

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

*Minutes of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council meeting held Virtually via the Zoom Platform on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 7:30pm*

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

**Also Present:** Mandy Adlington (Parish Clerk), C Cllr Joanna Spicer and ten members of the public

The Chairman made the following statement;

Ahead of the formalities in our agenda this evening, many will have seen the statutory notices that have been displayed following the resignation of David Reeve. David has been one of the longest serving Parish Councillors in the history of the Parish Council, serving us for well over 40 years. He has been a fountain of knowledge on a wide variety of subjects, least of all in being a longstanding link between the Church and the Parish Council and for us all, it has been a pleasure to work alongside someone that has always had the community's interest at heart as a stalwart communitarian. Undoubtedly, his successor will have very big shoes to fill. On behalf of the Parish Council and the community, I give a warm and heartfelt thanks to David as a tribute to his long years of loyal and dependable service to Ixworth as a Parish Councillor and wish him all the very best on his retirement.

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

Cllr Sutton had informed the Clerk she would be a little late attending. Cllr Sutton arrived at 7.50pm.

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

No declarations of interest were made.

### **3. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

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> March 2021 and 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

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

### **4. Reports**

The Clerk gave the following updates;

- **Councillor Resignation** – As mentioned by the Chairman David Reeve has resigned from the Parish Council. Notices have been placed on all notice boards and on facebook pages. If 10 or more electors request an election by 13<sup>th</sup> May an election for the vacancy will take place no later than 16<sup>th</sup> July. If ten or more do not request an election, then the Parish Council will be given permission to co-opt an individual to fill the vacancy. The election for the two current vacancies is being held alongside other elections such as County Council elections, so the Parish Council will only be required to pay a percentage of the cost. If an election is called for Mr Reeves vacancy the Parish Council will be required to fund the costs for the entire election.
- **Election** – A folder will be prepared for the two new Councillors after the election on 6<sup>th</sup> May.
- **Training** – A list of provisional dates booked for all six modules of Councillor training has been distributed to all Cllrs. The list will also be distributed to new Councillor's elected in May
- **Litter Bins** – The spreadsheet is in the final stages of completion on the possible replacing and removing litter bins.
- **VAS** – An application form has now been received from SCC which will require completing and submitting
- **Website** – The new website is almost completed. Once launched the old site will be closed. The new site address will be displayed on notice boards, in the magazine and at PC meetings. I am hoping, for a while, that a re-direction will be able to be placed on the old site directing a user to the new site.

The new website gives the Council the ability to keep developing various pages and areas giving information on events and news for instance.

It will be a work in progress and will develop more as time passes.

- **Communication** – I have created a facebook persona for Ixworth Clerk. As agreed, I as Clerk will respond to facebook posts, as soon as I can, on subjects relating to the PC. I will try to answer any queries or misleading posts from others on the position of the PC as a corporate body.

The facebook groups are not going to be monitored 24/7 so some posts may be missed and not always be responded to.

- **Outstanding Projects**

The outstanding projects that have now been re-started will be looked at over the next few months for completion. A document will be produced for all Cllrs.

- **May Meeting**

The meeting held in May is the Annual Parish Council Meeting which includes the Election of Chairman for the coming year and statutory Council business.

## **5. Public Forum**

The following questions were submitted to the Parish Council prior to the meeting;

- Would the Parish Council be willing to carry out a survey of the village at night to ascertain whether there are any residential areas in Ixworth which are so poorly lit that there is a danger of tripping over doorsteps, slipping on dog excrement or falling over in potholes
- A resident who is unable to attend this evening is concerned about a streetlight opposite 11 St Edmund Close which is partially obscured by vegetation. The streetlight is owned by West Suffolk and their highways officer has advised be to contact the Parish Council to contact the resident requested they cut back the vegetation.
- I mentioned to Joanna Spicer a few weeks ago that one of the pavements outside Ixworth Primary School is not a dropped pavement, and is a hazard for prams, pushchairs and wheelchairs. She suggested that I should mention it at the April Parish Council meeting – presumably so that councillors could formally request that Suffolk County Council include the creation of a dropped pavement outside Ixworth Primary School in this year's budget. I would be most grateful if you could do so please

Since then, I note that a brand new pavement has been built within the front car park of the school. I was surprised to see that this has no access via a dropped pavement and wondered whether this ought to be rectified.

- I would like to bring up the subject of communication. I would like information on the twitter profile @ixworth village. I have my concerns that this is advertised as the official page does the Parish Council have anything to do with this

The Chairman gave the following response;

- The Parish Council will certainly consider the current status with streetlights and add to our list of projects requiring attention. As part of this, we will take into consideration any issues in the particular area of the village where a need may be identified and mitigate that alongside any environmental impacts. In you kindly sharing advanced sight of your questions on this subject, I have already begun obtaining data from Suffolk Police through a Freedom of Information request that will assist in underpinning any issues that street lighting may/may not aid.
- Concerning your second question, it is a little intriguing that a highways officer from West Suffolk Council has made such recommendations when highways is a County Council matter. However, such issues that you raise would ordinarily fall part of a Minor Works programme which is a project the Parish Council has been looking into commissioning in recent months. We will have a look in person to see first-hand the issue you have described and determine the appropriate course of action. On any similar issue such as this and where residents are unable to attend a

meeting, we would very much encourage them to contact us by e-mail or telephone with any concerns they may have that we will try to assist and/or advise on where we can.

- Responding to your third point, footways are the responsibility of Suffolk County Council as the statutory authority and aside from lobbying, we have no means of intervening in this matter. As you may recall from previous meetings, widespread issue with footways in nearby Scott Road is something the Parish Council have been pursuing for over three years with no satisfactory outcome to date. Therefore, its slightly confusing why it has been implied the Parish Council needs to intervene in a matter which is wholly the responsibility of Suffolk County Council. Nevertheless, our County Councillor is here this evening, and I am sure, given you have already had dialogue with her, will take this forward appropriately.
- Your fourth point concerns a matter that is on private property and therefore the Parish Council has no locus to intervene on what occurs beyond the boundary of a private property.
- The Chairman informed the resident that he has administered this Twitter profile for several years and long before his time as a Parish Councillor. For more than 10 years, it has been fully and transparently disclosed in my register of interests. As this is nothing to do with the Parish Council, I would be more than happy to discuss this with you independently as residents.

A resident also wished to inform the Council that he had been in dialogue with Persimmon. The resident had written to Persimmon with concerns over the plastic fencing they had recently installed around their land adjacent to Crown Lane. It was requested that they remove it as it was becoming a trip hazard and a danger to wildlife.

The resident also stated that Persimmon had indicated they had the option to purchase the remaining land in that area.

The Chairman informed the resident that the PC were being consulted on the next sections of Crown Lane development by the landowners. The Crown Lane development had been on the Parish Council agenda and discussion for many years, and they would continue to keep dialogue open with the landowner and respond to any consultations.

The resident also highlighted his concerns that a new school may not be built. In a previous discussion with the previous NPWG a SCC officer stated numbers were unlikely be enough to warrant building a new school.

A discussion was held on supporting the current school to help increase numbers. It was agreed to help in any way and C Cllr Spicer stated she would contact to see if any assistance is required.

C Cllr Spicer stated that the meeting held by the previous NPWG with a SCC officer could be ignored as he was a very junior officer and figures he quoted and opinions given were incorrect.

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

C Cllr Spicer has nothing specific to report, but the following points were raised by Cllrs.

- **Crown Lane Land** – Is there a permissive footpath across the Crown Lane Development land and if not if the path has been used for many years does that then become a legal path. C Cllr Spicer stated she would investigate this.
- **A1088 By-pass** – Cllr Lord requested if there had yet been any response to the inquest report into the fatal accident on the A1088. C Cllr Spicer stated she would chase the response.
- **Thistledown Drive** – Cllr Lord requested if any action was being taken on the overgrown vegetation in Thistledown Drive. Cllr Lord had previously sent photographs to C Cllr Spicer. Cllr Lord requested an update.
- **Drainage Clearance** – Cllr Wilson asked C Cllr Spicer why the current footpath clearance work being carried out in Great Barton could not be done in Ixworth Thorpe. C Cllr Spicer stated that she did not know why but perhaps as Gr Barton footpaths were used by cyclists then it could be more of a priority than Ixworth Thorpe

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

D Cllr Griffiths sent his apologies for not being able to attend the meeting.

## **8. Planning**

No applications had been received.

## **9. Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr Birrell reported that the consultations had to be postponed and new dates arranged. A poster with the new dates for the village hall presentation and the online presentation would be displayed as soon as possible. Contact details to request the joining instructions and to book a place at the village hall would be on the poster.

## **10. Accounts**

The following accounts were agreed for payment;

BACS	Staff Costs	£1314.67
BACS	Zurich	£974.88
BACS	SALC	£779.93
BACS	Ixworth Association	£125.00
BACS	Suffolk Icloud	£505.00
BACS	WSDC	£160.18
BACS	David Thrower	£300.00
BACS	Parker Planning Services	£936.00
BACS	A Adlington (Zoom Renewal refund)	£143.88
BACS	A Adlington (ICO Membership refund)	£40.00
BACS	JR Garden Services	£560.00
BACS	Resident	£20.00
BACS	Viking (Grit Bin)	£358.80
BACS	D Thrower (Grit Bin)	£100.00
Direct Debit NEST		£50.16

The RFO (Responsible Finance Officer) was authorised to transfer £6000 by on-line transfer from the business account to the community account.

Cllr Wilson would authorise online the payments above.

The RFO reported that the previous years accounts had been passed to the internal auditor.

## **11. Ixworth Cemetery**

Cllr Lilley reported the Cemetery working group had met recently to discuss the tree survey that had been undertaken last year. Quotes had been obtained from two companies for the immediate work required.

The quote from TOP Garden Services was accepted.

The Clerk was instructed to inform the successful company and unsuccessful company.

The Clerk reported that the moss covering the Archway into the Cemetery has now been removed.

The removal of moss had highlighted that there were several loose and missing tiles. The Clerk was in the process of obtaining quotes to repair this issue.

Cllr Lilley informed members that he had received several comments from residents stating how much better the Cemetery was looking now a Caretaker had been employed.

## **12. Parish Council IT Provision**

As previously mentioned, the Clerk has been looking into the IT provision for the Council. Currently the office package, including a secure online for Council data, was currently held under the Clerks personal account. The Clerk had obtained one quote from a company assisting with this issue but a meeting with another company had been postponed. The Clerk hoped she would have all the relevant information and a report written for the June meeting.

A new website, with a domain owned by the Parish Council, had been purchased along with dedicated emails for all Councillors to use in the future.

### **13. Annual Parish Meeting**

The Clerk reported that Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) had advised Councils that Annual Parish Council meetings should be held this year. The meeting can be held virtually. It was provisionally agreed to hold on the evening of 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 7pm. However, further clarification would be required.

The Clerk would place an article in the magazine inviting residents to request topics for the agenda. The Chairman would invite local groups to attend and give a report on their organisations if they so wish.

### **14. Correspondence**

The following correspondence had been received and been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting

- **Resident** – Questions from March Meeting
- **WSDC Planning** – Information request on 52 St Farm Lane
- **Ixworth Library** – Opening hours consultation
- **Conifers in Thetford Road** – resident has concerns very overgrown
- **Resident** – Tree Stump
- **Anglia Water** – Road Closure
- **John Griffiths** – Message from WSDC Leader
- **Suffolk Police** – Speeding Email
- **Suffolk Police** – Email Attachment
- **West Suffolk Hive** – Green Issues
- **WSDC** – Delegation Panel Decision (Holly Bungalow)
- **Keep Britain Tidy** – Great Spring Clean-up
- **SALC** – Meeting in Public
- **Suffolk Police** – Actions from 28.03.2021
- **WSDC** – Property Services
- **Befriending Service** – Volunteers
- **C Cllr Spicer** – Bloor Homes
- **Julie Baird** – Town Centre Recovery
- **Keep Britain Tidy**
- **Suffolk Bus Timetable**

