

IXWORTH AND IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council meeting held in Ixworth Village Hall on 13th April 2022 at 7:30pm

Present: Councillors (Cllrs) Ben Birrell (Chairman), Pam Shelton, Ben Lord, Vicky Sutton, 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 eight 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, EP – Emergency Plan, RFO -Responsible Finance Officer, NP – Neighbourhood Plan, NPWG – Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, APCM – Annual Parish Council Meeting, FOI – Freedom of Information

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Sophia Wilson due to Covid 19 illness – the apology was accepted.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Birrell and Sutton declared a non-pecuniary interested in item 15.

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 meetings held on 9th March 2022 and 4th April 2022.

4. Clerks Report

The Clerk gave the following report;

- **Code of Conduct** – The Clerk informed members that a new Code of Conduct was being suggested by SALC for adoption. SALC are advising that all Cllrs and Clerks attend an online seminar to be giving a briefing on the impacts them as Cllrs. The Clerk would send Cllrs suggested dates and they would confirm which event they are able to attend. The Clerk would then book the Cllrs onto their preferred session. Once Cllrs had attended the online seminar briefing sessions Code of Conduct would be added as an agenda item
Action: Clerk & Cllrs
- **Office 365** – The Clerk reported this has been a longer and more complicated project, but it would be a priority for this month
Action: Clerk
- **PC Insurance** – The Parish council insurance is due on 1st June 2022. Zurich the current insurer is willing to fix the cost for five years once again. The Clerk would need to confirm the asset list with them as the new play equipment will be getting installed. The Clerk stated this would be on the May agenda for the members consideration
Action: Clerk
- **Policies & Resources WG** – The Clerk would like to arrange a workshop for Cllrs to discuss Policies that the Council currently have in place. The Clerk would send suggested dates and times and then arrange
Action: Clerk & Cllrs
- **Tree Warden** – The Clerk reported that unfortunately Mr Sharpe the PC Tree Warden will have to step down from this position due to personal reasons. The position of PC Tree Warden would be discussed at the APCM. It was agreed to contact the resident who had been willing to assist Mr Sharpe to see if she was still interested in the position of PC Tree Warden if the position was adopted again at the APCM. Cllr Reay agreed to forward to the Clerk the contact details of the resident who was willing to assist.
Action: Clerk & Cllr Reay

- **Notice Board** – It had been suggested some months ago the suggestion of installing a notice board near the Primary School in Crown Lane. The members confirmed they would like a quote obtained for consideration at a future meeting
Action: Clerk
- **Cemetery** – The Clerk reported that she had received a memorial application that was outside the Councils adopted size and design for Ixworth Cemetery. The family have requested a meeting on site to discuss further. The Clerk has agreed but would like the attendance of a Cllr. Cllr Lord volunteered to attend the meeting
Action: Clerk & Cllr Lord
- **Holiday** – The Clerks annual holiday would be from 23rd June 2022 until 10th July 2022. Urgent emails will be forwarded to the Chairman for action.
- **Historian** – The local history recorder had sent the Clerk her report on the Parish Council. The Clerk as yet has not responded but will do so as soon as possible.
Action: Clerk
- **SAWG** – A draft letter has been written ready to send to the relevant officer at WSC
Action: Clerk
- **Christmas Lights** – Would the Christmas Tree lights be taken down and stored
Action: Cllrs Birrell & Sutton

5. Public Forum

The following comments were made by members of the public;

- **NP** – a resident was concerned that no up-to-date information relating to the plan is available on the website for residents to view. The resident also requested why the NP was also going to be discussed in the section of the meeting when the press and public are excluded. The resident handed the PC a FOI letter as he felt no information within the NP was commercially sensitive.
- **Meeting Room** – a resident wished to highlight again that he felt the meeting room was unsuitable in the current Covid climate
- **Complaint** – A resident wanted to thank the Parish Council for their letter of apology he had recently received.
- **Councillor Conduct** – a resident asked Cllr Steve Wilson which retired Cllr he was referring when he stated that a recently retired Cllr had used an offensive word to him. Cllr Steve Wilson confirmed he meant Mr Lilley. Mr Lilley refuted the accusation. The Chair intervened and stated if Mr Lilley wished to complain about a Cllrs conduct it was a matter for the Monitoring Officer not the Parish Council

Mr Ian Rees - The PC Footpath Warden gave the following report –

- **Reinstatement of Historic Footpaths** – The Ramblers' intentions regarding the reinstatement of historic footpaths, Ian informed the Council that a map of potential candidates had now been produced, based on paths shown on old maps. Emphasising that none of these were necessarily rights of way, the Association now planned to review the list to prioritise those which it felt should be saved. Eleven of the paths were in the Parish but - he felt - few appeared to be of great value, as they either did not lead anywhere, were already well-used tracks or were adjacent to existing rights of way. He would keep the Council informed of any further developments.
- **Suffolk County Council** – Ian updated the Council on his recent report to SCC Rights of Way. Ian had advised that the sign near Lynton House in Ixworth Thorpe was missing and he had been assured it was now on their jobs list. Ian has requested if it is possible for SCC to supply the PC with the relevant signs, given their policy of not repairing/replacing waymarking signs located away from roadsides, so they could install them but no response had been received.

