

IXWORTH AND IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council meeting held in Ixworth Village Hall on Wednesday 8th December 2021 at 7:30pm

Present: Councillors (Cllrs) Ben Birrell (Chair), Pam Shelton, Ben Lord, Sophia Wilson, Steve Wilson, Debra Reay, Clare Black and Kate Rees

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Sutton – apology was accepted by all present.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

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

It was agreed by all present that the Chair sign the minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 10th November 2021.

4. Public Forum

The following were highlighted by residents;

- **Flooding Water in Walsham Road** - a resident shared photos and his concerns about flooding water across the road near Robins Copse. The resident had assessed the area and thought that a gully in Robins Copse was blocked or closed off preventing the water from escaping through the gully. The resident was also very concerned about the leaves on the pavements in that area.
- **Overhanging Hedges** – a resident requested if the Parish Council could consider compiling a list of who is responsible for overhanging hedges & bushes within the Parish. A list would then help when a hedge becomes a problem, such as blocking a pavement.
- **Commister Lane** – a resident from Commister Lane, who had reported the overgrown verge in Commister Lane at the November meeting, informed the members that he had forwarded to the PC a petition signed by all residents of Commister Lane requesting the verge is cut as soon as possible. The resident had spoken with C Cllr Spicer, who had also visited the site, and informed her he had obtained a quote for the work to be completed. C Cllr Spicer at this point informed members she would discuss further in her report.
- **SAWG** – in Cllr Sutton's absence Mrs Spiller gave an update on the group's progress. The magazine article would go in the January issue along with the consultation slips. Responses would be compiled and reported back to the PC. The Clerk confirmed that she and Cllr Sutton were in the process of obtaining or making boxes for residents to submit their response.
- **Public Toilets** - It was requested if a working group could be set up to discuss vandalism as this issue seems to be causing a problem and preventing the moving forward of issues such as re-opening the village toilet facilities.

5. Crown Lane Development

A discussion was held on the upcoming consultation that Pegasus are holding on 16th December 2021. The Clerk confirmed that the PC had not been formally approached for a response.

It was agreed that as this was such a prominent issue within the Parish, the Council should highlight to residents some issues surrounding the development prior to them attending the presentation.

It was agreed that Cllrs Lord, Birrell and Black would compose an article to appear on social media.

All Cllrs were urged to attend to offer their thoughts to the developer as a resident.

6. Report from County Councillor Joanna Spicer MBE

C Cllr Spicer reported the following;

- **Commister Lane** – As mentioned a quote for £580 + VAT had been obtained for clearing the verge in Commister Lane. C Cllr Spicer confirmed that she could grant the cost to the PC if the PC were to pay for the work in the first instance.
- **Ixworth Thorpe Gateway Sign** – C Cllr Spicer thanked the Clerk for sending her the plans for the sign. C Cllr Spicer stated that she had spoken with the highways team who felt there should be no problem with installing the sign. A couple of things required checking first such as if there are any underlying cables where the sign will be erected. C Cllr Spicer confirmed she would work with Cllr Sophia Wilson to help move this project forward.
- **Temporary Lights on A1088** – The bridge on this road near Bridge Farm, as previously reported, is in need of repair. It will soon be restricted to 7.5 tonnes. C Cllr Spicer and her fellow C Cllrs for the area are very concerned that minor roads in the area will be used by lorries over 7.5 tonnes. C Cllr Spicer will keep the PC updated.
- **SAWG** – C Cllr Spicer reported she was meeting with the SAWG for a walk around the village to look at dropped kerbs.

It was agreed by all present that the PC would instruct the contractor to cut back the verge in Commister Lane and then request a grant from C Cllr Spicer as agreed above.

Action: Clerk

Cllr Lord requested an update of actions that Suffolk County Council will be taking after the inquest on the fatality on the A1088. C Cllr Spicer stated she would investigate.

Cllr Sophia Wilson enquired if C Cllr Spicer could give an update on Ixworth Library. C Cllr Spicer stated that Cllr Reay may be better placed to give an update as she was the Chairman of Friends of Ixworth Library (FOIL) and the Chairperson of Suffolk Libraries.

Cllr Reay informed members that staff, including a manager, had been taken on but unfortunately the appointed manager had decided the post did not suit and the second new staff member had accepted an alternative role elsewhere. Currently, an experienced manager from another Suffolk library was overseeing Ixworth and all shifts were being covered. In the New Year it is hoped new members of the team will be recruited. Friends of Ixworth Library (FOIL) representatives will be meeting with members of Suffolk Libraries senior management team for a detailed briefing soon.

7. Report from District Councillor John Griffiths MBE

D Cllr Griffiths reported the following;

- **Hempyard Bridge** – D Cllr Griffiths reported that there have been various issues around this planning application. The decision date has now been altered while some of these issues are discussed. Concerns are around the suggested railings on the bridge. D Cllr Griffiths would keep the PC updated.
- **Christmas Fair** – D Cllr Griffiths thanked all those involved in making the Christmas Fayre event such a success. Whilst there he saw many happy faces enjoying themselves.

D Cllr Griffiths wished all a Happy Christmas

8. Planning

DC/21/2069 – a, double garage with storage above; b. Alterations to existing access; c. create vehicular access and driveway off Crown Crescent – 2 Park Cottages, High Street, Ixworth **No objection**

DC/21/2159 – single storey rear extension – 3 Riverview, Oak Barn, Stow Road, Ixworth **No objection**

DC/21/2234 – a; removal of cement based render and replace with lime render to front elevation b; install new riven oak laths and replace pentice boards c; replace or repair windowsills – 7 High Street, Ixworth **No objection**
Action: Clerk

9. Parish Council Projects

Updates were received on the following;

- **Roundabout Sponsorship** – no further update
- **PC IT Provision** – the Clerk informed members that this was a slow process as sorting files currently held is very time consuming

- **Neighbourhood Plan** – the Clerk reported the draft plan was with WSDC, but it is hoped the Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation would start on 1st February 2022.

Emergency Plan

Cllr Steve Wilson reported the following;

- Main plan complete, printed and entered on EPO's database.
- Redacted version circulated and to be lodged on PC public website.
- Village hall & volunteer supplements being written.
- Volunteer recruitment underway, two so far, briefings once enough numbers or individual if necessary.
- Emergency box in VH committee office.
- Emergency equipment donated by SCC but supplemental to our box, the lantern does not work.
- I will contact Pakenham PC to co-ordinate over 'bridge' properties and inform Cllr Rees of result.

VAS Ixworth

Cllr Steve Wilson reported the following;

- the radar received and installed in Bardwell Road at 9am Sunday.
- a minor bracket issue became apparent, but I have a fix for the problem
- due to the positioning of the sign traffic from Thistledown Drive was being picked up. The sign has been reprogrammed to 24mph to reduce effect of Thistledown traffic. The first statistics will be skewed by traffic in Thistledown. I will angle sign slightly next time to reduce this conflict.
- I asked Highways to reconsider our original location, but this was refused again.
- I anticipate 3-week cycle of recharge, download data, relocate.

10. Accounts

The following accounts were agreed for payment;

BACS	Staffing	£1129.24
BACS	H M Rev & Customs	£116.57
BACS	WSDC	£1662.12
	(election May 2021)	
BACS	J R Garden Services	£560.00
BACS	Elan City	£2342.84
	(VAS)	
BACS	Viking Direct	£233.99
	(Stationery)	
BACS	SALC	£720.00
	(Training)	
BACS	Arco	£67.44
	(Emergency Plan)	
BACS	A Adlington	£45.29
	(Refund Sign Trade Supplies VAS)	
BACS	A Adlington	£133.44
	(monthly expenses)	
BACS	Events Committee	£500.00
	(Christmas Fayre)	
BACS	Youth Club	£5000.00
BACS	Cllr V Sutton	£497.99
	(Christmas Lights)	
BACS	A Adlington	£289.97
	(PC Printer)	
Direct Debit	NEST	£39.03

The Clerk explained that a previous invoice of £1080 to SALC, approved at the June 2021 meeting, had not been paid as on investigation the invoice was incorrect. The correct invoice above has now been approved.

The RFO (Responsible Finance Officer) was authorised to transfer £12,000 by on-line transfer from the business account to the community account.

Cllr Sophia Wilson would authorise, online, the payments above.

Action: Cllr Sophia Wilson & the Clerk

The Clerk reported the budget for 2022-2023 would be finalised at the January meeting.

11. Play Area

A quote and a plan had been distributed to members prior to the meeting. A quote of £42,000 had been received to remove the rotten large climbing frame and replace with four different items of equipment including an accessible swing.

