

IXWORTH AND IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council meeting held Virtually via the Zoom Platform on Thursday 1st April 2021 at 7:30pm

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

Also Present: Mandy Adlington (Parish Clerk) and one member of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from the following Councillors –
Councillor Sutton due to a family bereavement and Councillor Reeve due to technical difficulties.
Apologies were accepted by all present.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

3. Public Forum

No members of the public registered to speak.

4. Planning

A comment from the application of DC/21/0571/TCA had been received and read out by the Chairman.

DC/21/0571/TCA – Fell one Horse chestnut tree, reduce in height on mixed country hedge by 0.5 metres –
Corner House, Commister Lane, Ixworth **No Objection**

DC/21/0418/HH – Front porch – 41 New Road, Ixworth **No Objection**

5. Planning Advice (Highways)

The Chairman read the following report received from the Parish Councils Highways Advisor;

Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council have a responsibility to support its existing residents and where possible assist them to retain, if not enhance, their existing quality of life. We, the parish council are duty bound to respond to planning applications when recognised to be generating an increasingly negative cumulative impact on the wellbeing of our residents. In respect of planning application reference DC/19/2481/OUT, submitted by Bloor Homes, we must go further and say the collective feelings of the Parish are strong enough to question a serious lack of consideration to matters of highway safety and convenience plus a lack of in depth local knowledge.

There are already numerous existing transport issues surrounding Ixworth.

West Suffolk Council has produced publications including the Crown Lane Ixworth Masterplan and Rural Vision 2031 documents. These documents are the considered benchmark but appear continually ignored. These documents have forecasted numerous and significant improvements to the existing transport infrastructure in this area when as a consequence of major new residential schemes in the area. However none of their proposals, including a proposed 5 arm roundabout upgrade (to an aforementioned existing 4 arm roundabout discussed in the current planning application) and a new pedestrian bridge have yet to be triggered.

Large residential development schemes generating significant extra traffic onto our roads are continually being considered favourably without due consideration to these documents.

There are already significant traffic jams in the Ixworth area due to a significant bottle neck on the A143. Plus numerous accidents have occurred in recent years, including a fatality. A coroner's report recently stated a contributory factor was due to a certain style of junction serving this area. The junction in question was identified as a right turn ghost island. Notwithstanding, Suffolk County Council Highways are still entertaining a brand new residential schemes with the same style of junction in Ixworth.

There should be no doubt that the numerous road network issues we are repeatedly highlighting are related to a poor standard of road infrastructure that is already not fit for purpose.

In the case of this latest planning application by Bloor Homes, we strongly feel that a proposed development of up to 250 units will result in a further and significant detrimental impact to the function of the local road infrastructure surrounding Ixworth. With road capacity issues already a major issue, now further and significant delays added to the already regular queuing will occur even more so for a very wide catchment or road users who need the A143 and A1088 in particular. Of course local residents will also have to suffer even more and wait for longer and longer periods when travelling on the local road network which includes these principal roads.

Crossing the A143 will continue to prove difficult, even more so if as a result of this latest development proposal with significant extra traffic. We note there is still no reference to the newly proposed pedestrian bridge required to cross over the A143, which has already been identified in West Suffolk Councils abovementioned documents. West Suffolk Council in its capacity as the Local Planning Authority will already be aware that the Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council has previously expressed serious reservations towards large residential developments proposed in the Ixworth area in that they will create a serious and detrimental impact on existing highways infrastructure. We refer your attention back to a current *committed development* of 77 units by Persimmon Homes which has since been withdrawn, albeit a road infrastructure scheme with the potential for serving a significantly greater number of units still has planning approval. Consequently, we must question where it is discussed in the applicants' Transport Assessment Document regarding a committed 77 unit scheme by Persimmon Homes whether this can be considered inaccurate?

The volume of forecast new build units in this area is actually significantly greater than what has been discussed in the applicants' Transport Statement. Therefore the traffic volume modelling of the Transport Assessment must also be considered seriously inaccurate and very much underestimated.

We note the applicants' Transport Assessment also makes to the following statement "It is difficult to reflect these interactions with isolated junction models, we have considered an improvement to the southern roundabout that benefits the network overall and will reduce queuing at the northern roundabout". We find this statement wholly unacceptable. Especially when the abovementioned considerably higher forecast of residential development units that will be realised in this area of Ixworth and Stanton over the next 10 years and beyond, up to 2031 has not been properly discussed, or acknowledged by Suffolk County Council Highways.

It must surely already be beyond doubt when as a result of all currently proposed or residential developments forecast in the future that there will be a much greater detrimental impact on the existing local road network in this area in the coming years.

We request West Suffolk Council in its capacity as local planning authority and Suffolk County Council in its capacity as the local highway authority respond to all these issues now and not later. They have a public responsibility to comment and react now based on the longer term impacts that will occur to the principal road network in this area.

It would appear that the above mentioned documentation produced by West Suffolk Council in consultation with Suffolk County Council is being continually ignored. It is being negotiated around by developers and not properly contested by the requisite overseeing planning and highway authorities. It would appear Suffolk County Council are not able to stand up to developers and enforce the safest and most appropriate standard for highways upgrades.

These piecemeal developments approaches are unacceptable when on such a grand scale and should be recognised to their fullest cumulative impact now. Clear and accurate forecasting for all potential developments in this area up to and including the year 2031 should be taken into account as per West Suffolk Council's Rural Vision 2031 document.

The proposed 5 arm roundabout upgrade inclusion remains incumbent where in respect of the Crown Lane Ixworth Masterplan and Rural Vision 2031 documents and should continue to be considered. There remains ample space in surrounding land to accommodate a 5 arm roundabout and we do not accept that a 5 arm roundabout cannot be designed and subjected to the fullest satisfactory road safety audit procedures. Therefore, from our position it remains our view that no highway consultant has yet to make a suitable attempt to design a satisfactory 5 arm roundabout. We understand this is not an impossible task if fully considered by a suitably qualified Chartered Civil Engineering Consultancy.

We note this proposed development by Bloor Homes is located on the southern outskirts of Stanton closest to Ixworth. The site location is not close to readily accessible forms of public transport nor appears to lend towards

any other form of other sustainable transport means as it is so remote to the existing service centre. So the propensity to travel by car must be considered significant.

We have sought some professional highways advice in these matters although not yet to the level afforded by developers. We are advised traffic generation figures for each property are regarded as 6 no. car movements per day per unit. Therefore, by just adding the Persimmon Homes' current estimate of 77 units plus Bloor Homes' 250 units, (and no more although there will be considerably more in the future), this already equates to up to an additional 2000 further traffic movements per each 24 hour cycle in the Ixworth area. Even when considering the proportionate distribution of road users heading in each direction plus the peak / off peak periods these figures are already substantial and must surely trigger more consideration and intervention by Suffolk County Council Highways?

We feel we could fund an equally strong and professional highways report reflecting on the negative impacts of major proposed residential schemes though regretfully are limited in our own funds. We should therefore seek to rely on the support of the relevant statutory authorities to ensure full and proper defences to our parishioners and commensurate contributions to road network improvements secured.

Based on all future potential developments in the area and not just the current Persimmon & Bloor Homes developments, we request that somebody at a higher level in the local planning authority, local highway authority, or both, will call in these various applications for further detailed and strategic consideration.

There appears to be limited joined up thinking when in respect of the numerous significant residential development proposals clearly earmarked and will be continually pursued seemingly one after the other but with seemingly no answer from Suffolk County Council as to how the road network will ever support them properly. Consequently, we feel it the responsibility of Suffolk County Council in its capacity as local highway authority to respond to state how we have reached this most unacceptable position. The existing and future capacity of both roundabouts discussed in the Transport Assessment plus overall design (safety) status of the current road network have still not been considered properly or to the fullest.

An exponential increase in residential developments in this area is imminent but not yet being considered to the fullest. The proposed improvements proposed by Bloor Homes are very limited, a sticking plaster at best, and do not recognise the overall bigger picture satisfactorily.

A very wide catchment of road users is already suffering serious issues in this area. A suitable road upgrade scheme should already have been identified by Suffolk County Council. It should have been designed and programmed accordingly so each and every developer can contribute proportionately. At the moment we are seeing bare minimum highways upgrade works to a road network which is already buckling.

Whilst our concerns are still yet to make an impact, we shall continue to monitor all developments and continue to object, until West Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council can demonstrate proper control in these matters. We cannot accept that these overseeing local planning and highways authorities being continually persuaded by seemingly positive reports when in reality only poor and unsafe transport situations exist whilst many long and overdue remedies from master plans now dating back some 15 years have still not been recognised.

It was agreed by al, present the Chairman could use the report to form a response to the Bloor Home planning application for Stanton.

6. Accounts

The following accounts were reported as being paid prior to the end of the financial year. All invoices had been distributed to Councillors prior to the meeting.

BACS	Pro Clean Xtreme	£250.00
BACS	Resident (Plant Britain)	£20.00
BACS	Resident (Plant Britain)	£20.00
BACS	Anglian Water	£13.11
BACS	ARCO	£110.80
BACS	TOP Garden Services	£615.00
BACS	JR Garden Services	£560.00
BACS	Navigus	£294.00

7. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 14th April 2021 at 7.30pm (Virtual Meeting)

8. 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.

The member of the public was excluded at 19.539m.
With no further business the meeting closed at 20.25pm.

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Signed

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Date