

ILTON PARISH COUNCIL

COVID - 19 EMERGENCY

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for Ilton held by remote connection using Zoom on

Tuesday 4th May 2021 at 7.30 p.m.

Residents were invited to attend the remote meeting using Zoom. In order to attend the meeting a resident will need to download Zoom and to contact the Clerk prior to the time of the meeting for joining instructions.

It was noted that the Annual Parish Meeting 2020 was cancelled due to the Covid Pandemic.

Attendance and Apologies

Those present by video link:

Mr I Sherwood (Chair Ilton Parish Council)
Mrs J Bennett (Councillor)
Mrs M Bullock (Councillor)
Mrs J Easterbrook (Councillor)
Mrs S Hill (Councillor)
Mr G Mackenzie-Green (Councillor)
Mr D Mico (Councillor)
Mr A Dnce (County Councillor)
Mrs S Morley (Clerk)

Apologies

Mr M Cavill (District Councillor)

In Attendance

1 member of the public

Those present by phone:

Mrs R Burt (Vice Chair Ilton Parish Council)

1. Report of the Chairman of Ilton Parish Council for 2020/21

This year has been a very difficult one because of the COVID pandemic and the total lockdown which started at the end of March 2020. Our last face to face meeting was on 10th March. Since then all meetings have been conducted via Zoom.

March and April 2020 were extremely challenging. Arrangements had to be made to hold our meetings on Zoom and to ensure the public had access to those meetings. Several parish councillors did not have access to Zoom and provision was made for them to join by telephone link. Notwithstanding all the problems, the parish council has been able to continue its business on Zoom with the occasional informal meeting on the Playing Field when regulations allowed.

During the first lockdown people in the village pulled together to ensure that shopping and prescriptions were delivered to those residents unable to shop for themselves. Particular thanks go to Councillor Jacqueline Bennett for organising help and for drafting and distributing a leaflet to all residents to let them know the situation and how to arrange help, and to Councillor Grahame Mackenzie-Green who, along with others, volunteered to collect and deliver prescriptions. Jacqueline distributed a second leaflet during the second lockdown to ensure residents could access the help they needed.

At the beginning of the lockdown the grass cutting teams were furloughed. Volunteers in the village cut the grass in the Cemetery and another contractor was asked to cut the Playing Field. Thanks go to all those who volunteered to help during this difficult time.

In July councillors voted to take all grass cutting in-house and to buy the equipment necessary to do this. Councillors Grahame Mackenzie-Green, Danny Mico, and Guy Danvers volunteered to head a team of volunteers from the village to cut the grass and work began to source the equipment. The large blue container was moved to a more accessible position in the car park and painted dark green to blend in with the surroundings. Councillors fitted it

with shelving and Councillor Jan Easterbrook's husband, who is an electrician, did the work of providing electricity. All the grass in the village is now being cut by councillors and other volunteers and we thank them for all their hard work.

Work was done in July on the mature lime tree in the Churchyard. Work is planned on the Wellingtonia in the Churchyard. The two large cypress trees at the entrance to the Cemetery had become overpowering and were removed in September. Two flowering cherry trees were planted a little way into the Cemetery which should look lovely as they mature. Thanks go to Councillor Searon Hill for sourcing and ordering the cherry trees.

The perimeter path around the Playing Field was begun at the end of September. Councillors decided to go for a tarmac path rather than the compacted gravel previously agreed. Tarmac is a more expensive option but it will be much more durable and make the Field more accessible for people in wheel chairs, with motorised buggies or push chairs. Due to the bad weather which started early in October, work was put on hold until the Spring. The path should be finished by the summer.

The new football pitch was signed off by the project manager in October despite some initial problems. The pitch has been seeded and should be ready for playing by this summer.

Bulbs were planted on the Playing Field by councillors and volunteers in October and some trees have also been planted around the Field. More are planned. Thanks go to those who turned out on a windy October morning to do the planting and to Councillor Searon Hill who organised the bulbs and trees.

Picnic benches are ready to be sited on the Field and 4 new benches are being delivered this week.

The idea of a skate park in the Field was discussed early last year and during the year initial enquiries were made to a number of companies. In December councillors voted to ask the company Maverick to continue the project. A consultation of all residents of Ilton was held by questionnaire in early 2021 and the results were very favourable. 415 forms were delivered and 258 received back. 217 were in favour of the skate park, 24 against and 17 were left blank. On the basis of the positive response, councillors voted in March 2021 to continue with Maverick's design at an approximate cost of £150,000 and to authorise £75,000 of the money given to Ilton by the Warren Trust to part fund the skate park. The remaining money will come from grants. Thanks go to Councillors Danny Mico for liaising with Maverick and to Grahame Mackenzie-Green and Jacqueline Bennett for organising the questionnaire. The next step is to agree the final design and submit a planning application. After this, fund raising will start.

