

# ILTON PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF ILTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 27<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2026 AT MERRYFIELD HALL, ILTON (6.30pm to 8.52pm)

### PRESENT:

Cllr. J Bennett (Chair)  
Cllr. A Pidgeon  
Cllr. J Easterbrook  
Cllr. I Sherwood  
Cllr. B Vance  
Cllr. N Matravers  
Cllr. S Ripley  
Cllr. A Gordon  
Mr T Heath (Clerk)  
10 members of the public

### 2025/221 CHAIRMANS OPENING REMARKS

Address to Members - It's good to see us all gathered here again after the Christmas break—though, I'm sure many of us are wondering if we truly had a break at all! As we begin this new year, it's hard to believe we are approaching our final year in office. From the very start, our commitment has been to ensure that we leave behind a well-maintained village, with services that will remain fully functional and easy to manage into the future.

I am pleased to report that we are approximately 90% finished with our work on the Churchyard, Cemetery, Green, and Brook Green. The only remaining major tasks are the Rec and Playpark projects, and I am confident that, by focusing our efforts this year, we can see these through to completion.

Both the committee and our Clerks have demonstrated exceptional dedication over the past three years, bringing us to this point. With continued teamwork, I am optimistic that all our plans will come to fruition during this final year.

The Churchyard now requires only routine mowing and strimming, except for a far corner which may still need some assistance from volunteers this summer. Path maintenance is now scheduled for every two years, which should suffice for upkeep. Cemetery records are nearly complete, and we have gained clarity on the ownership process regarding grave spaces. In the coming months, the cemetery grounds will be levelled, simplifying future maintenance, and a new hedge will be planted to enhance the area.

At Brook Green, bank protection work will be completed within the next month, and the village green is in good condition. The playpark has seen significant improvements compared to last year. This spring, we will carry out the necessary maintenance and install new play equipment, finalizing this project. For the Rec, the car park and shelters are scheduled for completion by summer.

All of our policies are now up to date, including the newly established communication policy. Residents can find information posted on the notice board, and a comprehensive update was published in the Messenger. Ongoing updates will continue to keep everyone informed. The Clerk now manages our Facebook page, ensuring that control remains within the Parish Council as it is handed from Clerk to Clerk, rather than resident to resident. Although our plan was to quietly launch the new Facebook page and officially announce it after this meeting, the information is now available and accessible to all. Additionally, our website is regularly maintained, containing all relevant and current information for residents.

It is clear that we have another busy year ahead. I look forward to the continued collaboration and hard work of this team as we strive to complete our remaining projects and serve our community in 2026.

#### **2025/222 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

#### **2025/223 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS**

No declarations of interest in agenda items were tabled.

#### **2025/224 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Members unanimously **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the minutes of the Extra Ordinary meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

**Proposed Cllr. Gordon**

**Seconded Cllr. Pidgeon**

#### **2025/225 PUBLIC SESSION**

A Member of the Public (MoP) put forward several suggestions for Council's consideration, including:

- The creation of a fenced dog-exercise area on the recreation field
- The potential sale of the land at Copse Lane to a developer for the provision of a local shop
- Laying hardstanding on the Copse Lane land for use as a car park

These suggestions were noted.

A MoP requested more detailed information regarding the 2026/2027 budget. This will be provided.

A MoP raised safety concerns about the condition of the road leading to the cemetery and recreation field. The Chair confirmed that a site visit with Abri, owners of the land, has been arranged for **10 February 2026** to discuss this and other issues. A MoP raised concerns about flooding along the path within the recreation field.

#### **2025/226 PARISH COUNCIL SURGERY**

No Members of the Public attended the session.

#### **2025/227 SOMERSET COUNCILLOR REPORT**

No Somerset Councillor present to report.

**2025/228 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

a) The bank reconciliation statement, dated 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025 was unanimously **APPROVED**.

