

IXWORTH AND IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council meeting held Virtually via the Zoom Platform on 9th December 2020 at 7:30pm

Present: Cllr Ben Lord (Chairman) Cllrs (Councillors) Sophia Wilson, Pam Shelton, Terry Lilley, Ben Birrell and Vicky Sutton

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Reeve, this apology was accepted by all.

2. Declarations of Interest

Non-pecuniary declarations were received from Cllrs Lord and Lilley in relation to item 6 on the agenda.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes had previously been distributed to all Councillors.

It was agreed by all present the Chairman sign the minutes as a true record of the meetings held on 11th November 2020.

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

4. Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported the following;

- **Play Area** - Playdale have been instructed to repair the edging of the netted climbing frame, replace the rotten poles on that piece of equipment and the balance wooden beam
- **Website & Policies** - a list of all policies that require updating has been made and the Clerk suggested the policies working group meet early in the New year to go through them and prioritise which to update first. Going forwards, the working group will update them and bring to the Full Council for approval and publication. A new website provider has been contacted for the cost of a new website which is more user friendly and suitable for a Local Council. The Clerk will also contact the current website provider to see if anything could be altered on the current site to improve it. I will bring details back to the Council in the New Year
- **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
- **Ixworth Churchyard** – The Clerk reported that a socially distanced or virtual meeting with Rev Karen Burton needed to be arranged to discuss the trees in the Churchyard and the ongoing issues with the lights in Ixworth Thorpe Church
- **V.A.S. (Vehicular Activated Sign)** - An email received from Joanna Spicer on the issue of a flashing slow down signs for various areas in Ixworth such as Stow Road and Thetford Road has been received. Unfortunately, as the officer in charge of this scheme at SCC (Suffolk County Council) has changed the whole process needs to be re-started. Once again, the Council will need to complete a form stating where they need to be positioned. A volunteer is required to visit the site with to complete form and carry out survey of poles currently there and where the PC (Parish Council) would like them positioned.
- **Emergency Plan** – an email had been received and had been included for discussion in correspondence
- **Meetings Dates for 2021** – The suggested dates had been distributed to all Councillors prior to the meeting. The meetings will continue virtually until further notice but would be held as normal on the second Wednesday of each month. The dates will be displayed on the weatherproof notice board at the Village Hall and included in these minutes
- **Clerks Holiday** – The Clerk informed members she would be taking annual leave from 24.12.2020 until 04.01.2021. Emails would be monitored but only emergencies would be dealt with

The Clerk also read the following statement –

Finally I would like to say thank you to the Parish Council and all its members for their help and understanding over the last few weeks and especially the few days prior to the last meeting after my family emergency. Thankfully, everything is now beginning to get back to normal but as I have said thank you for your support and offers of help. It was really appreciated at an exceedingly difficult time for me and my family.

5. Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received;

- **By-Pass Farms** – Request for Meeting (Crown Lane Area)
- **Mr Spiller** – Green Ixworth – Information and Grant Request
- **Resident** – Minutes Concerns
- **Resident** – Telephone Kiosk
- **Residents** – Telephone Kiosk
- **Resident** – Telephone Kiosk
- **Resident** – Abandoned Vehicle (passed to C Cllr Spicer & D Cllr Griffiths)
- **WSDC** – Emergency Plan

The Stow Road telephone kiosk be discussed in item 6.

A zoom meeting would be arranged with By-Pass Farms for Friday 15th January at 2pm.

Cllr Wilson stated that the grammatical errors in past minutes, that had been highlighted by a resident, had been unfortunate but in future the Council would try to make sure that such errors would not happen in the future.

The issue of developing an emergency plan would be added to the agenda in February for further discussion.

Green Ixworth would be sent the Council's grant application form to complete and submit for discussion.

The following correspondence had also been received but required no response;

- **John Griffiths** – Leader of WSDC (West Suffolk District Council) Statement
- **CAS (Community Action Suffolk)**– Covid-19 Update
- **C Cllr Joanna Spicer** – Wednesday Bus (email and timetable)
- **VH (Village Hall Trustee)** – Village Hall
- **Public Sector Executive** – Covid-19
- **WSDC**– Christmas Bin Collections x 2
- **WSDC** – Census 2021 Information
- **NCC (Norfolk County Council)** – Continuing Traffic Regulations
- **SARS** – Recycle Christmas Trees Fundraising Schemes
- **Sizewell Consultation x 2**
- **Suffolk Police** – Email and Newsletter
- **VH Chairman** – VH Letter
- **Work Well Suffolk**

6. Stow Road Telephone Kiosk

The Clerk read the following statement to respond to all queries that had been received;

This issue has been added to the agenda as the PC (Parish Council) had received some correspondence and there have also been comments made on social media sites relating to the Stow Road telephone kiosk.

