

IXWORTH AND IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Electronic Emergency Meeting of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council in March 2020 due to Covid-19 Emergency

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

As of 20:30hrs on Monday 23 March 2020, the UK Government placed restrictions on the free movement of people. The extra meeting that had been advertised to be held on this evening had already been cancelled. Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council have conducted an electronic meeting to discuss and resolve the issues below to continue to carry out the essential operations of the Parish Council.

Whilst this is very irregular, after seeking advice from National Association of Local Councils, it was felt that measures needed to be put in place covering the urgent and non-urgent business of the Parish Council.

These draft minutes are subject to the same procedure as approving minutes of ordinary meetings. Minutes will be subject to approval when the Parish Council are next able to meet in person.

1. Neighbourhood Plan

It was resolved to suspend all operations and activities of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group with immediate effect and until further notice.

This decision has been based upon the project being non-essential in the current emergency climate and taking into consideration that the next stage was to invoke further public drop-in sessions. Although there are options to hold drop-in's virtually, it was considered that the effectiveness of in-person drop-in's were more favourable and that virtual opportunities would exclude residents who do not have any online facilities.

The Clerk is instructed to inform all members of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group of this decision.

2. Housing Needs Study

It was resolved to suspend this matter at present. The Clerk was instructed to continue to collect information as to what is involved in the next stage of this project. Once the Parish Council can meet again this project will then be discussed again and as agreed on 11th March 2020, volunteers would then be sought to continue progression of this matter.

3. Ixworth Thorpe Boundary

It was resolved to suspend this matter at present.

4. Delegation of Powers to Proper Officer of the Council

It was resolved to delegate the following powers to the Proper Officer of the Council;

Finance

- Payments can be made by the Proper Officer of the Council via BACS payments
- This should be specific to, but not limited to, wages, pension contributions, outstanding invoices due for payment
- The Proper Officer will set up the BACS payments and these will then be authorised by either Cllr Wilson or Cllr Lord
- The Proper Officer has the authorisation to agree to funds required due to the current situation in conjunction with the Chairman if statutes allow this expenditure

Planning Applications

- Planning Applications will be forwarded to all Councillors via email or a telephone call.
- All Councillors are to respond to the Clerk with their comments and decision on Objection or Not Objecting.
- The Clerk will then collate all comments and decisions.
- The Clerk will then notify the Chairman of the decision of the Council

- If a clear, majority opinion is shown, this shall constitute our objection or support for a planning application.
- In the event those opinions constitute a deadlock decision, the Chairman shall break the deadlock as otherwise would have occurred in a physical meeting

Further Powers

- The Clerk, in conjunction with the Chairman, is authorised to carry out any duties that pertain to the legal running of the Parish Council

5. Annual Parish Meeting

It was resolved Annual Parish Meeting that had been agreed to be held on 22nd April 2020 be postponed.

6. Planning

DC/20/0424 – (i) 1no Red Horse chestnut-lateral crown reduction by up to 2 metres on Eastern aspect (ii) 1no unknown species – fell – The Vicarage, Commister Lane, Ixworth **No Objection**

DC/20/0389 (previous SE/12/1543) – 3no sycamores reduce height by 25% and reduce overhanging branches back to boundary – 21 Fordham Place, Ixworth **No Objection**

DC/20/0441 – (i) single storey glazed reception entrance extension (ii) vehicle spray booth to rear (iii) addition of roller shutter doors and additional windows to front elevation – Unit 1, Fordham's, High Street, Ixworth **No Objection**

7. Future Meetings

It was resolved to cancel the meeting scheduled for 8th April 2020.

It was resolved to postpone the meeting for 13th May 2020. The meeting due to be held in May is the Annual Parish Council Meeting which legally must be held in May. Guidance is still being obtained via NALC from the Government as to the legality of not holding this meeting after May.

8. Coronavirus Measures

The following was agreed;

Play Area

In line with the Government's embargo's, the Play Area, equipment of which is owned and maintained by the Parish Council is closed with immediate effect. A notice has been placed on village Facebook pages to that effect. Notices to this effect have been placed in the area.

The Village Hall Management Committee have advised the Parish Council that for as long as possible, and in-line with the Government's directive of the public being able to undertake daily exercise once a day, the playing field shall remain open providing social distancing guidelines are followed.

Staff Welfare

As part of our duty of care and welfare to our staff, in discussing contingency preparations with the Clerk, the Chairman suggested that a discussion be held between the HR line manager and the Village Cleaning Operative pertaining to ongoing work during this emergency to ensure full duty of care and welfare is followed.

In line with this, the Clerk has spoken with Mr Wilson since the lockdown and he wishes to continue his work. Mr Wilson is fully aware of the 2 metre restriction and will take measures to protect himself and the public. Mr Wilson will assess the situation as this issue continues but he and the Clerk feel that the importance of his role, such as emptying of rubbish bins and dog mess bins, is important to the Parish.

No Further Business Was Discussed

1st April 2020