

ILTON PARISH COUNCIL
website – iltonparishcouncil.gov.uk

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Ilton Parish Council held in Merryfield Hall on
Tuesday 14 May 2024 at 6.30p.m.**

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

In attendance: Mrs A Dallaway (Clerk/RFO), Cllr A Dance & Cllr J Roundell Greene (Somerset Council) for part of the meeting and seven members of the public

2024/73 Election of Chairman & signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office

There was one nomination of Cllr J Bennett.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPOINT CLLR J BENNETT AS CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL PROPOSED BY SR; SECONDED BY JE. MAJORITY VOTE IN FAVOUR. Cllr B Vance voted against. Cllr J Bennett signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chairman.

2024/74 Election of Vice-Chairman

There were two nominations of Cllr A Gordon and Cllr L Pike

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPOINT CLLR A GORDON AS VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL MAJORITY VOTE IN FAVOUR OF CLLR A GORDON, FOUR VOTES TO THREE.

Cllr A Gordon signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Vice-Chairman.

2024/75 Apologies: There were no apologies.

2024/76 Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest.

2024/77 Items to be dealt with after the public, including the press have been excluded – item 18 will be held in closed session as it is a confidential staffing matter

2024/78 Public Participation

A local resident spoke on behalf of the **Remembrance poppy making group** and asked for financial support with chicken wire and sticks. The Clerk asked for the request to be put in writing to the Council for consideration.

A local resident raised concerns regarding recent **flooding** which resulted in access issues to 10 residences in Ilford. A drain has been discovered under the road and the matter has been reported to SC Highways department. Cllr B Vance suggested the local resident write to the Clerk with details and the matter could be raised at the LCN Highways working group meeting.

2024/79 Somerset Council Councillor Report

This item was deferred to later in the meeting as the councillors were not yet in attendance at the meeting.

2024/80 Minutes of the 16 April 2024 Parish Council Meeting: to approve minutes as a true record

Cllr J Bennett queried whether the Council had heard from PKF Littlejohn, the external auditors – the Clerk advised that all the information for the 23/24 audit had now been received.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AN ACCURATE RECORD PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY AG. MAJORITY IN FAVOUR. Cllr B Vance abstained from the vote as he was not present at the meeting of the 16 April.

2024/81 Governance

a) **To review Standing Orders – to consider amendments in line with NALC guidance**

Initial

The Clerk advised that the existing Standing Orders were fit for purpose but that the procurement threshold needed to be updated from £25K to £30K in line with the Public Contracts Regulations. Council noted that there were several policies outstanding – employment policies and the Publication Scheme (see item i).

b) To review Financial Regulations – to note new model NALC Fin Regs and consider scheduling a Finance Committee meeting to review and produce new draft Fin Regs for Full Council approval at the June meeting

Council agreed to schedule a Finance Committee meeting in May to consider the new model Fin Regs and make recommendations to Full Council for approval in June.

ACTION: CLERK

c) To review committee structure and delegation – to agree committees and membership including Chairman

Staffing committee – Chairman: Cllr L Pike; Members: Cllr A Gordon, Cllr B Vance

Finance committee – Chairman: Cllr J Easterbrook; Members: Cllr S Calvert, Cllr N Matravers

The committee Terms of Reference are approved and available on the website. The Chairman of the Council is an ex-officio voting member of both committees.

d) To review arrangements with other local authorities, not for profit bodies and businesses

Council noted that the Rec Field is leased from the Warren Trust and that the terms of the lease are 399 years, three times over.

e) To review the Asset Register – to consider review of the Asset Register at the proposed Fin Com meeting for Full Council approval at the June meeting

Council agreed to review the Asset Register at the Fin Com meeting to be scheduled in May.

f) To review insurance provision – to consider the quote from Clear Councils for 2024/25 £1138.50

Council agreed to accept the quote for 24/25 and to schedule a comprehensive review of the insurance for 25/26 to include three quotations.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE INSURANCE QUOTATION FROM CLEAR COUNCILS FOR 2024/25

