

IXWORTH AND IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council meeting held at Ixworth Village Hall on 14th August 2019 at 7:30pm

Present: Cllr Ben Lord (Chairman) Cllrs David Reeve, Nick Laughton, Pam Shelton, Ben Birrell and Terry Lilley

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Wilson, Rowe and Sutton – apologies were accepted by all present.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Laughton and Lilley declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

After an alteration to the distributed draft minutes, it was agreed by all present that the Chairman sign the minutes as a true record of the meeting held on July 10th 2019.

4. Public Forum

A resident wished to highlight her concerns on the following;

- The verge near the allotments in Commister Lane and Thetford Road is very overgrown which makes it difficult to turn out of Commister Lane safely
- Mulley's roundabout is still very overgrown and has also become a safety issue for cars turning on to it
- Fly tipping at the top of Walsham Road, behind Thistledown Drive, has been removed but there are now large compost bins instead

Cllr Laughton volunteered to cut back the hedge on the corner of Commister Lane and Thetford Road.

Permission was given by the landowner who was present at the meeting.

The Chairman stated that the Mulleys roundabout was a continuing problem and he would be reporting on this issue later in the meeting.

The Clerk was instructed to report the compost bins.

5. Report from County Councillor Joanna Spicer MBE

C Cllr Spicer reported the following;

- **Hempyard Bridge** – C Cllr Spicer reported that she had a meeting with Suffolk County Council (S.C.C.) Officers in two weeks' time to discuss this issue. The ownership of the bridge is being questioned again but a local historian had read in previous Parish Council minutes that S.C.C. had declared ownership some time ago.
- **Resident concerns about traffic turning into Crown Lane** – C Cllr Spicer stated she would speak with highways to discuss any options to help the resident whose house gets damaged when vehicles turn into Crown Lane. Solutions suggested included a bollard on the corner
- **V.A.S.** – There still seems to be some confusion as to what happens next to get this installed within Ixworth. A permanent sign will not be approved by S.C.C. but a temporary one that can be moved between sites within the village may be possible. C Cllr Spicer stated she would work with the Clerk to move this issue forward.
- **Flooding** – As C Cllr Spicer drove into the village this evening, along Stow Road, there seemed to be no flooding even though there had been a lot of rain
- **Footbridge Over the By-Pass** – C Cllr Spicer suggested that when the planning application for the 77no dwellings on the Crown Lane site was discussed later a mention of the footbridge in the Parish Councils response would be advisable

The Clerk stated that the forms for the VAS within Ixworth had been started but the gentleman within S.C.C. who was dealing with this issue has now moved to another department. The Clerk received the new contact that afternoon. The Clerk would liaise with C Cllr Spicer to push this issue forward.

6. Report from District Councillor John Griffiths MBE

D Cllr Griffiths sent his apologies for not being able to attend this evening's meeting and sent the following report;

Firstly, I should report that Helen Lindfield, our locality officer at West Suffolk Council for the Ixworth Ward is retiring and I'm sure you will join me in both thanking her for her service and in wishing her every success and happiness in the future. Her responsibilities have been taken over by Will Wright who looks forward to meeting and working with you.

- **Stow Road Council Houses** - Ben Lord contacted me about the above houses. After liaising with our LLPG Custodian regarding Ben Lord's email – only the Owner or Developer of a property can change the name. There is a form on our website under Street Naming and Numbering
- **Thistledown Drive** – A resident contacted me regarding the overgrown hedges in Thistledown Drive. We have had a look at the GIS system and West Suffolk Council only maintain the grassed area and do not cut any hedgerows in Thistledown drive. It was suggested that perhaps it may be SCC's responsibility.
- **Vertas** - Andy Smith (Principal Enforcement Officer) is the case officer for this enforcement case and is now on annual until the 20 August – Sarah Rampley (Senior Enforcement Officer), however, is in the Ixworth area on Monday so will look to see what's happening on site and update us. That said, Vertas were to move by 24 June and vacate Ixworth to leave the site as "fallow" - locked up but not being used
- **Persimmon**
DC/1146/FUL was considered by DCC on 7 August. Committee resolved (thanks to Cllr Ben Lord's presentation) to defer the application, requesting further information in respect of (i) the progress of the masterplan for the northern part of the site (ii) further information in relation to the relationship between the road and the tree belt (iii) details of the measures to restrict Walsham Road to emergency access only and (iv) the requirements of proposed condition 21.
If this information is received in time the application will go back to September's committee
DC/17/0333/FUL - Officers continue to work with Persimmon in relation to the design and layout of the residential parcel of land. We have advised Persimmon that we will only accept a policy compliant scheme in respect of affordable housing. Julie Barrow (Case Officer) awaits a further response from Persimmon on this point
- **Grass cutting** -The service provider has apologised for the lateness of some of the works and their quality in some instances but has been working hard, including over weekends, to catch up. This is of course not an excuse but, by way of an explanation, there are a mix of reasons for this including: The time of year and the weather we have been having means growth has been both unusual and particularly rapid. The spate of wet weather also prevented some work.
Capacity – the workforce has remained relatively stable for many years but work has increased – not least for example, because more roads have been and are being built and adopted. We have also taken on new services like tree works which has been very successful
Finally, we have recently had some very experienced staff leave.
We are predominantly caught up in areas of grass cutting throughout West Suffolk, and resuming the high quality of service usually provided. As mentioned, the rate of growth is weather dependent, but this is monitored to ensure the most proactive and economical use of resources. The team is also further addressing the volume of grass cutting requirements which has seen our Open Spaces Manager commence trialling of new grass cutting machinery.
If there are any particular or specific areas of concern please do contact customer services directly:
<https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/contact-us.cfm>

Finally, I should mention that I have recently set up task forces at West Suffolk Council to look at if, and how, we can further improve things, and our services in a) our rural areas and b) with regard to climate change. Any input from the Parish Council or residents and businesses to these task forces would be welcome.

7. Ixworth Village Hall

The Clerk reported that after correspondence and advice from the PC Solicitor the following is needed before the PC Solicitor can advise the transfer of the land be completed;

- Confirmation that the transfer is legal, either by a Letter of Assurance from the VH Solicitor or confirmation from the Charity Commission
- The original Conveyancing Document to be sent to the PC Solicitor so the access from Crown Lane can be added to the title deed

The Clerk had written to the VH Chairman stating the above and are awaiting their response. Cllr Laughton stated the letter from the PC had been passed to the VH Solicitors to action.

Members wishing to view previous correspondence regarding this transfer can do so through their secure members correspondence website.

8. Hemyard Bridge

Cllr Laughton stated he was still awaiting costings and specifications that he and Cllr Rowe had been seeking. Cllr Spicer requested that if costings came through before her meeting with S. C. C. Officers could she have a copy to take along with her, this was agreed by all present.

9. Mulley’s Roundabout

Cllr Lord stated he had contacted Mark Wedgwood about the condition of the roundabout, however, he was very disheartened that he had not received any response to the Parish Council, but a response had been given to a resident.

Cllr Lord explained that there are possible sponsors in the area willing to sponsor the roundabout, but until the current poor condition is rectified why would anyone come forward. Cllr Lord explained that in January it will be three years since the first meeting on site to discuss this issue was held, and still it had not been resolved. After a discussion it was agreed by all present that Cllr Lord escalate this issue by writing directly to Mary Evans the Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Highways.

10 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Lord read the recent report to the Parish Council from the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.

11. Planning Other

Cllr Lord confirmed he had attended the Development Control Committee (D.C.C.) as a representative for the Parish Council on the planning application for the access road to serve the new development at Crown Lane. Cllr Lord had instructed, with the permission of the Finance Officer, a highways report on the development and that stretch of road. The highway survey had raised many points which he had been able to use in the arguments against the access road. After many points, raised and discussed at the Committee, the decision on the application was to defer whilst further information has been sought on the whole area of development.

