

**Minutes of the Ilchester Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday April 14<sup>th</sup> 2022  
at the Town Hall, Ilchester at 7.00 pm.**

**Present:** Mrs. H. Panter, Chairman, Mr. S. Marsh, Mr. G. Bushell, Mr. A. Litwinek, Mr. A. Schofield, Miss J. Stapleton, Mr. H. Williams, Mr. N. Bloomfield, County Councillor, Mr. J. Hall, Mr. P. Westlake, Mr. G. Hill, Mr. B. Masters, Ms. T. Rowe, Mrs. G. Verdon and the Clerk to the Parish Council, Mr. P. Horsington.

**Apologies** were received from Mr. J. Hughes, Mr. A. Capozzoli, District Councillor, Councillor, Mr. C. Hull, District Councillor, Mr. P. Rowsell, District Councillor, Mr. R. Graydon, CRO, RNAS, PC. Stefan Edwards & PCSO Tim Russell & Rev. B. Faulkner.

The Chairman opened the Meeting and welcomed all present.

**The Minutes** of the previous year's meeting held on May 20<sup>th</sup> 2021 , having been circulated and with copies being available for the members of the public, were signed as a correct record.

**Chairman's & Councillors' reports.**

**Chairman's report**, as received -

Firstly I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for all their work and support over the last year and also the Clerk.

As you can imagine the last year has not been easy for anyone and we have been doing our best with the covid outbreak and doing our meetings with social distancing.

We have still been busy trying to achieve many things to improve the running of the village. Like traffic flow, lorry's coming through the village, car parking, grass cutting and the general everyday things.

We have two new Councillors this year, Mr. A. Litwinek & Mr. J. Hughes, who were co-opted.

Please note that all members are up for re - election in May.

I will run through a few things with you before I go to my Councillors for their reports.

**Parking**

This is a huge issue everywhere up and down the country but Ilchester is my only concern. We really do need to think of others when we are parking our cars on corners and on pavements. Especially now when so many people have more than 1 or 2 cars. Graham Bushel will have more information on this subject and on the numbers of cars going through the village

**Police**

Well not a lot to say, it has been a while since we have seen anyone at our meetings but that could be a good thing as they are catching criminals or busy doing other things maybe like investigating or interviewing or whatever they do. We do get crime figures every month which is interesting and good for Ilchester our crime rate is very low. We also have 2 new PCSO so keep a lookout and have a chat to them if you can.

**Flooding**

Well everything is on hold to do with the 303 flooding in 2013 – 2014. It is still apparently ongoing and the modelling is in progress. Although apparently a new modelling is in the pipe line so we wait and see and hopefully no more flooding while we wait.

**Planning**

Planning is always a challenge. Nothing is happening to do with the digester that gave us a headache 2 or 3 year ago, the traffic management plan is still in place. The hold up is to do with Phosphate in the soil, SSDC can give you more details about this. The next planning issue we will have is the Country Park with 200 or 300 houses at the top end of the village at Fosse Way. The planning of 150 houses at the top end of the village is in construction as we speak. We have had a few issues with lorries coming through the village instead of coming in the top end and we have had a meeting to discuss this problem.

We are in talks with the Anglers Club about the land adjacent to Ivel Gardens and beside the river. They would like the parish to take it over and maintain the area.

**Dog Fouling**

Very much ongoing problem. What is really annoying is leaving the poo bags around the village and not taking them home. It is littering the village and disgusting. If you have a dog please be responsible and take the bag with you.

**Remembrance Service**

The Remembrance service was celebrated outside the Church, because of Covid so hopefully this year maybe with our masks still on ( your choice ) we can enjoy it better. Teas and coffee were served in the garden area behind Ilchester Arms, we thanked Mr. & Mrs B. Mcgee of the Ilchester Arms for this.

## **Surgery**

We have Mr. Steve Marsh who is a member of the PPG, so he will let us all know how things are going especially with the Covid vaccine. As we all know the doctors surgery was taken over by Symphony, we were told nothing would change. Things did change drastically. If you have a problem and not sure who to go to please tell us or Steve Marsh no names will be given out. The rumour's that have been going around the village about the closure of the Ilchester surgery, this isn't true, as we contacted the manager and the reply was they have no intentions of closing the practice.

As we all know cutting costs effect all of us and we are expected to do more around the village - gully clearing, hedge trimming - but I would like to ask the parishioners to look after their area, especially where you live because every little helps. Many thanks to you all.

## **Mr. Bushell's report -**

### **Finance:**

Monitoring and producing the financial accounts in conjunction with the Clerk.

Preparing the yearly budgets / Precept.

The Precept for the year 2022-23 is £29,000 a £3,000.00 increase on last year.

This increase is to contribute towards the purchase of Ivel Gardens, and the refurbishment work in the Cemetery.

The 2021-22 had some unexpected expense, principally with the rebuilding of the cemetery wall, which collapsed in February 2021 and renewing the adjacent pathway. The mowing the public areas has been reduced.

We started with a balance of £31,682 and finished with a balance of £23,271.00 a reduction of £8,411.00 of the year to 31/03/22.

### **Speed Indicator Device (SID):VAS,**

Installation of the SID in various locations in and around Ilchester.

The SID has been installed 19 times since January 2021

\* 3 times on the B3151 by the School where 70% of vehicles travelled between 25-35 mph.

\* 7 times in Northover where 85% of vehicles travelled between 25 - 35 mph.

\* 2 times in Church Street where 82% of vehicles travelled between 20 - 30 mph.

\* 2 time at the Lymington crossroads facing the Yeovil roundabout where 81% of vehicles travelled between 25-35 mph.

\* 2 times in Podimore where 78% of vehicles travelled between 30 - 50 mph.

\* 2 times in Bridgehampton where 66% of vehicles travelled between 30 - 40 mph.

Yeovilton Parish Council occasional hire the SID at a cost of £50 per session and instal it in Podimore and Bridgehampton.

The SID appears very effective at slowing the traffic down.

Data is put on website and can be passed onto the Police to help them target hotspots.

### **Cemetery:**

Currently managing the Cemetery with Andrew Linwinek.

The central wall fell down due to the ingress of rain so had to be rebuilt together with the pathway.

More recently the large tree on the west wall was damaged by the storm in February 2022 and has since been removed at an unexpected cost of £1,800.

Additional refurbishment work will still need to be done to the cemetery this year. Remember the Cemetery is over 120 years old. Thanks to all for their support.

## **Mr. Marsh's report**

### **Highway matters**

The issues of speeding, volume of traffic and parking continue to be the main concerns. The use of the SID provides evidence of both volume & speed data, which according to County Highways do not consider sufficient to warrant major funding. However, the data does give information, which is sent to the Police.

The Council are highlighting areas where improvements could be made, one idea being put forward is to raise the levels of the three Zebra crossings to make them safer.

Parking is a major concern, as there are examples of cars blocking pavements, putting pedestrians at risk.

## **Mr. Scofield's report**

### **The Skate Park & Mead Play Areas**

The Skate Park is a well-used facility, not only by the residents of Ilchester, but from outlying villages also from Yeovil and Wincanton. The Skate Park is inspected weekly by the SSDC Play & Youth Facility Inspection Team. A copy of the weekly inspection is sent to the Ilchester Parish Council. Any advisory items on the report are addressed by Ilchester Parish Council.

The skate Park equipment was installed in 2005 (17 years old); though safe the equipment is becoming dated. In the next five years the facility will need to be replaced. The cost replacing the ramps will be in excess of £100,000.

Over the past year there have been two episodes of graffiti on the skate park ramps. The first was in September 2021 the second was March 2022. Both episodes have been reported to Avon & Somerset Police Service and recorded as a Criminal Damage Crime.

After the first damage by graffiti was reported, the SSDC Street Cleaning, Environmental Services Team repainted all the ramps at the skate park at the cost of £591.23 plus V.A.T. The second episode of graffiti is yet to be discussed by the Ilchester Parish Council.

The Mead Play area continues to be well used & inspected regularly every two weeks.

### **Mr. H. William's report**

#### **Allotments**

Mr. H. Williams reported that the Parish Council now own the allotment area, all the allotments are taken, and there is a waiting list of nine. A meeting with the Tenants will be held on April 24<sup>th</sup> being the first for two years, due to Covid restrictions. The hedges have been trimmed.