Cllr Sophia Wilson explained that Playdale had been approached as they had installed the other sections of the play area. Cllr Sophia Wilson explained that she had only received the plan that morning and was sorry Cllrs did not have an earlier view of the suggested equipment.

The Clerk explained that the following budget could be used for purchasing the equipment;

- £15,000 in current allocated funds
- £12,500 possible grant from WSDC
- £15,000 from current budget

Cllr Reay wished to highlight her concern that no written report had been received and requested that in the future when such a large amount of money is being spent, that a report is received in good time prior to a meeting.

A very fractious and heated discussion took place in which a Cllr lost their temper during the conversation.

It was resolved to accept the quote and Cllr Sophia Wilson and the Clerk would move this project forward.

Action: Cllr Sophia Wilson & the Clerk

12. Ixworth Thorpe 'Welcome Sign'

Cllr Sophia Wilson had distributed a quote for a 'Welcome to Ixworth Thorpe' sign. Cllr Sophia Wilson accepted comments from C Cllr Spicer who suggested a white gate would be more effective. Cllr Sophia Wilson agreed to speak with the supplier on the cost of supplying a white gate rather than a wooden sign.

It was agreed by all present to accept the quote for £962 + VAT. Cllr Sophia Wilson agreed to contact the company to accept the quote. It was agreed to spend no more than the original quote for a white gate rather than a wooden one. It was also agreed to speak with C Cllr Spicer to ascertain if highways would assist in the installation.

Action: Cllr Sophia Wilson & the Clerk

13. Village Appearance

Cllr Steve Wilson requested that this item be on the agenda as he was concerned about the general appearance of the village. Over the last months the village appearance has become very untidy. Fallen leaves and litter are covering the pavements.

Some issues over the last few months are;

- Ixworth signs overgrown and covered up – did the Cemetery caretaker get approached to help with this issue?
- Commister Lane verge – Discussed in item 6
- Slippery leaves - did the Cemetery caretaker get approached to help with this issue?
- Village sign and Stow Road verge – this has been reported but no action is going to be taken by SCC
- Thetford Road verge - did the Cemetery caretaker get approached to help with this issue?

The Clerk reported she had spoken with the Cemetery caretaker, and he was unable to help at this time, with the leaves, Ixworth sign overgrowth and Thetford Road verge.

Cllr Steve Wilson suggested employing a street cleaner. It was agreed that as this was a staffing issue it would be discussed in item 22.

14. Chalk Lane

Cllr Steve Wilson reported that he had followed up, with residents, their concerns about the safety issues around Chalk Lane and below concerns which were highlighted to him.

- Cycle barriers in pedestrian cut from Chalk to Peddars reported as block to wheelchair in 2018, passed to Safety & Access Working Group (SAWG), will view on their walkabout.
- Poor state of pavement at No 4 & 6 Chalk Lane, previously mentioned in correspondence, passed to SAWG, I have reported it, to be seen on walkabout.
- Similar problems to Street Farm Lane, more vehicles per household than anticipated, few garages in use. Result is vehicles everywhere, including commercial, affects sightlines for traffic and leads to parking on pavements.
- Pavement parking in one cul-de-sac has led to two vulnerable residents being unwilling to leave their homes. Passed location to SAWG, to be seen on walkabout and suggest PC leaflets under windscreen wipers of pavement parkers.
- Commercial activity at one location causing traffic issues and disturbance at anti-social hours, PC has approached planning department for advice.
- Chalk Lane junction. Accident risk due to two-way traffic at speed and poor sightlines. It is a gyratory access road, not a roundabout. Suitable for two-way traffic. Highways will not pay to make it a roundabout.

A report on these issues had been distributed to all members prior to the meeting including a suggested letter to be sent to all residents in Chalk Lane seeking their opinions of practical solutions. It was agreed by all present to send suggested letter.

Action: Clerk & Cllr Steve Wilson

15. Footbridge

A report had previously been distributed by Cllr Lord on the current situation with the possibility of a footbridge over the by-pass. The report included a powerful letter from a young resident of the village highlighting his concerns of the dangers of crossing the by-pass.

Cllr Lord gave a brief overview of the history of the PC trying to get a bridge installed.