PROPOSED BY LP; SECONDED BY SC. ALL IN FAVOUR

g) To review subscriptions to other bodies

Annual subscriptions are paid to SALC Somerset Association of Local Councils (£348 for 23/24). The Clerk will clarify whether an annual subscription is made to SPFA Somerset Playing Fields Association and determine the benefits of membership.

h) To review the Complaints procedure

This item will be deferred to the June meeting.

i) To review the policy review schedule and consider the implementation of an Annual Cycle

The Clerk will produce a draft Annual Cycle of Council business for consideration at the June meeting – the Annual Cycle will incorporate the policy review schedule.

ACTION: CLERK

j) To review the Council's expenditure incurred under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972

Council noted that the s137 amount for 2024/25 is £10.81 per head of the electorate. This allows Council to spend on items for general community benefit when there is no other power available.

Cllr A Dance and Cllr J Roundell Greene arrived at the meeting

Initial

Somerset Council Councillor Reports (item deferred from above)

Cllr Adam Dance reported that Somerset Council has managed to set a balanced budget for 24/25. The Council is going through the process of **reorganisation** and will become a much smaller organisation. More than 240 staff have requested voluntary redundancy.

Cllr Jo Roundell Greene reported that the **waste contractor**, Suez is losing money due to escalating costs. The existing contract runs from 2020 to 2030 and Somerset Council is currently in negotiations with Suez. The contract costs will rise but this is still considered the most cost-effective option to ensure service delivery.

Cllr J Bennett highlighted the **flooding issues at Ilford** which were raised by a local resident during the Public Participation session earlier in the meeting. Cllr A Dance suggested that the resident email him direct to request a visit from the Highways Officer.

Cllr I Sherwood queried the **cutting of the roadside verges** and Cllr A Dance advised that they would be cut once per year by Somerset Council.

Cllr A Dance and Cllr J Roundell Greene left the meeting at 7pm

2024/82 Schedule of meetings for 2024/25

The Clerk will produce a Calendar of Meeting dates for 24/25 – Full Council to meet the second Tuesday of each month apart from August. The Clerk requested a change to the July meeting date due to holiday commitments: 16 July 2024. Cllr J Bennett will liaise with the Village Hall booking secretary.

ACTION: CLERK

2024/83 Postal address and communications

- a) **To approve the postal address for the Parish Council as c/o Merryfield Village Hall to include use of the Parish Council post box at the Village Hall**

COUNCIL RESOLVED THE POSTAL ADDRESS FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL AS C/O MERRYFIELD VILLAGE HALL

PROPOSED BY SC; SECONDED BY NM. ALL IN FAVOUR

- b) **To consider the quotation received for gov.uk email addresses for Clerk and councillors £120 plus VAT for first two years and then £60 annually**

A quote has been provided by the company which hosts the Council's website. Council agreed to accept the quote which includes 10 email addresses. Cllr B Vance highlighted the grant funding available.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPLY FOR GOV.UK DOMAIN NAME AND TO APPLY FOR THE GRANT PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY JE. ALL IN FAVOUR

ACTION: CLERK

2024/84 Planning Applications: There were no planning applications to consider.

2024/85 Accounts and Financial Information

- a) **To receive and sign the bank reconciliation to 30/04/2024**

Cllr J Bennett signed the bank reconciliation to 30/04/2024

- b) **To receive the Summary Receipts & Payments report to 30/04/2024**

Cllr S Ripley queried the amount in the CIL account. The Clerk explained that the recent CIL monies had been paid into the current account in April and had been transferred into the CIL account in May.

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

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE PAYMENTS

PROPOSED BY LP; SECONDED BY IS. ALL IN FAVOUR

Initial

d) To approve amendments to the bank mandate and signing instructions

- i) Lloyd's bank (3 accounts) – addition of the Clerk as Full Access signatory with access for online banking and removal of all ex-councillors and officers. To agree primary contact details.**

The current signatories are JB, IS, LP, SR and the Clerk, Annie Dallaway will be added to the mandate. All signatories will have access for online banking apart from IS. Council agreed that the primary contact should be JB at her home address.

- ii) Lloyd's bank – signing instructions to be any two signatories. To agree process for authorisation of online payments.**

Council agreed that the signing instructions should be any two signatories. The Clerk will post the online payments and one councillor will authorise the payments.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE i) AND ii) ABOVE

PROPOSED BY NM; SECONDED BY BV. ALL IN FAVOUR

- iii) Bath Building Society – addition of the Clerk as signatory and removal of all ex-councillors and officers. To agree primary contact details.**

The current signatories are JB and IS and the Clerk, Annie Dallaway will be added to the mandate. Council agreed that the primary contact should be JB at her home address.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE iii) ABOVE

PROPOSED BY IS; SECONDED BY AG. ALL IN FAVOUR

e) To receive an update regarding audit procedures for 23/24 and the AGAR Annual Governance & Accountability Return

The Clerk reported that she had produced the draft AGAR for 23/24 in readiness for the Internal Audit on 30 May and for approval by Full Council at the June meeting. The deadline for submission to the external auditors, PKF Littlejohn is 1 July 2024.

f) To consider the grant request for the Village Hall - £2,500 for replacement boiler

The Village Hall committee has requested a grant towards the cost of the replacement boiler and has provided copies of current bank statements and a copy of the quote.

Proposals of £1250 and £1500 were made.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE A GRANT OF £1500

PROPOSED BY NM; SECONDED BY SC. ALL IN FAVOUR

Council Financial Regulations require three quotes for payments in excess of £1k but the boiler replacement is an urgent matter and the Village Hall committee only sought one quote.

The grant will be paid out of the Facilities & Amenities EMR.

g) To consider whether the areas of grass not included in the grass cutting contract should be maintained by a contractor or volunteers (note quote for cutting the rec ground car park banks £110 plus VAT per cut)

Council noted that the rec ground car park banks are included in the grass cutting contract (Appendix 1, Area 1 indicates the car park is included in the area to be maintained). The Clerk will liaise with the contractor to request that this area is cut as part of the contract. The Clerk will also request that the contractor strims around the gym equipment, signs, planters and along the footpath during each cut.

ACTION: CLERK

Discussion took place regarding Chapter 8 training which enables the trained person to implement road closures and also supervise minor works on the highway. The Clerk will obtain a quote for the training to enable the Council to consider whether it would be useful for a Parish Council representative to undertake the training to help facilitate volunteer working parties carrying out minor maintenance works adjacent the highway in the parish.

ACTION: CLERK

8pm Cllr B Vance left the meeting during the next agenda item and did not take part in the vote. Cllr S Ripley stepped out of the room for part of this agenda item and did not take part in the vote.

2024/86 Community grants: to consider the draft grants policy and application form

The Clerk had previously circulated a draft policy and application form. Council agreed that grants could be given to individuals where the objective was to make a positive contribution to the life of people living, working and visiting the area as long as the individual was not operating as a business. The Clerk to clarify the policy wording to highlight what documentation is required to support a grant application and to introduce flexibility for smaller, un-constituted groups which may not have a constitution or annual accounts. The policy and application form will be available on the website.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE DRAFT GRANTS POLICY AND APPLICATION FORM SUBJECT TO THE AMENDMENTS ABOVE

PROPOSED BY AG; SECONDED BY JE. ALL PRESENT AND VOTING IN FAVOUR

2024/87 Churchyard path: to consider the works specification for the installation of a new path

The draft works specification for the installation of a new path had been previously circulated. Council agreed that all the surfacing should be hogging and that the Reverend had advised there was no need for the path to extend to the bell tower.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THE WORKS SPECIFICATION SUBJECT TO THE AMENDMENTS ABOVE

PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY AG. ALL IN FAVOUR

Cllr Calvert will send the contractor details to the Clerk to obtain confirmed quotes for review at the June meeting.

ACTION: CLLR CALVERT/CLERK

2024/88 Recreational facilities

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

The Clerk summarised the existing inspection costs and estimates received from an alternative contractor and from Somerset Council. Currently the playpark and MUGA are being inspected on a monthly basis and by a separate company on an annual basis. The Clerk will contact other local Town and Parish Councils to find out who carries out their play park inspections and how frequently. The Clerk will also contact the insurance company to find out if fortnightly visual checks and quarterly operational inspections would be acceptable.

ACTION: CLERK

b) To consider the allocation of funding up to £500 to address outstanding general maintenance items highlighted in the monthly reports for the playpark and MUGA

A site visit will be arranged to coincide with the May monthly inspection in order to prioritise and address outstanding maintenance items. The Clerk will attend with Parish Councillors.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE UP TO £1000 FOR OUTSTANDING MAINTENANCE ITEMS PROPOSED BY NM; SECONDED BY LP. ALL IN FAVOUR

ACTION: CLERK

c) To consider the request from Ilminster Football Club to use the sports pitch at the recreational field for training purposes and to consider whether to charge a fee

Council noted that the grass on the football pitch would need to be cut shorter if it was to be used for training purposes. The football nets would also need to be installed. The Council tractor could be used to provide additional cuts although it is likely to need a new battery.

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO APPROVE THAT THE COUNCIL TRACTOR COULD BE USED TO ROLL AND CUT THE FOOTBALL PITCH IN ADDITION TO THE CUTS INCLUDED IN THE GRASS CUTTING CONTRACT AND THAT VOLUNTEERS COULD BE ASKED TO CARRY OUT THIS WORK. THE FEE CHARGED FOR USE OF THE FOOTBALL PITCH WOULD BE £10 PER HOUR.

PROPOSED BY JB; SECONDED BY AG. MAJORITY VOTE IN FAVOUR. Cllr L Pike and Cllr S Calvert voted against.

Cllr L Pike expressed the view that it was unreasonable to ask the volunteers to undertake this work again.

The Clerk will contact Ilminster Football Club to confirm the exact requirements for training purposes.

2024/89 Councillor areas of responsibilities: to confirm areas of responsibility and receive reports

This item was deferred to the June meeting

COUNCIL RESOLVED TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION FOR THIS AGENDA ITEM AS IT WAS A CONFIDENTIAL STAFFING MATTER

PROPOSED BY AG; SECONDED BY LP. ALL IN FAVOUR

8.45pm Members of the public left the meeting at this point. The Clerk left the meeting at this point as councillors would be discussing the contractual terms of her employment.

2024/90 Employment matters

a) To consider the draft Clerk/RFO employment contract for approval and signing

Council agreed that further clarification of the contractual terms was needed before the contract was approved and signed. Cllr L Pike will liaise with the Clerk.

*Cllr S Calvert and Cllr I Sherwood left the meeting during this agenda item and did not take part in the vote
AMENDMENT NOTED 11/6/24 SC & IS LEFT THE MEETING BEFORE AGENDA ITEM 2024/90 a)*

b) To consider whether the Clerk/RFO additional hours worked in April to be paid or taken as TOIL

The Clerk had previously circulated a time sheet indicating 24 additional hours worked in April due to induction and hand-over and the additional work created by end of year procedures and audit requirements.

**COUNCIL RESOLVED TO PAY THE CLERK FOR THE ADDITIONAL HOURS WORKED IN APRIL
PROPOSED BY LP; SECONDED BY JB. ALL IN FAVOUR**

Dates of next meetings:

Annual Parish Meeting: Tuesday 21 May at 6.30pm at Merryfield Hall

Parish Council Meeting: Tuesday 11 June at 6.30pm at Merryfield Hall

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed

Date

Initial