

ILTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF ILTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 23rd SEPTEMBER 2025 AT MERRYFIELD HALL, ILTON (6.30pm to 8:35pm)

PRESENT:

Cllr. J Bennett (Chair)

Cllr. I Sherwood

Cllr. B Vance

Cllr. A Gordon

Cllr. A Pidgeon

Cllr. S Ripley

Cllr. N Matravers

Cllr. J Easterbrook

Mr T Heath (Clerk)

27 members of the public

2 officers from Avon and Somerset Police (left meeting after agenda item 5)

2025/159 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. L Pike.

2025/160 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS

No declarations of interest in agenda items were tabled.

2025/161 CHAIRMANS OPENING REMARKS

The Chair read the following statement:

Over recent weeks there has been a significant amount of correspondence received from members of the public, many relating to the land owned by the Parish Council in Copse Lane. These are noted by Council. The Parish Council is also aware of social media posts and comments on this matter.

On behalf of the whole Council, I would like to make the following statement to clarify the position.

Following receipt of a valuation requested by the recreation field task and finish group who along with the play area task and finish group are looking into medium- and long-term investment opportunities and benefits for the village, the PC agreed to form a further 'task and finish group' to consider options, costs, timelines and many other matters that may possibly lead to planning permission for the land at Copse Lane being pursued. The three task and finish groups, whose work is closely aligned, will report back to full Council at future meetings with their findings and recommendations. Only at that stage will Council be asked to make any decisions. Council is aware that some residents feel the village should be consulted on the Copse Lane land. Depending on the need and recommendations made by the three task and finish groups, Council will consider the most appropriate method of engagement with its key stakeholders.

2025/162 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting held on 19th August 2025 with one amendment to the published draft minutes, that being to add to min ref 2025/139 the following 'A MoP stated the land at Copse Lane is an asset that belongs to the village and its residents and that Council should hold a public consultation before the land is sold'

Proposed Cllr. N Matravers

Seconded Cllr. A Pidgeon

7 votes for, 1 abstention due to the Councillor not present at the August 2025 meeting.

2025/163 PUBLIC SESSION

Eight members of the public (MoP) raised various comments and concerns to Council, the majority being associated with the land at Copse Lane, currently being offered to local organisations and businesses for use as a car park. Points noted by Council were concerns over displacement of cars onto Copse Lane, residents' opposition to the land being sold for development, what benefits would be realised to the village with proceeds from any sale, the land currently being used as a car park is a community asset, no more houses are required in the village, no consultation with parishioners, impact on Merryfield Hall and Council should encourage the use of the car park, the land should be turned into a 'proper' car park and focus should be on speeding issues.

A series of questions were raised and noted by Council, including can a Parish Council legally sell an asset that is used regularly by the community, without first consulting with the residents. If no legal reason dictates, should the PC, under its obligation to act on behalf of the residents, morally consult with community, and if so, would it make sense to consult 'before' undertaking any research and/or spending any money. Have the Council got a purchaser for the land; how would residents go about calling for a 'vote of no confidence' in the Parish Council. Where would the Council expect the Wyndham Arms, Cricket Club and Village Hall customers to park. How much would you expect to sell the land for and have the Parish Council identified a use for the income. Do the Parish Council have any prospective purchasers. Have Council considered leasing the land to any of the car park users. Should the Parish Council pursue the sale of the land for development, have they considered making Copse Lane from the Village Hall to the T junction, at the north end, one way. The Clerk agreed to respond in writing to the question set on behalf of the Council.

Two members of Avon and Somerset Police force attended the meeting stating the village experiences low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. They encouraged reporting of incidents witnessed, these can be made via 101, on-line or Crimestoppers, which reporting can be anonymous. For serious events, 999 is the preferred option.

2025/164 SOMERSET COUNCILLOR REPORT

No Somerset Councillor present at the meeting.

2025/165 FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) The bank reconciliation statement, dated 31st August 2025 was unanimously **APPROVED** and duly signed by Cllr. Sherwood.

Proposed Cllr. I Sherwood

Seconded Cllr. A Gordon

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

£333.42	Bradfor	Various Items
£451.00	Premier Landscaping	Ranger Duties
£31.20	Scribe	Cemetery add on
£165.00	Play Inspection Company	Play Area Inspections
£19.94	Valda Energy	Electricity
£xxx.xx	Mr T M Heath	Democratic Services
£326.06	HMRC	PAYE
£3584.40	George Montague	Grounds Contract
£20.20	Mr T M Heath	Milage & Expenses
£114.00	Elite Playground Inspections	Play Area Inspections
£516.00	Zac Bessell Agricultural	Hedge Cutting

Proposed Cllr. B. Vance

Seconded Cllr. N Matravers

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

£84.92	Lloyds	Interest
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c) Members **NOTED** receipt of the financial report for period ending 31st August 2025, which included the latest accounting statement.

d) Council **APPROVED** unanimously the disbanding of the finance committee with immediate effect.

Proposed Cllr. N Matravers

Seconded Cllr. I Sherwood

2025/166 STAFFING COMMITTEE

Council **APPROVED** unanimously Cllr. A Gordon becoming the Chair of the staffing committee and **APPOINTED** Cllr. J Easterbrook to the committee.

Proposed Cllr. A.Pidgeon

Seconded Cllr. N Matravers

2025/167 ASSERTION 10

The Clerk briefed Council on a new requirement for this financial year stipulated in the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel Practitioners Guide. Assertion 10, digital and data compliance requires Councillors to have separate email accounts for Council business with best practice using .gov.uk domains for emails and website. Council is currently compliant here. A data protection officer should be formally appointed by Council. It was agreed to cover this and the adoption of an IT policy at a future meeting. Councils' website meets the required accessibility requirements, however an accessibility statement to the home page of the website is needed.

2025/168 FOOTBALL PITCH

Members **NOTED** the signed agreement between the Parish Council and Ilminster youth football club for season 2025/2026.

2025/169 PLANNING

Council reviewed planning application 25/02105/LBC, Internal remedial works to floor, walls and joinery (Implemented). Ye Olde Well Cottage, Cad Road, Ilton, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 9HF and unanimously **AGREED** to **SUPPORT** with no comments.

Proposed Cllr. J Easterbrook

Seconded Cllr. A Gordon

Council **NOTED** planning applications to be determined:

23/00404/FUL, The Stables, Ashford Old Farm, Isle Abbots 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).

17/01068/AGN, Land at Ilford Farm, Frost Lane, Ilton, Ilminster, Somerset. Notification of intent to erect a general-purpose agricultural building.

25/01855/REM, Land Os 4025, Frost Lane, Ilton, Ilminster, Somerset. Reserved Matters Application for the approval of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of approval 23/02332/OUT; Outline Application with all matters reserved for the erection of one self-build dwelling.

2025/170 VOLUNTEER TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Following agreement at the August 2025 meeting on the process for tasking and approval for volunteer works, Council unanimously **APPROVED** the closure of the volunteer task and finish group.

Proposed Cllr. A Pidgeon

Seconded Cllr. J Bennett

2025/171 VOLUNTEER GROUP

a) Cllr. Pidgeon reported to Council on tasks completed since the last meeting.

- Football Pitch mown twice in preparation
- Grass cutting along village verges
- Footpath between churchyard and Rod Lane Trimmed back and strimmed
- Churchyard hedge along entrance pathway
- Hortmead Lane trimmed and steps up to bypass
- Merryfield lane verge approaches grass cut
- Worked alongside contractor for reseeded in Play Park area taped off.
- Bullens close general strimming

b) Members unanimously **APPROVED** a cost of up to £400.00 for putting in place a 'hard stand' for the Merryfield bench. The task to be project managed by the volunteer group.

Proposed Cllr. A Pidgeon

Seconded Cllr. A Gordon

c) Members unanimously **APPROVED** a cost of up to £200.00 for purchase of a Christmas tree.

Proposed Cllr. J Bennett

Seconded Cllr. A Gordon

2025/172 RANGER TASKS

Two priority tasks were **AGREED**, those being tar the cracks in the recreation field path and clearing of weeds along pavement edges.

2025/173 PLAY AREA

A motion for Council to approve the forming and appointing members to a task and finish group, led by Cllr. Pike to consider the objectives, benefits, costs and administration of installing CCTV in the play area with recommendations made back to Council at a future meeting was **WITHDRAWN**.

2025/174 CRIME, DISORDER AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

No matters were discussed.

2025/175 HIGHWAY MATTERS

- a) A motion for Council to approve the forming and appointing members to a task and finish group, led by Cllr. Pike to consider the objectives, benefits, costs and administration of speed indicator devices to be deployed in the village with recommendations made back to Council at a future meeting was **WITHDRAWN**.
- b) The Clerk was requested to arrange a visit from Somerset Council highways to discuss options relating to parking issues opposite the entrance to Merryfield Hall and report back to Council at a future meeting on recommendations.

2025/176 CORRESPONDENCE

No matters were discussed that required a Council decision.

2025/177 ITEMS OF INTEREST AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Hedge – entrance to the recreation field car park

2025/178 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 28th October 2025 starting at 6.30pm

2025/179 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Council unanimously passed a resolution to exclude the press and public to allow discussion on commercial in confidence matters.

Proposed Cllr. A Gordon

Seconded Cllr. J Easterbrook

2025/180 WELLINGTONIA TREE (CHURCHYARD)

Council reviewed three quotes. Members unanimously **APPROVED** to contract with Greenheart tree surgery at a cost of £1950.00 for tree works as recommended in the Picus testing report.

Proposed Cllr. N Matravers

Seconded Cllr. B Vance

2025/181 SEEDING OF AREAS IN CEMETERY AND RECREATION FIELD

Following a proposal from the Chair, this agenda item was brought forward.

As no quotes were received for seeding of areas in the cemetery and recreation field in time for the meeting, Council unanimously **AGREED** to undertake seeding of the two areas via the Parish Ranger.

Proposed Cllr. J Bennett

Seconded Cllr. B Vance

2025/182 NORTH AND SOUTH DITCHES (RECREATION FIELD)

Cllr. N Matravers declared an interest in the agenda item and therefore left the room. Council reviewed three quotes. Members **APPROVED** contracting with Zac Bessell Agricultural at a cost of £2,340.00 inc. VAT for digging out the north and south ditches at the recreation ground and removing soil from site.

Proposed Cllr. J Easterbrook

Seconded Cllr. S Ripley

6 votes for, 1 against

Approved by:

Date: