

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 9th April 2025 at 7:30pm

Present: Councillors (Cllrs) Lord (Chairman), Tony Molloy, Sam Linton, Terry Lilley, John Rowe, Kate Rees and Stephen Mann.

Also Present: C Cllr Spicer, D Cllr Griffiths and sixteen members of the public

Abbreviations

Cllr/Cllrs – Councillor/Councillors, C Cllr – County Councillor, D Cllr – District Councillor, PC – Parish Council, WSC – West Suffolk Council, RFO -Responsible Finance Officer, SCC – Suffolk County Council, APM – Annual Parish Meeting

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from the following Councillors –

Cllr Black – holiday – apology accepted

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meetings

The draft minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting and taken as read. It was resolved that the Chairman sign the minutes as a true record of the meetings held on 12th March 2025 and 2nd April 2025.

4. Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported the following;

- **Church Lights** – a meeting had been held with the Church Warden but unfortunately at the last minute, the electrician had not been able to attend. A second meeting has been arranged for Tuesday 15th April.
- **Play Area** – a quote for replacing the rotten wooden walking trail had been received but two thirds of the cost was required up front. It was agreed to pay the upfront cost. A grant of £4479 had been received from WSC regarding the cost.

5. Public Forum

The following comments were received from the public present;

- **Planning Application of Bardwell Road** – a resident wished to highlight her views that the access on and off this development would cause even more congestion at the top of the High Street. Concerns raised were also that the amount of traffic that would travel down the High Street to leave the village would be dangerous and cause accidents. In the morning, evenings and school times that section is quite often gridlocked and adding even more traffic entering and leaving this site on that stretch of Bardwell Road was just madness.
- **Key Service Centre** – a resident stated that it is good that Ixworth is a Key Service Centre but planning applications, County Councils and district Councils cannot do anything to resolve health service issues.
- **Highways** -a resident stated it is disappointing that SCC and Highways do not seem to care about transport issues in and around Ixworth or are willing to accept the level of traffic is going to increase with all the developments proposed in the area.

6. Reports from County & District Councillors

C Cllr Spicer sent her apologies for not being able to attend the meeting and emailed the following report;

- **Access of Bardwell Road** – despite the clear stated position of Suffolk Highways I think the point needs to be pressed on about the appropriate access from A1088. It is worth referring to either the ghost island or roundabout. The bus parking is not actually a major issue to pursue but more about safety and viability as all traffic will either clog the High Street or must negotiate the staggered Bardwell Road crossroads.

- **Rights of Way** – What is being offered (it all needs to be permanent not permissive). Access across and/or under A1088. Link to Woolpit Road. Contribution to Footbridge over the bypass.
- **Primary School** – a site for a new Primary School had been identified and must be protected in masterplan and any planning application by Persimmon.

D Cllr Griffiths reported the following;

- **Planning** – As well as the application being discussed tonight there are as usual various planning applications being processed by WSC Planning Officers. Feelings, however, are very strong in relation to the application for houses on the land of Bardwell Road.
- **Footbridge** – this would take time and resources and has been discussed and requested for many years.

D Cllr wished to comment that all groups, the PC, WSC, SCC and residents should work together to get what is best for the Parish and the local area.

7. Planning

The following applications had been postponed from the meeting held on 2nd April 2025 to be considered at this meeting.

DC/25/0396/LB – orangery to rear of garden – The Priory, High Street, Ixworth

DC/25/0396/HH - orangery to rear of garden – The Priory, High Street, Ixworth

Support

Support

Action: Clerk

The following applications were then considered;

DC/25/0436/EIASC - EIA screening opinion under Regulation 6 (1) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017 on the matter of whether or not the proposed development is considered that there are likely significant environmental impacts for which an environmental statement would be required for up to 160 residential dwellings – Land West of Bardwell Road, Ixworth, Suffolk

No comment as screening not required

DC/25/0370/OUT - Outline planning application with all matters reserved (means of access to be considered) - a. up to 160 dwellings b. provision of open space c. landscaping d. sustainable drainage e. associated infrastructure and works - Land West of Bardwell Road, Ixworth, Suffolk

Councillors reflected carefully on the wide range of public representations that had been made to this planning application. Whilst it was recognised that new houses are needed and welcomed in Ixworth, it must be done with appropriate mitigations to the village infrastructure. The areas of concerns included:

- Quantity of Houses Proposed is greater versus the quantity set out in the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan
- Highways Access Proposed is totally inappropriate to a development of this size and falls out of earlier proposals that the applicant had made to the Parish Council when they first began planning how this development would be laid out.
- Public Rights of Way / Access to the Countryside. It was considered that the proposal to introduce an extended pavement along the A1088 to then encourage pedestrians to cross the A143 onto an existing public right of way is inappropriate and unsafe, not least because the existing Public Right of Way then leads to nowhere in pedestrian real terms. There exists a piece of infrastructure owned by SCC which was formally used as an underpass for cattle further down the A1088 which would be the preferred solution to a) have pedestrians safely cross the road and b) improve access to the countryside. At the South-West of the development (ie. Near Thetford Road), there was a lack of detail on the designation of the footpath as well as proposing that pedestrians cross outside the 30mph speed limit zone. The existing pavement is also not fit for purpose as it stands, let alone in the face of any increased usage through development.
- Lack of contributions proposed towards a footbridge over the A143 given the increase in footfall that will be generated by housing development in the village.
- Concerns over Primary School Education Capacity and at what point a new Primary School would be delivered – it was felt this should be in advanced of any pupil number increasing from development rather than after the houses were developed.

- Insufficient capacity to access GP/Primary Care Services. The amounts proposed by SNEE ICB NHS are meaningless in the face of a GP surgery that is landlocked by its footprint and is already experiencing service capacity issues.
- Zero contribution proposed to community recreation infrastructure.

It was proposed by Cllr Rees and seconded by Cllr Linton that the Council Object to the application. The resolution was carried five votes to two.

An amendment to the resolution was proposed by Cllr Rowe and seconded by Cllr Molloy that in the PC's response, the PC highlight that they are accepting of 145 houses as mentioned in the WSC Local Plan but object to the access onto the development off Bardwell Road alongside the other areas of concerns stated. The amendment was carried unanimously **Object**

It was resolved that Cllr Lord submit the PC's response with input from the PC's highway consultant.

Action: Cllr Lord

8. Finance

The following payments were noted;

BACS	Staffing	£1893.99
BACS	Jose Acosta Mendez	£783.74
BACS	Cloudy IT	£134.58
BACS	Suffolk Cloud	£470.00
	(2 invoices (website))	
BACS	A Adlington	£100.80
	(payroll software)	
BACS	ARCO	£183.53
BACS	WSDC	£497.12
	(Cemetery Waste)	
BACS	WSDC	£199.87
	(Ixworth Thorpe Waste)	
Direct Debit NEST		£71.82

The additional payment to R & S Playground of £5396.88 (inc VAT)

9. WSC Local Plan

It was agreed to contact the Highways Consultant to assist in construction the PC's response, including once again reiterating the need for a footbridge. It was also agreed to, if possible, to show costings that had previously been obtained, to counteract the inspector's comments that costings and feasibility had never been investigated. **Action: Clerk**

10. Clerk Vacancy

The Chairman advised members that there had been six applications for the role of Clerk/RFO. The staffing committee had short listed three candidates to interview. However, one had now retracted their application so the staffing committee would interview the two remaining candidates next week. It was agreed to hold an additional meeting on Thursday 17th April to receive a report from the committee on their recommendations relating to employing a new Clerk. **Action: Clerk & All Cllrs**

11. Community Recreation Working Group

Cllr Lord informed members that the Consultancy Group engaged by the Parish Council had held the first drop-in event seeking views of residents on their wishes for recreation within the Parish. An online questionnaire was available for residents to complete. Cllr Lord confirmed again that this project is to gather evidence of what residents would like to see in the future through any section 106 contributions from upcoming developments.

12. Annual Parish Meeting

The Clerk confirmed the Village Hall had been booked to hold the APM on Wednesday 21st May at 6.30pm. The Clerk informed members that Cllr Linton and she would work on invites over the next couple of weeks.

Action: Clerk & Cllr Linton

13. Chairman's Report

The Chairman informed members that the kebab van was still trading even though they had been instructed not to do so until they had applied for a trading licence.

Cllr Rees expressed her concern for the neighbours of the van as now the generator is outside the van the noise has increased considerably.

14. Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received;

- **Various** – Email trail re footbridge clarification
- **Litter Clearance**
- **Resident** – comments on Crown Lane
- **Resident** – Memorial Bench (David Reeve)
- **Cllr Lord** – Bardwell Road Traffic Issues
- **Cllr Lord** – correspondence with PC Battershall
- **Cllr Lord** – The Big Listen

The email on a memorial bench for the late Cllr David Reeve was discussed and members felt a bench near the newly refurbished Hemyard Bridge would be a lovely spot. It was agreed to respond to the email suggesting this area, but the family would need to seek permission from the land owner.

Action: Clerk

15. Councillors Reports

Cllr Rowe expressed his wish that the long service that Pam Shelton gave to the Parish Council should be recognised in some way. Cllr Lord informed members that this was being looked in to.

16. Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the Annual Parish meeting was confirmed as 14th May 2025 at 7.30pm in Ixworth Village Hall. As agreed above an additional meeting would be held on Thursday 17th April to receive recommendations from the Staffing Committee

17. Exclusion of Press & Public

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.

The press & public were excluded at 9.20pm.

- (i) Commercial Contracts

With no further business the meeting closed at 9.45pm.

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Signed

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Date