**Proposed Cllr. Pidgeon**

**Seconded Cllr. Sherwood**

b) Members unanimously **APPROVED** a list of payments, detailed below

Ilton Memorial Hall <sup>1</sup>	Grant	£280.00
Bathand Wells School Trust <sup>1</sup>	Grant	£800.00
Scribe <sup>1</sup>	Cemetery (Jan)	£31.20
Scribe	Cemetery (Feb)	£31.20
Bradfords <sup>1</sup>	Merryfield Bench	£18.22
Ilminster Hardware <sup>1</sup>	Cemetery	£14.98
Macs Printing <sup>1</sup>	Newsletter	£153.00
Safety Signs and Notices <sup>1</sup>	Copse Lane Land	£62.39
Elite Playgrounds <sup>1</sup>	Play Area Inspection	£114.00
Premier Landscaping <sup>1</sup>	Ranger Service (Dec)	£400.00
Lloyds Bank <sup>1</sup>	Service Charge (Dec)	£4.25
Lloyds Bank <sup>1</sup>	Service Charge (Jan)	£4.25
Valda Energy <sup>1</sup>	Electricity (Dec)	£27.32
Valda Energy <sup>1</sup>	Electricity (Jan)	£24.78
Mr T M Heath <sup>1</sup>	Clerk/RFO (Dec)	£xxx.xx
HMRC <sup>1</sup>	PAYE (Dec)	£325.75
Mr T M Heath	Clerk/RFO (Jan)	£xxx.xx
HMRC	PAYE (Jan)	£326.18
Mr T M Heath	Expenses (inc. milage)	£67.53
Greenheart Tree Surgery	Wellingtonia Tree	£1,950.00
Premier Landscaping	Ranger Service (Jan)	£400.00
Merryfield Hall	Room Hire	£308.00

<sup>1</sup> Retrospective approval due to no meeting in December 2025

**Proposed Cllr. Ripley**

**Seconded Cllr. Easterbrook**

Council **NOTED** receipts for December 2025, detailed below

Somerset Council	2025 CIL	£5970.26
Lloyds Bank	Interest	£56.96
Ilminster Youth Football	Hire of pitch	£173.00
Ilminster Walking Football	Hire of MUGA	£70.00

c) Members **NOTED** receipt of £5970.26 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and **AGREED** to add to EMR prior to drawdown for the Hamstone project.

d) Council **NOTED** receipt of the RFO report and accounting statement (APPENDIX A) for period ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025.

**2025/229 CEMETERY**

a) Members **APPROVED** expenditure of £234.98 (exc. VAT) for purchase of beech hedging roots to be planted as a continuation hedge in the cemetery. Work to be delivered by the volunteer group.

**Proposed Cllr. Matravers**

**Seconded Cllr. Gordon**

b) The Clerk reported he has been progressing the digitisation of the cemetery records and the creation of a detailed cemetery map on behalf of the Council. This work is now approximately 80% complete. A range of historic paper records has been used to support the process; however, there are a small number of cases where the available information does not fully reconcile. These will require further investigation before the project can be finalised.

The digitisation work has been carried out using standard Microsoft software. As a result, the Council may shortly be in a position to consider cancelling its Scribe cemetery subscription, generating an annual saving of approximately £400.

Once the project is complete, the Clerk will seek Council's authority to archive the paper records, with the exception of the Exclusive Rights of Burial register, which must continue to be retained by the Clerk.

In addition, the Clerk has been assisting a family with the transfer of ownership of a burial plot, working with Wakley's and the executors to ensure the legal authority is in place for the interment of a relative's ashes. This process has involved tracing and verifying records spanning three generations of the family. Cllr. Vance suggested that the Council consider issuing guidance to plot holders outlining the administrative difficulties and potential delays involved in transferring ownership following the death of a plot holder.

