

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

*Minutes of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council meeting held in Ixworth Village Hall on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at 7:30pm*

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

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

### **Abbreviations**

Cllr – Councillor, PC – Parish Council, C Cllr – County Councillor, D Cllr – District Councillor, WSC – West Suffolk Council, SAWG -Safety & Accessibility Working Group, SCC – Suffolk County Council

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

Apologies were received from Cllr Reay, absence was Covid related. Cllr Reay's apology was accepted by all present.

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

Cllr Rees declared an interest in planning application DC/21/2010 as she knew a member of the family and in item 16 as she knew the person who was volunteering to be the Footpath Warden.

Cllrs Birrell and Sutton declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 17 as both were on the Events Group organising the Jubilee Celebrations.

Cllr Steve Wilson declared an interest in planning application DC/21/2010/OUT as the property shared a boundary with his own. Cllr Steve Wilson stated he would not take part in the Councils discussions.

### **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 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

### **4. Clerk's Report**

The Clerk gave the following report;

- **Clerks Holiday** – between now and the end of March the Clerk has outstanding holiday to be used
- **Roundabout Sponsorship** – no update at present
- **Finance Committee** – no committee meeting had yet been arranged and the Clerk advised that all finance decisions, though not staffing, are made at a Full Council meeting
- **Tree Work** – the tree work approved for Robins Copse and St Mary's would hopefully be completed prior to the next meeting. More work is required at the Cemetery and St Marys, this would be looked at when the Cemetery working group meets next
- **Council Policies** – Council policies are all to be reviewed ready for adoption at the Annual Parish Council meeting in May

Cllr Sophia Wilson volunteered to help the Clerk work through the current policies for amendments to present to all members at a future meeting.

**Action: Clerk and Cllr Sophia Wilson**

### **5. Public Forum**

A member of the public read a statement and hand delivered a letter of complaint. An article had been published in a local newspaper wherein a Cllr was quoted as doubting the validity of a risk assessment the member of the public had made as a volunteer. They felt their professional reputation and integrity had been impugned as the individual is a chartered member of the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. It was noted in the statement that while this risk assessment was in place, this quoted Cllr did not comply with it. In their statement, the individual stated they felt the criticism was to advance personal issues and further the divisions they could already feel in the community.

A member of the public wished to highlight the following information on planning application - DC/21/2010/OUT

- Approving this application, with due consideration to Conservation restraints, could help achieve housing required for the village
- Removing various temporary hard structures and an old workshop to the rear of Everton House would give an extra 109 m2 of open space. Utilising this space could provide a much needed home as well as improving the ecology and landscape to the area
- Everton House is presently unoccupied and deteriorating, surface water in Thetford Road being a contributing factor to the severe damp at the front of the property

- Previous objections included vehicular access, stating access ‘not fit for purpose.’ This access has been used since 1962 with no problems. The 5.1 metre width inside the gates give ample manoeuvring space and in fact there are several examples of similar type of vehicular access in both the High Street and Thetford Road.
- Highways stated that loss of a garage on current property, the building in mention is not a garage, but a workshop, and has never been used for overnight garaging of vehicles
- Many objections raised previously are points that could be addressed at the detailed planning stage and are therefore not relevant to the outline planning application.

The resident wished to strongly advise the Parish Council that this development would make a positive contribution to the area and enable Everton House to remain part of Thetford Road scene for generations to come.

A resident wished to state she had an objection to this application.

The Chairman thanked all members of the public for their comments.

A resident also wished to highlight that whilst the verges in Commister Lane had been cut back but the verges on the junction of Thetford Road and Commister Lane were also in need of attention.

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

C Cllr Spicer reported the following;

- **Ixworth Thorpe Gateway** – an application had been submitted to highways for permission to install the gateway sign
- **Hempyard Bridge** – At present there seems to be the possibility of WSC refusing the application to refurbish the bridge. However, C Cllr Spicer is urging all relevant parties keep talking to find a compromise. Options that could be discussed are, closing the route as a bridleway or install mounting blocks
- **A1088** – By the end of February the weight limit will be in place from Mulleys’ roundabout to Stowlangtoft to put in place the restrictions of vehicles travelling of Bridge Farm bridge

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

D Cllr John Griffiths had sent his apologies for not being able to attend and sent the following report;

- **Planning - Access road to the site off Crown Lane (DC/22/0089/CLE)**

A lawful development certificate has been received for the access road to the site off Crown Lane (DC/22/0089/CLE). This seeks to confirm that the access allowed under Planning application DC/19/1146/FUL has been lawfully commenced and will therefore remain extant. This is currently being considered by West Suffolk’s legal team.

A number of actions came out of the last meeting with Persimmon and Pegasus. West Suffolk Council have completed its actions and are now waiting on a date for a stakeholder meeting, to agree initial parameters, dates and key issues for targeted workshops. Once this meeting has occurred there should be an overall timeframe for the project.