### **Mr. A. Litwinek's report**

#### **Rights of Way**

Mr. Litwinek informed the meeting that the Rights of Way were well used, with no issues to report.

### **Miss J. Stapleton's report**

#### **Youth Parish Councils**

Miss Stapleton reported that due to Covid restrictions no meetings have taken place. However there has been interest expressed by a lady, who would like to be involved and it has been agreed to hold a meeting with the School.

### **Mr. J. Hughes' report**

#### **Platinum Jubilee**

In the absence of Mr. Hughes, the meeting noted the update on the proposals to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Police matters**

The Council noted that regular Crime stats are being received, as well as their Newsletters. It was noted that the Council would appreciate their attendance at meetings on the odd occasion.

### **RNAS report**

The Clerk read the report received from Mr. Graydon RNAS

In this report I am covering points that I believe will be of interest to the Parish Council and any members of the public attending, including briefs on the programmes of our major operators. The latter I haven't included before, but I think it may be enlightening to have an insight into the extent of our support and influence worldwide.

#### **Air Day**

After a great deal of speculation over some months, we were able to announce officially on 17<sup>th</sup> March that there will be no Royal Navy International Air Day this summer. I would stress that this is not a cancellation as the event was never confirmed; and is due to commercial reasons. At this stage I am not able to offer any further news on future Air Days, but will keep you posted as and when I am able.

#### **Low Flying**

We have an enduring obligation to maintain the currency of our aircrew. Flying is a perishable skill which, if it were allowed to lapse through lack of training, would considerably reduce combat effectiveness. You will read in the CHF and WMF individual unit briefs below how crucial this is. Necessarily some of our flying will be at low level and at night. We recognise fully the impact that this can have on our neighbours and take steps to ensure that any intrusion is kept to a minimum. If any member of our local community has concerns, either generally or what they may judge to be a specific problem, these should be addressed either to the Ministry of Defence Low Flying Complaints Unit at RAF Wittering at [SWK-lowflying@mod.gov.uk](mailto:SWK-lowflying@mod.gov.uk) or to me at [robert.graydon422@mod.gov.uk](mailto:robert.graydon422@mod.gov.uk). For specific enquiries, dates and times are crucial. You have all chosen to live in communities that that very close to our busy operational airfield and we appreciate the support you give us.

#### **Publication of Flying Programmes**

I continue to receive requests from members of the public to publish our flying programmes in advance. I accept this might be useful, however I can only reiterate that to advertise widely in advance would, in our view, lead to

misunderstandings. There are a number of reasons why we need to adjust our flying patterns at very short notice: weather conditions, aircraft serviceability and unforeseen operational requirements being uppermost.

### **Flooding**

The historical situation at Stockwith Cross and on towards Bridgehampton appears to have improved following works in that area. This year we have not had to assist with escorting locals across the airfield in the event of flooding in Yeovilton village. That option remains open, subject to the previously agreed timetable.

