

IXWORTH AND IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council meeting held in Ixworth Village Hall on 9th March 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 thirteen 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, DEC – Disaster Emergency Committee, EP – Emergency Plan, RFO -Responsible Finance Officer,

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received from Cllr Reay who was absent. As per training from SALC the Clerk reported it is good practice for a Cllr to send apologies to the Clerk or Chair with a reason for absence. As reported, no apology had been received. Cllr Steve Wilson stated that Cllr Reay had sent her apologies to him. The members resolved not to accept Cllr Reay's reason for absence and apology received via Cllr Steve Wilson. Cllr Reay is marked as a non-attender.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Lord declared an interest in a piece of correspondence in item 17.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

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

It was resolved that the Chair sign the minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 9th February 2022.

4. Footpath Warden

Mr Ian Rees, the footpath warden for the Parish Council briefed the Council on the following;

- A total of six kms of Rights of Way are in the Parish which include one byway, two bridleways and six footpaths.
- I have walked them all in recent days and they were generally in good condition however, parts of Bridleway BR1 from Commister Lane to the Parish Boundary with Great Livermere were showing signs of damage arising from vehicular use.
- I have submitted a number of reports to Suffolk County Council concerning broken or missing footpath signs or waymarks. While the Suffolk County Council have already responded to say that it would be taking action to replace the missing footpath sign opposite Lynton House in Ixworth Thorpe, it regretted that way marking of public rights of way other than at the roadside were not a high priority, and work on these would only be undertaken by Suffolk Highways where it was considered essential to define the route of the path. As the paths concerned were generally well-known, he agreed that such replacement/repair was currently desirable rather than essential.
- The Ramblers had recently published a map containing eleven historic footpaths in the Parish which were potential candidates for reinstatement; he would brief the Parish Council further on this initiative at its next meeting.

5. Public Forum

A resident made a statement of concerns on the Parish Council that included:

- The resident considers that the meeting room is unsuitable, and the risk assessment being followed is invalid
- The resident considers that a Councillor is being unfairly treated.
- The resident considers that the Parish Council may be in breach of the Equality Act
- The resident advised that a vote of no confidence in the Parish Council could be demanded

The Chairman advised that if any residents have any concerns or wishes to make a complaint that they should do so in writing to the Parish Council where it will be handled in accordance with our Complaints Policy.

6. Report from County Councillor Joanna Spicer

C Cllr Spicer reported the following;

- **Footpath next to A1088** – C Cllr Spicer reported that the path was not being blocked by the owner of the Pumping House. Previously there had been a licence in place for the footpath but unfortunately when the land was sold, the licence then expired with the sale and there is no right of access in place anymore. C Cllr Spicer, the Rights of Way Officer and the owner were hoping to meet to try and resolve the issue. SCC may consider a 40mph buffer zone for walkers to cross the A1088 or if not then a 'Slow' written on the road. The members agreed that a 40mph zone would be acceptable and agreed for C Cllr Spicer to pursue this matter.
- **A1088 potholes** – Unfortunately, the work to repair the potholes had been delayed but it is hoped they will be repaired as soon as possible.
- **Commister Lane** – The suggestion of adding a 'No lorries' sign to stop lorries entering Commister Lane is more complicated than first thought. C Cllr Spicer reported she would look into this issue further and report back to the Parish Council at a future meeting.
- **Chalk Lane** – C Cllr Spicer had visited the area with a SCC Highways Officer. C Cllr Spicer informed members that the area was not a designated roundabout and SCC would not be willing to designate it as one. C Cllr Spicer informed members that the white arrow lines on the Street Farm island road were not installed by SCC.

It was suggested that it might help the issue if the trees were cut back or removed completely to give a better sight line. Another option suggested was to install a sign with perhaps 'Caution' or 'Slow' which may ease the issue also. However, a directional arrow would not be permitted to be included in the sign. C Cllr Spicer suggested that Council apply for a sign to be installed via SCC.

It was agreed that Cllr Steve Wilson would liaise with the resident who first highlighted the issue with the Council. The Clerk would ascertain how to apply for the licence to install a sign and the cost involved.

Action: Clerk & Cllr Steve Wilson

Cllr Lord wanted to thank C Cllr Spicer for all her help and lobbying to get Coddington Way and Scott Road pavements resurfaced.

It was agreed to write to thank SCC for completing the work.

Action: Cllr Lord

Having been shared a copy of correspondence from SCC Highways by C Cllr Spicer, Cllr Lord expressed concerns that SCC had only undertaken part of the recommendations made by HM Coroner following a fatal accident at the A1088 Thetford Road Junction in May 2017. Cllr Lord stated that a strong line needs to be taken against this defiance. Any fatal accident is one too many but on a stretch of road that continues to have inherent issues which will be majorly impacted by major future development is something that cannot be glossed over. It is imperative that SCC Highways are held to account on the directions of HM Coroner and as a Parish Council, we should not settle for anything less than the legal standing HM Coroner has.

