

IXWORTH AND IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council meeting held in Ixworth Village Hall on Wednesday 13th July 2022 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors (Cllrs) Ben Lord (Chairman) Ben Birrell, Kate Rees, Pam Shelton, Steve Wilson and Debra Reay

Also Present: Mandy Adlington (Parish Clerk) and three members of the public

Abbreviations

Cllr – Councillor, PC – Parish Council, C Cllr – County Councillor, D Cllr – District Councillor, WSC – West Suffolk Council, SCC – Suffolk County Council, RFO -Responsible Finance Officer, SARS – Suffolk Accident Rescue Service

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from the following Councillors;

Cllr Sutton – family commitments – apology accepted
Cllr Sophia Wilson – family commitments – apology accepted
Cllr Black – work commitments – apology accepted

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Reay declared a non-pecuniary interest if Green Ixworth mentioned during the meeting.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

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 8th and 22nd June 2022.

4. Clerks Report

The Clerk reported the following:

- **Correspondence** responded, as instructed, to various correspondence including – Responded to all correspondence that I was instructed to do
- **Tree Warden** - An article has not yet been placed in the magazine.
- **Ixworth Thorpe Gateway Sign** - SCC have not yet given permission for the sign to be installed. I have emailed for further information but have not yet had a response
- **Christmas Tree Lights** – It was agreed the lights would be looked at again in the Autumn

Cllr Steve Wilson enquired if the PC had a reply from Paul West (SCC Highways) in response to the enquire about Chalk Lane. The Clerk stated no response had yet been received.

Cllr Steve Wilson enquired if a response from SCC had been received about the cycle barriers in Chalk Lane. The Clerk stated no response had yet been received.

Cllr Steve Wilson enquired if any responses had been received local organisations on funding for dropped kerbs. The Clerk stated no responses had yet been received.

5. Report from D Cllr John Griffiths

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

Cllr Steve Wilson stated that he had hoped to ask D Cllr Griffiths if there was any update on the Open Space Assessment Consultation. An assessment had been completed but as yet no response had been received. It was agreed by all present that Cllr Steve Wilson could contact D Cllr Griffiths for an update.

Action: Cllr Steve Wilson

6. West Suffolk Local Plan

Cllr Lord proposed that the PC employ Chris Bowden from Navigus Planning, to assist in writing the PC response to the WSDC Local Plan Consultation. All agreed to this proposal. It was agreed that once the response was written all members would view and offer any comments. Once all comments

Approved at Meeting held on 10th August 2022

were received and if members were in agreement, via email, then the Clerk would submit to WSDC prior to the end of the consultation on 26th July 2022.

7. Code of Conduct

It was resolved to adopt the new Model Code of Conduct. The Clerk was instructed to provide a copy to all Cllrs.

Action: Clerk

8. Public Forum

A resident wished to highlight the lack of footpath signs in and around the village especially areas on the circular walk. The Chairman explained that several sections of the walk were permissive footpaths and not right of ways and signage is not normally placed on these.

Cllr Rees informed the resident that the Footpath Warden had reported missing signs and was in discussions with SCC to have them re-installed.

9. Planning

DC/22/0966/HH – a, convert and extend existing store to single storey side extension with replacement pitched roof b, replacement windows and doors c, front grass area to be replaced with a gravel and boundary fence removed – 1 Cross Farm Houses, Stow Road, Ixworth, Suffolk

No Objection

DC/22/1007/TPO – re-pollard tree to 12 metres above ground level – Parkland, High Street, Ixworth

No Objection

DC/22/1005/TCA – remove five branches from one Oak on South East side overhanging the property known as Robert Peel House – Robert Peel Guest House, 3 High Street, Ixworth

No Objection

DC/21/0039/FUL – to enable use of amended plans for the extensions and alterations to existing care home to form dementia care village – Ixworth Court, Peddars Close, Ixworth

No Objection

10. Environment Policy

Cllr Reay was the lead Cllr in this project and had distributed, prior to the meeting, a revised Environment Policy following reflections made when the first version was proposed in April with a recommendation to adopt this latest version and adopt the policy.

