

**Minutes of the Meeting of Ilton Parish Council held in Merryfield Hall on
Tuesday 8 October 2024 at 6.30p.m.**

Present: Cllrs: J Bennett (Chair), J Easterbrook, A Gordon, N Matravers, L Pike, S Ripley, I Sherwood, B Vance

In attendance: Mrs A Dallaway (Clerk/RFO), Cllr J Roundell Greene (Somerset Council) and four members of the public

2024/165 Apologies and reasons for absence: None received.

2024/166 Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest at this stage of the meeting.

2024/167 Items to be dealt with after the public, including the press have been excluded: Agenda item 14/minute ref 179 will be held in closed session due to commercial sensitivity.

2024/168 Public Participation

There were four members of the public in attendance who wished to observe the meeting.

2024/169 Somerset Council Councillor Report

Cllr Jo Roundell Greene was in attendance and highlighted the following matters:

- SC is working hard on re-organisation and managing the budget to avoid a section 114 notice.
- There are 603 children in care in Somerset and more foster carers are needed.
- The Enhanced Highways Maintenance Pilot scheme has now been launched by SC.
- Cllr Roundell Greene asked Parish Councillors to highlight future agenda items for the LCN meetings.

2024/170 Minutes of the 10 September 2024 Parish Council Meeting: to approve the minutes as a true record & consider any matters arising

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for the work she had done to ensure the successful conclusion of the audit process for 2023/24.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AN ACCURATE RECORD
PROPOSED BY NM; SECONDED BY LP. ALL IN FAVOUR.**

2024/171 Casual Vacancy – to receive an update

Cllr S Calvert has resigned from the Council. The Chairman thanked Cllr S Calvert for all her hard work on behalf of the Parish Council. Somerset Council has been informed of the Casual Vacancy and the deadline for 10 electors to request a by-election was 4 October. The Clerk is waiting to hear from SC whether a by-election will be held or whether the Parish Council can advertise the Casual Vacancy and co-opt a new councillor.

2024/172 Planning Applications – to receive any planning applications since the last meeting

A planning application was received after the agenda was published: **23/02332/OUT: Land Os 4025 Frost Lane Ilton Ilminster Somerset TA19 9EU.**

The application will be considered at the next Council meeting. Cllr A Gordon declared an interest in the planning application as he is the applicant.

2024/173 Accounts and Financial Information 24/25 (documents previously circulated)

a) Bank reconciliation to 30/09/2024 – to receive and sign

Cllr J Bennett signed the bank reconciliation to 30/09/2024

b) Summary Receipts & Payments report to 30/09/2024 – received

Initial

- c) **Schedule of Payments for October 2024 – to consider for approval (see Appendix to the mins)**
Cllr B Vance queried the fuel payment of £91.25 and was advised that three quarters of the fuel supply remains. Council noted additional payments for SALC for Councillor and Clerk training £160 and for Merryfield Village Hall for hire fees for additional Council meetings £24.50.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE PAYMENTS
PROPOSED BY AG; SECONDED BY IS. ALL IN FAVOUR**

The Clerk will schedule the bank payments online and Cllr Bennett will authorise as the second signatory in line with the Council's bank mandate.

d) **Finance Committee Meeting**

- i) **To receive the draft minutes and consider recommendations for approval as follows:
2024/25 budget virements:**

12. Subscriptions: SALC paid. £480 remaining. SAPF outstanding. Recommend vire remaining to training code

19. Play equipment inspection: recommend move to quarterly inspection (see agenda item 15 b/minute ref 178b), vire surplus to play equipment maintenance

25. Printing: £421 remaining, recommend use for new play park signage rather than F&A EMR. Note some allocation needed for printing of Merryfield Messenger

30. Other maintenance costs: £479 remaining, recommend use towards Merryfield bench renovations (if approved)

40. Equipment depreciation: this is not included in Parish Council accounts in line with audit recommendations. £600 recommend vire to green space maintenance. Delete this code for 25/26.

