

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Ilminster on Tuesday, 31 July, 2012 at 7.30p.m.

Those Present

Chairman: Cllr R Swann

Councillors: Cllr Austin, Cllr P Burton, Cllr E J Taylor, Cllr C Goodall, Cllr A Lawson, Cllr D Miller, Cllr Pallister, Cllr A Shearman, Cllr S Shepherd, Cllr S Sainsbury, Cllr L Vijeh, Cllr P Whaites,

Officers: Mrs J Thorne, Miss N McIntosh

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2012 be approved and signed as a true and correct record

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Cllr Sothern

3. Declarations of Interest

None

4. Mayor's Announcements/Engagements

The Mayor presented a written report of the following engagements from 26th June - 31st July 2012.

Thursday 28th June 2012 Wadham School, Open day

Friday 29th June 2012 Victim Support, Somerset Summer Raffle at Hatch Beauchamp

Saturday 30th June 2012 Scouts, Annual District Camp

Tuesday 10th July 2012 Finger buffet lunch at Citizens Advice Bureau, Yeovil

Thursday 12th July 2012 Celebration of Achievements Evening at Swanmead

Friday 13th July 2012 Wadham @40, Gala Dinner

Saturday 14th July 2012 Awards Night at Ilminster Swimming Club

Fete at Horton Cross, Nursing home

Monday 16th July 2012 Presentation Evening at St Bartholomew Church

Tuesday 17th July 2012 Judging the Miniature Garden Competition at Greenfylde School

5. Matters arising from the Minutes

None

6. Police Report

The Clerk presented a written report from PC Andy Stuart in which he said that since the last police report Ilminster station had been kept busy with work in the Town and in the surrounding villages. The recent weather had had a huge impact on resources and the police had dealt with the localised flooding in the area particularly in the Donyatt and Ilford areas.

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No one was injured in the ever rising water however many vehicles were left abandoned in the floods and one was broken into and some fishing items had been stolen.

The series of catalytic converter thefts seemed to have abated since the arrest of two local males and a third male from out of the area. There was an ongoing series of motor thefts not related directly to the Ilminster area but nevertheless it was a drain on resources. Outlying villages such as Winsham and Clapton had been affected but the main concern was Crewkerne where 4x4's had been stolen and used in local crime, then often recovered nearby. Local Officers had changed their shifts to combat this and one male had been arrested whilst another two were actively being sought. They were not from the Ilminster area but it did have an impact on the police because of the proximity in the town.

Parking – The introduction of Civil Enforcement Officers has had a dramatic effect on the town freeing Police staff up to deal with more important matters in the town. There was a shop window broken in the town centre following England's departure from the European Football Championships. There were no witnesses and it is not known whether this was related to the football. It was an isolated incident in what has been a fairly settled period for Ilminster.

The children and some of the older kids are looking forward to the imminent arrival of the new skate ramp. Anti –social behaviour was down on last year for the same time which may be due to the poor weather or better Police knowledge of the area.

A 4 x 4 was stolen from the New Road area, and a smaller car was burnt out next to where it was stolen from. The burnt car was stolen from Crewkerne, driven to Ilminster where the offenders then stole the 4 x 4 and burnt the other. The 4 x 4 was later recovered in Crewkerne, with a large amount of stolen items still in it. These were in the process of being returned to their rightful owners. Local Officers have assisted at Crewkerne due to the sheer volume of thefts and burglaries in the area, and have assisted with finding 4 recently stolen vehicles. Suspects had been identified, one arrested, with at least one outstanding. It is believed these persons were responsible for some of the thefts / burglaries in the area as well.

7. Report from County Councillor

The Clerk presented a written report from County Councillor Kim Turner.

Despite a great deal of opposition the Administration at County Hall had now sold The Great Wood on the Quantock Hills to the Forestry Commission.

The Service Reviews – Every one of the 170 services provided by Somerset County Council was being looked at and this was going ahead quite slowly. At Full council on 15th February the Administration voted to outsource many services. The budget for this work is £3 million for 2012-2013.

During February there were a series of Local Choice Events which Somerset County Council organised, fronted by the SCC Chief Executive. The purpose of the events was to explore what Parish/Town Councils and local communities may be able to do for themselves due to SCC being no longer able to afford to provide its current level of services.

There had been a staff survey at County Hall and results could be seen at:

<http://change.somerset.gov.uk/home/say/>

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Somerset County Council was set to invest millions in building new classrooms, and repairing and maintaining the county's schools and autism units. A £13m capital investment funding programme given by the Government to support children and young people was due to come into force this month for the 2012/13 financial year. Nearly £6m has been allocated to repair and maintain 172 schools across the county. In addition, £450K had been set aside to maintain and repair Somerset's Autism units and accommodation for children in care. In past years the County Council had to borrow money for school repairs and building new classrooms.

Somerset's museums, historic castles and ancient monuments had entered cyberspace, with the launch of a new website and social media platforms. Somerset Routes, a scheme that celebrates Somerset's heritage in one touring map, had launched its website - www.somersetroutes.co.uk - making it even easier for the public to explore the county's historic attractions. Originally created in 2009 by Somerset County Council and the Museums in Somerset group, the 'tube map' style design breaks the county into seven different travel lines, taking in over 120 of the counties best heritage attractions. The new website allows you to search for places to visit via the 'tube map' or by criteria, such as historic period or collection type. It also contains information on each attraction, events, itineraries and volunteering opportunities, as well as links to social media platforms Facebook, Twitter and You Tube. I hope that the new website can take the project to an even wider audience, encouraging yet more people to explore the county's hidden gems. To find out more visit www.somersetroutes.co.uk

A warning for the 15th November 2012 – There will be elections across the UK on that day for the posts of Police Commissioner in each policing area. Discussions are underway about the demise of the Police Authority on 20th November and the setting up of Police and Crime Panel to scrutinise the Police Commissioner.

Ken Maddock, Leader of the County Council, was stepping down. He had been selective as the candidate for the Conservative; for the post of Avon and Somerset Police Commissioner. The new leader will be John Osman. He was the cabinet member for Children and Young People. Cllr Turner reported her concerns of the First bus changes in Ilminster. She was worried that the Town has been split into two, as people could not pick up First Bus outside the Market house anymore and had to use the bus stops in Canal Way. She has asked that a meeting be arranged with officers from both District and County, and the Town Council to have talks to sort these urgent issues out.

Cllr Turner has also asked for an urgent meeting with County Highways Officer Colin Fletcher on the issues of enforcement parking in town centre and surrounding area. She has yet to receive a reply to the two emails and will chase him again after her annual leave.

8. Open Spaces Committee Meeting

Minute 5 Wardens report

It was **RESOLVED** that both a new bin and bench should be purchased and installed where the old furniture on the Orchard Vale had been.

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9. Planning Committee Meeting

There were no recommendations from the meeting held on 10 July 2012

10. Reports from Sub Committees

None

11. Representatives on Outside Bodies

Ilminster Forum Report for June and July 2012 from Cllr Lawson

Photographic Competition

The Ilminster forum have run a photographic competition for their annual calendar. Members of the public were invited to enter photos of Ilminster (and the surrounding area) with the 12 best being featured in the calendar, and the best being featured on the front. Prizes ranged from £50 to copies of the calendar.

Market Report

The Forum market had decided to drop their fees in order to encourage stall holders in lieu of the recent bad weather. This lower fee would stay in place for the duration of the year.

Marketing Ilminster

Website & Brochure are in development.

Library Garden

Several volunteers are now maintaining the garden, plant donations continue. Plans for an official opening are being discussed.

Litter

Volunteer litter picks continue with cumulative total of bags increasing weekly.

12. Website

It was reported that the Clerk and Councillor Lawson had arranged meetings on the 6th and 7th August with neighbouring towns, to discuss the possibility of sharing the same website provider.

The Clerk informed members the staff had updated the current website to the best of their ability. Agendas were still on the site but minutes had been removed as it was difficult to upload. The website now only contained current information and recent news. Cllr Burton suggested another website provider for the council to investigate and the Clerk agreed to look into this.

13. Code of Conduct

- a) To adopt a new code – The Clerk reported that since sending out two suggested models from District/County and NALC, the District had adopted its new Code of Conduct on the 19th July 2012 with some minor changes.

The Clerk notified the Council of the changes and asked the Council which Code of Conduct it would like to adopt.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the District model Code of Conduct.

- b) To decide procedure for dispensation – The Clerk asked the Council if it was happy to monitor dispensation as recommended by the Monitoring Officer.