12. Planning

DC/19/1449 – Listed Building Consent – Conservatory on side elevation (following demolition of existing) – Beech Cottage, 37 High Street, Ixworth	No objection
DC/17/0333 (Re-consultation) – 77no. dwellings with associated access road, emergency access, car parking and landscaping – Land off Crown Lane, Ixworth	Objection
DC/19/1358 – Fell 1no Walnut tree – 2 Crown Crescent, Ixworth	Objection

13. Accounts

The following accounts were agreed for payment

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Chq No 1353, 1354	Wages	£1265.91
Chq No 1355	Speedar Ltd	£113.75
Chq No 1356	Navigus Planning	£1255.80
Chq No 1357	Simon Ridley	£84.00
Chq No 1358	Ixworth Over 60’s	£100
Chq No 1359	Responsive Innovations Ltd	£1188.54
Chq No 1360	Ixworth Village Hall	£192.90
Chq No 1361	The Community Heartbeat Trust	£126.00
Chq No 1362	Viking	£145.48
Chq No 1363	Parker Planning Services	£1326.00
Chq No 1364	Ixworth RBL	£500.00
Direct Debit Nest Pensions		£27.99

The RFO (Responsible Finance Officer) was authorised to transfer £4500 by on-line transfer from the business account to the community account.

14. Parish Council Committees

A report on suggested Committees and working groups had been given to Councillors prior to the meeting. After a discussion the following was agreed;

- **Finance Working Group** – A finance working party would be set up to discuss such things as budgets and grant applications. This would, however, only be a working group as decisions on finance can only be agreed at a Full Council meeting. The working group would produce a full report to take back to the Full Council to agree or disagree with its recommendations. It was agreed that Cllrs Lilley and Lord would sit on this group and further volunteers would be sought from the three Councillors not present.
- **Planning Committee** – The Planning Committee would only be called when needed. If more than four applications have been received for discussion at the next Full Council meeting, then an extra meeting would be called by the Clerk. If a large application has been received, then an extra meeting would be called. All Councillors would sit on this Committee and would be summoned as per a normal Full Council meeting. All decisions at this Committee would be final and reported at the next Full Council meeting. It was suggested any extra meetings be held on a Monday evening. The Clerk would confer with the Chairman to decide if the Planning Committee needed to be convened. A quorum of three members are required.
- **Rules & Regulations Working Group** – A working group would review all current Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and all other Council Policies. The group would then make a report, distribute their suggestions for discussion and possible resolution at a Full Council meeting. Cllrs Shelton, Lilley and Lord volunteered to sit on this working group and further volunteers would be sought from the three Councillors not present.
- **Staffing Sub-Committee** – It was confirmed that this Committee would comprise of Cllrs Laughton and Wilson along with the currently serving Chairman. The sub-committee would be called when needed. Staff Appraisals are to be restarted and appraisals would be carried out on a one to one basis with the line manager of the staff member concerned. The sub-committee would deal with anything not dealt by staff line managers. Steve Wilson's line manager is the Clerk and the Clerk's line manager is either Cllr Laughton or Cllr Wilson.

15. Ixworth Cemetery

The report that the Clerk had previously distributed to Councillors was discussed. It was agreed that the urgent work needed to level the sunken graves, at a cost of £90, be accepted.

It was agreed the working party would meet again in October to rewrite the current grass cutting specifications. The working party was also seeking quotes to trim back the overgrown bushes to the fence line in the first section of the Cemetery, obtain a quote to remove some overgrown bushes in a few older graves and cut down a dead tree adjacent to Crown Lane.

The working party would report back to a future meeting. The Cemetery working party consists of Cllrs Lord, Lilley, Shelton and Reeve.

16. Correspondence

The following correspondence was received;

- **Kay Sallis**, Beck Row – Persimmon
- **Resident** – Mulley's Roundabout (passed to C Cllr Spicer)
- **West Suffolk** – Affordable Housing Planning Consultation
- **SARS** – Grant Request
- **Resident** – St Mary's Churchyard
- **Philip Smith** – Stanton PC – VE Celebrations

The Chairman stated he had replied to Kay Sallis. It was agreed to award a grant of £150 to SARS. The Chairman stated he would contact Stanton PC, on behalf of the Royal British Legion, as they were planning a lot of events around the VE Celebrations weekend. Cllrs were urged to look at the West Suffolk Consultation for their response in September.

The following were also received;

- **West Suffolk** – Crown Lane Development – Development Control Committee

- **Various Emails** – Mulley’s Roundabout
- **NPWG** – Various Reports
- **Resident** – Play Area (Area has been cut)
- **D Cllr Robert Everitt** – Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities
- **Resident** – Stow Road Flooding (passed to C Cllr Spicer)
- **PC Solicitor** – Response to enquiry from VH Solicitor
- **Better Broadband**
- **West Suffolk DC** – Review of Grant Applications
- **Highways Department** – Roadworks
- **Steve Wilson** – Monthly Report

17. Chairman’s Report

The Chairman reported that he had put together the Community Recognition Awards documents as previously discussed. It was agreed there would be the three following awards;

1. Individual
2. Non-Profit Organisation/Voluntary Group
3. Business

The Chairman would write an article for the magazine giving a brief description of each award with details of how and when to apply. The awards would be presented each year at the Annual Parish Meeting. The meeting for 2020 was agreed as Wednesday 22nd April at 7pm in Ixworth Free School. It was agreed to decide on which Councillors would sit on the decision panel later.

As discussed earlier, the Chairman stated he had attended the D.C.C. to discuss the planning application for the access road to the new development in Crown Lane.

The Chairman also attended the 50th Anniversary of Crown Lane School and would be meeting with the new Parish Vicar in September.

The Chairman also informed members that future meetings will be tightened up, with a view to increase clarity and efficiency.

18. Clerk’s Report

The Clerk reported the following;

- **V.A.S.** – see C Cllr Spicer report – the Clerk would continue to correspond with the gentleman now in charge of V.A.S. within Suffolk and enlist the help of C Cllr Spicer
- **Ixworth Thorpe Church Lights** – Welton’s have not yet been out to check the colour of the bulbs within the Church Lights. The Clerk has been in contact and stated this needs to be completed as soon as possible
- **Ixworth Thorpe Church (Grass Cutting)** – The Church is not actually a closed Churchyard so unfortunately there is no statue for the Parish Council to spend any precept money on cutting the grass in an open churchyard. The Clerk suggested discussing this further when the new Vicar is in post, this was agreed by all present.
- **PC Email Accounts** – The Clerk distributed instructions of how to login to an ixworth.net email account for each Councillor. The Clerk would bring to the September meeting instructions to Councillors not present this evening. Once all members, and if all agree, are ready to use the ixworth.net email all correspondence will be emailed through these addresses
- **Paperless Working** – The Parish Council has been informed no paper planning applications will be sent anymore. It was suggested to investigate obtaining a projector and screen so documents can be viewed on the evening or in the Planning Committee. The Clerk was instructed to obtain quotes over the coming months and bring back to members to discuss further
- **Play Area** – still waiting for new edging on climbing frame to be installed
- **.gov.uk website/email** – this is a long term project to be looked at again once all Standing orders, policies and financial regulations have been reviewed

19. Councillors Reports

Cllr Birrell enquired who he would need to contact to hold an open air cinema event on the playing fields. Cllr Laughton stated he would need to approach the Village Hall Management Committee.

Cllr Laughton read Steve Wilson's monthly report.

20. Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed at 11th September 2019 in Ixworth Village Hall at 7.30pm.

21. Exclusion of Press & Public

To resolve that, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded for the remaining items of business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by the reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed

22. Staffing

See confidential Minutes

With no further business the meeting closed at 9.55pm

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Signed

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Date