The following responses were agreed;

- (i) The Clerk was instructed to respond to WSDC Planning Officer informing him that the PC were unaware a response or suggestion was required by them.
- (ii) The Clerk was instructed to contact the resident who had ideas about the tree stump to inform him that the tree stump was not in the Parish of Ixworth and it is on private land. The resident would need to lobby Pakenham Parish Council or contact the owner of the land
- (iii) The Chairman reported that he had been to have a look at the Conifers mentioned in the email. The Conifers concerned are behind the flats in Thetford Road. The Chairman thought that they did look a bit in no mans land. It was agreed to take some photos and contact Havebury, WSDC and Suffolk County Council to ascertain ownership of the land and trees.
- (iv) It was agreed to respond to Ixworth Library stating the Parish Council supported the new suggested opening hours
- (v) SALC had informed the Council that once restrictions due to Covid-19 are lifted then physical meeting would start again at the Village Hall. However, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) are requesting Councils comments on the good and bad aspects of holding PC meetings virtually. NALC are then going to produce a report to discuss the possibility of Councils being able to continue holding virtual

meetings with the possibility of changing legal regulations. It was agreed that Cllrs would send their thoughts whether good or bad to the Clerk so she could send a response to NALC.

The Clerk reported that she was still in communication with the resident who had concerns on the running of the Council. The Clerk would contact again this month

### **15. Chairman's Report**

The Chairman read the following report;

Following the death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, books of condolences were not permitted as a result of COVID-19 regulations that would ordinarily have been in St. Mary's. Therefore, on behalf of the community, I sent a letter of condolence to Her Majesty the Queen and attended the church service on the eve of His Royal Highness's funeral.

Following the Council's approval to my proposed response to the Bloor Homes outline planning application in neighbouring Stanton, I have now formally submitted this to West Suffolk Council on our behalf. This has now been added to the planning portal and available to be viewed publicly. It is hoped once the County Council elections are out of the way, the meeting with the local Highways Technical Engineer together with counterparts from Stanton and Bardwell Parish Council's will take place.

Despite writing to Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways on 11 January concerning the ongoing issue with footways in Scott Road and the injury to a resident that occurred last October, I continue to have had no response from the Member or Suffolk County Council. Although I am sure the upcoming elections are cited as some of the reason as to why, almost four months on this is rather frustrating. I sent a follow-up note last Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> which has also not received a response thus far. In the event a response has not been received, if no one has any objections I would propose to attend the County Council's meeting in May to further escalate this.

Following various comments from residents across social media networks around an envisaged "safe crossing" over the A143 bypass, it has been almost two years since there was any discussion with Suffolk County Council relating to this. Having spearheaded this on behalf of the Parish Council for almost ten years, I will ensure following the County Council elections that these discussions need to be promptly restarted.

It was agreed that Cllr Lord could attend the County Councils May meeting to highlight concerns about the footways in Scott Road.

### **16. Clerks Report**

The Clerk reported she would be on holiday from Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June until Monday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

The Clerk also informed members that face to face meetings would be required to be restarted dependant on Covid regulations. SALC reminded Clerks that all measures currently in place with the Government still had to be upheld. Dependant on these regulations hopefully meetings may be held again in the Village Hall soon.

### **17. Councillors Reports**

Cllr Wilson requested that data from the VAS in Ixworth Thorpe is obtained.

Cllr Shelton informed members that the Post Office van would be attending Ixworth twice a week again.

### **18. Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as *Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7.30pm (Virtual Meeting)*

The Chairmen explained that this would be Annual Parish Council Meeting and usual the agenda would only contain the Election of Chairman and statutory business.

**19. 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 press and public were excluded at 20.57pm.

With no further business the meeting closed at 21.36pm

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Signed

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Date