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It was **RESOLVED** that the power of dispensation would be taken by the Council, when appropriate.

- c) To amend standing orders – The Clerk reported that due to changes under the Localism Act 2011 revisions needed to be made to standing orders to bring them in line with new legislation.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following amendments be made to standing orders:

S07. - Item C to be changed to Councillors with a disclosable pecuniary interest must leave the room or chamber during the relevant item of the business, unless permitted to remain following the grant of a dispensation.

Item D to be changed to Councillors with an interest in relation to any item of business being transacted at a meeting may (i) make representations (ii) answer questions and (iii) give evidence relating to the business being transacted but must, thereafter, leave the room or chamber, unless permitted to remain the following the grant of a dispensation.

Item E to add- Following a request to the Proper Officer of the Council (the Clerk), the Council may grant a member a dispensation to participate in a discussion and / or vote on a matter at the meeting even if s/he has any form of interest (discloseable pecuniary, other) if the Council believes that the members otherwise prohibited from taking part in the meeting would impede the transaction of the business; or it is in the interests of the inhabitants in the council's area to allow the member to take part; or it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation. The grant of a dispensation is automatically delegated to the Council any dispensation may permit the Councillor to speak, or to speak and vote.

SO 25 To replace the whole of the Power of well-being with Power of General Competence so that

SO25 now reads:

- a) Before exercising the power of general Competence, a meeting of the full Council shall have passed a resolution to confirm it has satisfied the prescribed statutory criteria required to qualify as an eligible parish council.
- b) The Council's period of eligibility begins on the date that the resolution under standing order 25 (a) above was made and has to be renewed by Council Resolution at the annual meeting of the Council that takes place in a year of ordinary elections.
- c) After the expiry of its preceding period of eligibility, the Council continues to be an eligible council solely for the purpose of completing any activity undertaken in the exercise of the power to promote well-being which was not completed before the expiry of the Council's preceding period of eligibility referred to in standing order 25 (b) above.

SO1 item (Y) should be amended to say: If a meeting is or becomes inquorate business may be delegated to the Clerk.

- d) To decide changes to the Register of Interest form – The Clerk informed the Council that SSDC had said they were happy to design an appropriate Register of Interest Form for Town Councillors.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the new Register of Interest form devised by SSDC.

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14. Appointment of Internal Auditor

The Council agreed that for the current year, the previous Internal Auditor would be asked again. To ensure good practice, it was agreed early next year the Council would seek a new Auditor.

15. Receipt of Audit for 2011/2012

The Town Clerk reported that the External Auditor was satisfied with the annual return and that it was in accordance with proper practices and there were no areas of concern.

The Clerk also notified the Council that a notice of conclusion of Audit had been placed on the notice board.

16. Recreation Ground

The Chair of Open Spaces reported a meeting had been set up for a working party to review the whole of the Recreation Ground and was due to be held on 14th August 2012. She hoped to have something positive to report on this in September. The working party comprised of three councillors and district officers.

It was reported that a structured Open Spaces work programme was underway with Cllr Goodall, the Deputy Clerk and district officer Chris Cooper, who was on hand to assist and advise the Deputy Clerk. The skate park was currently being installed and concerns had been raised about the bund. However, this was going to be changed to a slope so that it would be easier to mow. Herras fencing would also need to remain in place for two days after the equipment had been installed to allow it to set fully. It was agreed the Council would put up notices to explain the situation to the public.

17. Cemetery Wall

The Chair of Open Spaces informed the Council another letter had been sent to the neighbouring property to inform them that the Council were seeking advice for the best way forward.

Once this had been achieved the matter would be brought to the attention of the full council.

18. Authorisation of payments

It was **RESOLVED** that the accounts listed in the schedule, totalling £16,946.79 be approved.

19. Action Plan

Action 8 – Herne Hill leaflet

Cllr Miller asked if this item could now be deleted. Cllr Lawson informed Councillors that there were still amendments outstanding.

Action 7 – Hammerhead land

Cllr Shepherd advised his contribution should be made in the confidential section at the end of the meeting.

Action 10 – Bye Laws

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The Clerk said she had been asked to contact Model Flying Association about the bye laws and was waiting a response from them.

Action 11 – Canal Banks

The Mayor reported that there had been repairs to the canal bank to make it safer for pedestrians. He also reported that the problems with the badgers' sets would be addressed at the end of the project. He also said the Canal water levels had dropped due to an unknown person removing the temporary wood that was acting as an over-flow. The problem was being rectified.

Action 16 – Website review

Councillor Miller suggested updating this action following the outcome from the meetings.

Action 21 – Canal Way Parking

The Mayor informed the Councillors that Highways were expected to return at a later date to add additional yellow lining that was required on the corner of Greendale.

20. Town Clerk's Report and Correspondence

The Clerk reported that

- a) There was a workshop being held by SSDC for Localising Support for Council Tax on the Monday 10th August 2012, and a member of the Town Council was invited to attend. Councillors Whaites volunteered to attend and Cllr Goodall said she would already be attending.
- b) A request had been received from Cllr Sainsbury to use the Recreation Ground on September 1st for a team marathon to raise money for charity. The Council had no objections.
- c) A thank you letter had been received from South West Children's Hospice for money raised from the Jubilee head shaving event.
- d) A Letter had been received from Wincanton Town Council asking to hear the views of other Town Councils regarding Section 106 agreements for developments within Market Towns. It was felt that District Councillors ought to be involved in S.106 agreements. There were also suggestions there should be a 106 page on the District Council website to show where S.106 money had been allocated. It was thought it would be helpful to have an update from the S.106 Officer and that he should be invited to attend a future meeting and produce a summary report.
- e) Nominations for the Citizens Award were now being sought. A press release had been sent and a notice has been produced for the notice board.
- f) A request from the Liberal Democrats to use the Council Chamber on the 9th August had been received.

The Council decided to decline the request, on this occasion but it was suggested that the Town Council find out whether there was a specific policy in place regarding the hire of the Council Chamber, and to bring this Item to a future Council meeting.

21. Meeting Dates

4 September – Council meeting

18 September – Open Spaces to include Herne Hill Committee meeting

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2 October – Finance and Policy Committee meeting

16 October – Council meeting

22. Resolution

It was **RESOLVED** that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted it is advisable in the public interest, that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw as laid out in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

23. Confidential items

Hammerhead at Canal Way

Concern was raised about the use of the hammerhead area off Canal Way which was being used by the developers to access the new site of the medical centre.

There appeared to be some suggestion this might continue to be used as an access when the surgery had opened as the developers were still in dispute over the strip of land where the main entrance was to be located.

Members were very concerned about this and felt that a proposal to upgrade the temporary access at the Hammerhead would comprise vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian safety.

It was agreed a letter should be sent to the developer's architect Mr Proctor with the Council's concern on this matter and stating that Council was opposed to continued use of this area and asking for further clarification on the matter.

Councillors Austin and Burton left the meeting here.

Staffing Committee

Councillors were all circulated with the minutes from the Staffing Committee meeting which took place on Friday July 27th.

Following discussion:

It was **RESOLVED** that a Senior Administrator be appointed to work 25 hours per week (including meetings) on Scale point 16-17.

It was **RESOLVED** that the working hours of the Administrative Assistant be increased from 18 to 20 per week to include attendance at evening meetings and that her salary should increase by one scale point.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Deputy Town Clerk's salary should be increased from scale point 21 to 23.

It was **RESOLVED** that the hours for the post of Town Clerk should be increased to 30 hours a week including evening meetings and the role would be advertised on salary scale point 34-36.

It was agreed the vacancies for Senior Administrator and Town Clerk would be advertised on the Society of Local Council Clerks Website, Somerset County Council website, Somerset County Gazette, Chard and Ilminster News and Western Gazette for 2 weeks in the weeks

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beginning 6th and 13th August. Councillor Vijeh would put together a suitable advert to be agreed.

Closing dates for both posts were 22nd August 2012 and shortlisting would take place on 23rd August by Councillors Vijeh, Taylor, Shepherd and Whaites, with Cllr Sainsbury as a substitute if needed.

Interviews for the Town Clerk's post would be on 29th August and for the Senior Administrator on 30th August and the panel would be Councillors Vijeh, Taylor, Shepherd, Whaites and Swann.

Members also wished to set up a meet and greet option with the successful applicants.

The Meeting closed at 10:28 pm

Signed..... Date.....