**2025/230 2026/2027 BUDGET AND PRECEPT**

Council unanimously **APPROVED** the 2026/2027 budget, including receipts and payments, general and earmarked reserves as set out below;

Payments (expenditure)	£89,943
Receipts (income)	£14,600
General Reserves	£29,124
Earmarked Reserves	£132,289

Details of projects, tasks and services to be delivered during 2026/2027 were presented. These include:

- New website to improve community engagement and ease of use
- Enhanced and more secure IT system
- Recreation field ditches
- Churchyard path maintenance
- Enhanced recreation field land maintenance
- French drains
- Complete soil removal – recreation field
- Brook Green information board
- Devolution from somerset council – bins
- Grounds contract
- Ranger service
- Volunteer group
- Cemetery management
- Churchyard maintenance

- Brook Green land management
- Copse Lane land maintenance
- Play area management
- Hedge cutting
- Community grants

**Proposed Cllr. Pidgeon**

**Seconded Cllr. Sherwood**

Council unanimously **APPROVED** the 2026/2027 Precept request of £56,462.

This represents:

- an **increase of 2.66%** compared with the 2025/2026 Precept, and
- a **reduction of 5.03%** on the Band D tax base.

**Proposed Cllr. Ripley**

**Seconded Cllr. Easterbrook**

### **2025/231 RECREATION FIELD CAR PARK RISK ASSESSMENT**

Cllr. Pidgeon presented the findings of the recent risk review of the recreation field car park. Cllr. Vance requested that the containers and the toilet be included within the risk assessment. It was **AGREED** that these items would be assessed separately, as required. The tabled assessment and the associated control measures were **APPROVED** by Council (seven votes to one).

**Proposed Cllr. Pidgeon**

**Seconded Cllr. Gordon**

### **2025/232 TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**

#### **a) Recreation Field**

Council **APPROVED** (seven votes to one) proceeding, in line with the adopted Financial Regulations, to obtain estimates, quotes and tenders for project works in the Recreation Field car park. Cllr. Vance recommended that Council engage a design specialist; this recommendation was not supported.

**Proposed Cllr. Gordon**

**Seconded Cllr. Sherwood**

#### **b) Play Area**

Cllr. Easterbrook updated Council on the development of a proposal to enhance the play area and confirmed that safety-related maintenance tasks remain on schedule for completion in March 2026.

#### **c) Speed Watch**

Cllr. Vance reported that the Local Community Network meeting scheduled for January 2026 had been cancelled; therefore, no update was available.

#### **d) Brook Green Information Board**

Council **AGREED** to form a short-term task and finish group to prepare a design, obtain costings and make recommendations back to Council at a future meeting. The membership of the group to consist of Cllrs. Bennett and Matravers.

e) **Closed Churchyard**

Council **AGREED** to establish a short-term task and finish group to work with the Church on preparing a revised long-term maintenance agreement, to be brought back to Council for consideration. The group will comprise Cllrs. Vance and Gordon.

f) **Grit Bins**

Council **AGREED** to form a short-term task and finish group to engage with residents on the need, identify locations, administration and associated costs regarding the supply and purchase of grit bins. The membership of the group to consist of Cllrs. Vance and Easterbrook.

**2025/233 PROJECT/TASK UPDATES (2025/2026)**

Cllr. Gordon reported plans are in place to lay the three Hamstones by the end of February 2026 and place Hamstone boulders in Brook Green to a similar timescale. Cllr. Bennett stated the safety related work on a Wellingtonia tree in the Churchyard had been satisfactorily completed.

Cllr. Easterbrook reported scheduled play area maintenance tasks are on schedule for March 2026.

**2025/234 STAFFING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members unanimously **APPROVED** a revised set of Terms of Reference for the Staffing Committee which will be published on the Council's website.

**Proposed Cllr. Gordon**

**Seconded Cllr. Vance**

**2025/235 PLANNING**

Members sanctioned to **SUPPORT** planning application **26/00075/LBC**, prepare and repaint in the same colour the external front railings and gates at The Old Chapel, Church Road, Ilton, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 9EY.

Members **NOTED** the current position of applications determined since the last meeting and those awaiting determination:

**25/02309/HOU**

Old Leggs Farm, Podgers Lane, Ilton, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 9HE

Application to extend the two chimneys to minimum 1800mm above the level of the ridge. Conditions Discharged

**25/02105/LBC**

Ye Olde Well Cottage, Cad Road, Ilton Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 9HF

Internal remedial works to floor, walls and joinery (Implemented). Application Permitted with Conditions.

