

IXWORTH AND IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Ixworth & Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council meeting held in Ixworth Village Hall on Wednesday 12th June 2024 at 7:30pm

Present: Councillors (Cllrs) Lord (Chairman), Pam Shelton, Kate Rees, Stephen Mann, John Rowe and Tony Molloy

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

Abbreviations

Cllr/Cllrs – Councillor/Councillors, C Cllr – County Councillor, PC – Parish Council, WSC – West Suffolk Council, RFO - Responsible Finance Officer, SCC – Suffolk County Council, D Cllr – District Councillor, NP – Neighbourhood Plan, SEBC – St Edmundsbury Borough Council, PROW – Public Right Of Way

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from the following Cllrs –

Cllr Sutton – childcare – apology accepted
Cllr Black – childcare – apology accepted

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mann declared a non-pecuniary interest 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 Chairman sign the minutes as a true record of the meeting held on Wednesday 8th May 2024.

4. Public Forum

The following points were raised by members of the public present:

- **Crown Lane Masterplan** – a resident was concerned on the comments made in the previous PC minutes on the developing Crown Lane Masterplan. The resident was concerned that the public were not made aware of the alterations mentioned in the minutes. The chairman explained that the discrepancies had been found when the PC was completing their response to the WSC Local Plan Consultation. WSC had given the PC an extension to make comments following the discovery of the document mentioned in the April minutes. The Chairman reported that the development company had assured the PC that they would hold a consultation with residents when the document has been formed. WSC Local Plan, once submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, will have another consultation for residents to make comments.
- **PC Surgeries** – A resident present wished to state that the suggestion of the PC holding PC surgeries for residents were a good idea.
- **Hedges** – a volunteer, with the support of Green Ixworth, was completing some work on cutting back overhanging hedges and verges.
- **Good Neighbour Scheme** – it has been suggested that a Good Neighbour Scheme be set up which could help individual residents that need help cutting back their vegetation, plant new plants or clear their pavement. A lot of comments have been made on Facebook about areas of the village that perhaps a scheme such as this would help as all residents have a role to play to keep the village tidy. A formal group would then perhaps be able to access funding for such things as equipment.

5. Reports from County & District Councillors

C Cllr Spicer reported the following;

- **Hempyard Bride** – the repairs to the bridge have been delayed for one week.
- **A1088 Closure** – the date for the road closure on the A1088 at Bridge Farm would start on 7th July 2024. The closure will cause problems for road users but it is imperative the bridge be repaired before any further damage is caused, which may cause the bridge to collapse. SCC will be displaying various diversion signs in and around the area and further afield.

- **Footpaths** – All across the County verges and footpaths are overgrown. However, in Ixworth the steps leading to and from the by-pass off Crown Lane should be cleared soon and new signs installed on the by-pass.
- **Ixworth Courtyard (formally Ixworth Court)** – the courtyard is not yet open, but I have visited to view the new facilities. I will update once I have been informed of the opening date.

C Cllr Spicer wished to thank Mr Peter Brook for the clearance of footpaths work he has undertaken in the last few weeks.

Cllr Lord enquired if C Cllr Spicer was aware of whose responsibility it was to cut the grass around the trees at the bottom of the High Street. C Cllr Spicer stated it was the responsibility of SCC.

D Cllr John Griffiths reported the following;

- **Overgrown vegetation** – D Cllr Griffiths also wished to thank Mr Brook for all his hard work cutting back vegetation in the village.
- **WSC Local Plan** – the Local Plan, as mentioned above, is now with the Planning Inspectorate awaiting comment for them.

Cllr Mann enquired if parking was the responsibility of WSC or the Police. D Cllr Griffiths confirmed the Civil Parking Enforcement was the responsibility of WSC. It was suggested that areas of no parking were looked at again as cars were again being parked on the corner of the High Street and Bury Road.

Cllr Lord mentioned that the path from Peddars Close to Dairy Farm was once again very overgrown and residents were having to once again walk in the road. It was agreed previously that WSC can cut back this area. The Clerk was instructed to write to request this area be cut and be added to the WSC grass cutting schedule.

Action: Clerk

6. Planning

DC/24/0593/VAR – to allow privacy screen for first floor extension above existing two bay garage and external staircase with balcony to form annexe – 21 Fordham Place, Ixworth

Support

DC/24/0639 – reshape to balance and reduce to 2.5 metres – one Yew tree – St Mary's Churchyard, Ixworth

No Comment as a PC application

Action: Clerk

7. Finance

The following payments were made;

BACS	Staffing	£1828.45
BACS	H M Rev & Customs	£610.82
BACS	Clarks of Walsham	£72.98
BACS	Cloudy IT	£134.58
BACS	Village Hall	£19.25
BACS	Gardening Contractor	£1171.59
BACS	A Adlington	£125.45
Direct Debit NEST		£54.88

The RFO was authorised to transfer £5,000 from the Business account to the Community account.

Action: RFO

8. Annual Governance & Accountability

Section 1 & 2 of the Annual Governance Statement (AGAR) for 2023-2024 had been previously distributed to all members prior to the meeting.

After reviewing Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement (AGAR) of the Annual Return, for year ending 31st March 2024 it was resolved that the Council had ensured there is a sound system of internal control. It was resolved that the Chairman and Clerk could sign this section of the form.

After reviewing the figures in Section 2 of the Accounting Statement of the Annual Return, for year ending 31st March 2024 it was resolved that these figures were correct. It was resolved that the Chairman and RFO could sign this section of the form.

Action: Chairman & Clerk

9. Suffolk Archives Relocation

The Chair requested that Mrs Spiller speak to give the members an update of the Suffolk Archives closure in Bury St Edmunds. Mrs Spiller informed members that the closure was going ahead by the end of August despite public representations to keep it open.

Mrs Spiller suggested to members that a place within the village could be used to store records Ixworth and possible surrounding Parishes. Mrs Spiller informed members that she is in very early discussions with The Methodist Chapel, to see if they would be happy to discuss further if this could be accomplished within the Chapel, perhaps using lockable cupboards.

Mrs Spiller is still waiting to hear from the Suffolk Archives on which documents can be removed from the office as some Statutory Documents cannot be removed.

Mrs Spiller informed members she was going to travel to The Hold in Ipswich via public transport to highlight the problems involved.

The PC agreed in principal and requested Mrs Spiller find more information and return to the PC with any formal request.

10. Public Rights of Way

Cllr Lord gave the following report;

On 23 April 2024, the Parish Council met with representatives from Suffolk County Council to discuss the planned closure of the Hempyard Bridge. Part of this discussion involved noting no diversion route was possible owing to a lack of alternative formal PROW in the vicinity of the closure.

During this meeting, it was strongly recommended the Parish Council considers reviewing public access to countryside and PROW where appropriate.

It was agreed that Cllr Lord would liaise with Mr Ian Rees, the Footpath Warden to see what access is needed and what action might need to be taken. Cllr Lord will report back to a future meeting.

Action: Cllr Lord and Footpath Warden Mr Ian Rees

11. Crown Lane Masterplan

This item was discussed after item 6 as Cllr Rowe needed to leave the meeting.

Cllr Rowe left at 8.30pm.

Cllr Lord gave the following report;

On 21 May 2024, representatives of the Parish Council (Ben Lord / Kate Rees / John Rowe / Tony Molloy / Vicky Sutton) met with representatives from Persimmon Homes who wished to present to the Parish Council its proposed intentions around the land north of Crown Lane.

Key themes discussed were:

- The whole site will be delivered as one site
- Persimmon claim to have control over the site, but ownership will not transfer until planning consent is obtained
- Provisions for a new primary school continue to be included
- Ambiguity over the continuation and security of land behind the Cemetery is subject to further clarification after the PC stated its position on this.
- Extensive discussion was held over access where “extant lawful development certification” continues to render access being delivered from a right-hand ghost junction on the A1088. Although earlier in the meeting Persimmon gave formal recognition to the existence of an adopted masterplan requiring access of the A143/A1088 roundabout, the PC maintained its strong, vehement line on this and challenged the highways consultant on this matter. Further considerations are being taken by Persimmon who have stated they would come back to us to discuss on this specific point further.

- It appeared consideration over highways requirements was not including potential development at The Langridge since they only refer to land already allocated in incumbent local plans and not what is emerging in new local plans.

Persimmon anticipates holding a further local residents consultation event to further promote the scheme that the new masterplan is to outline at some point in the coming months.

Proposal

Given the sheer scale of this potential development, and the fact that this site pre-dates site allocations in our Neighbourhood Plan, it seems critical for us to galvanise local opinion on this matter, and it would seem totally pertinent for the Parish Council to hold its own “drop-in surgery” in the Village Hall in a separate room to that of the Persimmon consultation event.

The Parish Council is asked to agree this proposal and to request the Jiggins Trust formally notify us at their earliest opportunity when a booking to use the Village Hall is forthcoming so that this critically important engagement event is ringfenced.