This is an update on the status and history of the kiosk

BT (British Telecom) offered the Parish Council the option of adopting the kiosk as they were intending to remove the phone as it had not been used in over a year.

The PC agreed to this, and permission was also given by BT for the PC to assign a group within the village to take responsibility for it. The completion from BT to the PC took place at the end of 2017.

After requesting thoughts and ideas for what the kiosk could be used for, Ixworth WI first expressed an interest. Unfortunately, for various reasons they were unable to take responsibility for it. Ixworth & District RBL (Royal British Legion) then came forward to express an interest in refurbishing the kiosk and look after it. No other parties expressed an interest.

The PC confirmed the RBL could take responsibility September 2018.

However, responsibility was not given to the RBL until August 2019 when the grant from the PC was paid to them.

I have obtained an informal update from the Chairman of TRBL Ixworth who informed me of the following

1. Work was started on clearing the area in November 2019 but due to colder weather it was decided to postpone until the spring of 2020
2. Due to Covid-19, and all the issues surrounding lockdown, it has been unable for members to attend the site to carry out the refurbishments

It was resolved to write to Ixworth & District Royal British Legion to ascertain if they still wished to continue to refurbish the kiosk and look after it, going forward.

7. Litter Bins

Cllr Sutton read the following statement –

The Parish Council has received some correspondence concerning overflowing litter bins within the village.

A new contractor has been assigned the contract for emptying the approximate 28 litter bins within the village.

Unfortunately, there has been some minor issues with some bins being missed which the PC has now rectified, and all should be emptied each Wednesday.

However, the PC would like to highlight their concerns that some of the bins that have been reported as overflowing have had household waste placed in them, for instance folded and squashed cardboard, a towel and even a small rug.

The situation of employing a new contractor has highlighted to the PC that it has been some time since the number of bins, the style of bins and where they are placed within the village has been reviewed.

The PC has contacted the officer at West Suffolk District Council to visit the village and advise the PC on issues mentioned above. Advice already received from him is that some of the litter bins are not fit for purpose and may need to be moved, replaced or even removed.

A socially distanced meeting has been arranged for mid-January, though this may alter depending on Covid-19 regulations.

Quotes will then be obtained for WSDC and the current contractor for an annual contract to empty the bins.

D Cllr Griffiths read the list of current bins that are emptied by WSDC. The Clerk requested if D Cllr Griffiths could forward her the list to compare to the list she had given to the contractor.

8. Plant Britain

Cllr Shelton read the following statement –

I requested this to be added to the agenda to see if the Council could support this idea in some way.

The BBC programme Countryfile has set a goal of planting 750,000 trees over the next two years.

The trees do not have to be large Oaks on large areas of land but can be just small trees in someone's garden or even an even smaller tree in a window box or garden pot.

I would like to propose that the Council, from section 137 grant money, grant up to £20 to the first 50 residents to apply. This would cost the Council £1000 to begin with.

I suggest that residents supply the Council with the receipt of the cost of their tree and then they will be reimbursed up to the value of £20.

I realise this may cause lots of small payments for the Council, but my hope is to involve lots of individual residents in or on their own property rather than the PC deciding to plant several trees, for instance in Robins Copse.

I would place an article in the magazine possibly the end of December or January explaining to residents the project and how to apply.

I realise the finer details will need to be ironed out, but I hope you can all support me in this project

So my proposal is

1. The Parish takes part in Countryfile Plant Britain Campaign
2. 50 initial residents can request a grant of up to £20 (once receipts are supplied)
3. The cost would come from the section 137 budget

Further information can be found on the BBC Countryfile website.

It was resolved to agree to this proposal with the following alterations. The scheme will initially cease on 31.03.2021.

The Clerk was instructed to place an article in the magazine informing residents of the scheme.

9. Public Forum

The following comments were received;

- **Plant Britain Initiative/Green Ixworth** – A resident expressed their support for the Plant Britain initiative that the Parish Council are now supporting. Green Ixworth has registered with the scheme already and has starting phase one of planting along Crown Lane. A resident kindly has allowed 50 metres of new planting on their land and another resident has come forward and offered some more land.
Concerns have been raised on the woodland around the by-pass which the PC planted in 2006 and some are not sure the area has been maintained by the PC. Persimmon on their recent planning application wish to remove some or all the woodland area. Could the PC support the management of this area?
The SARS Christmas tree recycling is a good initiative and in the coming years Green Ixworth are hoping to organise something similar.
Green Ixworth are also hoping to have discussions with Persimmon on trees and shrubs currently on the land they have acquired for development. Any help with discussions with them would be gratefully received
Green Ixworth has already submitted comments to the WSDC consultation
- **Telephone Kiosk Stow Road** – A resident wished to inform members that he had contacted the local Poppy Appeal Organiser for her opinion on the fact that Ixworth RBL had been given ownership of the kiosk for another site for Remembrance. The Poppy Appeal Organiser felt that it should be given to an alternative group for a more community-based idea. The resident urged members to reconsider their decision and let an alternative group, who may have an alternative idea, to refurbish and develop
- **Woodland along the by-pass** - A resident informed members that he had spoken with a previous member of the Council who had help organise the planting of the small woodland along the by-pass. As the PC had planted the trees then would it be possible for the PC to maintain them as they were looking very unkempt which gave rise to Persimmon stating there would be no reason not to remove them when they develop the area.
- **Human Resources Financial Cost** – A resident requested why the members felt that a cost of £6825 for an investigation of a member of staff was an acceptable way to use public money when advice received from a solicitor had suggested that this would not achieve anything.
- **Green Ixworth Insurance Cover** – It was requested if Green Ixworth could use the Councils section of liability insurance when working within the community

The Clerk responded to the question about the Human Resources Financial Costs for an investigation. Due to the severity of the situation Parish Council decided the investigation was required.

The Clerk stated that due to various reasons she was not able to carry out this investigation. The members resolved that an independent outside person, outside of the Council, was required to carry out the investigation.

Cllr Birrell also stated that even though legal advice is sought the members have the right to choose another option. The Parish Council chose to have an investigation into the matter and engaged an independent Human Resources specialist to carry out the investigation. Unfortunately, due to the extensive nature of the investigation and extra work required many more hours were required for the investigation to be completed. The investigation found in the Parish Council's favour, justifying the cost.

The Clerk was instructed to contact the Council's insurance company on extending cover for a community group whilst working within the community.

10. Planning

DC/20/1914/TPO – Fell 1no Sycamore tree – 7 St Edmund Close, Ixworth – **No Objection**

DC/20/2064/TCA – Fell 1no. Bay tree – 19 High Street, Ixworth **No Objection**

DC/20/1926/HH – Install six feet fence between driveway and neighbouring property – 1 Street Farm Lane, Ixworth **No Comment as retrospective Application**

11. Report from County Councillor Joanna Spicer MBE

C Cllr Spicer reported the following;

- **Community Self-Help Scheme** – C Cllr Spicer stated she would arrange a meeting with SCC Officer Luke Merton to attend the village to discuss the Community Scheme. At this meeting, the recent traffic survey carried out by the Council could be discussed. Cllrs Lilley and Lord agreed to attend.
- **VAS** – C Cllr Spicer stated that she thought posts would be needed to be installed for any VAS the Council wished to purchase. The project would need a bit of work and discussions would need to be held with a SCC Officer called Keith Sampson. Cllr Sutton volunteered to take this project forward. The guidance that had been received by the Clerk would be passed to Cllr Sutton and all members for them to view. This would be added to a future agenda for further discussion
- **Streetlight near GP Surgery** – a streetlight had been damaged near the GP surgery and hopefully this would be repaired before Christmas
- **Scott Road Estate Pavements** – As requested by members the previous month C Cllr Spicer had taken this issue forward and requested that SCC come and inspect the pavement where a resident had fallen which had resulted in quite serious injuries. SCC had inspected the pavement and the findings were that whilst the pavement was in a generally poor state it was not bad enough to repair. C Cllr Spicer stated she had been informed it would be inspected again in the Spring.
- **Green Ixworth** – C Cllr Spicer felt the new group that had been formed was a very good initiative. Whilst walking through Coddington Way C Cllr Spicer was struck how pleasant it was having green space close to the houses. C Cllr Spicer suggested that when completing the latest WSDC consultation it is mentioned that new developments required green areas within them. C Cllr Spicer also wished to highlight that Ixworth required more walks in and around the Parish

Cllr Lord wished to convey the Council's disappointment at the response about the pavement in Coddington Way. The condition of the pavement had been reported in February 2018, suggesting an accident or serious injury would take place and now that had happened the members could not believe that SCC would not repair. The pavement on both sides of the road were in bad repair and it was agreed that this is highly dangerous to residents of the area. It was agreed that in the first instance Cllr Lord would write to the SCC Cabinet Officer about this issue. If no satisfactory response is received this issue may need to be taken to a Cabinet meeting of SCC where members of the public are allowed to ask questions on particular issues concerning them.

