

ILTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF ILTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 19th AUGUST 2025 AT MERRYFIELD HALL, ILTON (6.30pm to 8:40pm)

PRESENT:

Cllr. J Bennett (Chair)

Cllr. I Sherwood

Cllr. L Pike

Cllr. B Vance

Cllr. A Gordon

Cllr. A Pidgeon

Cllr. N Matravers

Cllr. J Easterbrook

Mr T Heath (Clerk)

Somerset Councillor Roundell (left the meeting following min.ref 2025/140)

8 members of the public

2025/136 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. S Ripley.

2025/137 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS

Cllr. Gordon declared an interest in agenda item 18a.

Cllr. Pike declared an interest in agenda item 16bii.

2025/138 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd July 2025 which were duly signed by the Chair.

2025/139 PUBLIC SESSION

Members of the public (MoP) raised various concerns regarding what they view as the potential sale of the Copse Lane land and wanted assurances that any sale would benefit the village. 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. This was noted by Council. The Chair responded to say Council are at an early stage in the process, with no firm decisions having yet been taken. Cllr. Bennett continued by summarising the fact that moving forward Council have significant overheads to fund as well as having to plan for replacement of current assets and enhancements to areas around the village. The financial crisis at Somerset Council is also having an impact on Parish Council's expenditure.

A MoP raised a point regarding the land currently being used periodically as a car park. Council responded by stating plans are being developed to enhance the car park area at the recreation field and make available for all.

A MoP raised an issue with parking opposite the entrance to Merryfield Hall. Council agreed to add an agenda item to the next meeting to consider options.

Damage to football goals located at the recreation field were brought to the attention of the Council. Members responded by stating they are not owned by the Parish Council and have been left in position, at risk, by Ilminster Youth football club.

2025/140 SOMERSET COUNCILLOR REPORT

Somerset Cllr. Roundell reported on the latest situation with respect to the Yeovil maternity ward closure. Somerset Council have set aside £50,000 to support school children, adults and staff affected by the West Somerset bus accident. The Councillor stated Wessex water are undertaking repairs to drains in Frost Lane. Somerset Cllr. Roundell then left the meeting.

2025/141 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) The Clerk reported that Picus testing of the wellingtonia tree in the churchyard had been completed with the report issued. The report recommended that height reduction to an extent that will reduce windsail should greatly reduce the chances of windthrow. Such works should be carried out to reduce the height by approximately 5m to strong growth points in a sympathetic manner. Where possible light branch reduction around the crown may help to reduce sail factor but would require the careful use of a spider lift around the gravestones. The Clerk was requested to obtain quotations from professional tree surgeons and report back at the September 2025 meeting.
- b) Cllr. Pidgeon reported the repair of the broken handrail at Cad Road had been completed by the volunteer group.

2025/142 FINANCIAL MATTERS

- a) The bank reconciliation statement, dated 31st July 2025 was **APPROVED** and duly signed by Cllr. Vance.

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

PKF Littlejohn	External Audit	£378.00
Bradford's	Various items	£59.33
Homefield Equestrian	Cemetery Soil Removal	£990.00
Ilminster Hardware	Various Items	£22.58
Scribe	Cemetery Package	£31.20
Andrew Pidgeon	Items for cross	£84.78
Macs Printing	Messenger	£79.00
Andrew Pidgeon	Volunteer Equipment	£347.47
Mr T M Heath	Democratic Services	£900.86
HMRC	PAYE	£311.14
Mr T M Heath	Milage	£16.20
George Montague	Grounds Contract	£3584.40
Lloyds Bank	Service Charge	£4.25
Mrs J Bennett	Chair allowance	£20.00
Somerset Council	Hamstone Licence	£900.00
Nick Matravers	Wood Stain	£35.99
AborVitae Tree Care	Picus Testing	£480.00
ICCM	Corporate Membership	£79.00

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

Mr P Burton	Walking Football	£120.00
Lloyds	Interest	£81.23

- c) Members **NOTED** receipt of the financial report for period ending 31st July 2025, which included the latest accounting statement.
- d) Council **APPROVED** the opening of a 90-day notice account with Hinkley and Rugby Building Society and to deposit £50,000 into the account and **AUTHORISED** the Clerk, Cllr Bennett and Cllr Sherwood to be made signatories on the mandate.
- e) Members **NOTED** the 2025/2026 National Joint Council pay agreement.