It was agreed by all present to hold the event proposed above and request if the Jiggins Trust are able to accommodate the PC on the same day as Persimmon. **Action: Cllr Lord**

Cllr Rowe enquired if Persimmon had responded to the discussion at the meeting as to why it is not feasible to have a five-arm roundabout to access the development. Cllr Lord and the Clerk reported that clarification had not been received.

Cllr Rowe requested that Persimmon are contacted for clarification as they had agreed. This was agreed by all present. **Action: Cllr Lord**

Cllr Rowe enquired if all documentation had now been completed in relation to the NP. The Clerk informed members that she had requested some additional information from Cllrs Lord & Mann to complete the Consultation Statement. The Clerk informed members once information had been received she would amend the document and sent to Navigus for submission. Once completed the document would be uploaded to the Cllr's Sharepoint. **Action: Cllrs Lord, Mann & Clerk**

12. Cloudy IT

The Clerk stated that all Cllrs should be using the PC email accounts from 1st September 2024. The email address would also access all paperwork relating to the Parish Council that Cllrs may require. The Clerk would re-supply all Cllrs their PC email account and if they are having any problems using this then they are to contact Cloudy It to assist.

As of 1st September 2024, all correspondence to Cllrs would only be to PC email accounts, not private ones, and as mentioned all required documentation would be now on the Parish Council Sharepoint.

Action: Clerk & all Cllrs

13. Parish Council Surgeries

After a discussion it was agreed to trial PC Surgeries. Terms of reference would be written to be approved at the next meeting and hope to start them as a three-month trial starting in September. It was agreed that the Library would be a good location and Cllr Rees volunteered to speak with the Library Manager to enquire if the PC could use a small area. **Action: Clerk & Cllr Rees**

14. Ixworth/Pakenham PC Alliance

Cllr Lord gave the following report;

On 24 May 2024, Parish Councillors (Ben Lord / Kate Rees) met Councillors from Pakenham Parish Council (Derek Dorling / Beryl Sidebottom), West Suffolk Council (John Griffiths / Andrew Speed) and Suffolk County Council (Joanna Spicer / Beccy Hopfensperger) and also Green Ixworth (Roger Spiller) to review issues affecting the boundary of Ixworth and Pakenham that did not seem to be getting the attention they should.

Principally there are two issues that are overdue in requiring attention.

Bury Road – Kebab Van

- First appeared in 2015 and has had a litany of issues, many of which remain present today including:
 - Food Safety
 - Licencing
 - Highways
 - Public Health
 - Planning
- In May 2017, SEBC received a planning application from the operator of the Kebab Van. This was refused.
- No appeal to that refusal was lodged.
- Owing to the public interest in this, an Enforcement Notice was issued in July 2017 where Adam Ford stated, *“A demonstrable and material impact on local amenity is perceived to arise from the unauthorised kebab van and, notwithstanding the points raised by County Council in the attached letter, the pursuance of enforcement action has therefore been deemed to be expedient, proportionate and in the public interest.”*
- That enforcement notice issued under Section 172 sec 2, clause b of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 was then accompanied by an assurance issued under Section 172a of the same act assuring Suffolk County Council would not have prosecution proceedings to uphold the enforcement notice taken against them.
- Despite a lot of communication within Parish, District and County Councils, by June 2020, still no action has occurred.
- The kebab van is now permanently positioned on Bury Road where the trailer has flat tyres meaning it cannot be moved easily and the van itself positioned next to it all the time. Land around here has been extensively damage by all the vehicles that its trade has generated. It not only has no planning permission to be there but is not registered with the local authority for business rates to be paid. What does this say to the 2 pubs and 3 fast food outlets in Ixworth who are all suitably licenced and registered?
- Renewed challenges to WSC Planning were mounted on this in October 2023. By January 2024, this had not received any attention and was escalated to CEO of WSC. The ping pong of referring this to SCC then began once more and in February 2024, SCC once more clarified it was not a matter for them to enforce and handle and referred it back to WSC. In March 2024, this was further chased this with WSC Planning and provided further useful detail to help accelerate this to a conclusion. A holding reply was received on 11 April 2024 advising that matters were still being investigated and further useful details were sent on 22 April 2024.

A broad discussion was held on the historical context of this matter and where action should take place. Whilst SCC has been assured of no prosecution by WSC in the enforcement matter, they were not the only party served with this notice and so D Cllr Andrew Speed (Ward Member for Pakenham) agreed to follow this up with some urgency to Planning Officers and where there was a common ground understanding that the environmental issues alongside the trading legitimacy issues were both reasonable and should be adequately addressed.

Green Ixworth then presented their issue with access to private land adjacent to the River Blackborne opposite Mulley’s from the highway that appeared to be without permission. Both C Cllr Spicer and C Cllr Hopfensperger agreed to take this away for further investigation.