### **Commando Helicopter Force**

- A. The MK3 'green' Merlins have all been upgraded and have become the MK4 Commando Merlin, which is coloured grey. All the MK4s are with CHF and there will be the same number of Merlins as before.
- B. CHF consists of two Merlin squadrons (845 NAS and 846 NAS), a Wildcat squadron (847 NAS), a Combat Services Support squadron (CSS) and the Commando Mobile Air Operations Team (Commando MAOT).
- C. Due to the Merlin upgrading process over the past two years, coupled with overseas deployments, exercises and tasks, well over half the Merlin fleet were away at any one time and fewer could be seen flying in the skies over Somerset. CHF is now back to normal and full numbers of our Merlins are back to flying training. Subsequently, there will be more flying in our skies than for some time. Such day and night flying training is critical to keep CHF operational.
- D. CHF has roles far and wide. Our helicopters regularly train with or deploy on the Royal Navy's two new aircraft carriers. 845 Naval Air Squadron was part of the HMS Queen Elizabeth Carrier Strike Group's world tour in 2021 and all CHF squadrons have trained with HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales. Our annual Arctic flying training and ground training continues to be undertaken 200 miles inside the Arctic Circle at the Royal Norwegian Airforce Base in Bardufoss, Norway. We are now in our 51<sup>st</sup> of providing this critical winter training in Norway to the UK's helicopter forces. At the same time in recent years CHF elements have participated in large NATO lead exercises in the far north. This year saw 30000 troops from NATO countries participating in Exercise Cold Response. It saw CHF working closely with NATO partners, especially the US Marine Corps.
- E. Another regular requirement is for the Force to provide helicopters to deploy to the Caribbean on board RN vessels for the duration of the hurricane season. These annual events can wreck incredible destruction and cause immeasurable hardship to the people of the Caribbean islands. Often it is only helicopters that can assist with disaster relief and deliver humanitarian aid.
- F. Throughout 2022 CHF will continue to train across the UK as well as more locally and the Force remains on standby to deploy anywhere in the world at short notice to provide whatever helicopter support the UK Government tasks us with. We are proud to be based in Somerset, the historical home of the Fleet Air Arm, and the Force continues to build and maintain strong ties across the Somerset and neighbouring counties.

### **Wildcat Maritime Force**

Four Wildcat Flights in support to Operation Fortis - Carrier Strike Group 21 deployment combining the capabilities of the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force in support of global operations. This deployment saw the largest number of personnel embarked in HMS Queen Elizabeth since she entered service and also the largest single deployment of F-35 fighter aircraft.

1. Fielding of Martlet missile system and successful test firings – now regularly flying with this from Yeovilton.
2. Support to operations to the Eastern Mediterranean and extensively in the Caribbean.
3. A permanent presence in the Gulf and frequent counter drug operations.
4. Personnel deployed as ambulance drivers in Wales in support of the COVID effort.
5. Support to COVID response in Yeovil Hospital and other hospitals in the Southwest.
6. Other emergent tasking dependent on world events.
7. Maintaining 24/365 Very High Readiness aircraft to deploy in support of Maritime Counter Terrorism and Fleet Ready Escort (a single warship maintained at high readiness for deployment at short notice anywhere in the World). Various national/international exercises including deploying to Norway for Exercise Cold Response.
8. Support to Ceremonial events, including the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and Falklands 40.

This information was welcomed.

### **County Councillor's report - Mr. N. Bloomfield**

As the unique five year term as County Councillor is ending, and he is standing as a Candidate, it was noted as he was in the situation of electioneering, he was in 'Purdah'. In his report he highlighted issues he had been involved with over the past five years. The new Somerset Authority will have two members per Division, the District Councils will continue for one year after which all the District Councils created in 1974, will no longer exist. The past five years had been very mixed, particularly the last two years with the Covid pandemic and its impact on Services.

### **District Councillors' report as received from Mr. Capozzoli**

Mr. Capozzoli, District Councillor in a written report stated that the principal issue was the impact of the Phosphate issues on planning decisions. Meetings of SSDC have now returned to the occasional in person rather than via Zoom. Mr. Capozzoli & fellow members were thanked for their support during the year. It was noted that there will be a new Unitary Authority – the Somerset Council, with elections on May 5<sup>th</sup>. It was noted that Mr. Capozzoli is standing as a candidate in the forthcoming election to the new Somerset Authority. The Chair, Mrs. Panter thanked both the County Councillor and the three District Councillors for their support.

### **Reports from Village Organisations.**

#### **Ilchester Town Trust**

The Ilchester Town Trust facilities were closed to business for the first part of 2021 due to the continued restrictions of the pandemic – our doors opened in July 2021 with customers and members of the public welcomed back into the Town Hall and Pavilion, with applicable restrictions in place. The first half of our financial year passed by with minimal income, and we are very grateful to both returning and new customers, who have supported us since our doors reopened and enabled our business to start to rebuild itself.

Maintenance routines have continued throughout the closure period, and our planned maintenance schedule has kept on course throughout the year, with minimal impact from the pandemic. There have been no refurbishments throughout 2021, but we have had new floodlights installed at the Pavilion, along with an additional CCTV camera to ensure we get as much coverage as possible to protect the assets at the Sports field.

