

IXWORTH AND IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council meeting held at Ixworth Village Hall on 10th Jul 2019 at 7:30pm

Present: Cllr Ben Lord (Chairman) Cllrs David Reeve, Sophia Wilson, Nick Laughton, Pam Shelton, Terry Lilley, John Rowe and Vicky Sutton

Also Present: Mandy Adlington (Parish Clerk), C Cllr Joanna Spicer MBE, B Cllr John Griffiths MBE and several members of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Birrell – accepted by all present.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Laughton and Lilley made a non-pecuniary interest as the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee was going to speak in the public forum.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was agreed by all present the Chairman sign the minutes as a true record of the meetings held on 12th June 2019.

4. Public Forum

The following points were raised by members of the public present;

- **Mulley's Roundabout** – the roundabout is once again overgrown, visibility is poor which increases the possibility of an accident, a small red car has been parked on the verge near the Micklesmere exit blocking visibility and generally the entrance to the village is an eye sore
- **Hempyard Bridge** – trees are over growing the bridge and hanging into the river, who is responsible for those trees?
- **Pavements** – Stow Road pavement in front of the Council Houses need to be swept and cleared back. The pavement was swept and cleared some months ago but need doing again. The grass verge opposite Dover Terrace is also very overgrown and in need of attention
- **Tree planting** – the resident enquired if there was a tree planting policy to plant trees to help the environment

The Chairman explained that Mulley's roundabout is and has been an ongoing issue with the Parish Council for some time. The Parish Council are hoping to arrange a meeting soon, with various parties, to discuss the possibility of sponsorship of the roundabout. The Chairman suggested to the resident concerned about the small red car to contact the Police.

D Cllr John Griffiths stated that West Suffolk Council do have a tree planting schedule to help with environmental issues. The Chairman explained that apart from the small area of land known as Robins Copse the Parish Council owned no other land in the village to plant any new trees.

Village Hall

Dr Stephen Mann, Chairman of the Village Hall Committee gave a brief history of the Village Hall and the current position;

- The Village Hall and Playing Fields had been left in trust to the Village by Mr Jiggins in 1930
- The Trust document was altered to become a Charity in 1985 where the Parish Council became the Custodian Trustees, but the day to day running of the Charity was carried out by the Village Hall Management Committee
- The Village Hall Management Committee made the decision to become a C.I.O. (Charitable Incorporated Organisation), which has been completed.
- It was agreed with the Parish Council, who had been advised by their Solicitor, to register the land with Land Registry and then transfer the land to the new C.I.O.

Dr Mann then made the following comments;

- Registration of the Land had been completed in June 2018 but not yet transferred to the C.I.O.
- The Parish council are not acting in the interest of the Village and in fact are acting against it
- The access footpath had not been included on the original land registry, why, when it is on the original conveyancing document
- The Parish Council are constantly dragging their heels to obstruct this transfer and he and the Committee are becoming very frustrated by the situation

The Chairman very strongly refuted Dr Mann's suggestion that the Parish Council were acting against the interests of the Village. In fact, the Parish Council were, correctly, seeking legal confirmation that the transfer is legal. Whilst there had been hold ups in the past the Parish Council now had a new Solicitor who was more efficient than the previous Solicitor employed by the Parish Council. Unfortunately, the previous Solicitors, Atkins Thompson, had not been as efficient as the PC would have liked. An email from the Solicitor that afternoon had been received seeking the following further information.

- Information about the access to the playing fields (conveyancing documentation)
- A 'Letter of Assurance' from the VH Solicitor confirming the transfer was legal or confirmation from the Charity Commission stating clearly this transfer was legal. Advice from the Charity Commission had been sought by the PC Solicitor, but no response had been received as at 10.07.19.

Despite clearly clarifying the Parish Council's position, Dr Mann further stated that he had no confidence in the Parish Council at such a critical time for the long-term safeguarding of community and recreational facilities within the village. The Chairman vehemently refuted such a suggestion given the ongoing, cohesive dialogue between the Village Hall and Parish Council to date. The Chairman once again reiterated that it is essential the PC has confirmation that transferring the land is legal. The Clerk was instructed to contact the PC Solicitor to confirm what is required to move this issue forward.