A lengthy discussion ensued with a variety of comments. There was a unanimous consensus amongst all members present that having such a policy would be beneficial. However, Cllr Rees expressed her concerns that assurances offered to mitigate potential increased cost implications to the Parish Council budget were not sufficient in the absence of any supporting, qualified evidence. Cllr Birrell further shared this concern by citing a recent live issue with the Churchyard that was to result in increased cost. In the absence of Cllr Sophia Wilson, the Chairman read her reflections where she was concerned the extent of this policy was beyond the Parish Council's remit to appropriately measure and manage. In particular, she was concerned who was suitably qualified within the Parish Council to discuss matters of biodiversity with landowners.

Cllr Reay proposed to withdraw the proposed policy and recommendation which was agreed by all members present. At this point, Cllr Reay advised she felt unable to continue leading this project and the Clerk offered to takeover preparing a policy that took into account the various wide-ranging reflections of members. It was agreed by all present. It was also decided that the Environmental Policy Working Group be disbanded now that the Clerk was instructed to prepare a more suitable policy. It was agreed that all members would send, if they wished, their comments on the suggested policy to assist the Clerk in writing a revised version.

Action: Clerk & Cllrs

11. Notice Board

A quote had been obtained from the supplier of the current notice boards in Ixworth. It was resolved not to install another notice board at this time. The cost of a new notice board had not been factored into the budget setting for 2022-2023.

12. Chalk Lane

The Clerk reported that a quote of £48 + VAT had been obtained for the suggested sign. C Cllr Spicer had agreed to pay for the cost of the sign and the licence to install on SCC land. It was resolved to liaise with C Cllr Spicer to purchase the sign and apply for the licence.

Action: Clerk

13. Circular Walk Leaflets

Three quotes of £720, £398 and £360 had been obtained to print 1000 Ixworth Walks leaflets. It was resolved to accept the quote for £398. The Clerk was instructed to order 1000 leaflets. **Action: Clerk**

14. St Mary's Churchyard

The Clerk reported that she had met with the grass cutting contractor to discuss leaving areas uncut to encourage wildflowers and wildlife. The contractor stated that whilst they would be cutting less, it would involve more work and may incur an increase per annum of 10%.

Cllr Birrell explained that a group of volunteers would undertake cutting the rear of the Churchyard until the existing contract was due for renewal in April 2023. It was agreed when the specifications for this grass cutting contract were revisited then the addition of a wild area would be incorporated before going out to tender in the new year.

Action: Cemetery Working Group

15. Accounts

The following payments were agreed for payment;

BACS	Staffing	£1462.00
BACS	Viking	£235.82
BACS	Wave – Anglian Water (Cemetery)	£16.91
BACS	Community Heartbeat (Ixworth De-Fib)	£105.60
BACS	Community Heartbeat (Ixworth Thorpe De-fib)	£30.00
BACS	TOP Garden Services (2 invoices)	£1230.00
BACS	Ixworth Village Hall	£16.65
BACS	TOP Garden Services (Play Area & St Mary's)	£1800
Direct Debit	NEST	£42.07

The RFO informed members that no bank transfer was required.

Cllr Lord or Sophia Wilson would authorise BACS payments **Action: Cllr Lord, Cllr Sophia Wilson**

16. Grant Requests

Two grant requests had been received from SARS and Citizens Advice West Suffolk.

It was resolved to grant £150 to SARS and £100 to Citizens Advice West Suffolk.

The grants would be paid at the August meeting.

Action: Clerk

17. Chair's Report

The Chairman read a report received from C Cllr Spicer. The Clerk would upload to the Cllr's secure correspondence website for all Cllrs to view.

- **Ixworth Primary School** - The Chairman reported that he had, on the behalf of the Council, conveyed congratulations to the Headteacher of Ixworth Primary School following their superb Ofsted result. The school has progressed from inadequate to good in all areas of the school which represented a double jump in Ofsted ratings. An achievement that is unprecedented and is down to hard work and determination by the entire school community and sets foundations for a new lease of life the school that is richly deserved
- **Jaynic development in Stanton** – The Chairman reported that with respect to the JayNic development in Stanton, he has made progress in establishing contact with them and they have offered to meet with him next week to discuss the issues that arise for us out of this proposed development. Additionally, given that this application is likely to come in the Autumn and therefore much sooner than housing development applications anticipated for Ixworth, He has begun liaising with the appropriate S106 officer in West Suffolk Council who has given some really insightful information that, if it can be demonstrated by robust evidence, this proposed development will negatively affect us, viability arguments no longer play a part in this as it could be conditionalized as part of any planning consent that a footbridge be secured. There's still a long way to go but the early indications sound a little more promising than they have done
- **Wednesday Community Bus** - A resident from Blackbourne View has approached me concerning the community bus on a Wednesday. The driver is now refusing to drop off residents outside the care home and is dropping them off kerbside on Thetford Road. I have said I would raise this with Joanna Spicer as the County Council operates this bus service

It was resolved that the Chairman contact C Cllr Spicer concerning the Wednesday Community Bus.