6. Report from County Councillor Joanna Spicer

C Cllr Spicer reported the following;

- **Hempyard Bridge** – It is good news that SCC and WSC were able to reach an agreement on alterations required on the initial planning application. The railings had now been removed and signs and a mounting block would be installed. The bad news is that due to the delay the work will not get started until June next year. C Cllr Spicer explained that the money for the refurbishment had been ring fenced for this project.
- **Chalk Lane** – highways have no objection to a sign being erected in Chalk Lane, highways would need to approve the wording and design
- **SAWG** – C Cllr Spicer informed members that she had met with two members of SAWG to look at issues around Ixworth, especially dropped kerbs. Cllr Steve Wilson would be giving a report later in the meeting on this issue
- **Rights of Way** – SCC has legal responsibility for Rights of Way in Suffolk. SCC still operate a claim system for residents to apply for a long used path to be designated a Right of Way. C Cllr Spicer thought that a path needed to be demonstrated that it had been used for over 20 years before a claim could be made

Cllr Steve Wilson thought there was a claim already in the system and agreed to send the information to C Cllr Spicer.

Action: Cllr Steve Wilson

7. Report from District Councillor John Griffiths

D Cllr Griffiths reported the following;

- **Locality Budget** – As it is a new budget year, I have a locality budget to award grants to groups within my ward. If anyone feels they wish to apply, please contact me. I awarded various grant to Ixworth last year including the Youth club and events for the Jubilee 2022 celebrations
- **Persimmon** – WSC planning department still waiting for a new Masterplan for the area to be submitted. The Certificate of Lawfulness in relation to the ghost island junction is a legal issue rather than a planning issue
- **Report from WSC** – I emailed a report today which may interest the Council. It contains various pieces of information such as recreational clubs happening over Easter holidays, grant schemes and other issues that WSC can help residents with

The Clerk informed members that she had received the email and would forward to them and add to the secure Cllrs correspondence website.

Action: Clerk

8. Planning Applications

DC/22/2043/LB – Re-consultation/amended plans – works to repair bridge and additions of railings to parapets - Hempyard Bridge, The Abbey, Ixworth

No Objection

Action: Clerk

Cllr Lord wished to clarify the position of the Parish Council in relation to this application when discussed in the Parish Council meeting in November 2021.

It was made very clear at that meeting that the reason the Parish Council had no objections as it was felt an objection could endanger the bridge being repaired when it had taken several years for funding to be found to deal with the remedial works required – in any case, the bridge's condition had been neglected somewhat that has caused the cost of repairs to be significantly higher. However, on checking the Parish Council's submission as a statutory consultee to planning applications, we did assert the concerns that were raised to us about the proposed railings in quite some detail thereby representing the comments made to us at the meeting where it was considered.

There have been some misleading comments that infer the Parish Council were overlooking this issue when there is unmistakable evidence to the contrary.

9. Accounts

The RFO reported that the following invoices were paid prior to the end of the last budget year;

BACS	TOP Garden Services (grass cutting)	£615.00
BACS	Anglian Tree Solutions (Robins Copse)	£1344.00
BACS	Anglian Water (Wave) (Cemetery Water)	£13.27
BACS	Insignia (Jubilee Beacon Trail)	£537.50
BACS	J R Garden & Property (waste management)	£560.00
BACS	Playdale Playgrounds (refurb deposit)	£27700.56
BACS	Scribe Accounts (software)	£345.60

The RFO made a transfer of £31,000 from the business account to the community account. Payments were authorised by Cllr Sophia Wilson.

The following accounts were agreed for payment;

BACS	Staffing	£1168.15
BACS	Profile Business Supplies (Environmental Policy)	£15.08
BACS	SALC (Membership)	£780.18
BACS	A Adlington (refund ICO Renewal)	£40.00
BACS	West Suffolk Council (waste collection Ixworth Thorpe)	£166.40
Direct Debit	NEST	£42.07

The RFO was authorised to transfer £1500 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. Annual Parish Meeting (APM)

The Clerk informed members that the Annual Parish Meeting needed to be called before the end of May. It was agreed;

1. The meeting would be held on Wednesday 25th May 2022 at 7pm in Ixworth Village Hall (to be confirmed)
2. Cllr Reay would invite all local groups, and the County and District Ward Councillors, to give a small presentation or report to attendees
3. The Clerk would place an article in the magazine before the deadline of 20th April 2022
4. Refreshments would once again be purchased for the evening. Cllrs Birrell and Sutton would arrange with a budget of £300

Action: Clerk, Cllrs Reay, Birrell and Sutton

11. Footbridge over the By-pass

Cllr Lord reported that residents had again been discussing various aspects in respect of the need for a footbridge over the by-pass, a project the Parish council has been committed to since 2012. Cllr Lord has taken the lead on the project from the start.

Following the successful presentation recently on the Crown Lane Development I propose that a similar event is held on this issue.

I propose, with the Councils agreement that this is held on Thursday 12th May at 7.30 pm in Ixworth Village Hall. It was agreed by all present to accept Cllrs Lords proposal. The Clerk was instructed to book the hall for this event and Cllr Lord would prepare and give the presentation.

Action: Clerk & Cllr Lord

12. SAWG

Cllr Steve Wilson reported that the walk around the Village with C Cllr Spicer had been held and it became apparent that several dropped kerbs were required if Ixworth were to become truly assessable. Unfortunately, there is little money for such work, so the group has identified a priority list of six locations.

1. A single corner of Commister Lane opposite entrance to Peasecroft Road
2. A single in Street Farm Lane opposite No 1
3. A single adjacent to the vehicle access to the Primary School. A pair across the entrance to the car park at Dover Terrace (which may be achievable with minor tarmac work)
4. A crossing point to the Surgery in Peddars Close
5. A crossing point to Blackbourne View in Peddars Close

It may be possible to source funding for some of the installations locally. A discussion took place on local sources of funding, and it was suggested contacting a SCC Highways approved contractor to ascertain the cost.

It was resolved

1. The Clerk would forward to list to SCC Highways department and C Cllr Spicer
2. An estimate from a local approved contractor would be contacted for a quote on the cost of dropping the suggested kerbs above. It was agreed that Cllr Steve Wilson would obtain the relevant quotes
3. Once the cost of installation was known the viability of local funding could be assessed

Action: Clerk & Cllr Steve Wilson

The following issues were also reviewed by SAWG;

1. The cycle barrier between Chalk Lane and Peddars Close had been assessed as impassable to wheelchairs but could be modified to allow this. Before considering the cost of modification the Clerk would inquire of Highways if retention of the cycle barrier was still a legal requirement.
Action: Clerk
2. The hedge adjoining a property in the upper High Street was restricting the width of the footway. The Chair knew the resident and would contact them seeking a resolution. The Clerk would confirm with SALC the legality of the PC writing to the owners of hedges in the future.
Action: Clerk
3. Cllr Steve Wilson and the Clerk had agreed the wording of a leaflet to be placed under the windscreen wipers of cars blocking the footway. A Word document would be available for any councillor wishing to print out leaflets for their own use.
Action: Clerk
4. The letter to WSC on the street lighting consultation would be sent once the Clerk had confirmation the appropriate Officer at WSC to send it to.
Mentioned in Clerks Report
5. The Clerk would forward her notes from her meeting with the Havebury Warden. SAWG would try to resolve the issue of the light shining into the bedroom window of a residence in Thetford Road
Action: Clerk and SAWG

13. Chalk Lane

Cllr Steve Wilson had visited the resident who first contacted the Parish Council with concerns on the safety in Chalk Lane. The Clerk had written to the seven residents of Chalk Lane who responded to the consultation exercise.

A discuss took place on what could be accomplished in the area to help, and the following was agreed;

1. A single large sign would be mounted on wooden stakes owned by the PC which are currently in the Cemetery.
2. Cllr Steve Wilson would advise the Clerk on the size and suggested wording for the sign
3. The sign would be large enough to incorporate artwork created by local children.
4. The Clerk would contact Highways to gain their agreement to the wording and the presence of artwork and discuss the license required to install signage of SCC land.
5. The Clerk would then obtain an estimate for the sign from a local contractor

6. The sponsorship of the sign by a local trader would be considered

Once all information has been gathered this issue would be added to a future agenda to discuss further.

Action: Clerk & Cllr Steve Wilson

C Cllr Spicer had supplied the name of the officer who was pursuing enforcement action on a fence near the Chalk Lane junction. The Clerk would check on the progress of this action.

Action: Clerk

14. Parish Council Environment Policy

The draft of the suggested policy to be considered for adoption had been distributed to all Cllrs prior to the meeting.

Cllr Reay wanted to thank all who had helped produce the document. Cllr Reay suggested that the PC adopt the policy.

Cllr Lord stated it was clear that some detailed effort had been put into producing this proposal. However, Cllr Lord raised concerns that there were no cost implications within the document. For instance, 'insisting' on scopes of work carried out by contractors to include requirements for contractors to have certain policies will undoubtedly cause situations whereby contracts could command a higher price tag than our budget affords which may restrict the variety of contractors that could come forward and offer their services. In reflecting on the current contractor for emptying bins (even though that in itself is a short term arrangement), only one company was willing to undertake this. How would it be if we had a situation whereby contractual services were required but then we are unable to execute them because contractors are unwilling to comply with our policy.

After a discussion it was agreed that Cllr Reay would try to obtain possible cost implications to the Council and bring back to the Full Council at a future date.

Action: Cllr Reay

15. Platinum Jubilee 2022

Cllrs Birrell and Sutton reported that the organisation for the Queens Platinum Jubilee celebration in June are well under way. On Saturday 4th June there would be various stalls, games and food stalls in the village playing fields with the feel of a village fete. On Sunday 5th June the High Street would be closed to hold a large afternoon tea.

Cllrs Rees and Black reports that the Jubilee coins, being presented to children of the Parish, had been ordered, and they were finalising in the next couple of weeks all the advertising to inform residents on how to interact with the Beacon Trail.

16. Waste Management

The Clerk started to read a report to clarify some points raised recently on the Parish Councils waste management. The Clerk was interrupted by two Cllrs disagreeing with the Clerks first point before waiting to hear the complete report. The Clerk requested that the Chairman move onto the next item on the agenda so as not to cause any further distress to herself, other members of the Council and residents observing.

17. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Lord gave the following report;

The NPWG has now received some initial reflections from WSC in respect of the current draft version of the NP. The group met a couple of weeks ago to review these reflections. Some aspects of the current plan currently conflict with both WSC Local Planning Policies as well as National Planning Policy Framework that concern site allocations and the potential impact of vitality to the High Street in the event the Village Hall be moved from its present position. Notwithstanding this point, WSC have confirmed there needs to be clear evidence-basis for a potential relocation of a village hall to justify deliverability as they have a clear position that viability is critically important to such a proposal. There also needs to be further considerations given towards economic and employment opportunities which are currently lacking in the plan as well as greater emphasis on a proposed footbridge over the A143. Consequently, all these issues are being reviewed by the Working Group and there will be ongoing liaison with the consultant in respect of these. It is therefore unlikely this will expedite to a public consultation in the immediate short-term as all members of the Working Group feel it is imperative that this is done correctly in all respects given the vast amount of time, and money that has been invested towards this thus far.

Cllr Lord informed the resident and members that there was commercially sensitive information being discussed relating to the NP which is why it is in the excluded section of the minutes.

18. Chairmans Report

The Chairman expressed his concerns that it has been suggested, in a recent letter from Green Ixworth sent to all local Parish Councils, that the PC has a working group to discuss with other PC's issues surrounding the development happening in this area. As yet no working group had been set up to work with other_PC's or any other organisation on this issue.

A group was discussed some time ago but the response from other PC's was not very forthcoming so as yet this has not happened. A working group of the Parish Council cannot be created without the agreement of the Full Council with set out Terms of Reference on its aims, objectives and memberships.

19. Correspondence

The following correspondence was received:

- **Resident** – Bypass Bridge & Footpath
- **Resident** – Thurston PC
- **Resident** - email and attachment on possible compliant
- **Resident** – Letter sent to other PCs
- **Resident** – Email sent to WSC concerning a letter sent to other PC's
- **Suffolk Board** – Foster Carers
- **WSC** – Play Area Service Agreement
- **Ixworth RBL** – Update on refurbishment Telephone Kiosk in Stow Road

It was agreed to write to Thurston Parish Council to congratulate them on successfully overturning a planning application by Mid-Suffolk as suggested by a resident. **Action: Clerk**

20. Councillors Report

Cllr Reay reported that she had been invited to a Climate Forum on 6th May 2022 and would report back to the Council at a future meeting.

Cllr Steve Wilson reported he had briefed three new volunteers for the EP. He had written a set of notes on power cut support based on the Villages recent experience following Storm Eunice which would be stored with the EP as an appendix.

Cllr Steve Wilson also wished to highlight his personal opinion on the action taken on a complaint received by the Parish Council. Cllr Wilson expressed his concerns on how a fellow Cllr had been treated and that a complaint to the Council should be shown to the Council. Even though PC Complaints Policy, and then the Policies & Resources Sub-Committee Policy was followed, but this does not make the process correct.

21. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting was confirmed as 11th May 2022 in Ixworth Village Hall. The meeting would be the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

22 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 9.35pm.

With no further business the meeting closed at 10.10pm.

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Signed

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Date