It was resolved that Cllr Lord would write to SCC as part of holding them to account in this matter. **Action: Cllr Lord**

7. Report from District Councillor John Griffiths

D Cllr John Griffiths had sent his apologies for not being able to attend.

8. Planning

DC/22/0262/LB & DC/22/2061/LB – a, repair and restore plasterwork and pargetting to front elevation b, replace existing staircase – 70 High Street, Ixworth, IP31 2HJ **No Objection**

DC/22/0301/Ful & DC/22/0302/Ful – removal and replacement of boiler room floor – 10 High Street, Ixworth, IP31 2HH **No Objection**

DC/22/0267/HH – Installation of detached timber outbuilding (following demolition of existing outbuilding) – Buttons Close, 35 High Street, Ixworth, IP31 2HJ **No Objection**
Action: Clerk

9. Accounts

The following accounts were agreed for payment;

BACS	Staffing	£1328.76
BACS	H M Revenue & Customs	£465.77
BACS	High Street Safari (Jubilee Beacon Trail)	£499.00
BACS	Glasdon	£1162.22

BACS	(Ixworth Thorpe Gateway Sign) J R Garden & Property (waste management)	£560.00
BACS	A Adlington (refund payroll software)	£70.80
BACS	A Adlington (expenses)	£99.15
CHQ No 1426	Urban Forestry (ground clearance)	£696.00
Direct Debit NEST		£42.07

The RFO was authorised to transfer £3000 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 RFO explained to members that the Urban Forestry payment was authorised the previous month but had not been paid via BACS as the recipient bank had rejected the payment. The company had now requested the payment via cheque.

The RFO also informed members that invoices, not yet received, would require payment prior to the end of the budget year. The RFO would distribute all invoices once received to members to view prior to the RFO making the payments.

10. Complaint to the Parish Council

Cllr Lord reported that the Policies and Resources Sub-Committee had been set up to investigate the complaint to the Parish Council received from Mr Lilley. The members of the sub-committee were Cllrs Rees, Black and Lord. The sub-committee interviewed the complainant and invited the Councillor Reay, mentioned in the complaint, to answer questions the sub-committee may have to aid the investigation. The complainant attended, however Cllr Reay declined the invitation.

The sub-committee investigated the complaint fully as per Policies & Sub-committee Reference D and made the following decision of the complaint.

The sub-committee recommend that the Parish Council write a full apology to Mr Lilley, the complainant, stating the Parish Council did not in anyway agree or concur with comments made by a Cllr in recent newspaper articles. It was resolved to accept the policies and resources sub-committee recommendations to issue a full apology to Mr Lilley.

Also, as per Policies and Sub-committee, reference B, the sub-committee found that Cllr Reay had breached the PC Media Policy and may have brought the Parish Council into disrepute with her comments.

Mr Lilley confirmed that he was happy to be named in the PC minutes.

Action: Clerk

It was agreed to contact the monitoring officer to investigate if Cllr Reay had broken the Code of Conduct bringing the Parish Council into disrepute.

Action: Clerk

11. Waste Management

The Clerk apologised for not being able to give her report on this issue due to time restraints. The Clerk would add to the agenda for April.

12. SAWG

As agreed previously, Cllr Steve Wilson had taken over as the lead Cllr for SAWG. Cllr Steve Wilson expressed his gratitude to Mrs Sue Spiller for the amount of work she had done on the matters the group were discussing. The help she gave enabled him to get up to speed with the issues very quickly.

- **Street Lighting Consultation** – The results of the street lighting consultation had been distributed to members prior to the meeting. The result of the consultation was that 72% of the residents of Ixworth who had cast a vote were in favour of West Suffolk Councils lighting being switched to part lighting. Ixworth Thorpe who had cast a vote were 100% in favour of the lighting remaining on. The meeting resolved to contact West Suffolk Council and ask for their streetlights within Ixworth to be switched to part-night lighting.

Action: Clerk

- **Havebury Site Meeting** – The Clerk was instructed to send a brief report on her recent meeting with the Havebury Ranger. **Action: Clerk**
- **Dropped Kerbs** - Dropped Kerbs (DKs). A prioritised list of required DKs in the Parish would be developed; funding restrictions meant that very few would be forthcoming in the near future. The cancelled walkabout with C Cllr Spicer would be re-arranged as part of this process. Once the installation costs of DKs were better understood, alternative funding sources could be sought.
- **Obstruction of Footways** - overgrown hedges and pavement parking were causing The obstruction of footways; this was restricting access for those with mobility issues. Approaches to residents to trim hedges had to be made through Suffolk Highways and the system was already known. SALC had advised the Council that it was acceptable to place leaflets under the windscreen wipers of pavement parkers politely requesting them to show more consideration. Cllr Steve Wilson and the Clerk would develop a form of words for such a leaflet. The manner of distributing the leaflets would be considered at a future meeting. **Action: Clerk & Cllr Steve Wilson**

Mrs Spiller and Cllr Steve Wilson would visit the care establishments in Ixworth to ask if there were other accessibility issues. Mrs Spiller had developed a spreadsheet of access limitations for the businesses in Ixworth, but this was not considered a matter for direct PC involvement. The provision of public toilets was also not considered to be a PC function.

Once the above objectives have been concluded, it was resolved that the SAWG would not remain open-endedly and therefore, once the above tasks have been completed, the group would be disbanded.

13. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Lord reported that issues had been raised by WSDC on the draft plan and the working group would hold another meeting to discuss these issues. The group would then report back to the Parish Council.

14. Queens Jubilee 2022

A report Cllr Rees reported that the Beacon Trail had been booked and payment agreed this evening. The trail will be a 'High Street Safari' for children and residents of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe. We are currently in the process of talking to retail outlets in and around Ixworth High Street. Seven outlets are required to display the Q Codes for participants to scan and each code will give information about each decade of the Queens reign. Participants will receive a completion code at the end of the Trail.

After speaking with the Primary School it had been decided to hold a colouring competition for each class and the winning entries, seven in total, would be displayed with each Q Code poster. The winning entry will receive a prize. Cllrs Black and Rees also distributed to the members a Jubilee coin they were hoping to purchase to give to each child at the school. The cost of 250 coins in a small plastic presentation box would cost £537.50. A grant of £500 had been received from D Cllr Griffiths to assist in this event and the school also hoped to be able to contribute to the cost, though this has not been confirmed.

It was agreed by all present to order the coins and any coins left over could be given to the Jubilee Events team who could distribute at the Jubilee weekend event to children who live in the Parish but do not attend Ixworth Primary School.

Cllr Black and Rees hope to advertise in the magazine and on social media pages.

Action: Clerk

15. Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported she would be on holiday for one week starting Monday 21st March 2022. Emails will still be checked, and any urgent issues will be dealt with.

Cllr Steve Wilson enquired if all Cllrs would be able to have input into discussing PC Policies. The Clerk stated she hoped to hold a Policies Committee meeting prior to the May meeting for all Cllrs to discuss current and any new policies. **Action: Clerk**

16. Chairs Report

The Chair gave no report.

17. Correspondence

The following correspondence was received;

- **Great Britain Spring Clean**
- **Resident x 2** – Meeting Room Concerns
- **Resident** – Jubilee Tree Planting
- **RBL Ixworth** – Jubilee Parade (grant request)
- **Resident** – PC Concerns

- **WSC** - Parish Forum – email and attachment (2)
- **Green Ixworth** – Email and attachment (2)
- **WSC** – Climate Change
- **WSC** – Jubilee Funding
- **WSC** – Hackney Carriage Policy Handbook
- **Resident** – Ukraine

It was agreed for the Clerk to enquire if it was still possible to take part in the Great Britain Spring Clean. Cllrs Rees and Black agreed to volunteer to take this project forward if it was still possible.

Action: Clerk, Cllr Sutton and Cllr Black

It was agreed to write to the resident who enquired if the Parish Council were doing anything to support Ukraine in the current conflict. The members felt at this time larger organisations such as DEC were better placed to help.

Action: Clerk

It was resolved that a grant of £200 would be made to The Royal British Legion for the Platinum Jubilee 2022 Parade.

Action: Clerk

No further responses were agreed.

18. Councillors Reports

Cllr Shelton informed members the Over 60's Club were starting to meet again.

Cllr Sophia Wilson informed C Cllr Spicer the VAS had not yet attended Ixworth Thorpe on the scheduled date.

Cllr Sutton wanted to thank all the residents and businesses, too many to mention, for the help offered to each other during the recent power cuts. The village hall became a hub for residents to come to for help.

Cllr Steve Wilson stated that on this occasion it was not classed as an emergency requiring the EP to be activated and suggested that a power cut plan may be needed to be written and added to the EP. Cllr Steve Wilson also wished to highlight that the power cut had affected the broadband and mobile networks. Unfortunately, access to power supply maps is not available so door knocking remained the best way to establish the scale of the problem.

Cllr Steve Wilson requested that the VAS article be placed on the PC's website.

Action: Clerk

Cllr Lord reminded members of the Crown Lane presentation being held on 16th March in the Village Hall at 7pm.

No requests were received for future agenda items.

19. Date of the Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on 13th April 2022 at 7.30pm in Ixworth Village Hall.

20. Exclusion of Press & 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 press and public were excluded at 9.10pm.

With no further business the meeting closed at 9.25pm

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Signed

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Date