49 – 52 SC Devolved: recommend carry over surplus to 25/26 as EMR

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS AS ABOVE
PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY JE. ALL IN FAVOUR**

- ii) **To consider Committee membership**

The recent resignation has left a vacancy on the Finance Committee. This matter will be reviewed once the Casual Vacancy is filled.

e) **Grant for annual hall hire costs for Ilton Youth Club – to consider grant application**

The grant application and supporting documents were not received in time to circulate to councillors in advance of the meeting. This matter will be deferred to the November meeting.

f) **Tractor insurance – to consider quotes**

The tractor insurance is due to expire on 11 November, before the next scheduled Council meeting. The existing insurer has yet to issue renewal terms. A comparison quote has been obtained. The Clerk will renew the tractor insurance with the existing provider as long as the premium is no higher than the comparison quote.

g) **Wreath for Remembrance Day – to approve**

The Clerk will order a wreath for Remembrance Day at a cost of £25. The Chairman will lay the wreath at the Remembrance Day service. Approval of funds for Remembrance Day events will be an agenda item at the next Council meeting.

ACTION: CLERK

2024/174 Employment Matters

a) **To consider whether the Clerk/RFO additional hours worked in September to be paid or taken as TOIL**

The Clerk had previously circulated a time sheet indicating 19.75 additional hours worked in September, due to the additional work created by extra meetings and ensuring good governance arrangements are in place.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO PAY THE CLERK FOR THE ADDITIONAL HOURS WORKED IN
SEPTEMBER**

PROPOSED BY BV; SECONDED BY LP. ALL IN FAVOUR

Initial

2024/175 Volunteer Terms of Reference – to consider for approval

Council considered the draft document and agreed the following amendments:

- Remove the last sentence in the 'Scope' section as Volunteers do not have to contact the Clerk before undertaking tasks. All tasks do need prior approval from the Parish Council and this will be a standing item for the monthly Parish Council meetings.
- Simplify the wording of clauses 9, 14 and 15 to clarify the record keeping process.
- Replace the word 'Supervisor' with 'Councillor/facilitator' to reflect the fact that Volunteer tasks do not have to be directly supervised but a Councillor will facilitate any tasks.
- Rename the 'Induction Brief & Volunteer Acknowledgement Form' to Volunteer Task Assessment Form' which is to be filled in by a Councillor in conjunction with the Volunteer in advance of the task.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE VOLUNTEER TERMS OF REFERENCE SUBJECT TO THE ABOVE AMENDMENTS AND SUBJECT TO REVIEW IN THREE MONTHS TIME

PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY BV. MAJORITY IN FAVOUR. 7 VOTES FOR; 1 VOTE AGAINST

Council noted the following Volunteer tasks scheduled for the next month: remove brambles in the play park, tidy hedgerows in the church yard and cemetery and remove weeds on pavements through the village.

2024/176 Cemetery

a) Cemetery Regulations & Memorial Inspection regime – to review

Council reviewed the existing Cemetery Regulations and made the following amendments:

- Remove all references to walls as there are none in the Cemetery.
- Burial records to be stored in a locked cabinet.
- Flat stones are permitted for both burial plots and cremation plots.
- Kerb stones are permitted in the Cemetery. Cllrs Pike, Sherwood and Vance were not in favour of kerb stones as it is difficult for a contractor to mow around them.
- Remove reference to 'artificial flowers under a dome'.
- Trees and shrubs are not permitted on burial or cremation plots.
- Glass containers are not permitted but plastic containers are permitted.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE REVISED CEMETERY REGULATIONS SUBJECT TO THE ABOVE AMENDMENTS

PROPOSED BY BV; SECONDED BY NM. ALL IN FAVOUR

Council agreed that Cllr N Matravers and Cllr I Sherwood would take responsibility for annual safety checks on Memorial headstones in the Cemetery and Churchyard. A written record of the checks will be kept.

ACTION: CLLRS MATRAVERS & SHERWOOD

b) ICCM Cemetery Management and Compliance Training £190 plus VAT – to consider training for Clerk

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE FUNDING FOR THE ON-LINE CEMETERY TRAINING FOR THE CLERK 28 & 29 JANUARY 2025

PROPOSED BY NM; SECONDED BY AG. ALL IN FAVOUR

c) Cemetery record keeping – to receive an update

The Clerk and Cllr J Bennett would like to undertake an audit of cemetery record keeping. The first step is to produce an updated plan of burial plots which will also be useful when recording the annual safety checks on the Memorial headstones.

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ACTION: CLLR J BENNETT/CLERK

2024/177 Environment Matters

a) Repairs to bench in Merryfield Lane – to consider quotes for the groundworks

Three quotes have now been obtained for the proposed groundworks. The ironworks will cost £238. The Clerk will contact the contractors who have quoted to clarify whether they have the necessary Street Works qualification (NRSWA) for working adjacent the highway. The Clerk will also contact Kier to ask if this work could be carried out as part of the SC Enhanced Highway Maintenance Pilot Scheme.

ACTION: CLERK

Council noted that the Clerk is also currently liaising with Somerset Council regarding a licence for the bench, bin and planter at this site.

ACTION: CLERK

b) SID – to consider purchase

Cllr A Gordon is currently looking into costings.

ACTION: CLLR A GORDON

c) SC Enhanced Highway Maintenance EHM Pilot and Volunteer training launch – to receive an update

A number of Ilton volunteers and councillors have expressed an interest in the EHM Volunteer training initiative and the names have been forwarded to the Chair of the Highways LCN Working Group.

d) Tree survey at churchyard – to consider

A verbal quote has been obtained for £250-£350.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE UP TO £350 FOR A TREE SURVEY AT THE CHURCHYARD PROPOSED BY AG; SECONDED BY NM. ALL IN FAVOUR

e) Chapter 8 training – to consider the costs of a Council representative undertaking the training

The Council is awaiting clarification from SC of the requirement for Chapter 8 training for volunteers or councillors working on the highway. Pending clarification, Council agreed to approve funding and the Clerk will research training provision and costs.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE UP TO £500 FOR CHAPTER 8 TRAINING PROPOSED BY AG; SECONDED BY BV. ALL IN FAVOUR

*At 8.30pm, the Chairman advised that the meeting was likely to over-run and proposed that an **Extra Ordinary Meeting be scheduled in October** in order to manage the remainder of the meeting agenda. Council meetings should not exceed 2.5 hours in line with Standing Orders. All councillors were in agreement. At the Chairman's discretion, it was decided that agenda item 15 b) be discussed, followed by agenda item 14 in closed session and the remaining agenda items be deferred to the Extra Ordinary Meeting in October (provisional date Tuesday 22 Oct).*

2024/178 Recreational facilities

a) Timber trail at the play park – to consider quotes for replacement

This item was deferred to the Extra Ordinary Meeting in October

b) Monthly inspection regime for the play park – to consider reducing inspections to quarterly (plus separate annual)

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO REDUCE THE PLAY PARK INSPECTIONS TO QUARTERLY TO REDUCE COSTS (PLUS SEPARATE ANNUAL INSPECTION)

PROPOSED BY JE; SECONDED BY AG. ALL IN FAVOUR.

Council noted that Cllr S Ripley is carrying out weekly visual checks of the play park and MUGA.

c) MUGA hire – to confirm existing hire arrangements and advertising

This item was deferred to the Extra Ordinary Meeting in October

d) Rec Field Working Party – to receive an update and consider tree planting

This item was deferred to the Extra Ordinary Meeting in October.

Initial

e) Football goals/nets – to consider purchase of age-appropriate nets

This item was deferred to the Extra Ordinary Meeting in October

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION FOR AGENDA ITEM 14 AS IT IS A
COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE MATTER**

PROPOSED BY AG; SECONDED BY JB. ALL IN FAVOUR.

8.45pm Members of the public left the meeting at this point.

**2024/179 Grass cutting contract – to receive an update on the Schedule of Works completed to date
and discuss contract delivery for remainder of 24/25**

Council agreed a schedule of proposed cuts (weather permitting) for all amenity areas for the remaining term of the 24/25 contract. The Clerk will produce a written schedule and send it to the grass cutting contractor for consideration.

Review of the grass cutting contract for 25/26 will be an agenda item for December.

ACTION: CLERK

2024/180 Policy Review

a) Employment policies

i) Expenses (approved Dec 22) – to review

ii)Sickness Absence - to consider draft policy for approval

b) Publication Scheme – to consider draft document for approval

These items were deferred to the Extra Ordinary Meeting in October

2024/181 Projects for 24/25

a) Village signs – to receive an update

This item was deferred to the Extra Ordinary Meeting in October

b) Bike track at Rec Field – to consider further consultation with the village children

This item was deferred to the Extra Ordinary Meeting in October

c) Shelter at Rec Field – to agree the specification

This item was deferred to the Extra Ordinary Meeting in October

d) Memorial Cross at the Church – to receive an update

This item was deferred to the Extra Ordinary Meeting in October

Dates of next meetings:

Extra Ordinary Parish Council Meeting: Tuesday 22 October at 6.30pm at Merryfield Hall

Parish Council Meeting: Tuesday 12 November at 6.30pm at Merryfield Hall

The meeting closed at 9pm

Signed

Date

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