

IXWORTH & IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Councillor Ben Lord

Clerk: Claire Usher

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 14th May 2025

At Ixworth Village Hall

Councillors Present: Ben Lord (Chairman), Clare Black, Terry Lilly, Sam Linton, Stephen Mann, Tony Molloy and Kate Rees

Others in attendance: Claire Usher (Clerk), Mandy Adlington (Clerk), Joanna Spicer County Councillor, and 4 members of the public.

140525/01 **Election of a Chairman of Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council:** Cllr Rees proposed Cllr Lord as Chairman and seconded by Cllr Black with all Councillors in favour; as there were no other nominations Cllr Lord was unanimously elected as Chairman to Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council.

Cllr Lord duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman.

140525/02 **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Rowe and District Councillor Griffiths. All Councillors resolved to accept the apologies.

140525/03 **Declarations of Interest (DoI):** No interests were declared.

Dispensation: Councillors noted no requests had been received and none were requested at the meeting.

140525/04 **Minutes of previous meeting:** All Councillors resolved to accept the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9th and 17th April 2025 as a true reflection of the decisions made and authorised Cllr Lord to sign the minutes.

140525/05 **Clerks Report:**

Mandy reported that there were no matters to report but would like to thank members for their help and assistance over the past 16 years and she was very sad to be leaving the role. She welcomed Claire to the role and wished her well in the position of Clerk.

Public Forum:

140525/06 A member of the public asked if the light outside Ixworth Thorpe parish church was due to be replaced and was advised by the Clerk that this work was due to be undertaken.

140525/07

County Councillor Report: County Cllr Spicer thanked Mandy for her contribution to the parish council for the past 16 years and that she had always been approachable and helpful and will be missed.

County Cllr Spicer thanked the Parish Council for its contribution to towards the dropped kerbs that were due to be installed on the High Street opposite the Methodist Church.

C Cllr Spicer also reported that she had met with County Highways with regards to the installation of white lines to indicate the bus stop on High Street. Having measured the area, it would mean the reduction of one car parking space and the removal of a small stretch of double yellow lines. This may have an impact on the nearby residents with the loss of a car parking space. C Cllr Spicer would be happy to proceed with this work with Highways but felt that local residents should be consulted. Cllr Lord was also of the opinion that nearby residents should be consulted before this was taken any further. It was agreed that the Clerk write to the residents concerned and ask for their opinions, and their views reported to the next parish council meeting.

C Cllr Spicer had also met with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer following the devastating fire in Bardwell. She reported that the Fire Service will be holding sessions for the owners of thatched roof properties across Suffolk in October to highlight the measures that can be taken by homeowners to avoid fires in their roof space and this will be advertised in as many places as possible. She hoped this would take place in Ixworth.

C Cllr Spicer gave councillors an update on the devolution process that was taking place.

140525/08

Planning:

- a. Councillors noted that an application had been received; Land off Crown Lane – DC/25/0666/FUL and an extension had been given to the Parish Council to make comments on this application.
- b. Councillors noted that no planning decisions that had been made since the last meeting.
- c. **Land West of Bardwell Road – DC/25/0370/OUT**

Cllr Lord reported that he had received notification from County Highways, as a consultee to this application, that they had responded to the District Council requesting a deferral as the County Council Highways were not currently in a position to support this application and was requesting further assessment, evidence, revisions and/or dialogue. Cllr Lord was pleased to see this response especially as at the present time the school buses for the High School park along where the proposed entrance would be, with no other appropriate area for buses to wait. He hoped that the application will now be looked at again by the planning department.

d. **Land off Crown Lane – DC/25/0666/FUL** – Provision of 215 dwellings with access, public open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure and the provision of 2.2 hectare site for education provision

Cllr Lord reported that the Parish Council had received notification of this planning application. Due to the size and location of this application he was proposing to hold a public meeting to enable members of the public to share their views on Wednesday 21st May. Once Councillors had heard these comments a meeting of the Parish Council had been arranged for Wednesday 28th May so that the Council can decide on their formal response. This was unanimously agreed.

Cllr Spicer reported on the number of school spaces and the proposed numbers of new children joining the primary school in September. Cllr Lord had also researched the numbers and though slightly different was of the opinion that these figures would need to be taken into consideration when the planning application was decided.

e. **Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr Lord reported the results of the referendum held on Thursday 8th May, 296 were in favour, 74.5% and 101 not in favour 25.5%, and therefore more than half of those voting had voted in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Lord had concerns that there was a percentage of the electorate who weren't in favour and this should be addressed. The District Council will consider the result of the referendum in July.

Finance:

140525/09

Payments: All Councillors resolved to approve the following gross payments by internet banking confirming a full schedule, supported by invoices and receipts, had been received prior to the meeting:

	Payee	Details	£
140525/09	Mandy Adlington	Clerks Wages	1235.28
140525/09	H Jermy	Maintenance	494.71
140525/09	R Pye	Bin Emptying	164.90
140525/09	CloudyIT	IT and Support	134.58
140525/09	Jiggens Memorial	VH Hire March	40.08

140525/09	J W Warren Electrical & Fire Ltd	External Lighting St Marys Church	624.00
140525/09	West Suffolk Council	Collection of Green Waste Cemetery 2025/26	58.00
140525/09	Jiggens Memorial	VH Hire April	65.45
140525/09	Jose Mendes	Grass Maintenance	783.74
140525/09	Mandy Adlington	Expenses March/April	97.99
140525/09	NEST	Monthly Direct Debit	58.27

The Clerk was authorised to transfer £7000 from the Business account to the Community account.

Bank Reconciliation – Councillors received a bank reconciliation report prepared by the Clerk, M Adlington: the Community Account as at 30th April 2025 £4,879.20, the Business Account as at 30th April 2025 £48,895.00, total £136,771.43.

Governance:

140525/10 **Standing Orders and Financial Standing Orders, Code of Conduct and Council Policies**
All Councillors agreed to re adopt these orders and policies, but the new Clerk to review and present to a later meeting for Councillors to consider.

Planning Working Group - Cllr Lord proposed that a working group be set up to consider all future planning applications before these are considered by full Council. The terms of reference to be agreed and considered by full council at the next meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Rees and fully supported.

All other existing working groups and committees to remain unchanged.

Membership of Committees and Working Groups:

Staffing Committee – Cllrs Lord, Rees and Mann

Policies and Resources – All Cllrs – Committee is arranged when required

Play Area Working Group – Cllrs Lord and Black, Linton

Cemetery Working Group – Cllrs Lord, Rees and Mann

Footpath Warden – Mr Ian Rees

Health and Safety Adviser – Cllr Lilley

Burial Officer

Councillors agreed that the Clerk remains as the Burial Officer for the cemetery with delegated authority for the day-to-day management of the cemetery.

Fidelity Insurance – All Councillors agreed to keep this at £250,000.

Asset Register – This has remained unchanged. The Clerk to review and update through the year.

140525/11 **Accounting Statements** – (AGAR) Year Ending 31st March 2025 – Cllr Lord having read the Statement to Councillors, it was agreed that the Chairman and the Clerk sign the document. The Clerk will publish these statements on the Council's website in agreement with the terms of the external auditor.

140525/12 **Meeting Dates 2025- 2026** – Councillors noted the meeting dates for the coming year. It was confirmed that all Parish Council meetings will be held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month.

140525/13 **Correspondence** – All Councillors had received a list of correspondence received by the Clerk for the month of April. Cllr Lord reported that Marketing Force who had landscaped the 2 roundabouts in the parish had carried out this work without charge for the first year but for this financial year there would be a charge of £2,750 for the maintenance and upkeep of the roundabouts. It was agreed that as this figure was budgeted for and placed in reserves, this payment should be met from that reserve.

Cllr Lord also reported that a letter had been received by a resident of Crown Mews who had raised concern about a small sapling that was growing very close to the footpath and may as it grows, cause damage to the nearby listed wall. It was agreed the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor take a look and report to the Clerk if he felt this should be removed.

140525/14 **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman reported that he had met with the Head of Ixworth High School and he had confirmed that he is opposed to the housing application on Crown Lane. He had also written to the Chair/CEO of NHS SNEE ICB and as a result there will be a stakeholder meeting between them, including himself and partners/management of Ixworth Surgery on 13th June.

The Chairman also reported on the illegally parked kebab van on Bury Road. It had been reported by the West Suffolk's Licensing Officers that there had been the offer of a commercial lease to the operator by the owner of the land where cars park. The Chairman stated that he had been requested to support any escalation action relating to this in an effort to definitively resolve this longstanding issue that was first raised 10 years ago.

The matter concerning the hedge clearance on Thetford Road, the Chairman confirmed that the landowner of the allotments had arranged for their caretaker to cut this back. During that time a member of the public became abusive to the caretaker and the work was halted. The matter was unnecessarily escalated to the police who failed to determine the full facts that this work was being done on grounds of Highways Safety to improve visibility.

The Chairman reported that there was still one vacancy on the Council.

0140525/15 **Councillors Reports**

Cllr Linton reported that the grass area around the white gates on to the playing field had now been cut back.

Cllr Black raised concerns that the children's play area around the play equipment is not fenced to help children play safely away from dogs. It was agreed the Play Area Working Group would meet to review this; seek a scope of work to be costed and ascertain approval from the Jiggins Trust.

140525/16 **Any other Council business for information to be noted or for inclusion in a future agenda:** None

140525/17 All Councillors noted that the next meeting of the Annual Parish Meeting will be at 7.00pm on Wednesday 21st May 2025 followed by the public forum to discuss the planning application and that an extra parish council meeting to discuss the comments made by the public and for the Parish Council to formalise their response will be held at 6.30pm on Wednesday 28th May 2025.

140525/18 **Exclusion of Public and Press** to resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed, commercial contracts and HR.

The press and public were excluded at 8.50pm.

With no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.05pm.

Signed Date