

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Ilton Parish Council held in Merryfield Hall on
Tuesday 12th March 2024 at 6.30p.m.**

2024/36 Attendance and Apologies

Present: Cllrs: Bennett (Chair), Gordon (Vice Chair), Pike, Vance, Sherwood, Matravers, Ripley, and Calvert.

In attendance: Somerset Council Cllr Roundell Greene and Ms. Fullerton (Locum Clerk) and nineteen members of the public.

Apologies: Somerset Council Cllr Dance

2024/37 Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

2024/38 Parish Council Vacancy: To consider any applications received.

Originally three potential candidates reduced to two as one withdrew their interest at the meeting. Chair Bennett asked the two remaining candidates if they would be willing to join the Finance Committee, as this was a requirement of the vacancy in this instance due to a shortage of members with the experience required. Both candidates were agreeable to joining the Finance Committee.

RESOLVED: Due to a tie, the Chair used the casting vote to resolve to accept J Easterbrook for the casual vacancy position. J Easterbrook completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Locum Clerk, and joined the table to take part in the rest of the meeting as a voting member. Cllr Easterbrook was given a copy of the Register of Interests form to complete and return at (or before) the next full parish council meeting.

2024/39 Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on the 13th of February 2024

A councillor queried the Minutes of item 2024/22a which the Clerk clarified and upheld as a true reflection of matters discussed. A recording of the discussion at agenda item 2024/22a was offered to the councillor querying the item (to listen to after the meeting in private) but the councillor didn't feel this was necessary.

RESOLVED: Some minor adjustments were made to the Minutes which were then unanimously accepted as a true representation of the meeting held on the 13th of February 2024.

2024/40 Somerset Council Councillor Report

Cllr Roundell Green informed the meeting of the current and on-going financial situation at Somerset Council. Responding to a question at the public session, Cllr Roundell Green apologised for the lack of clear advice regarding withdrawn (devolved) services and their impact on the parish council during the 2024/25 financial year. It was also clarified that streetlighting cannot be altered by Somerset Council due to the cost of the individual timers, which are £80 per light and preset, although there could be the potential to alter streetlight timings in the future (to allow a period of 'dark sky' through the night).

2024/41 Planning Applications:

None.

2024/42 Accounts and Financial Information

a) To receive the financial statement up to 29/02/2024
Not received.

b) To approve payments requiring authorisation

RESOLVED: To approve the following payments:

- i. George Montague Countryside Services - Play Park Grass Cutting £426.00
- ii. K Larsson - Administration expenses (Clerk) £46.59
- iii. N Mackenzie-Green - Twelve months of litter picking service - £629.70
- iv. K Fullerton - Locum Clerk (February meeting/minutes) - £145.30
- v. MACS Design & Print - Merryfield Messenger printing - £79.00
- vi. Elite Playground Inspections - Playground Inspections - £99.00

- vii. Christopher Dunn (Chardstock Joinery) - Bench repairs (wood supply only and didn't include paint) Merryfield Lane - £144.00 - Item to note: the next agenda should include an item to consider three quotes to replace the back slats on the bench.

ACTION: Clerk

- c) To consider the appointment of an internal auditor.

RESOLVED: To appoint the (remote) internal auditor Joanna Simonds, who the parish council used last year, to help with continuity now the parish council is temporarily without a Clerk. Members felt the auditor should be appointed quickly as her availability appeared limited according to the Clerk's report.

ACTION: Clerk/Cllr Bennett

2024/43 Staffing Committee: To agree staffing committee terms of reference.

Members noted that committee members would be required to attend appropriate SALC training and keep themselves up to date with changes in legislation as informed by NALC. The Committee would meet a minimum of once a year. Also points 3 & 8 would apply to other employees as well as the Clerk.

RESOLVED: The above amendments were made to the original model document before members adopted the Terms of Reference for the Staffing Committee.

2024/44 Finance Committee: To review appointment of finance committee members.

Members noted that Cllr Vance has withdrawn his interest to sit on the finance committee, therefore the replacement member will be Cllr Easterbrook. Committee members were asked to set up their terms of reference at their first committee meeting and were advised they would need to call committee meetings adhering to three clear days' notice, with a calling notice (agenda).

RESOLVED: To replace Cllr Vance with Cllr Easterbrook on the Finance Committee, alongside Cllrs Calvert and Pike. **AMENDMENT NOTED 16/4/24 MATRAVERS NOT PIKE**

ACTION: Cllrs Vance, Easterbrook, Pike

2024/45 Recreation Field Drainage/Flooding: To discuss possible measures to improve drainage and flooding.

Members felt it was time for action and asked the Clerk to add an item to the April agenda, to begin a tender process for contractors/groundworkers to come up with a solution to tackle the surface water issues. Tender documents to be arranged in time for the April meeting.

ACTION: Clerk

2024/46 Play Equipment Inspections: To review and consider requirements for future inspections.

The Clerk's report suggests how frequent the play inspections should be carried out. There is also the potential for a volunteer to take some play inspection training at SALC, which would enable them to carry out visual weekly inspections. The Locum Clerk suggested contacting Somerset Council who carry out three quarterly play inspections a year for just over £100 in total. The Clerk was asked to add review of the playground inspections, frequency and supplier.

ACTION: Clerk

2024/47 Young Person of the Month: To consider any nominations for the monthly award.

There were no nominations this month.

2024/48 Updates and Outstanding Items: To receive any updates not covered by other agenda items.

Members asked the Clerk to add updates by the responsible person or committee, listed on the agenda by name. The following issues were noted:

- The Church footpath requires moss removal as it is very slippery underfoot – works allowed without formal approval by the Church.
- Footpath update by Cllr Ripley – CH15/8 Woodgreen to South Bradon will be closed until the ground is dry enough for bridge repairs. Footpath ref. CH15/26, Pennysmead to Woodhouse Farm, mostly cleared, and the sleeper bridge should be installed soon at the cost of Somerset Council.
- Cllr Pike said the PCSO and Police Officer did attend the Youth Club recently and will try to try to attend more regularly.
- Parish Clerk vacancy – five applicants so far.

2024/49 Matters for Report Only

There were no matters for report.

2024/50 Items for the Next Meeting

- Gov.uk email addresses/website or similar alternative dedicated parish council email addresses for councillors and Clerk.
- Full council resolution on the recruitment of the Clerk/RFO position.
- Interim Clerk

Date of next ordinary meeting: Tuesday 16th April, at 6.30pm at Merryfield Hall

The meeting date to be a week later than usual to accommodate the recruitment of the Clerk/RFO item.
Clerk to inform the community via Facebook etc.

ACTION: Clerk

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

Signed

Date