of the integrated care boards in 2022, Ixworth Surgery now sits within the West Suffolk Alliance and aligned to the Blackbourn Primary Care Network. Any referrals requiring secondary care treatment and/or appointments are facilitated by West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust where it falls within their scope of secondary care services.



*Ixworth Surgery*



*The Beeches*

## CARE FOR THE ELDERLY

**2.32** The Beeches is a privately-run residential care home in the High Street, occupying what was formerly a large private house and the neighbouring property of Fyfield House. First opened as a home for the elderly in 1985 it now specialises in dementia care. It can accommodate 43 residents and has undergone recent extension and improvement work.





*Ixworth Court*



*Jiggins Memorial Hall (Jiggins Trustees)*



*Blackbourne View (Orwell Housing)*



*Exercise & Play Equipment*

**2.33** Ixworth Court was first opened in 1975 as a council-run care home for the elderly and later closed when the Council moved to 60-bed units. Re-opened in 2018, after an extensive refurbishment, it is now operated by Leaf Care Services as a specialist care home. It houses 20 residents and provides smaller group living for people with dementia.

**2.34** Blackbourne View is an extra-care housing scheme for the elderly. The building is run by Housing 21 with the care provided by Orwell Housing Association. Opened in 2005 it consists of 33 self-contained one- and two-bedroomed apartments on two floors.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

**2.35** Ixworth Village Hall is known as the Jiggins Memorial Hall and was opened in 1931 following a generous bequest from the estate of local farmer Charles Jiggins. It has undergone repeated extension and development over the years in an effort to improve its range of facilities. It is operated by the Jiggins Memorial Hall and Playing Fields Charity, a Charitable Incorporated

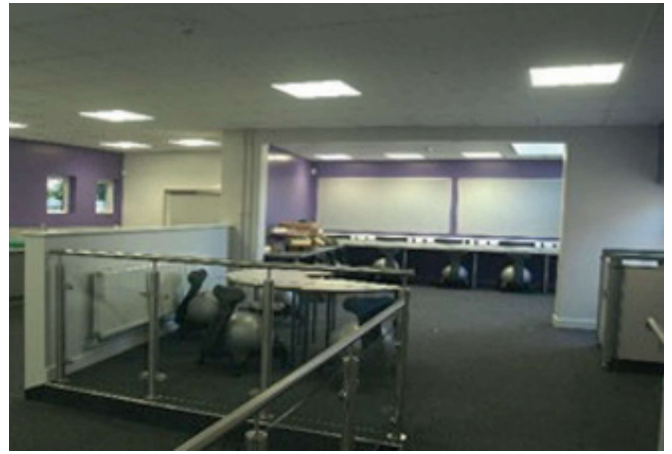
Organisation (CIO) who were considering the possibility of extensively redeveloping the hall once more; however, with the further expansion of the Village on the horizon, an alternative plan to create an entirely new community centre as part of a future development site has been pursued. Negotiations with developers are still ongoing.

**2.36** Ixworth Playing Field is also managed by the Jiggins Charity and has been home to Village football teams for decades. It is used by the Primary School for routine sports lessons and is the only place within the Village boundary which is suitable for the exercising of dogs. Should the Village Hall move from its current site the green nature of the field would be preserved under the terms of the trust which originally established the Village Hall Estate. It could, however, be re-landscaped more in the manner of a park. The field is currently home to three stages of play and exercise equipment ranging from toddlers to adults. The Jiggins Trust is considering the possibility of developing the area for a more general recreational use by Village residents.





*The Playing Field*



*Special Needs and Youth Club Building*



*The Library (Suffolk Libraries)*



*Allotments*

**2.37** Ixworth Library occupies two rooms within the Village Hall. Since 2012 it has been operated by Suffolk Libraries, an independent charity. It is open for 27 hours per week, including Saturdays. As well as books the Library loans CDs, DVDs and e-readers. Free internet access is provided and there are regular activities for all age groups from babies to adults. The Friends of Ixworth Library (FOIL) is a group which supports and promotes the Library. FOIL has run monthly film nights in the Village Hall.

**2.38** A Youth Club is in the process of being established at Ixworth by the Jiggins Trust in collaboration with SET Ixworth School. Using the building refurbished for special needs education, it plans to offer evening sessions for two different age groups (7 to 12 and 13 to 18.) The Club will be operated by youth workers funded initially by grants and supported by local volunteers. A meeting point and a range of activities will be offered as well as advice and support on issues relevant to young people living in a rural environment.

**2.39** There are 24 allotments in Ixworth Village spread across two locations. One site is owned by a local farmer and the other by the Jiggins Charity. Both are fully occupied.

## ACCESS TO NATURE

**2.40** Robin's Copse is a small nature reserve open to the public in Walsham Road in Ixworth. The land is owned by the Parish Council and the Reserve maintained by a group of volunteers.

**2.41** The main natural areas enveloping the village have largely restricted access. One large natural resource, Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Micklesmere, lies outside the village. Of the river bank only one side lies within the village and is largely inaccessible.



## PLACES OF WORSHIP

**2.42** St Mary's Church in Ixworth Village is one of the eleven churches in eight neighbouring parishes that make up the Blackbourne Team. Services are held every Thursday and Sunday.

**2.43** All Saints' Church in Ixworth Thorpe hamlet is also part of the Blackbourne Team but services are held only once every four weeks.



*St Mary's Ixworth*



*Ixworth Methodist Church*



*All Saints' Church, Ixworth Thorpe*

**2.44** Ixworth Methodist Church sits in the High Street and was dedicated as a Wesleyan Chapel in 1888. It holds regular Sunday services as well as a popular weekly coffee morning for members of the public. The Church makes its rooms available to local organisations for meetings.

## SPORTS AND LEISURE CLUBS

**2.45** Ixworth Bowls Club has used the same green since it was founded in 1907. Whilst it is a members' club, it has an open membership policy and non-members can pay a fee to have a game. It has equipment suitable for a range of abilities including juniors and wheelchair users and also offers opportunities for people with visual impairments. The bowling green and clubhouse are on land owned by the Jiggins Trust.



*Ixworth Bowls Club*



*Army Cadet Hut*

**2.46** The Army Cadet Force is a youth organisation which meets weekly at the Cadet Hut, Bardwell Road Junction. It provides training and learning activities for young people from Ixworth and surrounding villages aged between 12 and 18. Activities include life skills training, first aid, Duke of Edinburgh Award, BTEC CVQO as well as adventure activity, visits and an annual camp. Sponsored by the Ministry of Defence, the detachment is affiliated to the Grenadier Guards. There are currently around 30 young people involved.

## WHAT MAKES THE PARISH A NICE PLACE TO LIVE?

**2.47** Feedback from our public engagement events gave three main areas of high satisfaction with life in Ixworth:

- It is a friendly community which welcomes new residents.
- There is a good range of local facilities and services; the Surgery, Library, Pubs and Convenience Store being particularly welcome.
- It is a rural location with a Village 'feel' but close enough to major highways to allow travel to work in larger towns.



# 3. VISION AND OBJECTIVES



## CHALLENGES FOR IXWORTH AND IXWORTH THORPE

**3.1** The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address, as far as is possible, the key issues that face the community of Ixworth Parish. In summary these are:

- To ensure that new housing meets the needs of those with a connection to Ixworth that are in housing need.
- To ensure that the infrastructure of Ixworth Village is improved and expanded so that it can address the cumulative impacts of the growth in population that will arise through new development. In particular, this relates to the need for expanded community and retail facilities.
- The growing volume of traffic in the Village centre, with its relatively narrow High Street and the limited walking and cycling into the Village by local residents.
- The limited amount of access to recreational and green space provision in Ixworth Village and the poor access to leisure routes outside the Village.
- The event of the Covid-19 pandemic has seen at least two outlets close and there is a need, therefore, to encourage businesses and outlets.
- For Ixworth Village centre to remain vibrant and continue to be a place where people come to shop and spend their leisure time.

## VISION FOR IXWORTH AND IXWORTH THORPE

### **'IXWORTH PARISH: SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE'**

*'In 2040, Ixworth parish is still a pleasant place to live. It has grown considerably in size, but its long-established character as a bustling Village with an attractive environment has been preserved. Ixworth remains a vibrant Village with its range of independent shops with good community facilities continuing to draw in local residents from the Village and the surrounding areas every day.*

*In particular, Ixworth has successfully addressed three key issues. First, new housing development has taken place on sites around Ixworth Village, reflecting the scale and character of the existing built environment - they have been integrated into the area and feel part of Ixworth. As a result of the new houses, neither younger nor older people now need to leave the Village to find affordable or suitable housing.*

*Second, improvements in traffic management and pedestrian safety have made for a more pleasant environment while the development of walkways and cycle paths into and around the Village have encouraged people to leave their cars at home. This has reduced congestion and alleviated the pressure on the Village car park and the High Street, resulting in an improved Village centre as a place to stop and walk around. As a result, its shops and businesses thrive by both day and evening. The improvement of provision for small businesses has increased job opportunities for local people.*

*The character of the older parts of the Village is now even more secure and has led to an increase in the number of visitors and tourists coming to the Village centre. Ixworth has become a destination, where people come to walk or cycle in the surrounding attractive countryside or to enjoy a drink or meal in the Village.*

*Third, additional and improved leisure facilities have been developed. Potential green spaces have been developed into recreational and informal leisure facilities to meet the needs of all sections of the population. New facilities for youth activities have been provided.*

*A strong community spirit continues to exist and new, along with established residents, have successfully integrated into the Village, giving everyone the opportunity to participate in and live a healthy, safe and satisfying life.'*



# NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OBJECTIVES

**3.2** The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan as identified through engagement with the community are as follows:

## HOUSING

1. Ensure the design of new housing in Ixworth Parish is of high quality and in keeping with the best examples of character and design in Ixworth.
2. Ensure new housing meets the needs of Ixworth Parish, particularly in respect of providing smaller dwellings for first-time buyers and older people while providing a suitable mix of sizes to enable movement within the Parish.
3. Ensure new development is designed so that it is in keeping with its rural location and does not feel overly dense.

## TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

4. Improve the functioning of the road network to ensure pedestrian safety and maximise the potential for use by cyclists.
5. Encourage the provision of and improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes into and around Ixworth Village to support a more sustainable and safer environment, reduce reliance on the car and offer healthier lifestyle options.
6. Ensure the provision of appropriate public car parking within Ixworth Village.

## LEISURE AND RECREATION

7. Provide better opportunities for leisure for all in the community.

## ENVIRONMENT

8. Improve the range and quality of open spaces and sporting facilities serving the local community.
9. Ensure new development does not increase flood risk and does not adversely affect drainage and flooding.
10. Ensure new development is energy efficient and enables wildlife to thrive.
11. Create greater access to the countryside through the creation of more pathways and green corridors. This public access should be sensitive to the needs of the natural environment.

## IXWORTH VILLAGE CENTRE

12. Provide for and enhance existing facilities and support initiatives to attract visitors and tourists to Ixworth Village.
13. To develop a business hub from the current Village Hall should a new Village Hall be delivered.

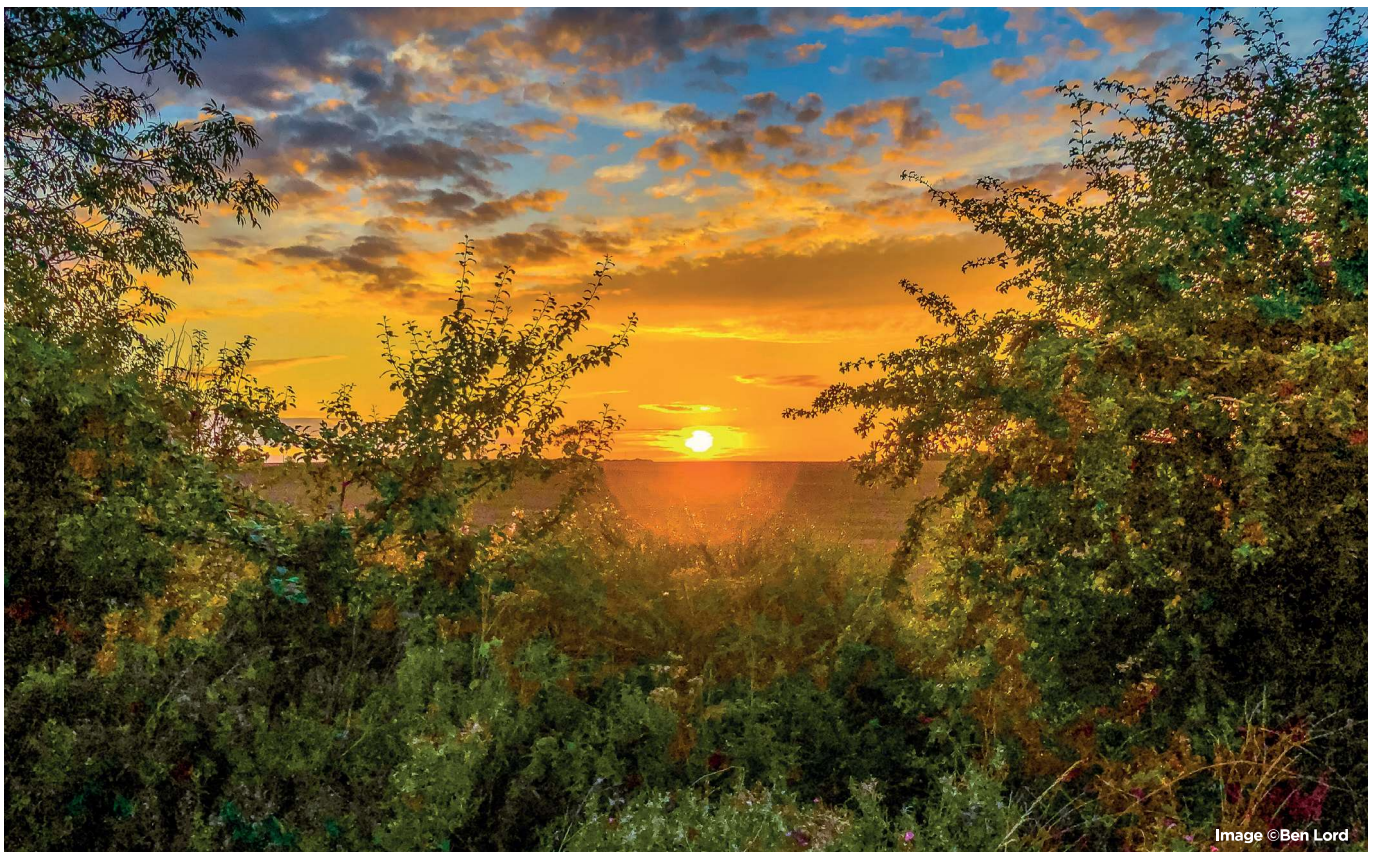


Image © Ben Lord



# 4. SPATIAL STRATEGY



Image © Ben Lord

**4.1** Ixworth Village is classified in the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy 2010 as a Key Service Centre. This means that it is one of the main locations for growth to be focused across West Suffolk and serves a wider hinterland of rural hamlets, including Ixworth Thorpe.

**4.2** The St Edmundsbury Rural Vision 2031 (adopted in 2014) plans for a minimum of 190 new dwellings over the plan period to 2031 on three site allocations. The Reeves Farm site allocation was granted planning permission for 16 dwellings and has been completed. The other two sites – land off Crown Lane and land to the west of the A143 and south of the A1088 – are allocated for 90 and 80 dwellings respectively. These sites are adjacent to one another and alongside the new dwellings, the allocation requires land to the north to be protected for a new primary school. At the current time, neither of these sites has been granted planning permission.

**4.3** In the early part of the plan period, the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy and the Rural Vision 2031 will be replaced by a new Local Plan which will cover the period to 2040. At the current time the extent of growth required to be accommodated across West Suffolk<sup>2</sup> is not known but it is certain that additional growth will need to be accommodated across the main settlements. This includes Ixworth Village. Engagement with officers at West Suffolk Council has identified that, based on national guidance for calculating housing requirements at a district level and then assigning this proportionately to each settlement gives an indicative figure for Ixworth Village of 97 dwellings. These would be additional to the two site allocations that are outstanding from the Rural Vision 2031.

**4.4** In this regard, the Neighbourhood Plan is seeking to be proactive in identifying locations that are suitable to accommodate broadly this scale of growth and to ensure that these sites provide the types of community infrastructure that will address the needs of the community, as identified through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. In particular, matters such as the lack of a convenience store selling a wide range of goods<sup>3</sup> and space to be able to have a wide range of community activities were raised. It is important that development addresses these needs and the site allocation in the plan addresses this.

**4.5** Policy IXW1 reflects this, with growth expected to be concentrated within the new settlement boundary of Ixworth Village, mainly on the site allocation. Windfall development on small infill sites within the settlement boundary will continue to come forward. Development outside the settlement boundary will only be considered acceptable if it meets the requirements of policies relating to rural development in the St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath Joint Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD). This includes but is not limited to Policies DM27 (Housing in the Countryside), DM29 (Rural Housing Exception Sites in St Edmundsbury), DM31 (Farm Diversification) and DM32 (Business and Domestic Equine Related Activities in the Countryside).

**4.6** It is also relevant to note that the Parish Council is seeking to gather the necessary evidence to determine whether it is possible and appropriate to establish a settlement boundary for Ixworth Thorpe hamlet in order to create more opportunities for housing development which can help to sustain the community of Ixworth Thorpe.

2. The Local Plan will be known as the West Suffolk Local Plan and will cover the local authority areas of St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath

3. Planning permission was granted for a convenience store at the northern end of the High Street in September 2017, but the operator withdrew and there are no plans to build the store.



## POLICY IXW1: IXWORTH SPATIAL STRATEGY

**A.** New development in Ixworth Parish shall be focused within the settlement boundary of Ixworth Village and on the site allocation in Policy IXW12 as identified on the Policies Map. Development proposals within the settlement boundary will be supported subject to compliance with the other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

**B.** In addition to sites allocated in Policy RV12 of the St Edmundsbury Rural Vision 2031, the Plan allocates land at the Langridge and land at Dairy Farm for development of approximately 229 dwellings to assist in meeting the identified need for housing provision.

**C.** All residential development proposals will be expected to address the following key matters:

- a.** ensure they address the evidence-based housing needs of the Ixworth Neighbourhood Area whilst providing either 20% or 30% Affordable Housing in conformity with policy CS5 of the adopted St Edmundsbury Core Strategy; and
- b.** contribute proportionately as necessary and appropriate towards key infrastructure which shall include but is not limited to primary healthcare, education, pedestrian movement and community facilities, through direct provision and/or developer contributions (including Community Infrastructure Levy and/or Section 106).
- c.** design high quality buildings and deliver them in layouts with high quality natural landscaping in order to retain the rural character of Ixworth Parish.

**D.** Development proposals on sites that are outside the settlement boundary will not be permitted unless they meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a.** They meet the requirements of policies relating to rural development in the St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath Joint Development Management Policies Document or any successor document.
- b.** They represent development required to support the rural economy.
- c.** They represent development required to support the expansion of education provision.
- d.** They relate to the retention of existing businesses and the provision of new commercial business activities that are appropriate in the countryside.
- e.** They relate to necessary utilities infrastructure and where no reasonable alternative location is available.

**E.** Where development, except for allocations as set out in this Plan, uses best and most versatile agricultural land, the economic benefits of farming the remaining parts of any fields on an ongoing commercial basis must be clearly demonstrated.

# 5. HOUSING



**5.1** As noted in the Spatial Strategy section, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to plan for a minimum of 97 new dwellings to be delivered over the plan period to 2040, in addition to the two outstanding site allocations in the St Edmundsbury Rural Vision 2031 (land off Crown Lane and land to the west of the A143 and south of the A1088) which are required to deliver a further 170 dwellings.

**5.2** Part of the importance of allocating sites for development is to address housing needs, not only as part of the wider need of West Suffolk as a whole, but also the need arising from people with a local connection to Ixworth.

## HOUSING MIX

**5.3** The Neighbourhood Plan has been informed by the Ixworth Housing Needs Survey 2019. The purpose of the study was to determine the level of need for housing across all tenure types in the parish. This need related to Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe residents and family members, even if those people did not currently live in the parish. It also sought to understand how affordable the current level of stock was to local people.

**5.4** The key messages from the survey were:

- 73 households reported having residents who would require accommodation in the next 5 years. Most common were those in the 16-24 age bracket.
- 38 households had close relatives who were not currently living with them but wished to live in the parish within the next 5 years.
- 43 households reported having people living with them who wished to move within the Parish but were unable to do so. The main reasons related to the cost of housing.

- 59% of households seeking accommodation within the parish were looking for something other than housing for sale at market value.
- 20% of households seeking a new home were looking to downsize to a smaller property.
- 26% of households that expressed a preference for a specific type of property were seeking a bungalow.

**5.5** The West Suffolk Housing Register also provides further evidence of need specific to Ixworth Village and Ixworth Thorpe hamlet. In November 2019, the register contained 26 households with a local connection to Ixworth Village and a further 5 with a connection to Ixworth Thorpe hamlet. The large majority of these needs were for 1- and 2-bed properties.

**5.6** The results of both sources suggest a clear housing need in Ixworth Parish. There is a need for a range of housing types, particularly smaller properties. A specific need is to enable older people currently living in bungalows to downsize, including to supported living accommodation, which in turn could enable older people in 4-bedroomed houses to downsize to the available stock of bungalows. This would free up some housing stock for growing families.

**5.7** If bungalows are not provided, then the design of housing must ensure that it meets the needs of older people. In 2015, the Government introduced two new 'optional' Building Regulations standards relating to accessible dwellings, which set standards in relation to accessible and adaptable dwellings (Part M4(2)) and wheelchair accessible dwellings (Part M4(3)) which are over and above the minimum requirements. It is particularly important, particularly on larger sites, that housing suitable for older people provides housing designed to meet these standards.



**5.8** Affordability is a key factor especially among younger people seeking their first home. The Housing Needs Survey provides evidence that the creation of one or more Rural Exception Sites (whereby affordable rented properties are held in perpetuity for households with a local connection) with a range of tenure types is justified for Ixworth Parish.

**5.9** Policy CS5 of the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy 2010 requires new housing development to provide a proportion of affordable homes as part of any scheme:

- Sites between 0.17 and 0.3 hectares or between 5 and 9 dwellings should provide 20% affordable housing.
- Sites of 0.3 hectares or more or 10+ dwellings should provide 30% affordable housing.

**5.10** Policy CS5 also states that the mix, size, type and tenure of affordable homes should meet the local identified housing need. In light of the findings of the Housing Needs Survey, it is considered important that new development which delivers affordable housing ensures these units are offered to people with a local connection to Ixworth Parish.

**5.11** As at February 2020, West Suffolk Council had received 122 applications to be on the Self-Build Register. Of these, 109 stated that they did not wish to accept a plot in Ixworth Village or Ixworth Thorpe hamlet which means that there are 13 applicants that potentially would accept a plot. Subject to the other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, the provision of self-build or custom-build plots is supported.

## HOUSING DESIGN AND LAYOUT

**5.12** Historic Ixworth Parish's stock of buildings, focused in particular close to Ixworth High Street, illustrate some of the features that give the area its character. These include a mix of styles, including some very attractive terraced housing, and use of materials such as flint, red and white brick and black woodwork. These are presented in a range of colours.



*Traditional houses on the High Street*

## POLICY IXW2: MEETING IXWORTH'S HOUSING NEEDS

- A.** Proposals for new residential development must contribute towards Ixworth's role as a Key Service Centre. This means addressing both the needs of the wider Housing Market Area and the needs of Ixworth parish as a rural community.
- B.** Development proposals that are required to deliver on-site affordable housing, in accordance with adopted St Edmundsbury Core Strategy Policy CS5, are expected to propose mechanisms that will maximise the opportunity for those with an established local connection to Ixworth Parish to access the new affordable properties.
- C.** On proposals of 10 units or more at least 25% of the dwellings will need to meet the requirements for accessible and adaptable dwellings under Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations, and will be required to demonstrate how the proposal contributes to increasing the choice and mix of housing available for the older population.
- D.** Proposals for self-build or custom build plots, or proposals that make a proportion of serviced dwelling plots available for sale to self-builders or custom builders, will be supported.



*Traditional terraces*

**5.13** More modern estates have taken some limited cues from this earlier development and some – particularly the 1930s development – provided lots of public green space for play which also gives a feeling of openness. One good example of this is the large open green space between development along Street Farm Lane and Chalk Lane. Development since the 1980s has however failed to replicate this, with the community saying that development feels cramped and uniform with little public open space to encourage children and adults to congregate together. These developments have also been served by straight access roads, creating problems with speeding cars. Poorly designed pedestrian walkways have also discouraged people from walking.

**5.14** It is important that new development is designed and laid out in a way that respects the character of Ixworth and also encourages people to congregate, feel safe on the streets and encouraged to walk rather than drive for short journeys, particularly for development in Ixworth Village which is within walking distance of the shops and services on or close to the High Street.



*Good example of modern development with a mix of styles*

## ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY DESIGN

**5.15** The Climate Change Act 2008 committed the UK to an 80% reduction in CO2 emissions by 2050. In June 2019, the UK Government made a commitment for the country to be net zero carbon by 2050. To achieve this will be a substantial feat that will require everyone to be engaged, from households and communities, to businesses and local and national government.

**5.16** In terms of the UK's stock of housing, this means that new homes will have to be designed to minimise energy use and create very low net carbon emissions through their design. This will include minimising heating and heat loss through effective insulation, having low water demand, and being fitted with or directly connected to renewable energy systems. In this context, the orientation of buildings can be important in order to make best use of available sunlight.

**5.17** With Britain no longer part of the European Union, the EU's Energy Performance of Buildings Directive<sup>5</sup> - which required all new buildings to be nearly zero-energy by the end of 2020 – will not apply. The UK's equivalent – the Code for Sustainable Homes - was withdrawn by the Government in 2015 and this has

## POLICY IXW3: RETAINING IXWORTH PARISH'S CHARACTER THROUGH RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

Proposals for residential development are expected to reflect the character of Ixworth Parish. Where possible, this should be achieved by incorporating the following features into the overall design of development:

- A.** Use of appropriate materials and colour palettes, particularly those that celebrate the vernacular of historic Ixworth.
- B.** Varying style of housing, including terraced housing, avoiding uniformity of layout and size.
- C.** Housing constructed around green open space.
- D.** Accessible and attractive public open spaces, incorporating opportunities for 'natural play'.
- E.** Footways that allow for safe access for all persons, including disabled access.
- F.** Preserve and sensitively incorporate existing natural features such as trees and hedgerows within the site, with the aim of delivering a net environmental benefit for local people and wildlife.

been replaced by new national technical standards, which include optional Building Regulations standards regarding water and access as well as a new national space standard (this is in addition to the existing mandatory Building Regulations).

**5.18** The Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to improve and promote sustainability in respect of minimising the emissions from built development in the parish by, for instance:

- integrating renewable energy systems into new development and retrofitting existing buildings;
- reducing water consumption through the use of grey water systems;
- developing community energy schemes.

5. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32010L0031&from=EN>



**5.19** The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to encourage energy efficient and sustainable well-designed development.

**5.20** At the local level, the design of individual buildings and of neighbourhood scale green and open spaces, including private gardens, will help to ensure that many of the species that are in Ixworth Parish can not only survive but thrive. This is crucially in line with the national planning guidance for achieving net biodiversity gain through all new development. This can be as simple as providing holes in fences for hedgehogs to move through or to place bird boxes at appropriate points on walls.

**5.21** Alongside technical design measures, there are simpler measures that can be adopted to help households reduce their carbon footprint. One type of provision that is increasing elsewhere is participation in small growing

spaces provided in communal areas outside residential developments. This can be as simple as a few raised planting beds. Not only do these enable more people to grow their own vegetables, but they have the advantage of being close to residents so they can participate in growing whilst engaging with fellow residents.



## POLICY IXW4: INCORPORATING ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY FEATURES INTO BUILDING DESIGN

**A.** Development which includes features in its design that minimise the energy and climate impacts of new buildings and maximise the opportunities for biodiversity to thrive will be strongly supported. In particular, this should consider the following:

- Siting and orientation of new buildings to optimise passive solar gain.
- The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials.
- Installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation, double glazing and low energy heating systems.
- Incorporating on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels and ground and air source heat pumps.
- Reducing consumption of potable water through the use of grey water systems and rainwater harvesting.
- Providing the infrastructure for electric vehicle charging points that can be accessed by each dwelling or public building and meet the requirements of the Suffolk Guidance for Parking 2019 (or any successor document).

**B.** Proposals to develop community energy schemes are strongly encouraged and will be strongly supported.

**C.** Development proposals that incorporate into their design features which encourage local wildlife to thrive will be strongly supported. In particular this may include:

- Bird and bat boxes and hedgehog runs;
- Measures to support character species of fauna and flora;
- Planting schemes including native species of trees and shrubs and nectar-rich plants for bees and other pollinators;
- The connection of any features to wider ecological networks.
- Preservation of rural, riverside and other important habitats.

**D.** In order to enhance local food growing networks, major<sup>6</sup> new residential developments will be expected where possible to provide defined growing spaces in communal areas that will contribute towards health and well-being appropriate to the scale of development.

6. Major development is as defined in the NPPF - For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

# 6. COMMUNITY FACILITIES & IXWORTH HIGH STREET

Image ©Ben Lord

## IXWORTH VILLAGE HALL

- 6.1** Since 1932, the residents of Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe have had the benefit of a village hall that has been provided on its current site in land and buildings left in trust to the residents of the village. In 1990, this was renovated and extended in a programme financed by the Parish Council. Over the past decade, the facilities have dilapidated to an extent where they are no longer considered suitable to meet the needs of the community as new development emerges within the village. Therefore, there is a fundamental need to provide a new village hall / community centre facility in a location to be further determined subject to appropriate feasibility studies and resident consultations independent of the Neighbourhood Plan process.
- 6.2** A proposal to build a new library adjacent to the existing hall did not meet with universal approval locally during the consultations that were held in 2017. In addition, it proved to be an expensive option and could have resulted in the reduction of green space for additional car parking.
- 6.3** In looking for alternative sites, the purchase of land for expanded sporting facilities within Ixworth settlement boundary would be very expensive. It was however known that there were extensive facilities, football pitches, rugby pitches a cricket pitch and other facilities at the Ixworth free school now run by the Seckford Education Trust (SET). It was decided to make an approach to see if this area could be made available to the local community. This approach was successful and in addition a grant was obtained for £60,000 to build an all-weather multi use games area. A contract was then negotiated with the school for the Jiggins trustees to run and make available to the community the facilities at the school thus satisfying the requirements of the new CIO.
- 6.4** The Trust is therefore still seeking a site for an expanded village hall. A site has been suggested at the Langridge, subject to the remainder of the site being made available for residential development and a new shop. Policy IW13 allocates this site for such development. Work since this point has been focused on the design of the building to include a library facility. If the site is allocated for development and brought forward for development, then the new hall will be handed over to the community through the Trust, although the completion of the hall will require additional funding.
- 6.5** With respect to the existing Village Hall, an assessment undertaken by professional surveyors has ascertained that it is suitable for conversion to a number of light industrial or office units. Communal areas for social purposes and meeting/ board room activities could also be made available, with the existing car park providing car parking for the occupiers. This would provide an income to the Jiggins Trust in a way that would be applied in accordance with its charitable status as a CIO. In addition, if a fourth unit was deemed suitable, then this could be provided by way of an extension to the existing building.
- 6.6** The existing car park is of a sufficient scale to provide parking in addition to that which would be required to support any commercial occupiers and its location means it is an important asset serving the heart of Ixworth Village. It must therefore be retained.
- 6.7** Consideration of the existing playing field has been made but no definitive alternatives have been identified. Given its location and amenity, the community considers it an important space for leisure and informal recreation and therefore it is considered important to retain as an open space for the benefit of the community.



**6.8** It is fundamental that any proposals for alternative uses in the existing Village Hall will only be permitted if satisfactory alternative provision has been made and is available prior to the closure of the existing Village Hall. Also, all value and revenues would be the property of the villagers and applied for the benefit of the residents of Ixworth according to the Charity Commission's Rules and Regulations.

**6.9** It is recognised that the proposed location for the new village hall is not as central as the current location. The Village Hall plays an important role in contributing to the vitality and viability of the centre of Ixworth Village. In order to justify the new provision, easy access from the High Street must be provided for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled users. Policy IXW12 seeks to facilitate this by requiring a pedestrian crossing. Alongside this, it will be important that the alternative uses in the existing Jiggins Memorial Hall play a role in supporting the vitality of the High Street, both through the services that occupying businesses provide and the additional footfall of workers and visitors.



Image © Ben Lord

## POLICY IXW5: RE-PROVISION OF IXWORTH VILLAGE HALL

- A.** The re-provision of Ixworth Village Hall on the proposed site allocation (Policy IXW12) will be supported, subject to the following criteria:
- a.** Sufficient parking provision is made on site.
  - b.** The quality, size and range of community spaces and ancillary facilities are of at least the same standard as the existing Village Hall.
  - c.** New provision has been completed and is available for use prior to the closure of the existing Village Hall.
  - d.** Safe access is provided to the High Street for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled users.

**B.** A new Village Hall will be expected to retain library provision at least equivalent to the existing provision. The replacement library provision may need to support enhancement of the library service as a result of growth in the Neighbourhood Plan area and its surrounding area.

**C.** If a new Village Hall is provided in Ixworth Village, then the re-use of the existing facility for activities which enhance the function of Ixworth Village Centre will be strongly supported. This includes office, retail and community uses (provided they do not compete with the facilities offered at the new Village Hall) and employment/meeting space.

**D.** In recognition of its value in supporting the vitality of the shops and services in Ixworth Village centre, the car park serving the existing Village Hall (along with the existing access onto the High Street) must be retained for public use unless it can clearly be demonstrated that an alternative use will not harm the vitality of the Village centre.

## IXWORTH VILLAGE CENTRE

**6.10** The centre of Ixworth Village has always played a central role in community life. The primary focus has traditionally been built around its retail services which, in turn, has created a hub for community life, with the High Street acting as a natural venue for residents to meet.

**6.11** Ixworth Village is designated in the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy 2010 as a Key Service Centre in recognition of the important role it has to play in serving the residents of the Village and those that live in the immediate surrounding area. This importance is enhanced by its relatively old and ageing population, with older people typically relying more heavily on local shops and services (an issue exacerbated by the limited public transport options).

**6.12** As with many high streets however, Ixworth Village has experienced decline in the number and range of shops and services since the late-20th century. This brings fewer people into the centre of the village which makes it harder for existing businesses to thrive. However, there have been some recent successes. In 2019, the Courtyard Café opened adjacent to the Pykkerell pub and includes a small play area for toddlers.

**6.13** Ixworth Village therefore needs to be creative in the way it provides shops and services that address the needs of the community. A more flexible approach is needed as to the types of appropriate uses that can occupy retail units, including temporary uses. The community has expressed an interest in developing a community hub – including post office services and a café – which should be assisted where possible.

## POLICY IXW6: RETAINING AND ENHANCING THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF IXWORTH VILLAGE CENTRE

**A.** To secure the ongoing vitality of Ixworth Village, proposals which protect, enhance and promote a diverse range of appropriate uses – including retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural and community – will be supported, subject to the other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.

**B.** New commercial, office and/or retail provision will only be supported in the existing Village Hall once suitable alternative community provision has been completed and is available for use elsewhere.

### NEW RETAIL PREMISES

**C.** The provision of new retail premises outside Ixworth Village Centre and the proposed provision on site allocation IXW12 will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:

- a.** It meets the requirements of St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath Joint Development Management Policies Document Policy DM35 (Proposals for Main Town Centre Uses)<sup>7</sup>.

- b.** Provision is made within the settlement boundary and in a location that is easily accessible to the existing community and the identified site allocation, particularly on foot and by bicycle.

### TEMPORARY USES

**D.** The use of Class E premises for temporary uses will be supported in Ixworth Village Centre. Such uses include ‘pop up’ shops and cultural, creative and leisure uses introduced on a temporary basis or for specific events.

**E.** Such uses must demonstrate that they will not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses, particularly residential through excessive noise and pollution.

**F.** Such uses will generally not be considered appropriate if the operation of the business requires large numbers of vehicle parking spaces in order to function unless sufficient parking arrangements have been presented.

7. A sequential approach must be applied to demonstrate that there are no suitable, viable and available sites in the Village Centre or edge-of-centre locations. Also proposals to provide more than 300sqm of gross floorspace will require an impact assessment to demonstrate that it will not have a significant adverse impact in accordance with the NPPF (paragraph 90).



## LEISURE AND SPORTS FACILITIES

- 6.14** Ixworth Village has a reasonable range of leisure and sports facilities. The growing population will create greater demand for facilities but also it should be recognised that there are certain requirements which could be better provided for.
- 6.15** There are extensive playing fields at the SET Ixworth School and there is an intention for these to be made available to the general public outside of school hours. This would free up the playing field at the current Village Hall. The provision of a Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) has helped to address a particular need. It is therefore considered that new locations for outdoor sport and leisure provision are not required. Rather there is a need for the type of facilities which remain uncovered by the school's facilities.
- 6.16** The April 2019 workshops on issues for the Neighbourhood Plan identified a desire for children's 'active' play facilities (e.g. an adventure playground) and youth facilities (e.g. skateboarding, BMX, etc). There is the potential for the play and youth facilities to be provided through the allocation of the Langridge and Dairy Farm site (Policy IXW12).

## POLICY IXW7: ENHANCING LEISURE AND SPORTS FACILITIES

- A.** In order to provide for the increased need for leisure provision to support the growing population of Ixworth Parish, development proposals that deliver the following shall be strongly supported:
- a.** Children's 'active' play facilities
  - b.** Youth facilities
- B.** The delivery of new facilities or improvements to existing facilities will be secured through Section 106 contributions or Community Infrastructure Levy funding or provided on site.

# 7. MOVEMENT



Image © Ben Lord

## KEY MOVEMENT ROUTES

**7.1** Feedback from the community about the development of the Micklegrove estate, built in the early 1990s, was that the narrow, overgrown footpaths that lead into the centre of the Village are rarely used. This highlights a common problem, namely that if walking routes are not attractive and don't follow logical routes to key destinations, then people won't use them. This in turn encourages people to use their cars for short journeys within the Village.

**7.2** In terms of trying to positively influence future patterns of movement into and around Ixworth Village, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to focus on making improvements for pedestrians and cyclists in order to encourage more walking. Linking the new housing allocations, as well as the existing parts of the Village, into a network of safe walking and cycling routes is vital to encourage more walking/cycling and less use of the car. Such improvements have a range of benefits including:

- Providing genuine alternatives to the private car as a means of accessing key shops and services, the two schools and other community facilities.
- Providing health benefits through increased walking.
- Reducing congestion at busy times by encouraging children to walk to and from school and people to walk to the shops rather than 'jumping in the car' for a short journey.
- Providing a safer environment for the community of Ixworth, including vulnerable users.

**7.3** Analysis of the existing routes and the location of both proposed and existing residential areas and the main services people use (shops, schools, community facilities) shows that the routes where good pedestrian facilities have the best chance of increasing walking are along the main roads in Ixworth Village:

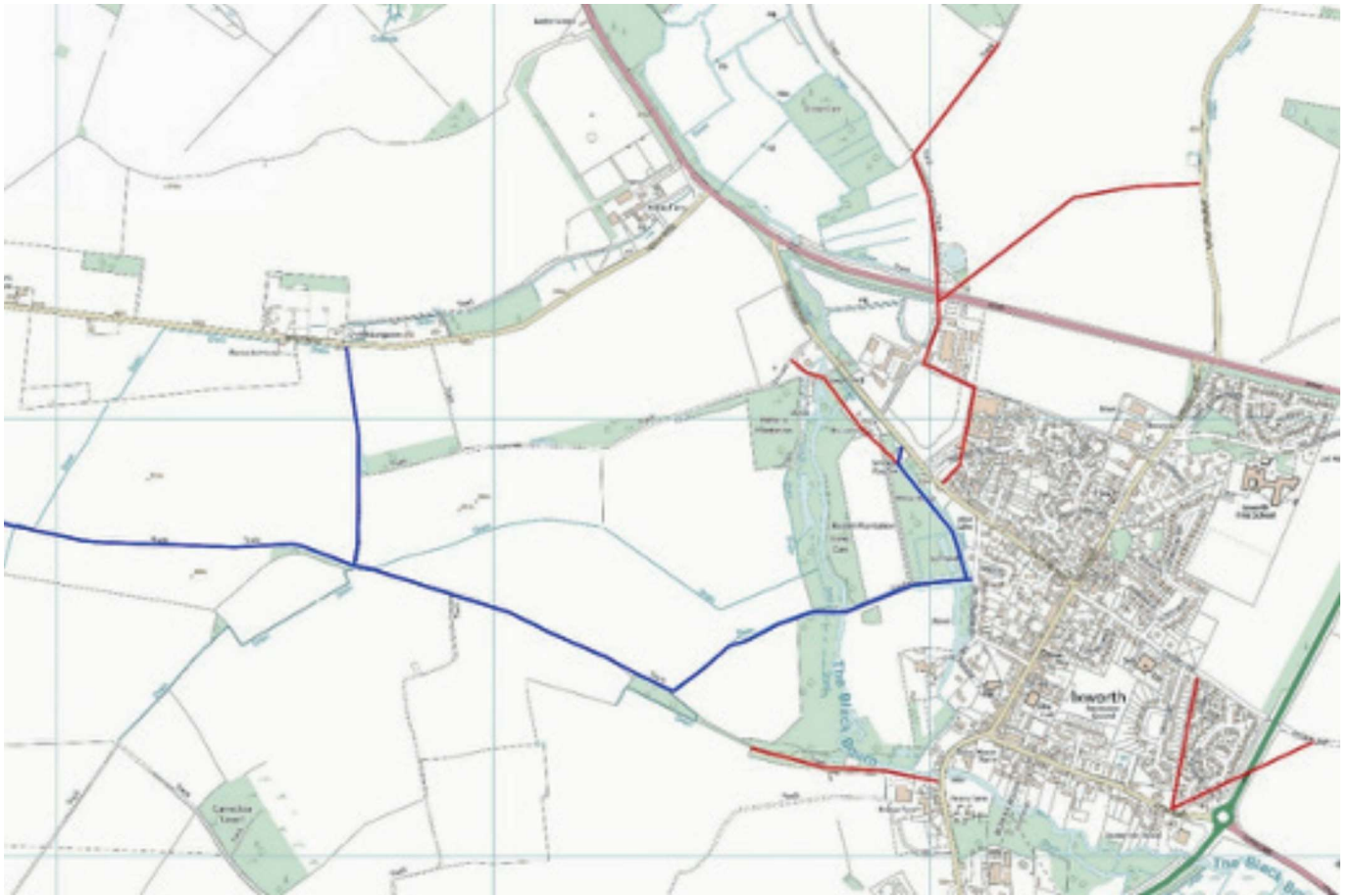
- Along the High Street/Bardwell Road
- Along Thetford Road/Crown Lane
- Along Stow Road
- Also, although not a main route, along Commister Lane

**7.4** The improvement of these routes for pedestrians and also for cyclists will be particularly important as development comes forward. This includes ensuring that footways are wide enough to accommodate all users, including disabled users, and that crossings are provided as necessary. One such location where a pedestrian crossing is considered to be needed is along the High Street to safely link the existing community with the new Village Hall on the Langridge site (Policy IXW12).

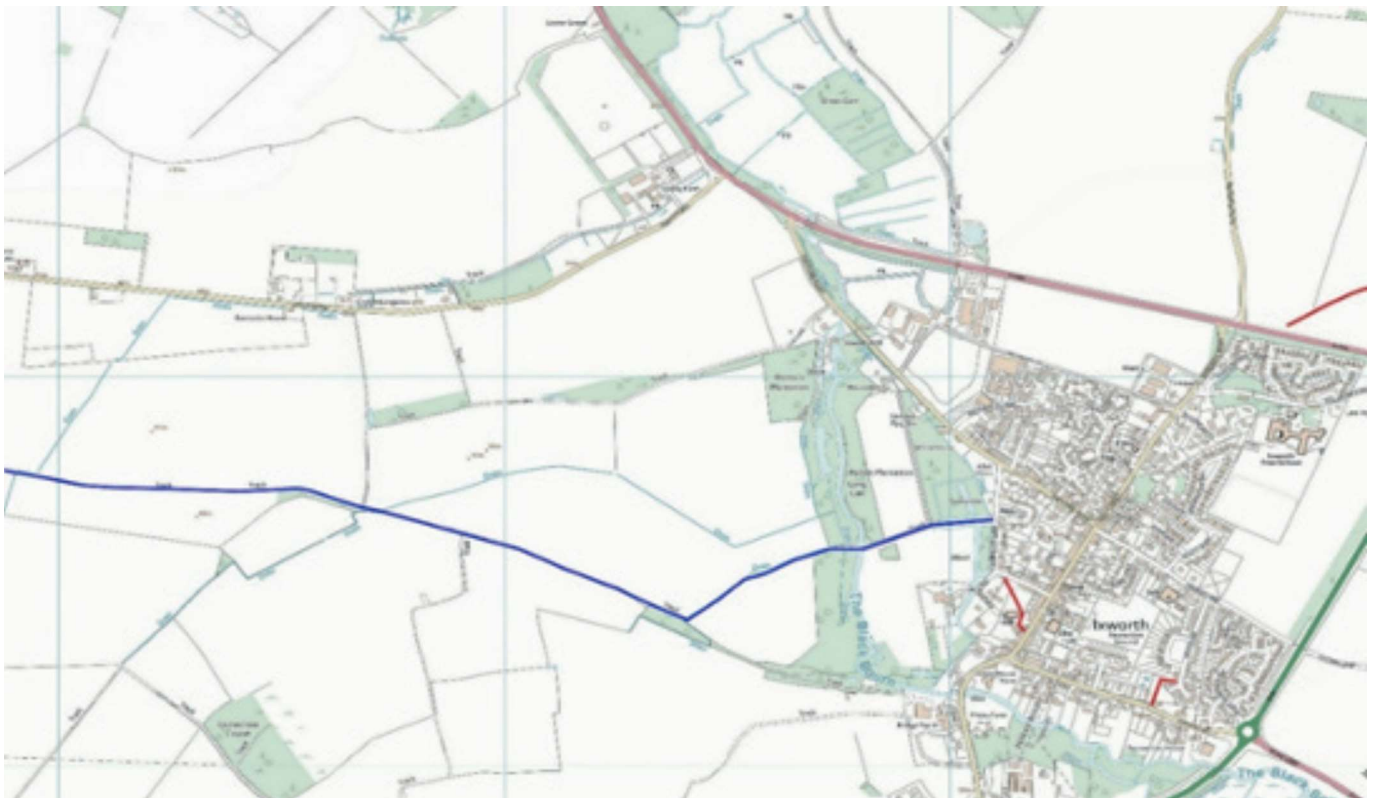
**7.5** Ideally, dedicated provision for cyclists should also be made, although shared paths for pedestrians and cyclists should generally be avoided.



**7.6** The parish of Ixworth is notably lacking in public rights of way, given its rural nature. It used to have a good number of routes but many of these were lost (see Maps 4a and 4b below).



**Map 4a: Footpaths (in red) and permissive footpaths/bridleways (in blue) - in 1951**

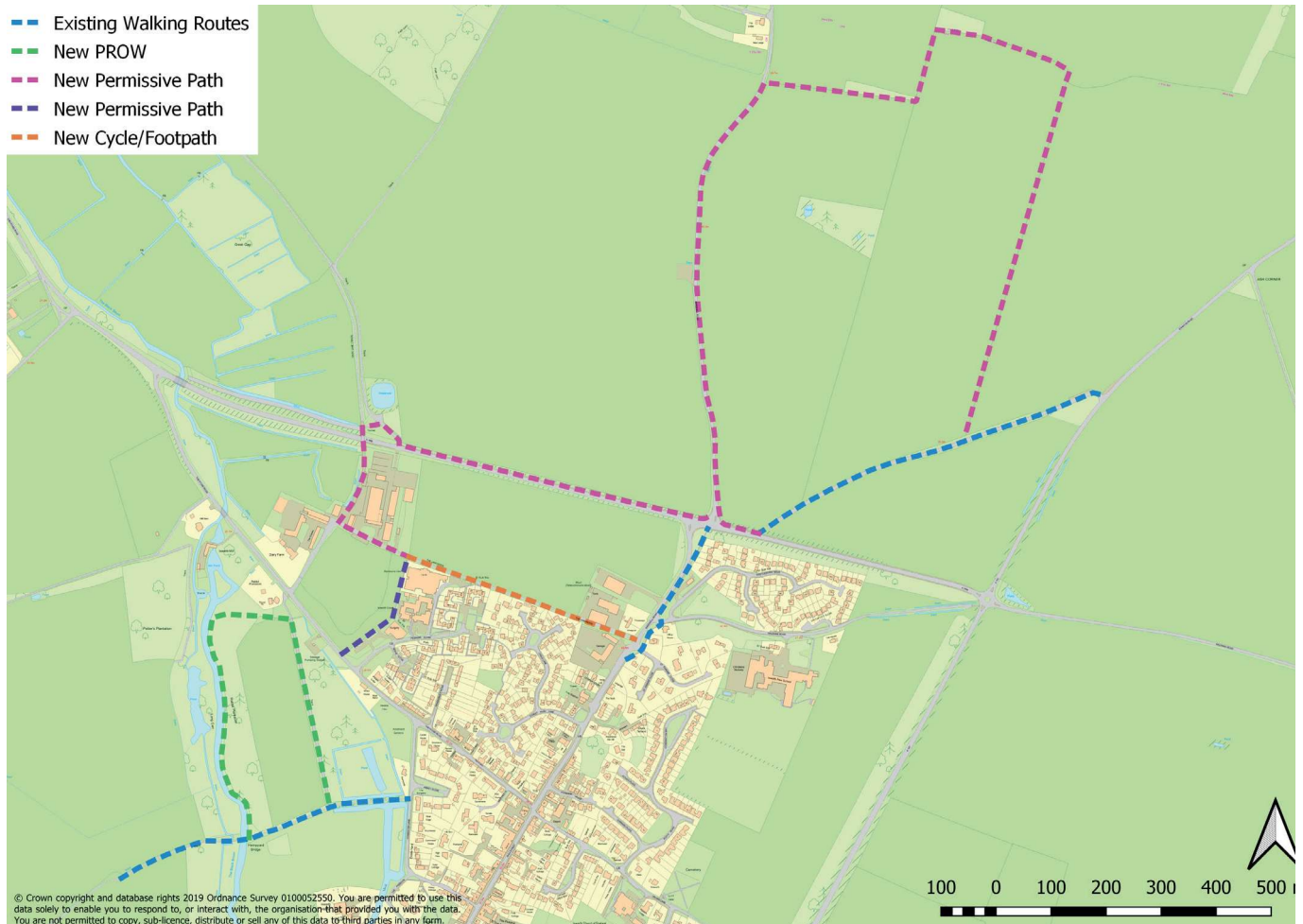


**Map 4b: Footpaths (in red) and permissive footpaths/bridleways (in blue) - today**

## 7.7

Unsurprisingly as a result, the community has identified a strong desire for more rural walking routes, including circular routes. As part of the allocation at the Langridge and Dairy Farm (Policy IW12), the landowner has committed to providing new circular walking routes across land under the same ownership. As shown on Map 5, this includes:

- a. to the north of the A1088
- b. to the west of the village incorporating a walk along the river.



**Map 5: Proposed circular walking routes – map to be prepared formally once agreed**

## 7.8

Additionally, a more specific scheme identified is a footbridge (also possibly with cycle access) over the bypass at Crown Lane. This would create safe access out of the Village. A partnership between the Parish Council and Suffolk County Council has been exploring various options for the delivery of such a footbridge that would connect the two ends of Crown Lane. It is important that this bridge seeks to provide cycle access and also considers access for wildlife.

## 7.9

The need for a such a footbridge, linked to the allocation of sites off Crown Lane (RV12(c)) west of the A143 (RV12(b)) in the St Edmundsbury Rural Vision, is increased by other development to the north of Ixworth. Land east of Bury Road in Stanton has outline planning permission for up to 220 dwellings. In addition, proposals are being assembled at the Shepherd's Grove Industrial Estate near Hepworth for a vehicle distribution depot which would create approximately 250 heavy goods vehicle movements per day. Such developments would create significant additional traffic on the A143 travelling to and from the A14 at Bury St Edmunds. Any alternative to a dedicated footbridge would place pedestrian safety at considerable risk and would serve to limit access by the community of Ixworth to countryside walking routes to the east of the village towards Pakenham.



## POLICY IXW8: IMPROVING WALKING AND CYCLING THROUGHOUT IXWORTH PARISH

- A.** Development proposals will be expected to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement.
- B.** In particular, provision of pedestrian and cycling routes that are physically separated from vehicular traffic and from one another will be strongly supported. Such routes should also ensure that access by disabled users and users of mobility scooters is secured, which could include the provision of wider pavements, dropped kerbs and widened entrance ways. With the exception of the green corridor route along the Langridge (Policy IXW12), shared paths for pedestrians and cyclists should be avoided.
- C.** To ensure that residents can access public transport facilities, schools, leisure and other important facilities, all new developments should ensure there are safe, attractive and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to the following routes (shown on the Policies Map):
  - a.** Along the High Street/Bardwell Road
  - b.** Along Thetford Road/Crown Lane

- c.** Along Stow Road
- d.** Along Commister Lane

**D.** Proposals to provide a pedestrian footbridge over the A143 bypass to the east of Ixworth Village will be strongly supported.

**E.** Development will be expected to avoid having a detrimental impact on the routes and access points identified in Parts C and D. Where necessary development will be expected to provide a strategy to mitigate the impact of additional traffic movements on pedestrian and cyclist safety and movement.

### PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

**F.** Proposals for development must look to protect and enhance the existing Public Rights of Way network in the immediate vicinity of the development site. Linking the Public Rights of Way network to the routes identified above is encouraged. They must also seek opportunities to link to other green spaces and the wider Public Rights of Way network, and where appropriate contribute to improving and enhancing it.

## VEHICULAR PARKING

**7.10** In a rural location such as Ixworth Parish where public transport is limited, car ownership is high. It is therefore important that adequate parking provision is made for all types of new development. In particular, residential development – a high generator of parking need – must be well designed in order to maximise the safety of pedestrians. This in turn will help to encourage more pedestrian movement for short trips within and around Ixworth Village.

**7.11** The requirements for the provision of parking are provided by the Suffolk County Council Parking Guidance 2019. Development proposals that generate an increased need for parking will be expected to have regard to this guidance.

## POLICY IXW9: VEHICULAR PARKING

Parking should be provided referring to standards set in the Suffolk County Council Guidance for Parking 2019 (or any successor document). Any on-street parking should be well integrated into the development layout and street-scene to avoid obstruction to all users, paying particular care to the safety and movement of pedestrians and cyclists.

# 8. ENVIRONMENT



## LOCAL GREEN SPACES

**8.1** Under the NPPF, Neighbourhood Plans have the opportunity to designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to them. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 100 of the NPPF says that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

**8.2** The following eight areas are considered to fulfil all of the criteria of the NPPF:

## POLICY IXW10: PROTECTING LOCAL GREEN SPACES

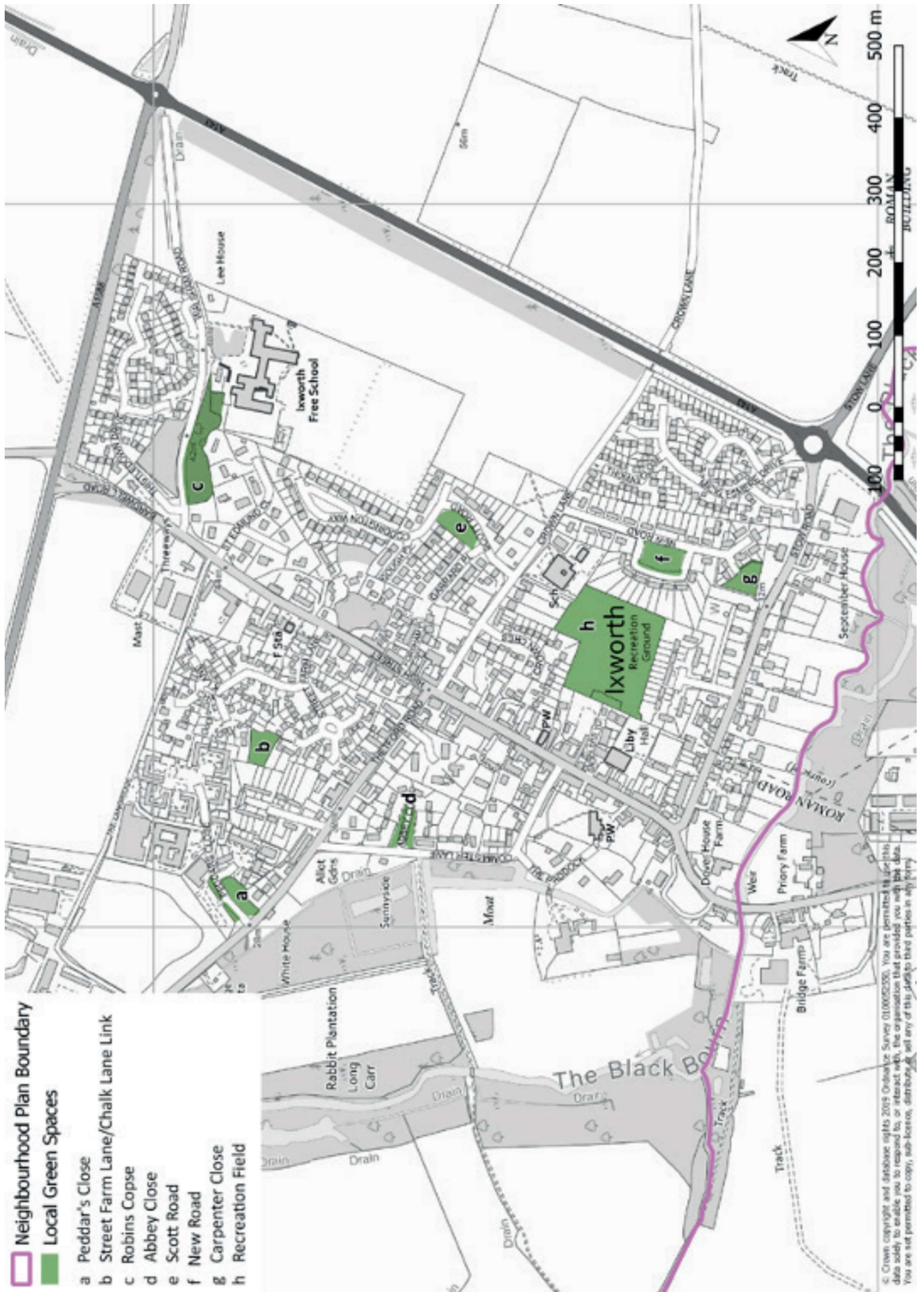
**A.** The following areas shown on the Proposals Map are designated as a Local Green Spaces:

- a. Peddar's Close
- b. Street Farm Lane/Chalk Lane Link
- c. Robins Copse
- d. Abbey Close
- e. Scott Road
- f. New Road
- g. Carpenter Close
- h. Recreation Field

**B.** Proposals for built development on these Local Green Spaces must be consistent with policy for Green Belts and will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that it is required to enhance the role and function of that Local Green Space.

**8.3** Map 6 (on the next page) shows each of the Local Green Spaces. Detailed maps of each space are shown in Appendix A. Details of how each area fulfils the Local Green Space criteria are included in the supporting evidence base.





Map 6: Location of Local Green Spaces

## SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

**8.4** Ixworth Parish was notorious for its drainage problems throughout the 19th century, mainly due to its sloping locations. The main problem area was along the line of Ixworth High Street down towards the river, with a secondary issue of surface water run-off down Thetford Road from the High Street. A sewage system was finally installed in 1951 to solve the problems.

**8.5** More recently, problems have been experienced at the low point in the system in Commister Lane/The Paddock during heavy rainfall. In 2018, Anglian Water installed a storm tank in Commister Lane which has the capacity to accept the run-off from a '1-in-30 year' storm event, prevent it from overwhelming the sewers and then gradually pump the water away. Problems still persist however on Thetford Road between the A1088 and the bridge, the High Street/Stow Road junction and near to the coach park at the A143/A1088 junction.

**8.6** Whilst this significant infrastructure investment addresses a known flooding issue, it is important that the Neighbourhood Plan ensures that new development provides effective urban drainage solutions that can add additional capacity and flexibility to water drainage systems. Developers need to give consideration to how to make best use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) so that they are seen not only as a drainage solution but for their amenity value, providing a place for residents and others to enjoy and be closer to nature and green infrastructure. Also it is particularly important that they are utilised to address the NPPF requirement for development to provide a net gain for biodiversity.



Examples of multi-functional SuDS provision

**8.7** With the threat of a warming climate, SuDS provide opportunities to mitigate the growing threat of water stress through effective water capture and management. For example, when rainwater or greywater is captured, it can be used to keep greenery adequately watered and to generally cool the ambient temperature of the built development.

## POLICY IXW11: MULTI-FUNCTIONAL SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

- A.** Where appropriate, development should mitigate the risk of flooding from all sources and not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere through use of multi-functional Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), which can be used as Public Open Space. SuDS should be well integrated and attractive part of a development and the use of a wide range of creative solutions are encouraged such as provision of SuDS as part of green spaces, green roofs, permeable surfaces and rain gardens.
- B.** Development must demonstrate how the proposed SuDS is designed so that it can enhance wildlife and biodiversity.
- C.** Development proposals should be supported by a drainage scheme maintenance plan, which demonstrates a schedule of activities, access points, outfalls and any biodiversity considerations, as well as the body responsible for each aspect of the plan. SuDS assets will require recording on the Suffolk County Council Flood Risk Asset Registry. This information provided should be proportionate to the stage of the application.



# 9.

## SITE ALLOCATION

### - LAND AT THE LANGRIDGE & DAIRY FARM

**9.1** Whilst in two parts, this site is in single ownership. The Langridge part of the site can come forward in the short term, with the Dairy Farm part of the site following in the short-to-medium term. The Village Hall, proposed on the Langridge part of the site, can come forward in the short to medium term and the adjacent retail provision in the medium term. Development of the Langridge in particular provides significant benefits. These include the following:

- A range of housing to meet local needs (including a minimum of 30% affordable housing).
- Land for a new village hall to replace the existing Village Hall. Such provision should meet the requirements of Policy IXW5.
- Provision of a small retail unit on the south-eastern area of the Langridge part of the site. This would need to include space for parking, storage and servicing.
- A green corridor along the Langridge with access for pedestrians and cyclists, which can also to be used for emergency vehicular access, and in part provides access to the new Village Hall site for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

- Easy access to potential new walking routes to the west of the village, providing opportunities to improve physical and mental health and wellbeing. All of the new routes would be on land controlled by the landowner of this site, demonstrating their deliverability. It would be important to ensure that any ecological impacts could be appropriately mitigated.
- The provision of land and financial contributions towards the provision of play and youth facilities to meet the needs identified in Policy IXW7 and paragraph 6.15.
- Improvements to road safety at the junction of Bardwell Road and the A1088 as identified in the site-specific Transport Assessment which will support a future planning application. Given the importance of pedestrian safety at a location where there have been fatalities, the solution advocated by the Parish Council is a roundabout which would serve to provide the necessary ingress and egress from the Langridge site at the A1088. An alternative solution will only be considered if it provides for both pedestrian safety and appropriate vehicular access.

**9.2** Development of the Dairy Farm part of the site would need to avoid harm to the listed barns on the site and their setting.





## POLICY IXW12: LAND AT THE LANGRIDGE & DAIRY FARM

Land totalling approximately 10.5 hectares at the Langridge and approximately 10.7 hectares at the Dairy Farm (as identified on Map 7 and on the Policies Map) is allocated for a total of approximately 229 dwellings. Additionally, approximately 0.5 hectares is allocated for a village hall site and associated parking provision, and 0.2 hectares for new retail provision (as identified on Map 7 and on the Policies Map). All requirements of this allocation can be brought forward independently of each other but must be secured as part of a comprehensive approach that ensures delivery of the full range of uses on the site.

### DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL BE SUPPORTED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

#### HOUSING AND DESIGN

- A.** Approximately 220 dwellings on the Langridge part of the site, providing a range of housing sizes and types which, as a minimum, address local needs and meet the requirements of Policy IXW2.
- B.** Approximately 9 dwellings on the Dairy Farm part of the site.
- C.** Where development on the Dairy Farm part of the site includes conversion of listed barns and associated traditional buildings, this must be to a high standard and must demonstrate how the buildings and their setting will be preserved and, where possible, enhanced.

#### RETAIL

- D.** Provision of a retail unit of up to 300m<sup>2</sup> gross floor space fronting on to Bardwell Road, along with appropriate space for storage and service, its own vehicular access and parking.

#### COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- E.** Provision of approximately 0.5 hectares of land for a new village hall with parking, to be transferred to the Jiggins Memorial Hall and Playing Fields Charity.
- F.** The Education Authority is satisfied that the additional education needs can be appropriately addressed.
- G.** Provision of space for play and youth facilities (see Policy IXW7).

#### ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

- H.** Provision of suitable vehicular access via a roundabout off the A1088 for the Langridge part of the site and via the original Thetford Road to the south for the Dairy Farm part of the site.

- I.** Addressing safety issues at the junction of Bardwell Road and the A1088 to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority. Such solutions must firstly consider provision of a roundabout; any alternative solution must be justified accordingly on the grounds of fully addressing pedestrian safety.

- J.** Provision of a dedicated pedestrian crossing of Bardwell Road in association with the Langridge part of the site.

- K.** Provision of green corridor incorporating dedicated bicycle and pedestrian access along the Langridge to junction with Bardwell Road/High Street. Such access should also be suitable for emergency vehicles, and in part used to provide access to the village hall for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

- L.** Provision of walking routes through the site, particularly through and into green spaces.

- M.** Provision of access to walking routes (existing or proposed) into the surrounding countryside will be supported where these ensure ecological impacts can be properly mitigated.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL

- N.** Provision of a multi-functional surface water drainage system which manages surface water to the satisfaction of the local flood authority, enhances biodiversity and provides open space for informal recreation .

- O.** An appropriate landscaping scheme, particularly on the southern, western and northern site boundaries, and retention of mature trees on the site.

# 10. NON-POLICY ACTIONS

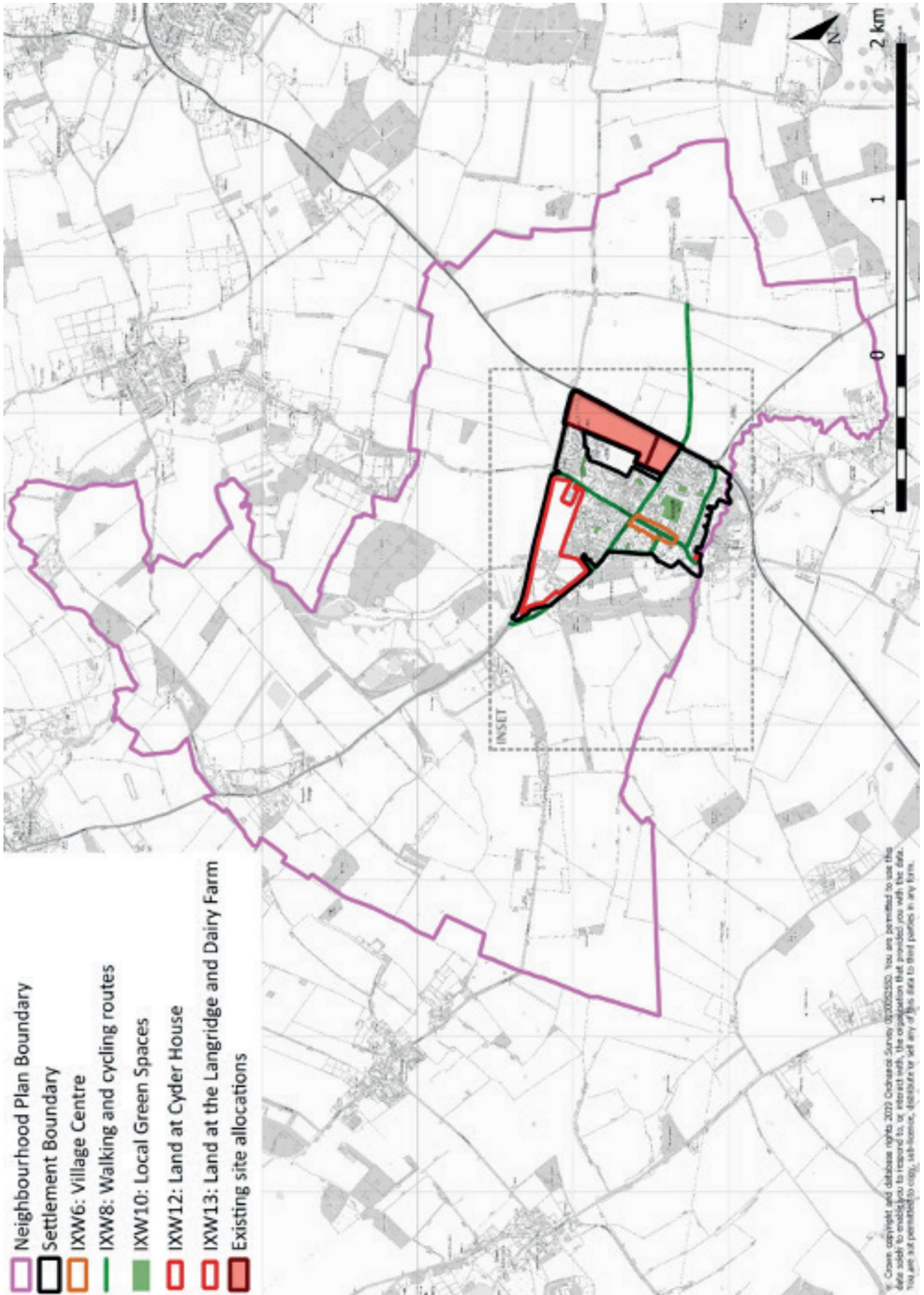
**10.1** Table 10.1 below identifies a series of actions that have arisen through the community engagement in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. These were considered by the community to be important matters but do not necessarily require planning permission. As such, they are not the subject of planning policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. These non-policy actions will be reviewed by Ixworth Parish Council in line with the rest of the Neighbourhood Plan as part of the Local Plan Review, to take account of changing circumstances and community aspirations.

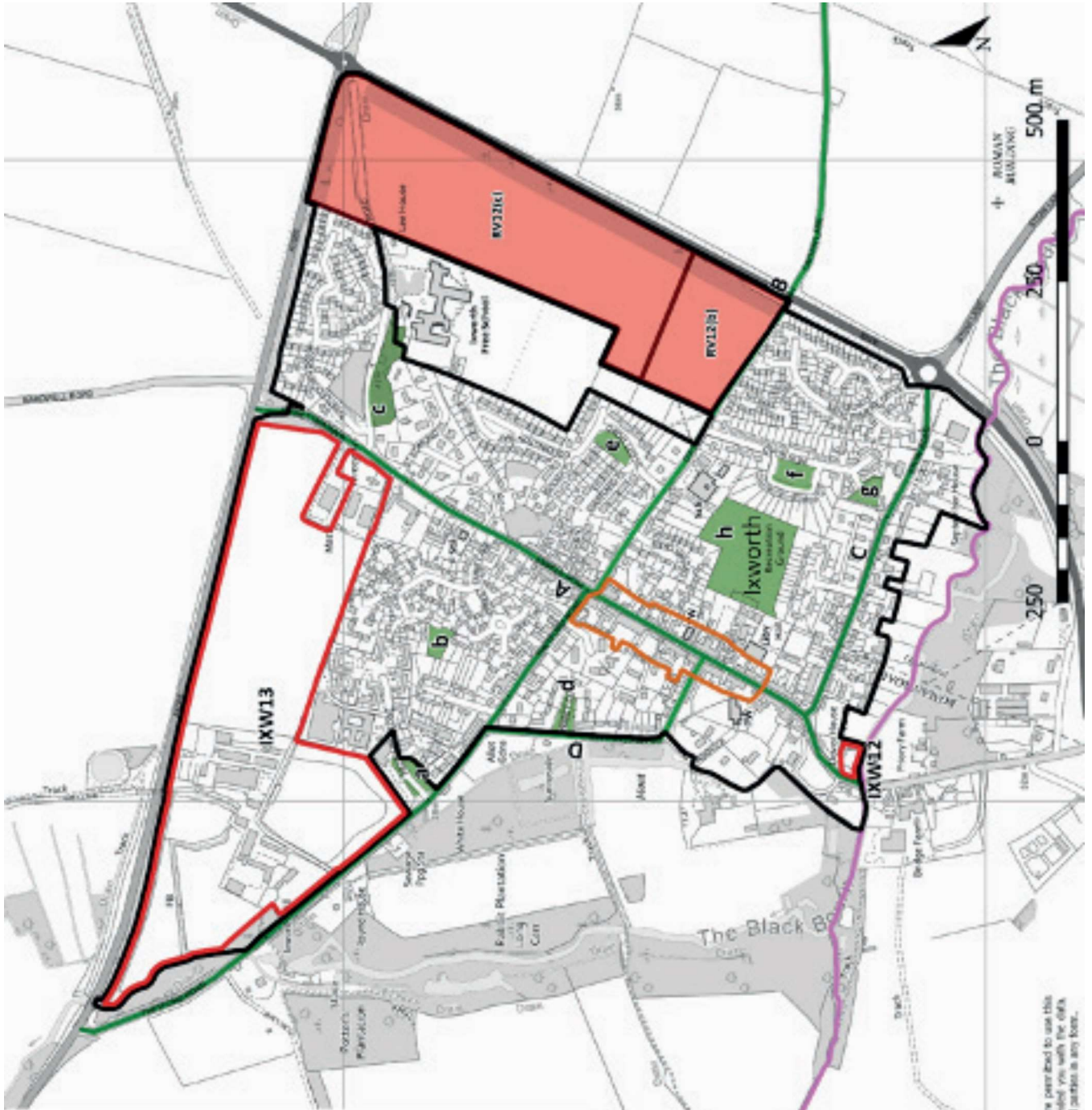
ISSUE	POSSIBLE ACTIONS
<b>Retain, strengthen and improve retail activity on Ixworth High Street.</b>	<p>Set up Ixworth Business Association to co-ordinate actions which support and develop the High Street economy.</p> <p>Create promotional material for the parish – to attract visitors, capitalising on events, markets and festivals, and also to attract niche businesses.</p> <p>Support flexible use of shop units and encourage temporary uses (for instance via pop-up shops), including open-air markets.</p>
<b>Encourage events and activities which attract people to Ixworth High Street</b>	<p>Revive the Ixworth Christmas Fair, a winter community event which has been in abeyance for some years.</p> <p>Provide for pop-up stalls and activities, potentially to coincide with other events, such as the Mayday Weekend Cycle Races.</p>
<b>Increase youth activity</b>	<p>Recruit one or more youth advocates to the Parish Council to represent the interests of young people at the heart of community business.</p> <p>Encourage involvement of children and young people in designing play and recreation areas.</p>
<b>Create more opportunities for community interaction</b>	<p>Consider starting new community activities – e.g. ‘Men and Sheds’, local resident meet-ups etc.</p> <p>Work with local residents and heritage groups to collect a historical archive for the parish.</p> <p>Identify opportunities for SET Academy School students and Primary School to collaborate.</p>
<b>Traffic management</b>	<p>Explore potential to develop a ‘20’s Plenty’ scheme within Ixworth Village, including modern traffic calming such as planters.</p>
<b>Access to ‘soft edges’ of Ixworth</b>	<p>Negotiate with landowners to provide public access to green spaces on the edge of Ixworth Village, in particular the riverside and the ‘moats’ north of Ixworth Abbey.</p>
<b>Raising awareness</b>	<p>Work with West Suffolk College to strengthen links to promote the Mickle Mere for their environmental courses.</p>
<b>Recycling</b>	<p>Identify incentives to support eco-friendly actions and local projects where recycled items can be used for common good.</p> <p>Encourage Parish Council and local businesses to recycle more of their waste.</p>
<b>Supporting ecology</b>	<p>Create more opportunities for school students and young people to help with the nature reserve.</p>
<b>Healthy Ixworth</b>	<p>Investigate opportunities for working with Ixworth Surgery and others to promote a healthier Ixworth.</p>
<b>Engagement</b>	<p>Work with housing developers and West Suffolk Council to have input, at the earliest stage, into the development of the new housing in Ixworth.</p>

Table 10.1: Non-land use issues to be addressed



# 11. POLICIES MAP



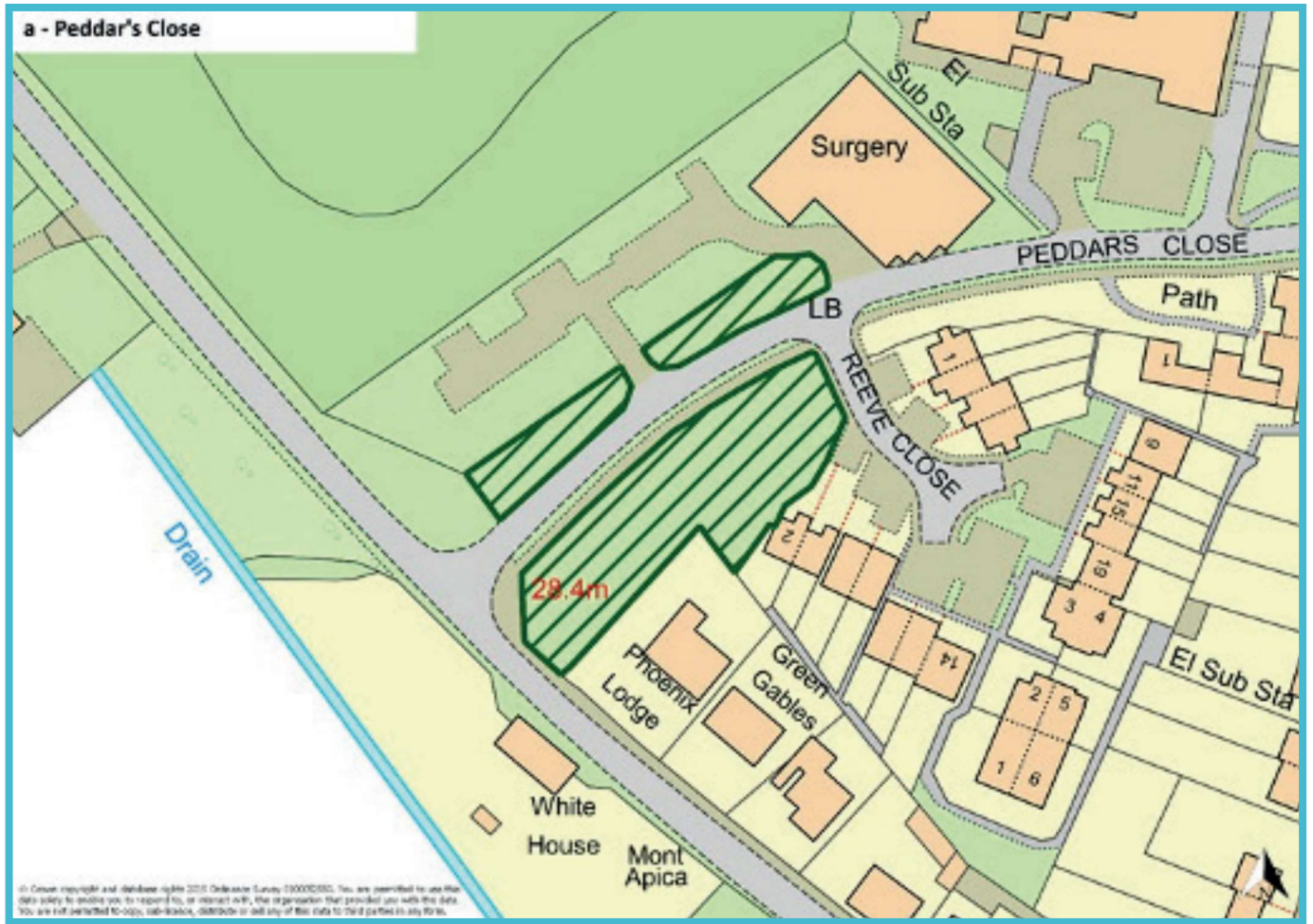


- Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
- Settlement Boundary
- IXW6: Village Centre
- IXW8: Walking and cycling routes
  - A. Along the High Street/Bardwell Road
  - B. Along Theford Road/Crown Lane
  - C. Along Stow Road
  - D. Along Commister Lane
- IXW10: Local Green Spaces:
  - a Peddar's Close
  - b Street Farm Lane/Chalk Lane Link
  - c Robins Copse
  - d Abbey Close
  - e Scott Road
  - f New Road
  - g Carpenter Close
  - h Recreation Field
- IXW12: Land at Cyder House
- IXW13: Land at the Langridge and Dairy Farm
- Existing site allocations

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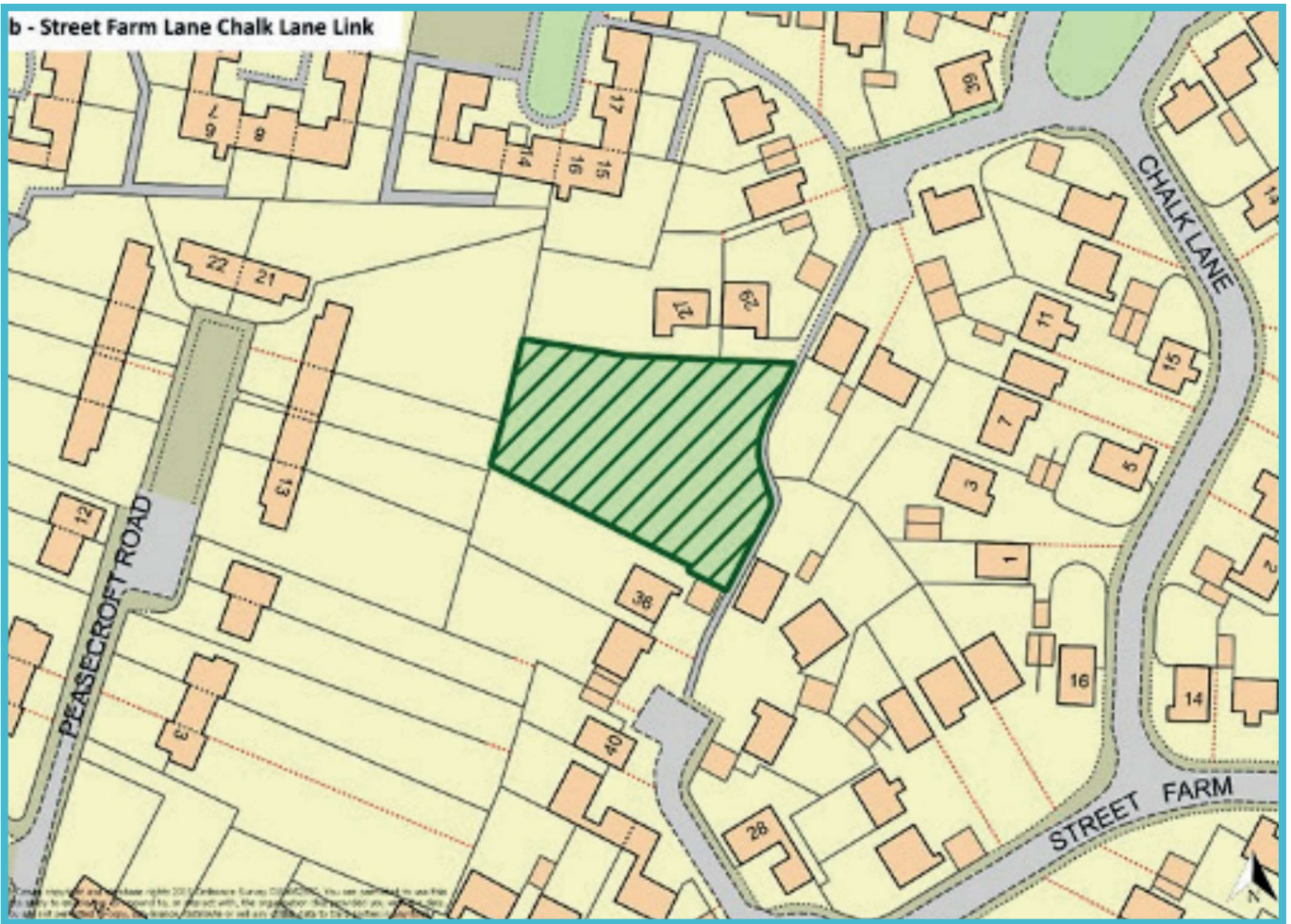