Cllr Lord proposed that the PC carry out a survey to gather information on crossing the by-pass and thoughts on a possible footbridge.

It was agreed by all present for Cllr Lord to arrange an online survey and a possible article in the magazine. If required boxes would be placed in the Village stores and the Butchers for residents to place their responses.

18. Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received

- **Resident** – Hicks Bungalow
- **Jaynic** – Public Consultation Poster
- **SCC** – Passenger Interest Group
- **Sizewell** - Update
- **Resident** – Thistledown Drive Pot Hole (issue resolved)
- **Surviving Winter** –
- **Green Ixworth** – Email & Letter
- **SCC** – Upcoming Works A1088
- **WSC** – Council Tax Rebate

It was resolved to contact Havebury Housing to request that they cut back the hedge outside Hicks Bungalow.

Cllr Reay requested if previous correspondence from a resident on Jubilee planting had been responded to. The Clerk would investigate this request but explained all responses that she had been instructed to send had been sent. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr Reay enquired why a response had not been sent to Green Ixworth's correspondence regarding the emerging highways issues caused by major development along the A143. The Chairman clarified once more that the minutes of June's meeting outlined the Parish Council's position and that both Ixworth and Stanton Parish Councils are best placed to strategically collaborate on such issues.

Cllr Birrell stated in April 2022, whilst he was Chairman, that he had clarified that there was no agreement between the Parish Council and Green Ixworth to collaborate on this issue and this

clarification became necessary following correspondence that had been circulated by Green Ixworth which the Parish Council had not had foresight of and was misleading. Cllr Birrell continued to share his view that as a result of this and other matters where Green Ixworth has persistently failed to accurately represent that correct position of the Parish Council that he believed it would not be conducive to work on this or other issues with Green Ixworth.

19. Councillors Reports

Cllr Reay wished members to know that Angie Gibbs and Lesley Stone had received a Suffolk Libraries Peoples Champion Award for Innovation for their work on the Pop Up Community Garden at the Village Hall during Covid.

Cllr Reay stated it was good to see Ixworth on the local news this evening.

Cllr Reay requested clarification of confidential business and when this should be discussed after the press and public have been excluded.

The Chairman clarified that the Clerk, as the Proper Officer, who is highly trained and suitably experienced in this role, makes the decision on what should feature confidential business. The Chairman reminded Cllr Reay that she had questioned the Clerk's decision when the meeting summons to Councillors was issued and that this had been clearly explained to her. It was further clarified that matters involving commercial sensitivity that are shared with the Parish Council cannot always be disclosed publicly due to the level of sensitivity and the correct protocols are always followed in respect to this.

Cllr Reay expressed her opinion that Cllr Birrell's remarks concerning Green Ixworth in Item 18 were inappropriately toned. Cllr Birrell once more explained his reasoning for his view that was also shared by some other members present. Unfortunately, a heated exchange occurred owing to Cllr Reay speaking over Cllr Birrell whilst he was explaining his reasoning and consequently, the Chairman was compelled to interject and move this on for other members to present their reports. The Chairman reminded Cllr Reay that her comments would need to be balanced against the declaration of interest made at the start of the meeting.

Cllr Steve Wilson requested that more information on items on the agenda be included in the published version of the agenda. The Clerk states she would look into achieving this. **Action Clerk**

Cllr Rees wished to thank Cllr Birrell and his volunteers for painting the bridge in Bury Road.

Cllr Birrell wished to thank Cllr Lord and Ixworth RBL for starting the refurbishment of the telephone kiosk in Stow Road.

Cllr Shelton wished to highlight that the verge in Thetford Road from Peddars Close to Dairy Farm was very overgrown and she and her Granddaughter had to walk in the road rather than the path. It was agreed to report to WSDC as they were responsible for cutting back the vegetation in that area.

Action: Clerk

20. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 10th August 2022 at 7.30pm in Ixworth Village Hall.

With no further business the meeting Closed at 9.45pm

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Signed

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Date