

IXWORTH AND IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council meeting held Virtually via the Zoom Platform on 13th January 2021 at 7:30pm

Present: Councillors (Cllrs) Ben Lord (Chairman), Sophia Wilson, Pam Shelton, Terry Lilley, Ben Birrell and David Reeve (via phone link with Clerk)

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 Sutton sent her apologies due to work commitments, the apology was accepted by all.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The draft minutes had previously been distributed to all Councillors.

It was agreed by all present that the Chairman sign the minutes as a true record of the meetings held on 9th December 2020.

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

4. Clerks Report

The Clerk reported the following;

Complaint

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

1. Initially this will be dealt with by holding an informal discussion with the person making the complaint to see if the matter can be resolved.
 2. A complaint on a Councillor's 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 West Suffolk District Council (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.
- **Plant Britain** - The Council have received quite a few enquiries but not close to the 50 initially suggested. A couple of applicants are requesting if it would be possible to request more than £20 if they were to purchase 2 or 3 trees.
 - **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 wooden balance beam. Playdale are still waiting for their suppliers to supply relevant parts, the delay is due to Covid-19 restrictions.
 - **Telephone Kiosk** – No official response has yet been received, though the Chairman of RBL wrote an article in the magazine stating it was still their intension to refurbish.
 - **Cemetery Caretaker** - It was decided in the staffing section of last month's meeting to advertise to employ a Cemetery caretaker. An advert will be placed within the magazine. 2/3 hours per week is being suggested as a starting point. The caretaker will carry out general jobs that are not covered by the grass cutting contract including placing the bins out each week.
 - **Public Participation** - I mentioned last month that it has been suggested that when residents request the joining instructions for the Parish Council meeting that they register if they wish to speak. I do not think I explained it very well. I meant it would be helpful if a person stated they would like to speak, they do not, if they do not wish to, explain what they wish to say. As the Parish Council is meeting virtually then it becomes quite difficult to manage who does or does not wish to make comments. Especially if the person attending chooses not to have their video link on.

If people are registered, then the Chairman would be able to go through the list compiled. On speaking with other Clerks many Parish and Town Councils request this.

- **Woodland - Crown Lane** - I have kindly been given a list and map of the area of trees that the Parish Council paid to have planted on Cross Land. I have not yet had a chance to visit the area to view. Hopefully, I will be able to visit before the meeting and add to the agenda either February or March. I am in the process of checking previous minutes.
- **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. Due to Christmas this has not been arranged as yet.
- **VAS Ixworth** - I think C Cllr Spicer has an update on this later.
- **Emergency Plan** – An email has been received and is in correspondence – a meeting will be arranged when possible.
- **Council Training** - Presently SALC are still only doing minimal online/Zoom training. Once they release their timetable for the New Year, I will pass to members.

5. Public Forum

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

Local History Recorder – The local history recorder informed members that she was required to write a report to record what happened through the year 2020. Mrs Spiller requested if she could be supplied with numbers relating to the Ixworth Community Response Scheme.

Cllr Lord gave some approximate information regarding the volunteer scheme and stated he would send all relevant numbers to her via email. It was noted, however, a lot of volunteering was done informally once the scheme had connected individuals.

Mrs Spiller then requested if each Parish Council member could supply her with anything positive the Council had achieved in 2020. Cllr Lord informed her a response would be sent to her once members had a chance to review the year.

Personal matter - A second member of public noted that he was named in a statement read in previous minutes. The resident then asked a question regarding a personal matter involving a Councillor and was informed the Council would discuss the question and, if agreed, a response would be sent by the Parish Council.

6. Report from County Councillor Joanna Spicer MBE

County Councillor (C Cllr) Spicer reported the following;

- **Crown Lane Steps** – Various complaints had been received about the muddy, slippery conditions from the steps leading from Crown Lane down to the by-pass. C Cllr Spicer stated that the Suffolk County Council (SCC) Rights of Way team were unable to help but she has requested help from SCC to try to resolve this issue.
- **Community Self- Help Scheme** – A particularly useful discussion took place with the SCC Officer in charge of this scheme, herself, two members of the Parish Council, and the Clerk. The Officer outlined the scheme, and it is suggested that this be added to the February or March agenda for further discussion.
- **Hempyard Bridge** – C Cllr Spicer was pleased to announce that she had been informed that work would start on repairing the bridge in early summer.
- **Council Tax** – Various local media reports have been discussing the possible increase to the SCC section of council tax. Whilst nothing formally has been adopted by the Council yet, there may be an increase. The income received by the council is down and reserves may need to be used.