# APPENDIX A – LOCAL GREEN SPACES



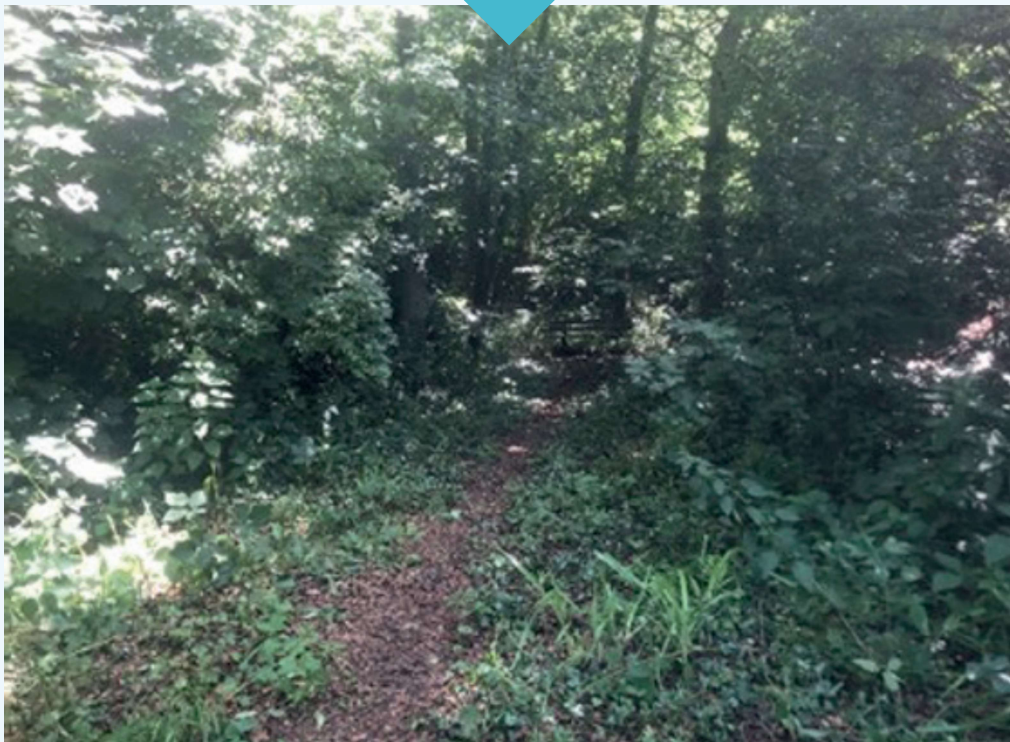
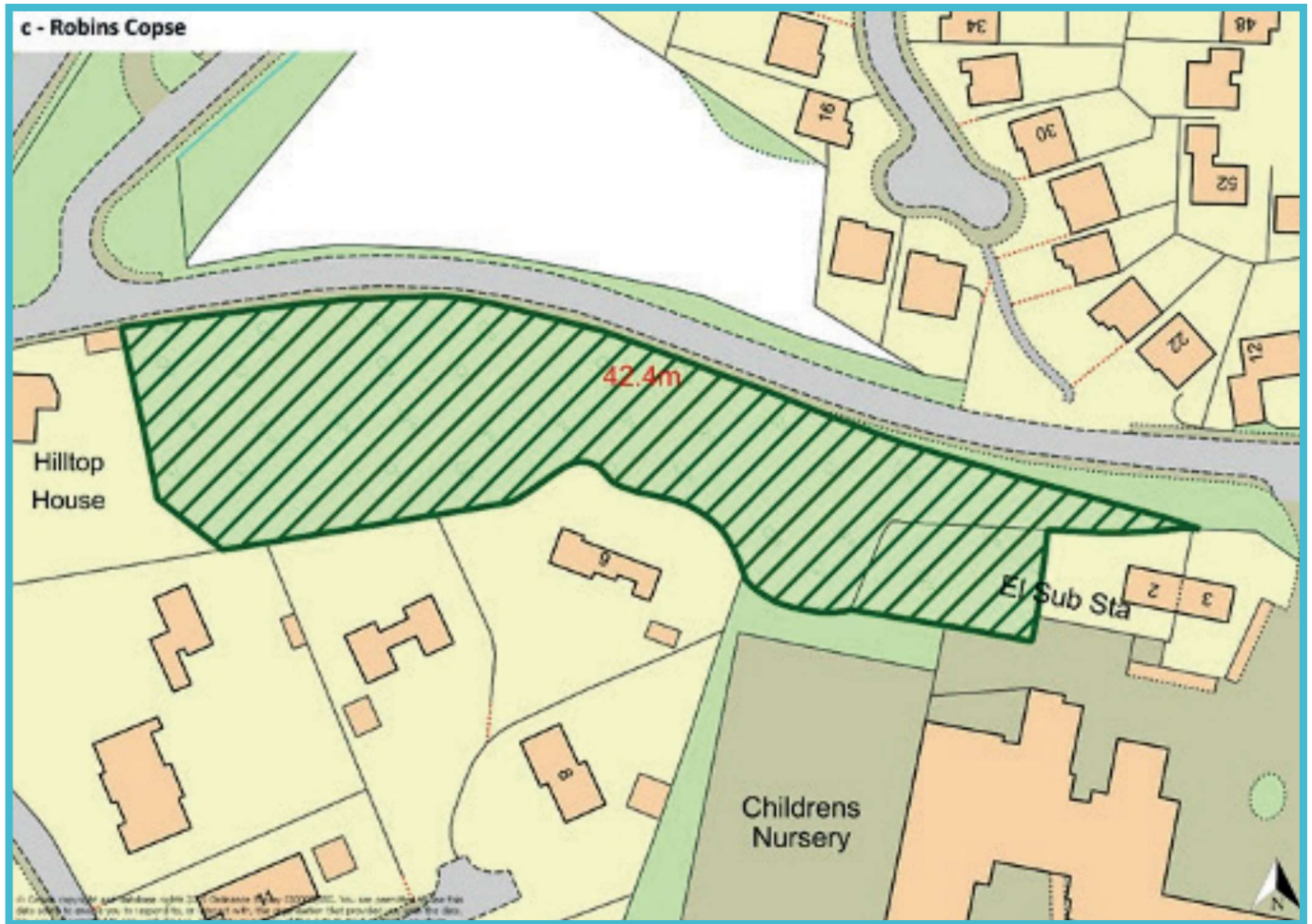


b - Street Farm Lane Chalk Lane Link





# APPENDIX A – LOCAL GREEN SPACES









# APPENDIX A – LOCAL GREEN SPACES





f - New Road



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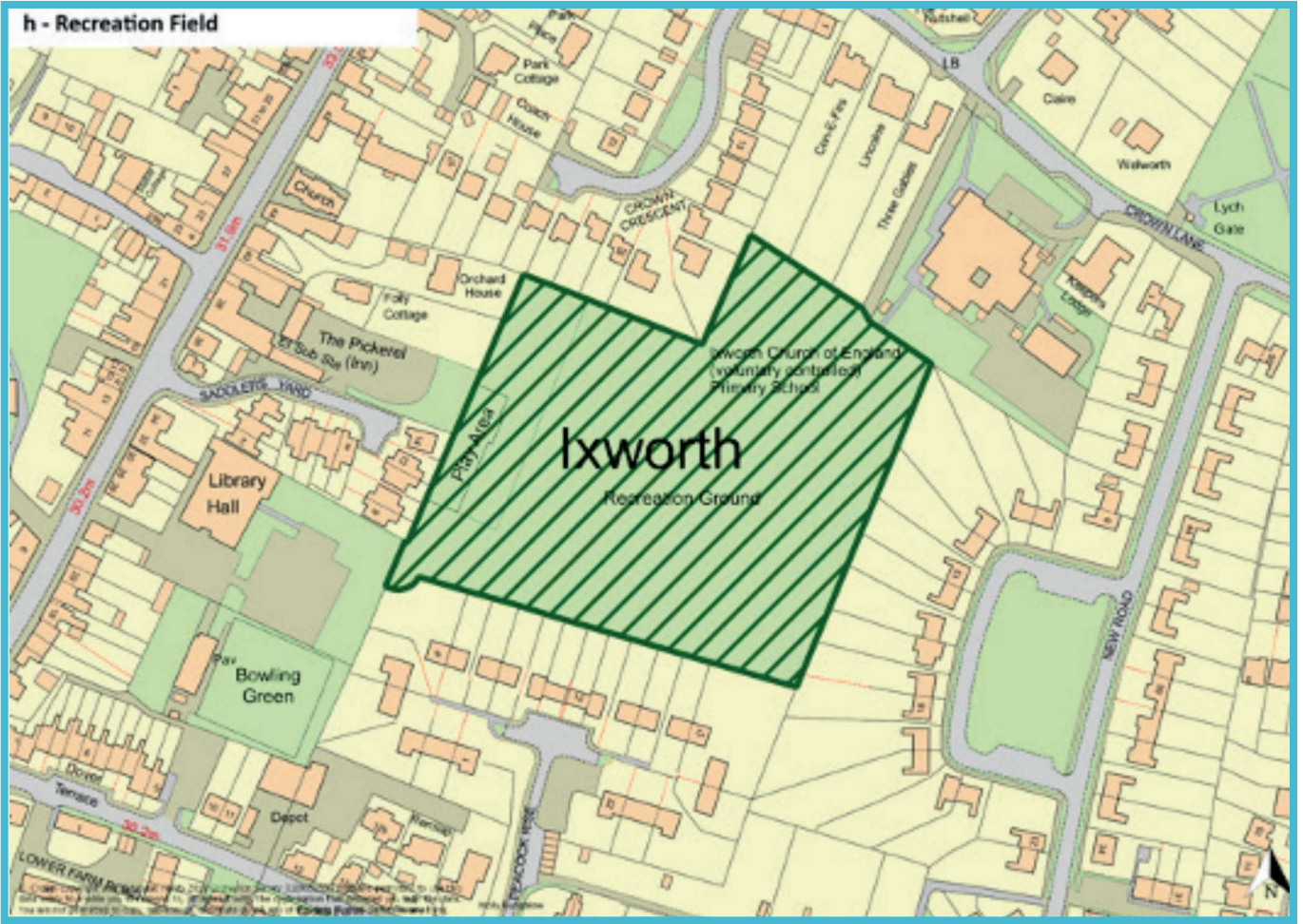


# APPENDIX A – LOCAL GREEN SPACES





**h - Recreation Field**





# IXWORTH & IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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## 2021 – 2040

PRE-SUBMISSION (REG 14)  
CONSULTATION VERSION