Car boot sales started at the Sports field on the last Sunday in June. These continued through to the end of September and garnered just under £7k, which was used for the new floodlights, CCTV, and will be used for the installation of a door locking system at the Pavilion in the summer of 2022.

The rebuilding of the Market Cross started in July 2021, with skilled stonemasons Boden and Ward working within the compound on the Green for almost four months, to bring this historic monument back to its former glory.

The Market Cross is the central point of the Community, and a re-dedication ceremony was held on the evening of Monday 25<sup>th</sup> October, with a sound and light show, followed by a short dedication by the Rev. Faulkner.

The Trust instructed an ecologist to do a series of wildlife surveys at the Roman cemetery site at Northover. The survey work will be completed by late spring of 2022. At this stage a plan to complete scrub clearance at the site will be able to commence.

The Priory Road “Ransom Strip” was purchased by the Trust using funds supplied by the High Street residents whose properties are bounded by the strip. It is the Trust’s intention to issue permanent easements for access across the strip to those residents once the ownership has been confirmed by the Land Registry, who have been incredibly tardy in their work. The Trust is incredibly disappointed to hear of the severe problems being experienced with the District Council by one of the residents, in seeking planning permission to create vehicle access.

#### **IDCA report**

It was noted that the Newsletter is being published bi-monthly.

#### **IRINEC report**

#### **Ilchester Relief in Need and Education Report - April 2022**

The object of the Charity is twofold, firstly to provide Relief in Need either generally or individually to persons resident in the Parish of Ilchester, and secondly in the Promotion of Education of persons resident in the Parish of Ilchester. A financial need must be established for Relief in Need applications.

The charity’s income is derived from the rents on farmland owned mainly in the Parish of Stocklinch gifted to the charity by Robert Veal in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Further income is derived from the interest on charity investments.

During 2021 Trustees have been approached by students attending university, further education college and other training providers. These students have been supported to help them with their studies. Trustees are also approached by educational establishments in the parish of Ilchester to support local organisations. During 2021 IRINEC has supported more than 18 students in 2021. Trustees have also provided grants for individuals and organisations where a need is established.

The Charity is in a stable financial position and aims to continue giving support to the Community during 2022.

#### **Ilchester Community Primary School: Report from Mr. N. Heath -as received**

Report received from Mr. N. Heath from the Ilchester Community Primary School

Like so many areas of life, the last twelve months have been a turbulent one for the school. Managing covid-related absences in both children and staff has presented significant challenges which have persisted right through until this moment in time.

During lockdowns, many of our children continued to attend school as their parents were classified as key workers, however we also maintained responsibility for the learning of those children still at home. Laptops and workbooks were distributed as needed and- thanks to IRINEC- we were able to increase our supply of devices to supplement those available through government schemes. No parent in Ilchester therefore reported being unable to access learning from the primary school online although, of course, the challenges for many of working from home and supervising children's learning simultaneously were significant!

Clubs and extra-curricular activities have restarted and we have enjoyed welcoming parents back to school for both social events and face-to-face parents' evenings. In the coming months I will be holding an open meeting for those in the wider Ilchester Community to come and discuss our vision for the future of Ilchester Primary and what they want to see our school doing and be involved with. I am looking forward to re-engaging with all in Ilchester and to the future as school and life gets back to normal.

**St Mary Major PCC report - as received from Rev. B. Faulkner**

In the absence of Rev. Faulkner due to it being Maundy Thursday, it was noted that there will be 'Coronation' in St. Mary's Church at the end of May, involving the Schools being part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

**Other issues.**

Mrs. G. Verdon, also a Candidate for the Somerset Authority stated that she had enjoyed attending the meeting and these meetings have their own character.

Mr. Hall expressed his concern at the volume and speed of traffic through Northover. He was assured that the data collected is sent to the Police.

Ms. T. Rowe, asked for contact details reference illegal parking. These were to be made available.

Ms. T. Rowe stated that the signpost in Church Street to Limington was still in need of being repainted and offered her help. Mr. Marsh informed her that this work is still on his list to be done.

There being no other matters raised, Mrs. Panter thanked all those present and closed the meeting at 8.00pm.

Signed.

Date.