Cllr Birrell enquired if there was any provision being made for people who, though no fault of their own due to Covid-19, that they are not in the position to pay.

C Cllr Spicer yes there was a scheme available and she would pass the details to him.

7. Report from District Councillor John Griffiths MBE

District Councillor (D Cllr) John Griffiths reported the following;

- **Council Tax** – A review is taking place at present, but nothing has yet been adopted. WSDC also has schemes available to various groups who require help. I could also supply contact details if required.

- **Covid-19** – Behind the scenes many people are busy lobbying for more support for our district. It is great news that finally the roll-out for vaccinations in our area is beginning to happen.
- **Grants** – Many business grants are available to local businesses through this difficult time. The WSDC website has a lot on information if help is required.
- **Brown Bins** – Currently the brown bins are still being emptied and hopefully this will continue.

8. Planning

DC/20/1784(re-consultation) – First floor extension above existing two bay garage and external staircase with balcony to form annexe – 21 Fordham Place, Ixworth **No Objection**

DC/20/2153 – Single storey front extension (following demolition of existing porch) – The Cottage, Stow Road, Ixworth **No Objection**

DC/20/2197 – Single storey side extension to create an annexe following demolition of existing garage – Holly Bungalow, Stow Road, Ixworth **No Objection**

9. Hempyard Bridge

An update of this item was given by C Cllr Spicer in item 6.

10. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Birrell informed all that over the Christmas period no further work had been completed on the plan. Cllr Birrell is hoping to arrange a meeting in February of all the working group to discuss the next steps.

11. Accounts

The following invoices were agreed for payment;

BACS	Staff Costs	£883.74
BACS	TOP Garden Services	£615.00
BACS	Viking	£276.91
BACS	Anglian Water Business	£14.64
BACS	MCP Solicitors	£2230.80
BACS	M J Nunn Surfacing Ltd	£160.80
BACS	J R Property Maintenance	£480.00
BACS	Designs on Metal	£198.00
BACS	Elite Fencing	£1120.00
BACS	Cllr Lilley (Cemetery)	£16.63
Direct Debit Nest Pensions		£26.48

The RFO (Responsible Finance Officer) was authorised to transfer £5500 by on-line transfer from the business account to the community account.

12. Precept 2021-2022

The RFO explained that two versions of a suggested budget for 2021-2022 had been previously distributed to all Cllrs. The RFO explained that it looked slightly different to previous years with some different categories. The RFO briefly outlined the categories for all members.

The RFO stated that if version two were to be agreed and accepted by all members then this would mean a small reduction to a Band D property. However, the final confirmation would depend on West Suffolk District Council when their budget is finalised.

It was resolved to accept version two and the RFO was instructed to submit to West Suffolk District Council the relevant precept form.

13. Parish Council Website

The Clerk reported that the quote for the new website using suffolk.cloud would cost;

£110 transfer of information from old site to new site, £50 training, £125 annually, a total cost of £285.

There was an optional £30 annual charge per account for an individual email account for each Councillor.

After questions from Councillors on the suitability and access to uploading documentation, the Clerk explained that the new site would be easier for her to upload relevant documentation and easier for users to access and view.

It was resolved to accept the above quote of £285 to set up the new website and then an annual cost of £125.

The decision on individual email addresses for Councillors would be discussed again once the site is up and running.

At this point of the meeting Cllr Birrell requested that the time be noted so that the recording of the meeting could be reviewed later by Councillors. The time was noted as 8.25pm.

The Chairman warned that if there were any more interruptions to the meeting, he would not hesitate to remove persons from the meeting.

14. Parish Council Policies

The Clerk informed members that she would distribute to all Councillors the updated Grant Application Policy and the Social Media Policy. The Clerk also informed members that work had started on other policies which she would distribute for viewing and approval.

15. Ixworth Cemetery

The Clerk reported that unfortunately the taps at the Cemetery had not yet been replaced. Cllr Lilley reported that a local plumbing company had kindly attended the Cemetery to cap one of the taps when it split. Currently the tap is still capped off but there is one working tap still in use.

The company who were instructed to remove the moss from the Arch Roof had still not attended so another company would be sought.

16. S106 Money

The Clerk reported that an email had been received from an Officer of WSDC to inform members that an amount of section 106 money was still available from a small development within the village. The amount was just over £12,000 and he was requesting if the Parish Council had any projects in the past or future that WSDC could perhaps contribute to. The email stated that it had to be for open spaces walks or play areas along with other leisure suggestions.

Suggestions were – improve the open space behind St Farm Lane, Seats along the avenue leading to Hempyard Bridge or possibly towards the footbridge over the by-pass.

Cllr Wilson suggested a small working party to discuss further and to get further information from the Officer at WSDC. The Clerk was instructed to contact WSDC for further information.

17. Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received and distributed to Cllrs prior to the meeting;

- **Norton PC** – Grant Request from Norton Pre-School
- **Roger Spiller** – Information re Woodland at Crown Lane
- **Resident** – Footpaths within the Parish
- **Resident** – Litter in Village/Volunteer Litter Pick
- **Cllr John Griffiths** – WSDC Litter Bins Collections
- **SCC** – Bus Timetable
- **D Cllr John Griffiths** – Message
- **Census Details** – Email and Handbook (2)
- **Hempyard Bridge Inspection** –
- **C Cllr Spicer** – Hempyard Bridge
- **D Cllr John Griffiths** – Covid-19 Grants
- **Cllr Lord** – Emails re Scott Road Footpath
- **Resident** – Complaint re Cllr Lilley

- The woodland at Crown Lane had been previously mentioned in item 4.

It was resolved to contact the resident about the footpaths in and around the Parish to inform them that this has been looked at within the Neighbourhood Plan and, with permission from the resident, send their email onto C Cllr Spicer for information and help with this issue.

It was agreed to make a small donation of £100 to Norton Pre-school.

Unfortunately due to low Councillors numbers the Parish Council felt it was not possible for them to arrange a litter pick at present. However, they would support any group wishing to arrange one and could contact the District Council, who had in the past, supplied equipment for such a scheme.

The Clerk reported at this point that she had contacted the Parish Council's insurance company to ascertain if a group within the Parish could be included within the insurance when working in the Parish. The insurance company informed the Clerk that only groups affiliated with the Council could use the insurance as cover.

18. Chairman's Report

Some may recall the sad business of a fatal road accident occurring on the Thetford Road Ghost Island junction in May 2017 where a young man lost his life. I have recently seen some media coverage relating to the inquest that was held and the inquest made a ruling that the construction, layout and type of junction was contributory to this accident and these findings have been statutorily informed to Suffolk County Council as the statutory highway authority.

For many years, we've stressed at various opportunities when discussing planning and highways that junctions of this nature on this particular stretch of road are treacherously unsafe. Although a junction in isolation continues to have planning approval for a future development, we must fundamentally ensure in light of this inquest that we take those findings into consideration at any future planning or highways matters that involve the A1088 to ensure there any dangers of this happening again are eradicated as best as possible.

I'm continuing to liaise with County Councillor Joanna Spicer to further understand SCC's position relating to this and how this may affect future matters on this stretch of road.

As agreed last month, working with Terry, I have submitted a formal letter to SCC Highways relating to the poor condition of footways in Scott Road and the lack of remedial attention by SCC

19. Councillors Report

Cllr Wilson reported the problems with the drains in Ixworth Thorpe which are once again blocked. The blocked drains cause dangerous problems when it rains as the road gets flooded, the weather then turns cold and the water freezes causing ice across the road.

A discussion was held that this problem keeps returning as the sand from the banks next to the pavements just runs into the road then down into the drain. The issue had been reported several times on the SCC highways reporting tool. A suggestion made was that the verge has an edging fitted so the sand is unable to run into the road and it was agreed to determine who owned the land so this suggestion could be put to them.

20. Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as February 10th 2021 at 7.30pm (Virtual Meeting)

21. Exclusion of Press and 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.

Business to be discussed;

- (i) Staffing
- (ii) Confidential Contract

With no further business the meeting closed at 9.25 pm.

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Signed

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Date