Cllr Wilson requested if C Cllr Spicer had yet obtained a quote to have a Village name sign installed in Ixworth Thorpe. The sign suggested was a white gated one similar to the one in Stow Road. The sign needed to be installed as you enter Ixworth Thorpe from Honington. C Cllr Spicer stated that she would obtain suggested types of signs and costings.

Cllr Wilson also requested if C Cllr Spicer could explain why TVAS had not attended Ixworth as scheduled.

C Cllr Spicer replied that it had not attended due covid-19 cases in the VAS team.

12. Report from District Councillor John Griffiths MBE

D Cllr Griffiths reported the following;

- **Civil Parking Enforcement** – The team visited Ixworth on 28 occasions in November
- **Planning Applications** – WSDC in their planning strategy always encourage green spaces within new developments
- **Covid-19** – WSDC are pleased that many services have been kept going during the current Covid-19 regulations.
- **Locality Budget** – If any groups wish to request a grant from my locality budget please apply as soon as possible

D Cllr Griffiths then wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

13. Neighbourhood Plan

The neighbourhood plan has had a quiet month, we held a meeting to discuss the potential relocation of the village hall, the meeting was attended by Trustees of the Village Hall (Jiggens Memorial Village Hall & Playing Fields Trust) and the Parish Council.

In the meeting it was discussed that the VH trustees had declined the offer of a joint task force with the specific members of the PC that had put themselves forward and that should the neighbourhood working group want to push for a public consultation around the relocation that would also not be supported by the VH Trustees.

One of the reasons for the suggestion of a joint group is that presently, there are no plans or drawings in place to show the members of the public what a refurbished VH on its current site would look like. After discussion it was agreed that Nick Laughton would approach an architect and discuss the feasibility of keeping the village hall on its current site and as to whether the plans drawn up for the Landridge site would fit into the land around the village hall.

Mr Laughton had already contacted the architects and gave them a brief outline of the plans and we now have a loose agreement from the architect and their costs. Cllr Birrell proposed the PC pay for the costs of this initial work. The quote was £965 + VAT. It was agreed by all present to fund this work to ascertain all information to give residents of the Parish the option to express an opinion.

14. Accounts

The following payments were agreed for payment;

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|--------------|-------------------------|---------|
| BACS | Staff Costs | £883.94 |
| BACS | H M Rev & Customs | £396.98 |
| BACS | Viking | £33.53 |
| BACS | PKF Littlejohn | £360.00 |
| BACS | JR Property Maintenance | £400.00 |
| BACS | One Suffolk (Website) | £60.00 |
| BACS | A Adlington | £108.82 |
| Direct Debit | Nest Pensions | £26.48 |

Due to a VAT refund the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) was not required to make a transfer from the business account to the Community account.

The R.F.O. reported the external audit report and certificate had been received from PKF Littlejohn LLP, no issues were raised. The report and certificate have been uploaded to the Parish Council website.

15. West Suffolk Planning Consultation

A report on this consultation from Cllr Lilley had been previously distributed to all members prior to the meeting. It was agreed to use this report as a basis to reply to the consultation.

- Notes also requested to be included –
- Footbridge over the by-pass
- Green areas within new developments
- Recreational areas

The Clerk was instructed to submit a response before the deadline of 22nd December 2020. – just checking that's correct

16. Cemetery

The following was reported by Cllr Lilley and the Clerk;

- The new fencing had been delayed as the fence panels had not yet been received. The panels had been delayed due to problems with manufacturing due to Covid-19. The fence would be installed as soon as the panels arrive
- The Clerk still had not been given a firm date for the moss on the roof entrance to be cleared. The Clerk would speak to the contractor in the New Year if not completed by then
- The tap at the entrance of the Cemetery had split causing water to flow down Crown Lane. The tap had been removed and the pipe sealed and currently the water is turned off. A plumber had been contacted to install new taps and protective boxes as soon as possible
- The Cemetery Working Group had met, via Zoom, to discuss the recent tree inspection carried out on the trees within the Cemetery. Cllr Lilley would contact tree surgeons to discuss the inspection suggestions and obtain quotes for the work that is required

17. Chairman's Report

The Chairman had nothing to report.

18. Councillors Reports

Cllr Wilson reported the drains at Ixworth Thorpe were still blocked.

19. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting was confirmed as 13th January 2021 at 7.30pm (Virtual Meeting)

20. Chairman's Seasonal Message

Cllr Lord read a personal seasonal message.

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

Members of the public were excluded at 9.11pm.

22. Staffing

Discussed in a closed meeting due to the confidential nature of the business being discussed.

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Signed

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Date

With no further business the meeting closed at 9.35pm.