Speedwatch

The Ixworth Community Speedwatch Group attended the meeting to state the group was disbanding due to various issues such as lack of members (now only three)

The group also wanted to highlight their disappointment and frustration in the Parish Councils lack of support and concerns about speeding within the village. The group were disappointed that after months of discussions there was still not a Vehicular Activated Sign (V.A.S) installed within the Parish.

The Chairman refuted the suggestion that the Parish Council does not care about the safety of villagers from speeding vehicles within the Parish. Over the years the Parish Councils have discussed this issue many times and initiated the forming of the Speedwatch Group when a member of the public attended a meeting with the suggestion.

The Clerk reported that as previously mentioned a form had been received from Suffolk County Council that needed a vast amount of information before a sign could even be considered. The form had only been received in May and due to the Clerks holiday had not yet been completed and returned. The Clerk stated this would be completed before the next meeting.

5. Report from County Councillor Joanna Spicer MBE

C Cllr Spicer sent her apologies for not being able to attend the meeting and send the following report;

- **Roundabouts** – I have reported the dreadful state of the roundabouts
- **Hedges** – Suffolk County Council will not cut any hedges until 1st September
- **Footbridge over the By-pass** – I have no update currently
- **Flooding in Stow Road near Cross House** – I have passed the photos onto Suffolk County Council Highways Department
- **Hempyard Bridge** – I hope Cllr Rowe will update the Council on recent meetings

6. Report from District Councillor John Griffiths MBE

D Cllr Griffiths reported the following;

- **Persimmon** – the recent application for the access road has been refused over various concerns the planning officer had. The planning officer dealing with the application for the houses is speaking with Persimmon to address all points raised from concerned parties
- **Vertas** - Vertas has left the Fordham's site and planning enforcement officers will visit to confirm
- **Pavements** – West Suffolk are looking into clearing all overgrown paths reported recently especially Thetford Road which has been reported many times

7. Hempyard Bridge

Cllr Rowe reported that he had a meeting 10 days previously with West Suffolk and Suffolk County Council Officers to discuss the bridge. It would seem Suffolk County Council are now stating they are unable to repair the bridge as there seems to be, once again, issues over the ownership. Cllr Rowe stated that Suffolk County Council had finally given him the inspection report from 2 years previously for the Council to view. Cllr Rowe stated that if Suffolk County Council were not going to repair the bridge then other options needed to be looked at, such as funding from different sources.

A discussion was held, and it was agreed that Cllr Rowe and Laughton would pursue this matter by;

- Cllr Rowe and Cllr Laughton to meet with a consultant to help more this process forward
- Creating a 'Schedule of Work' with the above company to give to builders to obtain quotes

Any costs incurred in producing the schedule and discussion with a consultant would be brought back to the Full Council for approval.

8. Mulley's Roundabout

Cllr Lord presented the following proposal for the members to consider;

- That the Parish Council take the lead role in sponsoring Mulley's Roundabout for a two-year period subject to commercial/contractual negotiations that do not exceed the suggested maximum amount per annum.
- That the Parish Council invites local landscaping contractors to assist in delivering a "landscaping gateway" to the village
- That the Parish Council invites local businesses based within the village or that have a village connection to tender for some visibility at each exit of the roundabout. Each business who tenders would then be expected to either offer an amount they would be prepared to pay, or we take the total cost of the sponsorship and landscaping and divide by the number of interested sponsors.

After a discussion I was agreed by all for Cllr Lord to pursue this proposal and bring any possible costs back to a meeting to discuss further.

9. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Lord reported that he and the Clerk had met with the Clerk, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (NPWG) and the following issues were highlighted;

- Lack of Councillors attending the meetings
- Communication between the Council and the NPWG
- Lack of Support from the Parish Council

The NPWG had requested if the Parish Council could guarantee if a designated Councillor or deputy could commit to attending every meeting of the NPWG.

