

## **IXWORTH AND IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL**

*Minutes of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council meeting held Virtually via the Zoom Platform on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 7:30pm*

**Present:** Councillors (Cllrs) Ben Lord (Chairman), Sophia Wilson, Pam Shelton, Ben Birrell and Vicky Sutton.

**Also Present:** Mandy Adlington (Parish Clerk), County Councillor (C Cllr) Joanna Spicer MBE, District Councillor (D Cllr) John Griffiths MBE and eleven members of the public.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Reeve apologised for not attending due to technical issues – apology accepted by all present.

Cllr Lilley apologised for not attending due to illness – apology accepted by all present.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were made.

### **3. Minutes of the Previous Meetings**

The draft minutes had previously been distributed to all Councillors and taken as read.

It was agreed by all present that the Chairman sign the minutes as a true record of the meetings held on 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

The minutes would be signed when the Chairman and Clerk are able to meet.

### **4. Reports**

The Clerk read the following reports to update the Council on ongoing issues;

**Parish Wood** – I have been investigating the area of trees planted by the Parish Council that a resident mentioned at a previous meeting. I have spoken with the Councillor who was instrumental in arranging the trees being planted on the Cross family land. The agreement with Mr John Cross was never put in writing and as described to me was a 'gentleman's handshake'. The Parish Council was required to apply to St Edmundsbury Borough Council for the free tree scheme, as they were the local authority. The Parish Council then paid a contractor to plant the trees. There were no records in the Council papers on this, though I have now been given a map and list of trees planted, and never any agreement that the Parish Council would look after the trees. The Parish Council have never paid any contractor to look after the trees once planted. I have not yet had a chance to look at the area to ascertain if the whole area is on the Persimmon land or By-Pass farmland. I have spoken with By-pass farm representatives who state as far as they are aware, they have always looked after them and will continue to do so if they are on their land and at this time have no plans to remove any trees. Persimmon have also confirmed that they have no plans at present to remove any trees and when they submit in the future another planning application, they will take all comments received into consideration.

**Training** – I have spoken with SALC who are now offering online Cllr training. As agreed, some time ago I am booking modules for the full Council and all members. There are six modules they are offering at £100 per module and all Councillors can attend at the same time. Training cannot be arranged until September or October and SALC are requesting a particular evening you would like so they can speak with their trainer and offer some suggested dates and times. I will send a list to all Councillors so they are aware what each module will cover.

It was agreed that Wednesday evenings would be acceptable to all members.

**Litter Bins** – I am in the process of finishing the report on suggested changes to removal, replacing and moving litter bins within the village. I will pass to Cllrs for discussion at the next meeting. In the meantime the current contractor will continue to empty the current litter bins.

**VAS** – I have contacted local PC clerks who have installed VAS in their parishes for any information to help move this project further. Areas still being looked at for signs are Stow Road, Thetford Road and the High Street.

**NPWG** – Now that all minutes have been agreed by the working group last week, I will upload them to the website as requested by a resident last month. There had been a delay in confirming the minutes were a true record of recent meetings.

The working group had held meetings with developers and as these meetings contained commercially sensitive and confidential information the notes from these meetings will not be published. Guidance had been sought from the Information Commissioner's Office on this decision. Information from these meetings will be available from the developer in the future.

Cllr Birrell will give a further update later in the meeting.

**Robins Copse** – An issue of safety was highlighted to me in the Robins Copse area. One of the trees within the Copse is in danger of falling and other trees over overhanging a residents property which may also cause a safety issue.

A quote has been obtained to get the work on these trees so that the issues could be resolved as soon as possible. The quote for £1120 was given to all Councillors prior to the meeting and I am requesting that as the issue is a matter of health and safety that this quote is accepted so work can be started as soon as possible.

It was agreed by all present to accept this quote and the Clerk was instructed to inform the tree surgeon to go ahead with the work required.

## **5. Public Forum**

One resident had requested to speak and asked the following questions;

- A planning application in Ixworth Thorpe failed on many grounds set out in the letter of refusal. Was this letter read and understood by the PC members before taking the decision to require a Settlement Boundary around Ixworth Thorpe.
- In the unlikely event that a settlement boundary were to be achieved how many units of affordable housing would be created compared to the number if it were allocated as a Rural Exception Site.
- If the Settlement Boundary were to be included within the final Neighbourhood Plan how does the WG anticipate West Suffolk reacting to the NP when it would not be permitted by any the options already placed before the public.
- Does the PC think spending nearly £1,000 of residents money on an architects report into the viability of keeping the Village Hall on its present site was contributed value to the village, when it was clear to all but the Cllrs that the NPWG consultations held in February 2020 showed strong support.

Cllr Lord thanked the resident for his questions and informed him there would be an update on the Neighbourhood Plan later in the meeting.

Cllr Lord stated that an answer to all the questions would be sent to the resident.

## **6. Report from County Councillor Joanna Spicer**

C Cllr Spicer updated the members on the following issues;

- **Hempyard Bridge** – It does now seem that railings will be required to be installed on the brickwork of the bridge.
- **VAS** – The process for installing VAS in Parishes has been updated. C Cllr Spicer stated she would pass to the Clerk the updated information. Whilst C Cllr Spicer agrees, and of course will support the signs being installed, she would rather a Councillor take the lead on this project.
- **Ixworth Thorpe Flooding** – Unfortunately, there is no further information on this issue.
- **Bridge in Thetford Road (Flooding)** – SCC have agreed to come and assess the area to see if they could assist in any drainage problems.

Cllr Lord asked the following questions;

1. Is there any feedback from Suffolk County Council (SCC) on the inquest results on the fatal accident on the A1088?
2. Two months ago the Council wrote to Andrew Reid about the condition of the pavements in Scott Road and Coddington Way after a resident had a very nasty fall. If there any response been sent yet?
3. An overgrown hedge in Thistledown Drive was still in need of attention.

C Cllr Spicer replied stating that as yet, she had not received an update on the inquest result or from Andrew Reid on the pavements in Scott Road.

C Cllr Spicer requested that Cllr Lord send her the photos of the overgrown hedging and any information on who owns that area of land so she can investigate further.

## **7. Report from District Councillor John Griffiths**

D Cllr Griffiths reported the following;

- **Ixworth Thorpe** – It was good news that SCC were beginning to investigate the flooding problems in Ixworth Thorpe, however, it is not only the main road that floods but also Bardwell Road. Bardwell Road also has many potholes which are causing damage to vehicles using them.
- **Hempyard Bridge** –D Cllr Griffiths once again stated that WSDC would help in any way it can on this project.
- **Rural 2041 Consultation** – The District Council is working through all responses to the consultation.
- **Neighbourhood Plan** – Officers at WSDC would give any assistance required on any aspects of the plan.
- **Planning** – D Cllr Griffiths stated he had received many representations from residents on a planning application for development of Everton House in Thetford Road. All comments have been passed to the planning officer for consideration. D Cllr Griffiths requested that the PC inform him of their decisions on planning applications, especially any that they do not approve.
- **A134** – D Cllr Griffiths reported that a team had attended the A134 around Ixworth to carry out a litter clear up after some complaints. Unfortunately, the area did look noticeably clear for a few days but once again the litter has built up again.

The general problem with litter was discussed and it was thought by that individual members of the public need to get involved in the Parish they live in, to make the Parish an area that all were proud to live in.

It was agreed by all present that if the Everton House planning application went to the Development Control Panel then Cllr Lord could attend on behalf of the Parish Council.

## **8. Planning**

No planning applications had been received.

## **9. Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr Birrell gave the following update on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (NPWG);

The NPWG had a very productive meeting recently discussing the options for a public consultation on site allocations for the plan. A leaflet had been finalised and would be included in the next magazine. The consultation in the village hall would be dependant on Covid-19 regulations and there would also be an online presentation. The consultation in the village hall and online will have a registration and appointment system in place.

Once this consultation had taken place all comments would then be analysed and included in the next addition of the draft plan.

