

**Minutes of the Meeting of Ilton Parish Council held in Merryfield Hall on
Tuesday 11 June 2024 at 6.30p.m.**

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

In attendance: Mrs A Dallaway (Clerk/RFO) and eight members of the public

2024/91 Apologies: S Calvert, A Gordon (Vice Chair), B Vance, Cllr J Roundell Greene (Somerset Council)

2024/92 Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest.

2024/93 Items to be dealt with after the public, including the press have been excluded – agenda item 19 as it is a confidential matter, item 20 as it is a commercially sensitive matter and item 21 as it is a confidential staffing matter (minute ref 109-111).

2024/94 Public Participation

Public (Graeme Price): Thanks to the Clerk for her letter regarding the precept budget for 24/25 and Council ring-fenced funds.

The Land Registry title to the Copse Lane land (car park) is on the agenda – does the Council have any plans for the land?

Council: There are no immediate plans for the land which is an asset to the village and currently very well used as a car park.

Public: If the Council decided on a change of use for the Copse Lane land would there be public consultation?

Council: This would be an agenda item for formal Council resolution with public consultation as necessary.

Public: The hedge and verge around the Copse Lane land needs to be kept trimmed.

Council: The Council's contractor has just cut the road side hedge as it was obstructing pedestrian access on the footpath.

Public: The hedge is overgrown on the footpath to the playpark (Cottage Corner & Bradleys).

Council: This hedge is the responsibility of a private landowner – Cllr I Sherwood will liaise.

Public: I am concerned about the Council's contractor driving his mower at speed on the Rec Field.

Council: Concern noted - the grass cutting contract is an agenda item for this meeting.

Public: Thank you for organising the D Day Celebrations in the village.

Council noted that some volunteers were disappointed that they had not been asked to help out.

2024/95 Somerset Council Councillor Report

There were no representatives from Somerset Council in attendance at the meeting.

2024/96 Minutes of the 14 May 2024 Parish Council Annual Meeting: to approve minutes as a true record & consider any matters arising

Council noted that SC and IS had left the meeting before the final agenda item 2024/90.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AN ACCURATE RECORD SUBJECT TO THE AMENDMENT ABOVE

PROPOSED BY NM; SECONDED BY SR. ALL IN FAVOUR.

The Clerk advised that the transition to a new .gov.uk website domain name (in line with audit recommendations) was in hand but that it was not possible to access the grant funding available as the supplier is not an approved registrar participating in the Parish Council Domains Helper Service.

2024/97 Minutes of the 23 May 2024 Finance Committee Meeting: to note the draft minutes and consider the recommendation

Initial

- a) **New model NALC Finance Regulations as amended – to consider for adoption and note that the Standing Orders will be updated in line with the Fin Regs (previously circulated)**
COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE NEW MODEL NALC FIN REGS AS AMENDED PROPOSED BY JE; SECONDED BY NM. ALL IN FAVOUR

2024/98 Schedule of meetings for 2024/25

The Clerk had previously circulated a schedule of meeting dates including committee meetings for 2024/25 which will be displayed on the website.

2024/99 Planning Applications: There were no planning applications to consider.

2024/100 Accounts and Financial Information 23/24 (documents previously circulated)

- a) **To approve the Asset Register for 23/24**

The Clerk advised that some of the purchase values had not been transferred to the 23/24 Asset Register. The document has now been updated and the current value column has been updated in line with the insurance schedule for 23/24.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE UPDATED ASSET REGISTER FOR 23/24 PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY SR. ALL IN FAVOUR

- b) **To receive and note the Internal Audit Report for 23/24**

Council noted the report and recommendations.

- c) **To approve the AGAR Annual Governance Statement 23/24**

The Clerk read out each statement and Council agreed to tick yes to all areas of internal financial control with the following exceptions:

Box 2: on-line payments had not been authorised by two signatories in line with Financial Regulations (arrangements now in place)

Box 5: the Business Risk Assessment document had not been considered and approved by the Council (see agenda item 2024/103 of this meeting)

Box 7: the Council had not acted upon all of the advice received by the Internal and External Auditors (See AGAR Response to Section 1 Report 23/24 for full details)

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 23/24 SUBJECT TO THE ABOVE.

PROPOSED BY LP; SECONDED BY JE. ALL IN FAVOUR

The Chair and Clerk/RFO signed the document which will be submitted to the External Auditors.

- d) **To approve the AGAR Accounting Statements 23/24 (prepared and signed by the Clerk/RFO)**

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 23/24

PROPOSED BY IS; SECONDED BY SR. ALL IN FAVOUR

The Chair signed the document which will be submitted to the External Auditors.

- e) **To approve the period of notice for the exercise of public rights 17 June to 26 July 24**

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE DATES AS ABOVE

PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY IS. ALL IN FAVOUR

2024/101 Accounts and Financial Information 24/25 (documents previously circulated)

- a) **To receive and sign the bank reconciliation to 31/05/2024**

Cllr J Bennett signed the bank reconciliation to 31/05/2024

- b) **To receive the Summary Receipts & Payments report to 31/05/2024 – received**

- c) **To approve the Schedule of Payments for June 2024 – see Appendix to the mins**

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE PAYMENTS

PROPOSED BY NM; SECONDED BY IS. ALL IN FAVOUR

- d) **To consider the one-off allocation of funding up to £500 to address any urgent outstanding maintenance issues within the parish**

Council agreed to allocate up to £500 for verge cutting at the bottom of Frost Lane and the Cad Road junction as the overgrowth is creating a highways hazard. The funding will be allocated from the Somerset Council devolved services ring-fenced fund for verge cutting.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE UP TO £500 FOR URGENT VERGE CUTTING
PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY JE. ALL IN FAVOUR**

2024/102 Copse Lane car park: to consider the application to Land Registry for full title of the land (currently possessory title)

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPLY FOR FULL TITLE FOR THE COPSE LANE CAR PARK LAND
PROPOSED BY JE; SECONDED BY NM. ALL IN FAVOUR**

The Clerk will also amend the contact details for the Land Registry title deeds.

ACTION: CLERK

2024/103 Risk Management

- a) **To consider for approval the draft Business Risk Management doc (previously circulated)**

The template has been provided by the Internal Auditor and updated by the Clerk.

Council agreed the following additions to the document:

Financials i) Payments – stipulate the annual review of the bank mandates as a control measure.

Financials iv) Cash reserves – stipulate review/Investment Strategy to preserve security of funds in line with FSCS.

Financials v) Contracts - stipulate the need to see copies of Risk Assessments and appropriate insurance documents as a control measure.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE DRAFT BUSINESS RISK MANAGEMENT DOC
SUBJECT TO THE ABOVE ADDITIONS**

PROPOSED BY SR; SECONDED BY NM. ALL IN FAVOUR

- b) **To consider arrangements for annual asset review procedure**

The Clerk advised that a system of annual asset review would be introduced with a documented review of all land and property assets. Any maintenance items with cost implications will be brought to the attention of the Full Council in line with Fin Regs. A Risk Assessment will be produced for each land asset and will be subject to annual review.

2024/104 Annual Cycle and policy review

- a) **To consider for approval the draft Annual Cycle including policy review (previously circulated)**

The draft Annual Cycle includes all Council business and a policy review cycle and aims to spread the workload across the year and ensure that Council complies with its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Council suggested that the grass cutting contract should be included for annual review in November and requested that the review of cemetery regulations be an agenda item for July.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE DRAFT ANNUAL CYCLE INCLUDING POLICY
REVIEW**

PROPOSED BY IS; SECONDED BY NM. ALL IN FAVOUR

- b) **Complaints procedure – review deferred July FC**

2024/105 Churchyard path: to consider the quotes received for the installation of a new path

Four contractors were approached for a quote in line with the project specification approved by the Council at the May meeting. Three quotes were received by email by the deadline of 6 June 2024 and circulated to all councillors for review. The Clerk had produced a Summary Report of quotes with names redacted for consideration at the meeting. Council approved the quote from Sibley Landscapes subject to agreement regarding the colour of the aggregate to be used and confirmation that the surface will be wheelchair friendly. The Clerk will also contact the contractor to ask if it is possible for councillors to view any similar work they have undertaken locally. The contractor has offered 1 July as a provisional start date.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE SIBLEY LANDSCAPES AS THE CONTRACTOR AT A PRICE OF
£13055 excl VAT**

Initial

PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY SR. MAJORITY IN FAVOUR. LP VOTED AGAINST.

ACTION: CLLR CLERK

Funding will be allocated from the Facilities & Amenities EMR.

2024/106 Recreational facilities

a) To review and approve the inspection regime for the playpark and MUGA and confirm arrangements for weekly visual checks

Cllr S Ripley has offered to undertake the weekly visual checks with support from other councillors. The Clerk will produce a suitable checklist to ensure a written record is kept for insurance purposes. Cllr S Ripley would like to attend the free Playground Inspection Awareness training available from the Somerset Playing Fields Association. The playpark and MUGA will continue to be inspected on a monthly basis and by a separate company on an annual basis.

ACTION: CLERK/CLLR S RIPLEY

b) To receive an update regarding general maintenance items highlighted in the monthly reports for the playpark and MUGA

A site visit was held at the play park in May with a representative from Elite Playground Inspections. Outstanding maintenance items were reviewed and prioritised. Councillors have already carried out some of the minor repairs and Elite will undertake dedicated equipment repairs. A local contractor has been asked to quote for repairs to the timber trail.

c) To receive an update regarding the request from Ilminster Football Club to use the sports pitch at the recreational field for training purposes

Ilminster Youth Football Club would like to train at Ilton Rec Field year-round, using the football pitch in the summer and the MUGA in the winter (1 hour on a Wednesday 6-7pm). There are lots of junior teams so the club needs lots of training pitches. Ilton youth are welcome to attend the age-related training sessions as appropriate. IYFC may carry out the white line marking of the pitch themselves. Currently the grass is too long for the pitch to be used for football. Village volunteers will be asked to carry out additional cuts of the grass, on behalf of the Parish Council, in line with the resolution passed at the May Full Council meeting.

2024/107 Project overview: to consider and approve the confirmed list of projects for 24/25

A Summary Report of projects had been previously circulated to councillors, highlighting projects identified during the consultation carried out in June 2023.

Rec consultation:

24/25 Project: Bike track – some preliminary research has been carried out by councillors. Council noted that the first step was to approve funding to engage a contractor/consultant to draw up a project specification. This will be an agenda item for July. Lead member: Cllr S Calvert

24/25 Project: Shelter/seating area – some preliminary research has been carried out by councillors. Council noted that the first step was to agree the specification for the shelter/seating area. This will be an agenda item for July. Lead members: Cllr S Calvert, Cllr A Gordon

Off-lead dog area – Council agreed not to proceed with this as feedback from other Councils suggests it is difficult to manage the dog fouling.

Skatepark – Council agreed not to proceed with this (June 23 minutes).

Facilities & Amenities consultation:

Bins – purchased & installed

Seating in village – Coronation bench purchased & installed

2024/25 Project: Village signs – some preliminary research has been carried out by councillors and quotes are available for Standing Stones. Council noted that the first step was to agree the specification and location for the signs in liaison with Somerset Council Highways. This will be an agenda item for July. Lead members: Cllr A Gordon, Cllr J Easterbrook

Flooding on Rec Field path – research is on-going with this project. Lead member: Cllr N Matravers

2024/108 Remembrance activities: to consider whether activities and events should be organised by the Parish Council

Council agreed to ask a village representative to organise the Remembrance activities and to ask Cllr B Vance if he would like to be involved on behalf of the Parish Council.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION FOR THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS: ITEM 19 AS IT IS A CONFIDENTIAL MATTER, ITEM 20 AS IT IS A COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE MATTER AND ITEM 21 AS IT IS A CONFIDENTIAL STAFFING MATTER (MINUTE REF 109-111)

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

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

2024/109 Code of Conduct complaint: to update Council regarding the outcome of a recent Code of Conduct complaint

A member of the public made a Code of Conduct complaint against a serving councillor in April 24. The Monitoring Officer has investigated the complaint and judged that it is not in the public interest to refer this complaint for a formal investigation. The Monitoring Officer has recommended that the councillor attend further training.

2024/110 Grass cutting contract: to review the scope of works within the existing grass cutting contract and consider the Clerk's report to address outstanding maintenance issues within the parish

- i) Council agreed that the following regular maintenance tasks were outstanding at the Rec Field:
- Strim and weed path surface (strim grass to edge of tarmac path and use certified amenity chemicals for weeding)
 - Spray edge of path as necessary to prevent further growth of grass onto the path (using certified amenity chemicals)
 - Strim banks in car park
 - Strim mud mound (near football pitch)
 - Weed MUGA surface (using certified amenity chemicals)

COUNCIL RESOLVED THAT THE CLERK SHOULD WRITE TO THE GRASS CUTTING CONTRACTOR TO REQUEST QUOTES FOR THE ADDITIONAL WORKS AT THE REC FIELD.

PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY SR. ALL IN FAVOUR

ACTION: CLERK

Funding will be allocated from the Green Space Maintenance budget. The Clerk will ensure that the contractor Method Statement, site-specific Risk Assessments and spray certification are all on file.

Council noted that the contractor had cut the road side hedge of Copse Lane car park as the overgrowth was causing a hazard on the footpath. The contractor will not charge extra for this work but the cutting of the internal hedge will not now fall within the scope of the contract for 2024/25.

- ii) Council agreed that the following areas in the village were overgrown:
- Bus shelter
 - Merryfield Lane
 - Spurwells
 - Church Road

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO ORGANISE VOLUNTEER WORKING PARTIES AS APPROPRIATE TO HELP OUT WITH VILLAGE MAINTENANCE.

PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY NM. MAJORITY IN FAVOUR. LP VOTED AGAINST.

Cllr J Bennett and Cllr N Matravers will coordinate the volunteer working parties. A local resident has offered to help out with Risk Assessments necessary for insurance purposes. The Clerk will clarify when the Council equipment was last serviced.

Initial

The Clerk left the meeting at this point as councillors would be discussing the contractual terms of her employment.

2024/111 Employment matters

- a) **To consider the draft Clerk/RFO employment contract for approval and signing**
COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE CLERK/RFO EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT
AMENDMENT NOTED 16/7/24 SUBJECT TO RECEIVING THE JOB DESCRIPTION
PROPOSED BY LP; SECONDED BY JB. ALL IN FAVOUR

- b) **To consider whether the Clerk/RFO additional hours worked in May to be paid or taken as TOIL**
The Clerk had previously circulated a time sheet indicating 34 additional hours worked in May due to the additional work created by extra meetings and end of year procedures and audit requirements.
COUNCIL RESOLVED TO PAY THE CLERK FOR THE ADDITIONAL HOURS WORKED IN MAY
PROPOSED BY LP; SECONDED BY JB. ALL IN FAVOUR

Date of next meeting:

Parish Council Meeting: Tuesday 16 July at 6.30pm at Merryfield Hall

The meeting closed at 9.25pm

Signed

Date

Initial