A full discussion was held, and the following was agreed;

- **Attendance** Councillors could not commit to be at every meeting, however, Cllrs Laughton and Wilson committed to attending as many as was possible

- **Communication** – it was felt that communication had improved since the new NP Clerk had been employed. A member of the NPWG committee suggested that the NPWG should meet a week before each Parish Council meeting to enable a report to be produced and forwarded to the Parish Council for discussion at the next meeting. The committee member in question stated he would be willing to attend each Parish Council meeting to answer any questions the members may have
- Communication between the NPWG and the PC would be through the PC Clerk and the NPWG Clerk rather than third parties which may add to issues becoming confused

The Clerk was instructed to contact the NPWG Clerk to discuss further. The NPWG member also stated he would report to the NPWG Chairman.

10. Planning

DC/19/1146 -Access road to serve development comprising 77 no dwellings (resubmission of DC/17/0339)
Land off Crown Lane, Ixworth

It was resolved the Parish Council **OBJECT** to this application

DC/19/1275 – Fell 1no. Pride of India – 28 High Street, Ixworth.

It was resolved the Parish Council have **NO OBJECTION** to this application

11. Accounts

The following accounts were agreed for payment;

Chq No 1348, 1349	Wages	£1371.72
Chq No 1350	Ixworth Village Hall	£150.00
Chq No 1351	Pro-Scape Ltd	£330.00
Chq No 1352	Anglian Water	£17.10
Direct Debit Nest Pensions		£37.19

The RFO (Responsible Finance Officer) was authorised to transfer £2,000 by on-line transfer from the business account to the community account.

12. Parish Council Committees

After a discussion it was resolved to form a Finance Sub Committee. Full details, when to meet etc, will be discussed further at the August meeting.

13. Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received;

- **West Suffolk Electoral Office** – Extra Councillors
- **S.C.C.** – Mulley's Roundabout
- **S.C.C.** – Hempyard Bridge
- **Joanna Spicer** – Letter Re: Bridge Options
- **Over 60's** – Grant Request
- **Resident** – Thistledown Drive Concerns (passed to Joanna and John)
- **Community Speedwatch** – Disbandment of Group
- **Meeting with Bypass Farms** – Ixworth Cemetery
- **John Griffiths** – Vertas Update
- **Able Community Care** – Do Not Knock Stickers
- **Speedwatch Complaint**
- **Village Hall Chairman** – Annual Report
- **RBL Ixworth** – Stow Road Telephone Kiosk
- **Hempyard Bridge** – Various Emails
- **Joanna Spicer** – Blackbourne View
- **Steve Wilson** – Monthly Report
- **Highways** – A14 Roadworks

It was resolved not to increase the number of Councillors who sit on the Parish Council.
It was resolved to grant £100 to the Over 60's Club.

14. Chairman's Report

The Chairman expressed his concerns over two badly sunken graves within the Cemetery. It was agreed to get a quote and have these filled in immediately as they were a health and safety issue. It was also resolved for the Cemetery working part, Cllrs Lord, Reeve, Lilley, Shelton and the Clerk, to meet at the Cemetery on Friday 19th July at 2,30pm to look at other issued within the Cemetery.

15. Clerk's Report

The Clerk gave the following report;

- **VAS Ixworth** – Discussed in item 4
- **Number of Cllr's** – discussed in item 13
- **Fly Tipping** – grey bags now removed from Thetford Road & large backs removed from behind Thistledown Drive
- **Ixworth Thorpe Church Lights** - instructed Welton to change bulbs so they match
- **Village Hall** – discussed in item 4
- **Play Area** – another rotten pole had been found on the large climbing frame, this will be replaced by Playdale
- **Councillor Emails** – it was agreed that all Councillors would use an Ixworth.net email address in the future. The Clerk would supply members in August with their email addresses

16. Councillor's Reports

Cllr Shelton reported that residents near the Fordham's site were very pleased that Vertas had left the site.

Cllr Lilley requested the grave digger be contacted again to discuss the risk assessment needing for working within Ixworth Cemetery.

Cllr Rowe requested if a new dog mess bin could be installed near Hempyard Bridge.

Cllr Laughton read Steve Wilson's monthly report.

Cllr Wilson requested if the bin near Ixworth Thorpe Church could be replaced as it has been damaged again.

17. Date of the Next Meeting

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on August 14th 2019 at 7.30pm in Ixworth Village Hall.

With no further business the meeting closed at 9.35pm.

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Signed

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Date