The group now had momentum again to get the plan written and submitted to WSDC.

Cllr Birrell stated he would take the questions posed in the public forum to the next NPWG meeting for assistance in answering them.

## **10. Accounts**

The following were agreed for payment;

BACS	Staff Costs	£1191.77
BACS	HM Rev & Customs	£273.24
BACS	Rees Pryer	£948.00
BACS	JR Property Maintenance	£560.00
BACS	Mr Laughton (Robins Copse)	£91.15
BACS	Mr D Thrower	£295.00
BACS	SLCC (Training)	£54.00
BACS	Residents x 4 (Plant Britain)	£80.00
BACS	A Adlington (Brightpay)	£58.80
BACS	A Adlington (Clerks Expenses)	£93.23
Direct Debit Nest Pensions		£44.33

The RFO (Responsible Finance Officer) was authorised to transfer £3500 by on-line transfer from the business account to the community account.

Cllr Wilson would authorise online the payments above.

### **11. Parish Council Website & Communications**

The new website is under construction but due to the Clerks workload it had not progressed as quickly as expected. The website still should still be ready for launch in April or May.

The Clerk informed members that going forward it would be good practice for all members to have a dedicated Council email address. The Clerk would give further information at the April meeting.

The Chairman stated he was concerned that the magazine had not printed the minutes of the Council minutes in recent additions of the magazine. The Chairman was concerned that residents who did not have access to the internet were not able to access the minutes as the Library is currently closed.

It was agreed to write to the magazine to request if in future the minutes would be printed as historically, they always had included them.

### **12. Development Infrastructure Impact on A1088**

Cllr Lord reported he would shortly be meeting with our appointed highways technical consultant to discuss this matter and will report on that separately once that has taken place. However, he was pleased to report that he did have a virtual meeting with opposite counterparts in Bardwell and Stanton Parish Council's hosted by C Cllr Joanna Spicer and we all agreed we should continue to maintain a dialogue and exchange information in a more joined up way than what is being experienced thus far. Again, he shall report on this as and when there are further updates, following a meeting with a Highways Engineer that is due to happen in April.

### **13. Parish Council Policies**

The following Policy were distributed to Councillors prior to the meeting;

- Social Media Policy

It was agreed by all present to adopt this policy.

Additional policies were being amended and would be sent to all Councillors prior to the next meeting.

### **14. Community Self-Help Scheme**

As Cllr Lilley was involved in the initial meeting with SCC which gained information on the scheme, it was agreed to postpone this item until the April meeting.

### **15. Grant & Donation Requests**

A grant request had been received from Citizens Advice Bureau in Bury St Edmunds. It was agreed to grant £200 to this important Charitable Organization.

### **16. Ixworth Cemetery**

The Clerk reported that the caretaker had started this week. As agreed, Rob was completing extra hours to catch up on various issues that have been neglected in the past few months.

It was agreed that the Cemetery Working Group would meet, socially distanced, at the Cemetery on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021 to discuss the next projects that required investigation.

### **17. Correspondence**

The following correspondence had been received;

- **Resident** – concerns about Parish Council
- **Citizens Advice** – Donation Request (discussed in item 15)
- **Arthritis Action** – Online Support
- **Resident** - Reply from C Cllr Spicer
- **WSDC** – Dog Fouling Campaign + attachments
- **Families Community** – West Suffolk Hospital
- **SCC** – Hempyard Bridge Inspection
- **Joanna Spicer** – A1088 Findings
- **Resident** – Email to John Griffiths + his response
- **One Life Suffolk** – Service Extension
- **WSDC** – Planning Newsletter
- **Anglian Water** – Upcoming Works
- **Cllr Lord** – Footbridge Email to Joanna Spicer

- **C Cllr Spicer & D Cllr John Griffiths** (Rubbish on highway)
- **Families Community** – Housing Hub
- **C Cllr Spicer** – Stanton Limit Change + attachments
- **Cllr Thorndyke** – Stanton Limit Change
- **Resident** – Comments on Everton House

It was agreed to invite the resident who expressed concerns about the Parish Council to meet with the Council to ascertain their concerns. The Clerk was instructed to contact the resident to see if this were something the resident would be interested in to help allay their concerns.

### **18. Chairman's Report**

West Suffolk Hospital are currently calling for any member of the public within its catchment area to make responses as part of their ongoing public consultation that has begun into the development of a new healthcare campus that shall consist of a new hospital. For further information, please refer to the hospital website where you can find a section dedicated to this.

It has been brought to my attention that there has been recent commentary on community social media groups concerning particular boundaries onto the Village Hall Playing Field and that these are the responsibility of the Parish Council, and in some cases, my responsibility as Chairman. I wish to clarify that this is not in any way remotely correct. Any issues pertaining to the playing field, and its boundaries and the structures contained therein remain a matter for the Jiggins Memorial Trust. The only area of responsibility that the Parish Council has to the playing field is with respect to the area it leases for the provision of the play and fitness equipment and where we own the equipment on that leased area.

### **19 Clerks Report**

The Clerk gave the following report;

- **Play Area** - Playdale have been instructed to repair the edging of the play area and replace the rotten poles on that piece of equipment and the balance wooden beam.
- Still awaiting work to be completed (Covid-19) I will contact again to ascertain a starting date.
- **Ixworth Churchyard** - Rev Burton and I still need to arrange a date to meet socially distanced at the Churchyard to discuss overgrown bushes, shrubs and trees in the Churchyard and the lights at Ixworth Thorpe Church
- The spotlights at St Mary's are not working so I have instructed an electrician (who installed them) to attend to ascertain what the problem is.
- **Emergency Plan** - a meeting will be arranged then added to a future agenda for discussion.
- **Ixworth Thorpe De-Fib** – Currently there seems to be an issue with the electricity supply. An electrician has been instructed to attend and fix the problem.
- **Black litter bin in Ixworth Thorpe Church Lay-by** – Unfortunately, the black litter bin in Ixworth Thorpe Church lay-by has once again been run over and flattened. WSDC will not replace until a concrete slab away from the road has been installed for the bin to stand on. I have instructed a contractor to complete.

### **Also reported;**

A complaint has been received from a resident on Cllr Birrell's conduct and it will be dealt with as follows;

1. Initially this will be dealt with by holding an informal discussing with the person making the complain to see if the complaint can be resolved.
2. A complaint on a Councillors conduct cannot be investigated by the Council.
3. If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the person making the complaint, they have the right to contact WSDC Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer to pursue further.
4. If contacted, WSDC Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer will then carry out an investigation. Once the investigation has been carried out both parties will be notified of the decision.

**20. Councillors Reports**

Cllr Wilson reported the following;

- The litter bin in Ixworth Thorpe Church layby had been removed.
- The drains had been cleared in Ixworth Thorpe but there was still sand on the pavement from the bank which would run into the drain again next time it rains.
- The VAS (Vehicle Activated Sign) had been deployed in the Ixworth Thorpe, but the batteries had once again become flat.
- The ditching had not yet been cleared.
- Is there litter picking equipment available for residents to use.

The Clerk reported the bin had been removed as it had been flattened by a lorry. WSDC would replace and continue to empty, but only when a base is installed in the verge. The Clerk had instructed a contractor to install a base so the bin can be returned.

The Clerk thought there were some litter picking equipment stored at the village hall and would investigate if the equipment were still available.

Cllr Birrell reported that a resident had approached him to enquire if a street cleaner was to be employed. As previously agreed, the Council have decided at present, not to employ anyone in this role.

D Cllr Griffiths wished to inform members that the Civil Enforcement team had visited Ixworth 8 times in the last month and had issued 1 fine.

C Cllr Spicer and D Cllr Griffiths both wished to highlight the good work being achieved by all the Covid vaccinations and testing teams across the County.

**21 Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 7.30pm. The meeting would be a virtual meeting held via the Zoom platform.

**22. Exclusion of the 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.

The press and public were excluded at 9.05pm.

With no further business the meeting closed at 9.30pm.

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Signed

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Date