- **Locality Budget** - D Cllr has awarded £2491 to local groups from his locality budget this financial year. Groups include, Ixworth Youth Club, Ixworth Christmas Fair, Ixworth Royal British Legion and the PC for the Jubilee Beacon Trail.
- **WSDC Grants** - D Cllr Griffiths wished to highlight Covid two grants are still available. The grants are Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant (OHLG).and Omicron Additional Restrictions Grant which can be applied for through WSDC

## **8. Planning**

**DC/21/2010/OUT** – Outline Planning application (means access/layout/scale to be considered) – one dwelling (part demolition of existing house and garage) – Land rear of Everton House, Thetford Rod, Ixworth **Objection**

**DC/22/0041/TCA** – Trees in conservation area notification – one Conifer (T1 on plan) fell – one Beech (T2 on a plan – tree overhanging Little Barn) trim overhanging branches – Little Barn, High Street, Ixworth **No Objection**

**DC/22/0089/CLE** – Application for lawful development certificate for existing development – access road to serve residential development comprising 77 no dwellings as per approved planning permission referenced **Objection**

DC/19/1146/FUL – Land off Crown Lane, Crown Lane, Ixworth

**DC/22/0116/TPO** – One Acacia -remove one leaning bough on neighbouring fence line of Ixworth Abbey – The Priory, High Street, Ixworth IP31 2HT **No Objection**

## **9. Accounts**

The following accounts were agreed for payment;

BACS	Staffing	£1439.81
BACS	TOP Garden Services (Grass Cutting)	£615.00
BACS	Viking (stationery)	£143.94
BACS	SALC (Clerk training)	£30.00
BACS	J R Garden & Property (waste management)	£560.00
BACS	Urban Forestry (ground clearance)	£696.00
BACS	TOP Garden Services (tree work, Ixworth Cemetery)	£1968.00
Direct Debit	NEST	£67.13

The RFO (Responsible Finance Officer) was authorised to transfer £3500 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**

## **10. Safety & Accessibility Working Group (SAWG)**

Cllr Sutton reported that unfortunately she would have to step down as lead Cllr for this project. Cllr Steve Wilson volunteered to take over the role of lead Cllr. It was resolved that Cllr Steve Wilson would now be lead Cllr for this working group.

A discussion took place that the group parameters had become larger than first suggested. It was agreed that once the Street Lighting Consultation had been completed the need for the group would be re-evaluated.

## **11. Traffic Management (Commister Lane)**

After a discussion it was agreed to approach C Cllr Spicer to discuss the possibility of SCC installing no HGV sign as you enter Commister Lane.

**Action: Clerk**

## **12. Chalk Lane**

Cllr Steve Wilson updated the Council on the concerns in Chalk Lane. The proposed walkabout organised by SAWG had been postponed due to illness and would be re-arranged.

Cllr Steve Wilson had delivered fifty-one letters to addresses in Chalk Lane regarding the junction which had been considered dangerous by some residents. Seven replies had been received. The Parish Council had been advised that action on the matter was extremely limited, but the opinion of the residents had been sought on the installation of speed bumps, informal signage, and the clearance of the low-lying shrubs on the central island. The responses received supported only the installation of signage.

There was a desire among the replies to deter parking on pavements and in places that restricted sightlines; there was an overall wish to see the junction used as if it were a roundabout.

It had been suggested that one fence, recently erected adjacent to the junction, did not meet Highways' criteria. The Council agreed that the next step should be to discuss the matter with a County Council Highways Officer. The Clerk would liaise with C Cllr Spicer to obtain the name of an Officer in position to help with the options of signage, parking problems and the recently erected fence.

**Action: Clerk**

## **13. Vehicular Activated Sign (VAS)**

Cllr Steve Wilson reported the following;

- A single charge on a set of batteries was lasting approximately 11 days in winter conditions. This experience had been borne out by a neighbouring parish council.
- The device was being relocated every 3 weeks with an interim battery change.
- Further study was needed to get the best out of the statistics offered by the device.
- There was little indication of a major speed issue in Bardwell Road.
- The Thetford Road location allowed the device to operate at its optimum and so vehicles were being detected at 330 metres range. The manufacturers had been consulted and this was considered normal.
- Such long-range detection was having a negative effect on the battery life.

- No major speeding issue had been seen in Thetford Road on the first use.
- The device had also been used at the Thetford Road location but pointing towards the village. This was effective and the use of 'spy mode' had demonstrated an increase in speeds when the device was not displaying.
- A major saving of battery life was achievable if the device displayed speed without the accompanying messages.

The following was resolved for the future use of the VAS

- Statistics would continue to be collected but only circulated if they were of interest.
- Messages would continue to be displayed unless there was a need to extend battery life at specific times.
- 'Spy Mode' would be employed during the next deployments at Bardwell Road and Thetford Road to establish base speed levels and then intermittently in the future.
- The 3-weekly cycle of use at the three locations would continue.

**Action: Cllr Steve Wilson**

A short article would be prepared for the Ixworth Magazine outlining the use of the VAS so far and renewing calls for sites in Stow Road. The article would also seek volunteers to reactivate the Speedwatch scheme. Content from the article would be circulated on social media.

**Action: Cllr Steve Wilson**

#### **14. Crown Lane**

Cllr Lord reported he had prepared a presentation for residents on the Crown Lane Development which would held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022. Cllr Lord would place an article in the magazine informing residents.

**Action: Cllr Lord**

#### **15. War Memorial**

Cllr Lord highlighted to members that the War Memorial was in need of attention. The Memorial itself required cleaning and the black surround also required repainting.

Cllr Lord reported that usually the Scouts kindly cleaned it, but Cllr Lord felt on this occasion a professional clean was required. A quote of £2270 had been obtained to complete the restoration of the Memorial and the metal surround. It was resolved to accept the quote. The Clerk was instructed to contact the company to accept the quote and request the work is completed as soon as possible.

**Action: Clerk**

#### **16. Tree Warden & Footpath Warden**

##### Tree Warden

A report on the tree warden had been distributed to all Cllrs prior to the meeting. The Clerk informed the members that she had spoken with Mr John Sharpe who was willing to continue as the Parish Councils tree warden and at this time did not feel he required an assistant. It was resolved that Mr John Sharpe continue as the tree warden as he had served the Parish Council in this role for many years. If in the future, he wished to relinquish this role then a replacement would be sought.

##### Footpath Warden

A report on the suggestion of having a Footpath Warden had been distributed to all Cllrs prior to the meeting. Cllr Rees read out duties a Footpath Warden would undertake and that this was a voluntary position at no cost to the PC. Mr Rees had volunteered to undertake this role and it was resolved to accept his kind offer.

#### **17. Jubilee 2022**

Cllrs Rees and Black informed members that they had started work on the Jubilee Beacon Trail for Ixworth. An approach to the school had been made to involve all classes in a colouring competition to run along the Trail. A full report would be made at the March Meeting.

Cllr Sutton and Birrell reported the Events group were organising various events over the Jubilee Weekend. Events of the Saturday would include a fair and various competitions, and on the Sunday, the High Street would be closed for the residents to come together to hold a Street Party.

Cllr Sutton and Birrell would continue to update the PC on the progress of this event.

#### **18. Chairman's Report**

The Chairman read a statement regarding the conduct of a member of the Council.

- Excessive time was being spent counselling members and staff who felt bullied, unfairly demonised, or tired of other member's behaviour
- A Cllr had been to the media to criticise a decision of the Council made within the previous 6 months. The standing orders state resolutions cannot be returned for at least 6 months.

- A majority of Councillors feel undermined and intimidated and that the approach to the media was used solely to portray them in a poor light.
- These actions have resulted in a formal complaint being made to the Parish Council
- The Chairman felt the Parish Council has been brought into disrepute after being accused of breaching the Equality Act 2010, the PC strongly refute this claim.
- I feel a Cllr may have breached for following PC Policies;  
Dignity at Work Policy.  
Media and Communications Policy.  
Section 4 of the Code of Conduct.
- I feel several members of the Council face ongoing hostility at meetings from a Cllr.

The Clerk was instructed to obtain information on the possibility of holding a Vote of No Confidence in a Cllr.

**Action: Clerk**

**19. Correspondence**

The following correspondence had been received;

- **SCC** - Jubilee Road Closures
- **Residents** – Comments on Chalk Lane
- **WSDC** – Local Plan Timetable (2)
- **Healthwatch** – Elective Care (3)
- **SCC** – Updating Street Lighting
- **WSDC** – Review Community governance
- **WSDC** – ~Platinum Jubilee
- **Residents** – Concerns over parking and pavements in Walsham Road

D Cllr John Griffiths had addressed the issue of parking and pavements in Walsham Road. It was resolved no responses were required.

**20. Councillors Reports**

Cllr Steve Wilson reported six Emergency Plan volunteers have joined the project and have received guidance. All supplementary documents have been completed after the Jiggins’s Trust contributions.

Cllr Steve Wilson also commented on the current waste management plan.

- The decision not to re-hire a street cleaner was made in a closed meeting
- The contractor emptying the bins was charging a price Cllr Steve Wilson felt was excessive
- Further quotes did not seem to be sourced after this initial one that Cllr Steve Wilson feels was high
- The recording of the decision in the minutes was too brief
- It was suggested that should recruitment for a street cleaner not be successful, a resident should be recruited instead

Cllr Steve Wilson wished to apologise to residents for not investigating this sooner as he felt it was a failing in his duty.

**21. Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 7.30pm in Ixworth Village Hall.

With no further business the meeting closed at 9.50pm

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Signed

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Date