The following recommendations from Cllr Lords report were agreed;

- The Parish Council formally writes to the Leader of Suffolk County Council in respect of this matter and the observations/representations Cllr Lord made in his report
- We should recognise young Jacob's voice as being our 'young mascot' for this project.
- Attending Suffolk County Council's next full Council meeting to present our position thereby ensuring it receives appropriate attention and request that the County Council does not focus only on Ixworth development to fund this overdue infrastructural requirement.

It was also suggested and discussed that an alternative approach, such as a campaign with local residents and children may be a new way forward or ascertain if a local group could take this forward with the support of the Parish Council. All members thought a local campaign was a promising idea.

It was agreed by all that Cllr Lord on behalf of the Parish Council write to the Leader of Suffolk County Council highlighted observations made on Cllr Lords report.

Action: Cllr Lord

16. Parish Council Environment Policy

Cllr Reay requested confirmation that all Cllrs had read, understood and accepted her recommendations made in her report for the November 2021 meeting.

The recommendation is as follows -

'Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe PC will set up an Environmental Policy Working Group comprising Parish Councillors, residents, businesses and community organisations to develop a Policy based on the priority area set out below and in consultation with the local community. Policy Proposals will be brought to the PC at its meeting in March 2022. The PC will provide resources sufficient to undertake public consultation.'

All members stated they had understood and agreed at the last meeting, as minuted, to form a working group as suggested. It was agreed a budget of up to £200 to facilitate this policy.

Cllr Reay suggested that the PC write to Mrs Palmer to thank all who took part in the recent presentation given to the Parish Council. All members were impressed by the hard work undertaken by Eagle Class and inform them that a business within the village has already taken on their suggestion of litter pickers being made available to residents.

17. Chairman's Report

The Chair stated he had nothing further to report.

18. Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that the new printer for the PC had arrived.

The Clerk stated that from the February meeting her report would appear towards the top of the agenda so that she could report on any actions taken by the PC that were not an item for discussion on that month's agenda.

The Clerk had been requested to bring to the attention of the members that a member felt the current meeting room was unsuitable due to the current Covid 19 cases increasing once again. The member was concerned that a member of their family was shielding and felt there was not sufficient social distancing at the current venue. A discussion took place, but no agreement was made to alter the venue for the meeting. The Clerk stated she would look into an alternative and seek the opinions of members prior to formally issuing the agenda for the January meeting.

The Clerk was asked if the member did not feel able to attend due to this situation what were the legal requirements for attendance at meetings when summoned. The Clerk explained that all Cllrs had the option to apologise for not being able to attend and it was highly likely, in the circumstances, that members would accept the apology for absence.

19. Correspondence

The following correspondence has been received;

- **Ixworth Cycle Races** (02.05.2022) – Welcome Back
- **Resident** – Commister Lane, concerns over overgrown verge
- **Resident** – Concerns over Road Closure for Street Fair
- **Pegasus** - Email & Flyer attachment for consultation on 16.12.2021
- **WSDC** (Winter Social Media Campaign) - Dog Fouling Campaign + attachment
- **Bardwell PC** – Quiet Lane
- **Joanna Spicer** – Hempyard Bridge Information
- **John Griffiths** – Street Lighting Information
- **Grant Applications** – Youth Club & Events Group

It was agreed that the Clerk write to the Cycle Race organiser stating the Parish Council would be happy for the cycle races to return to Ixworth. **Action: Clerk**

It was agreed to write to the organisers of the Beacon Lighting for the Queen's Jubilee to inform them that in principle the Parish Council would like to take part in the event. **Action: Clerk**

20. Councillor's Reports

Cllr Steve Wilson reported that he had been in touch with the Suffolk Record Office, and he would be collecting the first two minute books from them on Friday.

Cllr Steve Wilson requested if the minutes could be expanded to show such things as getting Hicks Bungalow hedge trimmed after a resident approached the PC. It would be good to show positive things the PC has completed.

Cllr Lord enquired if a date had been received from the contractor to cut the trees within the Cemetery. The Clerk stated no date had yet been received and she would speak with the contractor. **Action: Clerk**

21. Date of the Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on 12th January 2022 in Ixworth Village Hall at 7.30pm. It was agreed that this would be a planning and finance meeting only.

22. Exclusion of the Press & Public

The press and public were excluded at 9.50pm

With no further business the meeting closed at 10.10pm

.....
Signed

.....
Date