

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 3rd April 2024 at 6:00pm

Present: Councillors (Cllrs) Ben Lord (Chairman), Vicky Sutton, Kate Rees. Stephen Mann, John Rowe and Tony Molloy

Also Present: District Councillor (D Cllr) John Griffiths MBE and one member of the public

Abbreviations

Cllr/Cllrs – Councillor/Councillors, C Cllr – County Councillor, PC – Parish Council, WSC – West Suffolk Council, SCC – Suffolk County Council, WG – Working Group, D Cllr – District Councillor, NP – Neighbourhood Plan,

In the Clerk's absence due to illness, the Chairman took minutes of this meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from the following Cllrs –

Cllr Black – holiday – apology accepted

Cllr Shelton – unable to get transport to meeting – apology accepted

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

3. West Suffolk Local Plan

The Chairman presented a background to Councillors present on issues arising from the Parish Council's recent submission to the latest consultation of the West Suffolk Local Plan. During the consultation period and at the PC meeting held in February, it was resolved to point out to West Suffolk Council that the PC were disappointed by the lack of modification to the emergence of the local plan based on representations made during earlier consultations. An example of this was the land directly behind the Crown Lane Cemetery which is not included as a site allocation for development in Rural Vision 2031 but has now been reintroduced in the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan which seeks to replace Rural Vision 2031. Initially, WSC confirmed that this was a mapping error and thanked the PC for raising this matter. Upon requesting a copy of the modified map by way of assurance that this modification had been made, the PC were then informed after the consultation period had ended that the information provided in the e-mail advising of the mapping error was incorrect and that the map is correct and will not be changed which is in line with the Urban Site Assessment Report that is being used in evidence to the emergence of West Suffolk Local Plan. Until this e-mail was received, the Parish Council had no knowledge of the existence of such a report that was commissioned by West Suffolk Council and is dated March 2023. Moreover, it makes a litany of recommendations and opportunities for the site north of Crown Lane that includes the land directly behind the Cemetery that include:

- Vehicular Access to/from Scott Road into the area intended for an extension to Crown Lane Cemetery. This is to enable 'sustainable connectivity to a new Primary School to be situated to the south of the proposed site'
- Vehicular Access to/from Walsham Road beyond Coltsfoot Close (currently a dead-end since the bypass construction)
- Vehicular Access to/from Crown Lane beyond New Road
- Pedestrian Access to/from Micklesmere Drive

Given the high impact significance of these issues, the Chairman felt it appropriate to call this additional meeting of the Parish Council for Cllrs to discuss at the earliest opportunity. All Cllrs present felt considerable concern by the existence of such a document proposing the above given the impact this would have on Crown Lane/Scott Road/High Street.

The Chairman requested D Cllr John Griffiths provide any further detail concerning this matter. D Cllr Griffiths confirmed he was not aware of this report although acknowledged that it was part of the documents available to the local plan consultation. D Cllr Griffiths reiterated the discretionary extension offered by West Suffolk Council in conciliation to this situation and has emphasised within WSC that the Planning Inspectorate should be advised why our representations must be taken into careful consideration. D Cllr Griffiths emphasised to the PC

that it should lobby the Planning Inspectorate through the public hearing process that the West Suffolk Local Plan will be subjected to.

In light of this unexpected situation, the Chairman did suggest that the PC might seek to include the land directly behind the cemetery as a site allocation within the Neighbourhood Plan although recognised the potential difficulty of this given the late stage the NP process is at. Cllr Rowe confirmed that our NP consultant, Chris Bowden, advised that whilst theoretically possible to do this, in practical terms it is not advisable to modify the Neighbourhood Plan to include this site as an allocation as it would mean resetting certain aspects of the regulatory process that could further delay the plan’s progression by several months. Notwithstanding this though, Cllr Rowe endorsed the Chairman’s background to this matter in that it presents a big problem for Ixworth and for the provision of the cemetery long term.

The Chairman permitted participation from one member of the public at this point who wished to highlight the maps within this Urban Site Assessment Report being inconsistent and that it is physically impossible to expect Crown Lane to be used as a vehicular access point.

Cllr Sutton suggested clarity was sought over what this meant for Crown Lane and that what is implied and proposed by this report would lead to carnage for Crown Lane and routes off it.

Cllr Mann proposed that the advice of our NP consultant provided to Cllr Rowe be followed and that we should not hinder the current stage of the NP. This was seconded by Cllr Rowe and unanimously agreed by all present. Cllr Mann further stated that it appeared there was no difficulty in agreeing how we respond to this.

All present agreed that in addition to the remarks submitted on 12 March 2024 to the latest consultation held by WSC on the West Suffolk Local Plan, we should issue a response to include:

- Traffic impact on the areas/roads effected if the proposed vehicular access points were delivered on.
- Cemetery provision impact; whilst it is not envisaged that any burials are needed imminently on this land, it is necessary to safeguard this for the long-term future as well as seeking to develop a new access into the cemetery off Scott Road given the narrow constraints at the Crown Lane entrance.
- All of the proposed access points are unsuitable for well-established and documented reasons.
- The data within this report which is relied upon and for which WSC seeks to rely upon in the context of the emerging local plan are factually inconsistent.
- Reference is made to ‘archaeological significance’ on this site which has not previously been stated.

It was agreed that the Chairman would prepare a draft response to be circulated to all Cllrs and that the Chairman would submit this by the deadline provided in the discretionary extension by West Suffolk Council of 8 April 2024.

16. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 10th April 2024 at 7.30pm in Ixworth Village Hall.

With no further business the meeting closed at 6:45pm.

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Signed

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Date