In the autumn a 'tommy' was ordered from The Royal British Legion and set up on the Village Green for Remembrance Day. Another 2 'tommies' were cut from board and painted black. Plans are ongoing to provide a memorial for the Village which can be set on the Village Green each year. A donation of £2,000 has been promised by the developers of the new houses by the Playing Field which will almost cover the cost of the memorial. Thanks go to all the councillors involved with this project.

In December a Christmas tree covered with lights cheered up the Village Green. This is now a regular feature of Christmas and a permanent hole has been made for the tree. Thanks go to Councillor Jan Easterbrook for organising the tree and lights.

Also in December a Santa's Sleigh was built using wood kindly donated by Mr Andy Leary of Bespoke Kitchen and Shop Fitting at Ilton Business Park. On Christmas Eve the Sleigh, painted bright red, toured the village to wish everyone a Happy Christmas. It is planned to use the Sleigh each year. Thanks to everyone who helped with this fantastic idea to brighten everyone's Christmas.

The parish council has continued to cover the cost of printing the Merryfield Messenger. A grant of £100 was given to the Cricket Club towards the cost of disabled toilets and other facilities.

In March this year Elaine Simpson agreed to take over the planter on the corner of Merryfield Lane and thanks go to Elaine for her help.

There have been many planning applications during the year, which now all come digitally, which councillors have considered, with Councillor Rosemary Burt taking the lead on applications. Most applications are fairly straightforward but the application for a number of new houses behind St Peters Close has been contentious and is now due to go the Area Committee for consideration. This has been postponed several times. Thanks go to Rosemary for her work on planning, and also her oversight of Highways matters, particularly along Cad Road.

Councillors Jacqueline Bennett and Ian Sherwood have been walking the parish footpaths. Councillors have discussed whether it will be possible to lobby Highways to get the footpaths to Ilminster made safe and walkable by building an underpass or a bridge across the A303.

Councillor Marie Bullock has taken responsibility for overseeing the Play Park and thanks go to her for her vigilance in ensuring everything is safe and maintained.

The A358 upgrade is going ahead and Councillor Ian Sherwood has pressed Highways for a second exit/entrance onto the upgraded A358. At present only one is planned.

Flytipping is a constant problem in the parish and all reports are passed on to SSDC by Clerk Sue Morley.

A lot of damage was done at Brook Green by 4 x 4's driving through the river and making a mess of the river banks. The Police have been very helpful and residents have been asked to be vigilant and pass on any information to the Police. Our thanks go to the Police for their continued support.

Our website Ilton Talking which is hosted by BT is being closed from the end of May. A new website is being planned. Councillor Jacqueline Bennett and Clerk Sue Morley have been working on this.

Councillor Mrs Matravers resigned from the parish council in November 2020. The Chairman thanked her for her many many years on the council and her work on behalf of the village. After the required period of notice, Guy Danvers joined the council in December to assist with the maintenance of the Playing Field. After much hard work on the Field, Guy resigned in April this year and there is now a vacancy on the parish council. Thanks go to Guy for the big contribution he made during the months he was a councillor.

Somerset is likely to become a unitary authority in the next couple of years, either as one unitary authority which is Somerset County Council's preferred option, or two unitary authorities which is the District Council's preferred option. Work is ongoing at District and County level.

The regulations allowing remote meetings by Zoom will end on 7th May. After that date councils will be required to hold their meetings face to face. This is not likely to be possible until the end of June. It is hoped that face to face meetings can resume in the village hall in July.

Thanks go to all councillors who have worked hard during this very difficult and challenging year. Particular thanks to our County Councillor Adam Dance for his support and advice, and our good wishes to District Councillor Malcolm Cavill who has been ill and not able to attend meetings for over a year. We wish him a speedy return to good health and hope to see him back to work very shortly. Thanks also go to the local Police for their continued vigilance and support. Face to face meetings should resume in the next few months and as we all get our vaccinations, we hope the Covid pandemic will be over and life can return to normal.

2. Public Voice

There were no comments from the public present at the meeting.

Councillor Grahame Mackenzie-Green proposed a vote of thanks to Councillor Ian Sherwood for his work as Chairman over the past year. It has not been an easy time. All councillors were in agreement and thanked Ian for his hard work.

There being no further comments the meeting closed at 7.45 p.m.

Ian Sherwood, Chairman Ilton Parish Council