2025/143 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW

Council **NOTED** the External Auditor's Report and Certificate for 2024/25 and the associated cost of £378.00 inclusive of VAT and give **AUTHORITY** to the Clerk to post the notice of conclusion of audit on Council's website and noticeboard.

2025/144 CEMETERY

- (a) Following a proposal from Cllr. Bennett, members **APPROVED** a revised set of ground rules and regulations for Ilton cemetery which will be available for viewing on the Council's website and cemetery noticeboard.
- (b) The Clerk reported completion of the soil heap and fence removal in the cemetery. Members expressed their appreciation of a job well done. The Clerk was requested to obtain quotes for seeding the area.

2025/145 FOOTBALL PITCH

- a) Members **APPROVED** expenditure up to £100.00 for the purchase of turf for the football pitch goalmouths. The turf to be laid and maintained by the volunteer group.
- b) Cllr. Bennett briefed members on the outcome of a recent meeting with Ilminster youth football club. The club have made a proposal to offer £1,215 for the season September through April with 81 anticipated matches. Payments to be made during the season by standing order. There will be a requirement for a portable toilet to be made available. Council **APPROVED** the use of the football pitch and associated payment of £1,215 subject to confirmation that Ilminster youth football club will fund and administer the portable toilet.
- c) Council **AGREED** with the recommendation from Cllr. Bennett that other than the already planned pre-season works and the laying of turf in the goalmouths, the only maintenance tasks for the pitch, September through April will be mowing by the volunteer group as and when required.

2025/146 PLAY AREA

- a) Following a request from Cllr. Sherwood, members **APPROVED** the purchase of timber to be used for the refurbishment of benches in the play area at a cost of £200.00 plus VAT.
- b) Cllr. Pike requested the agenda item associated with CCTV in the play area be deferred.

- c) Members **AGREED** to set up a task and finish group to review the recent independent inspection report and make recommendations back to Council on remedial actions as well as preparing for Council's consideration a fully costed future plan and schedule for the play area. Members of the group appointed were Cllrs. Ripley, Matravers and Easterbrook.

2025/147 RECREATION FIELD

- a) Council **AUTHORISED** the Clerk and Cllr. Matravers to obtain quotations and associated delivery schedules for digging out of the north and south ditches in the recreation field
- b) The Clerk reported the position of removal of soils heaps from the recreation field. Work had commenced, but due to scheduling and staff issues the work has paused. The contractor has been made aware of the importance of completing by the end of August 2025, aligning with the start of the football season.
- c) The Clerk updated Council on plans for hedge cutting of the recreation field and the land at Copse Lane. The work has been tasked with a scheduled completion date being the end of August 2025.

2025/148 BROOK GREEN

Members **AUTHORISED** expenditure to the value of £1,000 plus VAT to install a number of one tonne hamstones in the area currently occupied by the broken wooden fence. Cllr. Gordon to arrange.

2025/149 HAMSTONE PROJECT

- a) Council overwhelmingly **APPROVED** the purchase, delivery and placement of three hamstones at a total cost of £6,600 plus VAT. Tasking for the stones to be made following receipt of the Somerset Council licence.
- b) The Clerk reported acknowledgement by Somerset Council of the funding to commence generation of the licence enabling placement of the hamstones in three designated positions. An estimate of two to three months was given for the licence to be issued. A period of public consultation is included in this estimate.

2025/150 SPREED INDICATOR DEVICE

Cllr. Pike requested the agenda item associated with a speed indicator device be deferred.

2025/151 REPORTS FROM TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

Volunteer Task and Finish Group

- a) The Clerk presented a proposal for how volunteer tasks shall be authorised and managed. This was **ACCEPTED** by Council.
- b) Council **NOTED** the main points on their insurance policy relating to volunteers. This being all tasks shall be formally issued and recorded by the Council; all tasks shall be appropriately risk assessed with proportionate mitigations put in place; volunteers using certain powered tools like chain saws shall undertake professional training and be accredited to use.

- c) Council formally **APPOINTED** Cllr. Pidgeon to be the main sponsor for all volunteer activities.
- d) Members **APPROVED** joining the Somerset Council highways volunteer scheme with Cllrs. Pidgeon, Sherwood and Matravers as well as Mr. Grahame MacKenzie-Green and Mr Ian Ripley being put forward for the online training module.
- e) Cllr. Pidgeon briefed Council on tasks undertaken since the last meeting, these included:
- All flower beds in Field weeded
 - Footpath adjacent to cricket pitch through to field cut back.
 - Footpath to Ilminster partially cut (excluding last 3 fields) (Hortmead Lane end)
 - Footpath to Ilford cleared from Cad Brook footbridge
 - Bench for Merryfield lane completed (awaiting base preparation)
 - Benches in Cemetery re stained
 - Cemetery gates re stained
 - Bench recovered and cleaned in Brook Green
 - Handrail replaced on Hortmead Lane bridge
 - Bench repaired in Playpark
 - "Timber Trail" post relocated in Playpark
 - Merryfield to Business Park grass verges cut x 2
 - Field footpath trimmed back
 - Junction splays cut back (Church Rd/Cad Rd & Cad Rd/Frost Lane)
 - Churchyard to Frost Lane footpath cleared

Recreation Field Task and Finish Group

- a) Cllr. Bennet provided a list of current and proposed plans which include:
- Ditches – quotes to be obtained, agreed and tasked
 - French Drain – scope to written, quotes to be obtained, agreed and tasked
 - Pond – Clerk to engage again with management company regarding maintenance
 - Hedge Cut – tasked
 - Repair of Path – discuss with ranger
 - Weed Control – tasked
 - Sand, Seed etc. Football pitch, tasked
 - Remove soil mounds – tasked
 - Seed area after soil removal - quotes to be obtained, agreed and tasked
 - Car Park – scope to written, quotes to be obtained, agreed and tasked

Council **APPROVED** moving forward against line items detailed above.

- b) Following a lengthy debate in which many constructive points were raised by members, Council **APPROVED** by majority to set up a task and finish group to consider options, costs, timelines and other matters for achieving detailed planning permission for the land at Copse Lane and report back to a full Council meeting with their recommendations. Council will then formally determine whether to proceed or not with detailed planning permission. Members of the group to include Cllrs. Bennett, Gordon, Pidgeon and Easterbrook.

At this stage Cllr. Pike indicated to Council her intention to resign as a Parish Councillor due to Council's 'vision' being different to hers.

2025/152 PARISH RANGER

Council **AUTHORISED** the following tasks be undertaken by the Parish Ranger;

- Chamfer timber trail (priority)
- Repoint wooden posts (priority)
- Tar path (priority)
- Cut hedge in the cemetery to expose graves
- Level graves where applicable
- Cut hedge either side of the bus stop
- Clear kerbsides throughout village
- Cut and accentuate verges including Frost Lane
- Lopping of Oak tree in the play area
- Mend latches on gates along the cricket club footpath

2025/153 PLANNING

- a) Council **SUPPORTED** planning application 25/01855/REM/23/02332/OUT with the following comment; Reference documents "Plan Superseded A104 BPR Sheet 004 REV2 Proposed Ground Floor Plan" and "Plan A101 BPR Sheet 001 REV2 Location Plan & Issue Sheet," - both dated 15th August 2025. Measurements of the snug, currently given as 10.80m should be changed to match that of the sun room, given as 5.48m.

- b) Council **NOTED** the position of current and in month determined planning applications, these being;

23/03105/FUL

Frost Farm Frost Lane Ilton Ilminster Somerset TA19 9EU

Proposed alterations to access and the erection of a dwelling

Application Permitted with Conditions

20/02388/FUL

Drakes Farm Church Road Ilton Ilminster Somerset TA19 9EY

Erection of five dwellings with associated landscaping, parking provision and alterations to access.

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

2025/154 CRIME, DISORDER AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

No matters were discussed.

2025/155 HIGHWAY MATTERS

Cllr. Bennett reported to Council the main points from the recent village walkaround with a Somerset Council officer. Full details have been issued to members. As an output from the meeting the Clerk has requested a visit to the village from Abri to discuss various matters around ownership and maintenance of land.

2025/156 CORRESPONDENCE

No matters were discussed.

2025/157 ITEMS OF INTEREST AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Merryfield Bench – hard stand

Speed Indicator Device

Parking opposite the entrance to Merryfield Hall

2025/158 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 23rd September 2025, starting at 6:30pm

Approved by:

Date: