

**Minutes of the Meeting of Ilton Parish Council held in Merryfield Hall on
Tuesday 14 January 2025 at 6.30pm.**

Present: Cllrs: J Bennett (Chair), J Easterbrook, A Pidgeon, L Pike, S Ripley, B Vance

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

2025/1 Apologies and reasons for absence: Cllr A Gordon (prior commitment), Cllr N Matravers (prior commitment) and Cllr I Sherwood (personal reasons).

2025/2 Declarations of Interest: Cllr J Easterbrook declared an interest in agenda item 7b)/minute ref: 2025/7b) as she is the applicant of the Planning application.

2025/3 Items to be dealt with after the public, including the press have been excluded: Agenda item 12)/minute ref: 2025/12) will be held in closed session as the Council will be discussing the terms of a contract.

2025/4 Public Participation

Public: A local resident wrote to Somerset Council Highways Department and Planning Department in November 2024, to request a speed hump where St Katherine's Close joins St Peter's Close. The original Highways report suggested that traffic calming measures would only be necessary if the stretch of road was longer than 70 metres. The local resident maintains the stretch of road is 130 metres. The local resident highlighted the fact that there has still been no response from SC officers.

Council: The Clerk has also contacted SC regarding this matter and will chase a response from the Highways Department in order to clarify the requirement for traffic calming measures in this location. Cllr J Roundell Greene asked to be copied into any correspondence.

Public: There are lots of willing volunteers within the village who would like to help out with litter picking. Does the Parish Council need to allocate funding in the budget to pay someone to pick up the litter?

Council: This matter will be reviewed as part of the budget setting process.

Public: I have looked at the draft budget for 2025/26 and the forecast figures for 2024/25 show £22,298 expenditure on Facilities & Amenities. Please can you clarify this expenditure?

Council: The Clerk reported that the Facilities & Amenities cost code is an Ear Marked Reserve EMR and not part of core budget expenditure. The £22,298 represents expenditure on the installation of the new churchyard footpath, repair of play park equipment, new bus shelter roof and payments towards green space maintenance. The grant to the Village Hall towards the cost of the new boiler was also funded out of this EMR to avoid using up all of the community grant allocation in the core budget for 2024/25.

The Clerk will send the local resident a copy of the EMR Report up to January 2025.

2025/5 Somerset Council Councillor Report

Cllr Jo Roundell Greene reported as follows:

- SC is working towards setting a budget in February for 2025/26. The workforce reduction programme is ongoing with the new staff structure to be implemented in April 2025.
- LCN Highways Working Group - Cllr Roundell Greene attended the recent LCN Highways Working Group meeting and highlighted the need for clear written, guidelines for Parish Councils planning to undertake maintenance works on SC land or assets. Clarification is needed regarding the use of external contractors, the requirement for Chapter 8 training and the insurance implications when Parish Councils are carrying out work on SC land or assets.

2025/6 Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 10 December 2024: to approve the minutes as a true record & consider any matters arising

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

2025/7 Planning Applications – to receive any planning applications since the last meeting

- a) **24/02959/HOU at Little Haven, Frost Lane, Ilton – Erect ground floor extension and enlarge dormer window**

**COUNCIL RESOLVED NO OBJECTIONS TO THIS APPLICATION
PROPOSED BY SR; SECONDED BY LP. ALL IN FAVOUR.**

Cllr J Easterbrook declared an interest and left the meeting for the next agenda item as she is the applicant.

- b) **24/02937/LBC at Drakes Farmhouse, Ilton, Ilminster - Due to insufficient supply of thatch required to complete project, applicant seeks permission to replace wheat reed thatch with outer layer of water reed on front elevation roof, retaining wheat reed under straw**

**COUNCIL RESOLVED NO OBJECTIONS TO THIS APPLICATION
PROPOSED BY SR; SECONDED BY LP. ALL IN FAVOUR.**

2025/8 Council meeting date change for 2025/26 – to consider changing the monthly Parish Council meeting from the second Tuesday of the month

A request has been received from existing councillors to change the date for the monthly Parish Council meetings.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO CHANGE THE MEETING DATE TO THE FOURTH TUESDAY OF THE MONTH FROM APRIL 2025
PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY AP. ALL IN FAVOUR**

2025/9 Accounts and Financial Information 24/25 (documents previously circulated)

- a) **Bank reconciliation to 31/12/2024 – to receive and sign**

Cllr J Bennett signed the bank reconciliation to 31/12/2024

- b) **Summary Receipts & Payments report to 31/12/2024 – received**

- c) **Schedule of Payments for January 2025 – to consider for approval (see Appendix to the mins)**

Council noted two additional payments for Bradfords Building Supplies for maintenance resources £22.58 and £6.60 and a reimbursement for Cllr J Easterbrook of £10 as a donation to Ilminster Young Farmers for the disposal of the Christmas Tree.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE PAYMENTS FOR JANUARY
PROPOSED BY SR; SECONDED BY JE. 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) **Citizens Advice Somerset – to consider request for donation towards service costs**

CAS helped 12 residents of Ilton from April to Sept 2024. Cllr Bennett suggested she would support a donation if CAS ran a surgery from the Village Hall. However, the advice service is operated primarily by email or phone with opportunities to speak to an advisor in person only available at Community Access points in the larger Somerset towns.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED NOT TO MAKE A DONATION TOWARDS SERVICE COSTS
PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY AP. FOUR VOTES IN FAVOUR.
ONE VOTE ABSTAINING AND ONE VOTE AGAINST**

- e) **Internal Auditor – to consider appointment for 2024/25**

Council agreed to obtain three quotes. This will be an agenda item for approval in February.

ACTION: CLERK

2025/10 Budget 2025/26

- a) **Budget for 2025/26 – to consider for approval**

Initial

- **Litter picking** - further to minute ref 2024/220 Council reiterated that there would continue to be an allocation in the budget to pay someone for litter picking in the amenity areas. Council welcomes the involvement of village volunteers if they would like to help out with litter picking.
- **Football pitch maintenance** - at the Chairman's discretion, agenda item 14 f) was brought forward and included in the discussion of the budget.
Council agreed to cancel one of the portable toilets on hire from Eagle Plant as the representative from Ilminster Youth Football Club has advised that the provision of one portable toilet is sufficient at the Rec Field.
Cllr Vance will research grass cutting equipment to see if there is anything better suited to the maintenance of the football pitch.
Council agreed that the budget allocations of £4369 in Green Space Maintenance and £2210 in Rec Field Facilities are sufficient to meet the maintenance needs of the football pitch.
- **Grass cutting** – the budget allocation for the grass cutting contractor is less than last year because the allocation for last year included more than the contract price.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE BUDGET FOR 2025/26
PROPOSED BY BV; SECONDED BY AP. ALL IN FAVOUR**

b) Precept request for 2025/26 – to approve

The budget includes a precept allocation of £55,000 which is consistent with last year and equates to £159.55 for a Band D property.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE £55,000 FOR THE PRECEPT FOR 2025/26
PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY JE. ALL IN FAVOUR**

Members of the public left the meeting.

2025/11 Environment Matters

a) Repairs to bench in Merryfield Lane – to review the revised specification of works

Council agreed to remove the planter and the slabs, to repair the bench and to replace the slabs with grass.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO CARRY OUT THE WORKS AS DETAILED ABOVE
PROPOSED BY BV; SECONDED BY LP. ALL IN FAVOUR**

Discussion took place regarding moving the bin to the other side of the road but Council noted that SC has just issued a licence for the bin in this location.

The Clerk will obtain quotes for removing the planter and the slabs.

ACTION: CLERK

b) Bin emptying for 2025/26 – to consider costs from Somerset Council

A letter has been received from SC advising that a provisional charge has been set of £6.50 +VAT for the emptying of any bin on land that is not owned by SC. These charges are due to be introduced from 1 April 2025. The Council awaits further information from SC.

c) Spray pavements – to receive an update regarding Kier costs and consider works for approval

The Council is still awaiting confirmation from Kier of the costs of spraying.

d) Rec ditch clearance – to agree specification of works for this financial year

A site visit has been scheduled with Trust Green, the Management Company for Hawthorne Gardens, in order to discuss the pond and related drainage issues. Rec ditch clearance will be an agenda item for February.

e) Ilminster Area Resilience Group – to receive an update and consider whether Ilton Parish Council wishes to be involved with this group

Council agreed not to join the resilience group as no councillor was able to commit to attend all of the meetings and training sessions. The Parish Council will continue to address any flooding issues at a very local level with the support of the community.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED NOT TO JOIN ILMINSTER AREA RESILIENCE GROUP
PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY AP. ALL IN FAVOUR**

f) Volunteer works – to agree volunteer works for January

There will be volunteer working parties in the churchyard and the playpark and the football pitch will be cut when the ground conditions allow. Councillors are also planning a good sort out of the containers at the Rec Field.

At the Chairman's discretion, the next agenda item was deferred to the end of the meeting.

2025/12 Grass cutting contract – to receive an update regarding contract negotiations for 25/26

2025/13 Hedge cutting contract – to consider quotes for 25/26

The Clerk has requested three quotes but one quote is pending. Quotes for the full hedge cutting contract will be considered at the February meeting.

Council agreed to fund the hedge cutting at Copse Lane car park as priority works as this is now very overgrown.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE £150 FOR HEDGE CUTTING AT COPSE LANE CAR PARK WITH A TRACTOR AND FLAIL
PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY AP. ALL IN FAVOUR**

2025/14 Recreational facilities

a) Tree planting at Rec Field – to receive an update and consider proposals

Council is in agreement that only one copse should be established and four specimen trees at the Rec Field. The Clerk will contact the SC Tree Strategist to see if he is available to help out with the tree planting. Village volunteers could also help out with tree planting and tree care. **ACTION: CLERK**

b) MUGA electrical supply – to receive an update and consider quotes

Quotes are still pending for the electrical works at the MUGA. Cllr Vance will chase up outstanding quotes. **ACTION: CLLR B VANCE**

Council agreed to fund the safety inspection of the electrical installation as priority works as the inspection is very overdue.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE UP TO £400 FOR THE SAFETY INSPECTION OF THE ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION AT THE MUGA
PROPOSED BY BV; SECONDED BY LP. ALL IN FAVOUR**

c) Rec Field light – to consider quotes for the light at the entrance to the field

A light is required at the entrance to the field to enable safe access. The contractor to advise regarding a suitable light for this public area, taking into consideration access to the existing power source. This matter will be deferred again to February Full Council, pending quotes.

d) MUGA Conditions of Hire – to consider update in line with Football Pitch Conditions of Hire

Council agreed to remove clause 2.6 (hirer to receive credit for session in the event of cancellation due to heavy snow/rain) from the MUGA Conditions of Hire (v2/2019) in order to be consistent with the Football Pitch Conditions of Hire approved Dec 2024. Council also noted that clause 2.4 will now be strictly adhered to and that all hirers will need to provide 24 hours' notice of cancellation or they will be charged as normal.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO REMOVE CLAUSE 2.6 FROM THE MUGA CONDITIONS OF HIRE
PROPOSED BY SR; SECONDED BY BV. ALL IN FAVOUR**

e) Bike track at Copse Lane play park – to consider health and safety action required

The quarterly safety inspection in December, highlighted the bike track as high risk. Local children have been digging holes in the earth mounds throughout the last year which has rendered the bike track hazardous. The Council has filled the holes in on several occasions and has also installed new signage to discourage any modifications to the layout of the track. The annual safety inspection in July 2024 also highlighted the situation as medium risk. Council agreed that it was not practical to keep filling the holes and that the only way to ensure the safety of the site was to flatten the earth mounds and remove the excess earth. The Clerk will obtain quotes for review at the February meeting.

ACTION: CLERK

f) Football pitch maintenance – to agree maintenance schedule and consider associated costs including equipment costs and hire of toilets

Initial

See above – minute ref 2025/10a)

2025/15 Projects for 24/25

a) Village signs – to receive an update

SC Highways Officer has recommended amendments to the location of the sign at Old Way. The Clerk will request definitive location maps for all three proposed signs. The SC Safety Audit of the proposals is in progress. Council agreed to defer contacting the SC Planning Team for advice pending the results of the Safety Audit.

b) Bike track at Rec Field – to receive an update regarding arrangements for consultation with the village children

The Council now has two design proposals and has organised two consultation sessions for the village children in January at the Village Hall. There will also be a leaflet drop to every household with children in the village in advance of the consultation sessions. Notices will be displayed at the school, on village noticeboards and on the Council’s website and Face Book pages.

ACTION: CLLR J BENNETT

**THE COUNCIL RESOLVED TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION FOR AGENDA ITEM 12/MINUTE REF: 2025/12 (DEFERRED TO THE END OF THE MEETING) AS THE ITEM RELATES TO CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS
PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY SR. ALL IN FAVOUR**

2025/12 Grass cutting contract – to receive an update regarding contract negotiations for 25/26

The Clerk sent the revised contract proposals for 25/26 to the contractor in December and is still awaiting feedback.

Council agreed to take advice from SALC regarding the status of the contract and clarification of the terms.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO TAKE ADVICE FROM SALC REGARDING THE STATUS OF THE CONTRACT AND CLARIFICATION OF THE TERMS
PROPOSED BY AP; SECONDED BY SR. ALL IN FAVOUR**

Date of next meeting:

Parish Council Meeting: Tuesday 11 Feb 2025 at 6.30pm at Merryfield Hall

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

Signed

Date

Initial