15. Ixworth Village Hall

Cllr Lord suggested that, as the PC had received many complaints, on the condition of the village hall car park the members consider asking the grass contractor to make a one-off cut and then deduct the fee from the amount the PC owes the Jiggins Trust for the play area rent.

Cllr Mann, as the Chairman of the Jiggins Trust explained various issues had happened to stop the grass getting cut. Cllr Mann requested that the PC pass on the information of the grass contractor and they would contact him directly to discuss getting the area cut.

Cllr Mann enquired if any further action had been taken on the amount owed for the play area rent. The Clerk informed members she had met with Mr Birrell, a Trustee of the Jiggins Trust, in early April and was awaiting an invoice for the amount.

16. Play Area

The Clerk reported that Cllrs Lord and Black, and the Clerk had met with a contractor to discuss some repairs required at the play area, one being the resurfacing of the roundabout surrounding to remove the trip hazard identified in the recent Play Area Inspection Report. The contractor had sent a quote of £2500 for all the required actions. It was agreed by all present to accept the quote and the Clerk was instructed to inform the contractor.

Action: Clerk

The Clerk also informed members that the PC's gardening contractor has repaired the small train.

It was agreed to investigate refurbishing some of the area in the Spring when weather would allow.

17. Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received;

- **Hepworth PC** - concerns on planning application
- **Resident** – overgrown vegetation at VH
- **Resident** – overgrown trees from St Mary's
- **Resident** – sponsored litter pick
- **Resident** – Local Plan – re minutes of last meeting
- **Mike Jones** – Youth Junction
- **Suffolk Wheelers** – Cycle Races 2025 (05.05.2025)
- **Joanna Spicer** – Hempyard Bridge
- **Joanna Spicer** (x 2) – Thistledown Drive
- **Joanna Spicer** – verge/weed cutting
- **WSC** – Community Grant Scheme
- **SCC** – Hempyard Bridge closure (x 3)
- **WSC** – Community Grant Scheme
- **WSC** – Grass Cutting Schedule
- **WSC** – Persons Nominated for Election
- **WSC** – Changes to Community Chest Funding

It was agreed to thank the Suffolk wheelers for their letter but to inform them that while the PC like to see the cycle races in Ixworth the PC do not host this event.

Action: Clerk

It was agreed to grant £25 to the resident completing the sponsored litter pick.

Action: RFO

It was agreed to pass the residents concerns to St Mary's Church about the overgrowth from the Churchyard.

Action: Clerk

It was agreed that the Chairman write to support Hepworth's PC's comments on the recent planning application at Shepherds Grove.

Action: Cllr Lord

The Report from Mike Jones at the end of the grant period was discussed prior to Cllr Rowe leaving the meeting. All agreed that Mike Jones and his team were doing a very good job and hoped the Youth Junction would go from strength to strength.

18. Chairman's Report

Cllr Lord reported the following;

- **Hedge Overgrowth Article** – As an informative article had been submitted to the Magazine from Green Ixworth, it seemed sensible for me not to duplicate the message we are all trying to convey.
- **SET Ixworth School** - I met with the new Headteacher of SET Ixworth School on 23 May 2024. Aside from the usual "getting to know" introductions, I was keen to discuss community accessibility to the school facilities which has become quite difficult. The Headteacher was unaware that the MUGA area had been grant funded on a condition there was community access to the facilities and took away an action point to investigate this.

Initial progress has been made on clarifying the arrangements and I received an e-mail on 4 June 2024 advising:

We have amended our website around facilities "Rates are negotiable for local communities and non-profit groups. For additional information, please contact enquiriesixworth@seckfordeducation.org.uk". Please can you let any organisations you know about this, most local organisations we would not charge for the MUGA or field.

We are currently unable to offer letting past 6:45 pm or at weekends, but we should be able to accommodate holiday bookings.

I shall continue to liaise with the school as to more wider community links and interactions which they are keen to embrace.

- **RAF Honington Sunset Service** - I have been invited as Chair to represent us at this occasion once more next Thursday which I have duly accepted.
- **High Street Flowerpots** – Unfortunately the flower pots in the High Street have not been maintained on a regular basis and are looking very untidy. I suggest the PC once again consider taking over the looking after and planting of these.

Cllr Rees volunteered to look into this issue and report back at a future meeting. It was suggested also to consider speaking with the current grass contractor to see if he could assist.

Action: Cllr Rees

19. Councillors Reports

Cllrs made no further reports.

20. Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 10th July 2024 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