**23/00404/FUL**

The Stables, Ashford Old Farm, Isle Abbotts Road, Ilton, Ilminster, Somerset TA19 9ED Change of Use of land to a travelling caravan site consisting of 3 pitches each containing 1 mobile home, 1 touring caravan, 1 utility dayroom and associated works (partly retrospective). Awaiting decision

**17/01068/AGN**

Land At Ilford Farm, Frost Lane, Ilton, Ilminster, Somerset

Notification of intent to erect a general-purpose agricultural building. Awaiting decision

## **2025/236 COMMUNITY AND OPERATIONS**

Cllr. Pidgeon reported limited work had been undertaken due to the weather. However, some general tiding tasks had been undertaken.

## **2025/237 CORRESPONDENCE**

No correspondence received that required a decision from Council

The Clerk reported on recent engagement with key stakeholders

### **Ilton Cricket Club**

A further meeting has taken place with the Chair of the Cricket Club, with a shared focus on strengthening a positive and constructive working relationship. Several matters were discussed during the meeting. The Parish Council now awaits a formal request from the Club regarding the proposed use of the land at Copse Lane as a car park during the 2026 season. Once received, this request will be presented to Council for consideration.

### **Somerset Council**

A number of matters raised by both the Parish Council and residents have been communicated to Somerset Council. It is becoming increasingly difficult to secure satisfactory outcomes. For example, the Clerk challenged an invoice relating to bin emptying, but despite three follow-up emails the matter remains in abeyance.

### **Abri**

The Clerk reported that repeated attempts had been made over several months to secure a site visit from an Abri area manager. A date has now been confirmed for **10th February**, when the Chair will meet with Abri to discuss the condition of the road leading to the recreation field car park and the overgrown brambles bordering the play area.

## **2025/238 COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION**

The date of the next full Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

## **2025/239 CONFIDENTIAL SESSION**

Members passed a resolution to exclude the press and public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 from the remainder of the meeting to discuss staff in confidence matters

### **Proposed Cllr. Bennett**

### **Seconded Cllr. Vance**

Members **NOTED** the resignation of Mr Terry Heath as Clerk. The Chair of the Staffing Committee proposed that Council split the Clerk and RFO roles and appoint two employees accordingly. Mr Heath confirmed his willingness to continue in the RFO position. Council agreed to this approach and **AUTHORISED** advertising, through various forums, for the vacant position of Clerk (Administrator). Mr Heath agreed to remain in post until such times as a new Clerk has been appointed.

**Appendix A – Accounting Statement as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025**

		£
1	Lloyds Current Account	9,220.07
2	Lloyds Instant Access Account	62,884.15
3	Hinkley and Rugby Building Society	50,345.62
4	Redwoods Bank	80,000.00
5	Outstanding Payments	0.00
<b>Total as Cashbook</b>		<b>202,449.84</b>
 <b>Less Ringfenced Lines</b>		
6	General Reserve	27,742.02
7	Rec Field Development Project	97,045.28
8	Play Area Refurbishment of existing Equipment	3,973.01
9	Play Area Procurement of new Equipment	12,874.21
10	Asset Maintenance/Refurbishment (non play area)	4,800.00
11	Procurement of new Assets (non play area)	11,888.00
12	CIL	4,212.18
13	Legal Cost Provision	5,000.00
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>167,534.70</b>
 <b>Working Capital</b>		
		<b>34,915.14</b>
14	2025/2026 Expenditure Budget	77,872.86
15	2025/2026 Expenditure	50,616.87
<b>Remaining 2025/2026 Budget</b>		<b>27,255.99</b>
16	2025/2026 Receipt Budget	74,390.09
17	2025/2026 Receipts	82,049.24
<b>Receipts in Excess of Budget</b>		<b>7,659.15</b>
 <b>Unallocated Funds</b>		<b>0.00</b>

Approved by:

Date: