



**Minutes of Ilchester Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 8th May 2025
at the Town Hall, Ilchester at 7.00 pm.**

Councillors: Cllr D Galloway (Chair), Cllr J Hall, Cllr H Williams, Cllr J Stapleton, Cllr S Marsh, Cllr A Schofield, Cllr S Bomers, Cllr R Binns
Parish Clerk: R Coombes
County Councillors: Cllr E Pearlestone, Cllr J Bailey
Parishioners: 5 members of the public attended
Apologies: None

271/2024 Apologies

None received.

272/2024 The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th May 2024

These minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was resolved that they be signed as correct.

273/2024 Chairmans and councillors reports

Cllr Galloway provided the following chairs report: "Welcome to the annual parish meeting. Firstly, I'd like to thank my fellow councillors for their work and support over the year. Also, to Marie Grice for her time as councillor. Secondly, a very big thank you to our clerk, Ruby Coombes who has been a great help to me and service to the council in getting our policies, procedures and financial management tools in good order. We do have a vacancy for a councillor if you know anyone who might be interested.

Main achievements:

- Installation of a 20mph traffic zone in the centre of the village. Although it is obvious that not every vehicle complies, the general sense is this has made a difference.
- Refurbishment of the Limington Road fingerpost – this looks much smarter now.
- We have agreed contractors and quotes for repair to the Limington Road cemetery wall and to resurface the market square car park.
- With thanks to Graham Hill, some progress in involving various agencies to resolve regular flooding at the Mead with repairs to the drainage.
- Writing and adopting required policies for the council.

Main disappointments and challenges:

- Somerset Council's planning committee's decision to approve a further 200 residential units at Hainbury Meadows despite our formal objections.
- The failure of Vistry Group to complete the remediation work to roads and footpaths at Hainbury Meadows. We contacted our MP twice and Vistry Customer Services each month to push for action.
- We were unable to replace our faulty Speed Indication Device this year as funding from the Police was not forthcoming. We will try again.
- A lack of volunteers to record illegal transits of HGV's through the village.

Finances

We are still unsure what services Somerset Council may withdraw and make us responsible for. To that end we have raised our annual precept income to £52.16 for a Band D property.

Your money is primarily spent on maintenance of grassed areas, inspections, operations and administrative expenses, major repairs and donations.”

Cllr Binns read a report regarding the website. “The website has continued to be updated through the year with relevant information. In the past month there have been issues regarding the SSL certificate for the site and with the email accounts Vision ICT provide to us. We have decided to look for a new provider as we are unhappy with the level of service provided in response to these issues.”

Cllr Schofield reported that The Mead play area was still being inspected bi-weekly by Somerset Council and raised no concerns, it appears to be well used. Cllr Schofield acknowledged the end of the lease on the land where the skatepark is situated.

Cllr Williams reported to the council regarding the allotments. Cllr Williams stated there is currently 1 full plot and 3 half full plots vacant. There have been a few instances of theft over the past year, these have been reported to the police. There has been a slight problem with rabbits and the water tank has now been secured as it had been leaking.

Cllr Bomers updated parishioners regarding planning. The council continue to ensure the communities best interests are considered during planning applications.

Cllr Hall provided an update regarding highways. Cllr Hall stated lorry watch has been set up and is beginning to work, but there is currently a lack of volunteers. Further work is being done investigating use of ANPR cameras to aid the lorry watch. It was noted that the 20mph zone had been installed by Somerset Council.

Cllr Stapleton provided an update regarding cemetery matters over the last year. It was noted that outer wall has cracked on the corner and this will be repaired. Consideration will be paid to the grave that is situated close to the wall and a bush will be removed from the inside of the wall to prevent further damage. Cllr Stapleton also noted that the chapel has received repair and painting and will now be offered to IDCA for storage. Cllr Stapleton and Cllr Marsh checked the stability of the gravestones and 7 were laid down. Further work to the trees and vegetation at the cemetery will be undertaken shortly.

274/2024 Police Matters & RNAS

Phil Jones reported regarding matters at the base. Operational squadrons have been in various locations. Merlins have been supporting operations in Gaza. There has been an increase in the amount of air crew they need to put through in the next 12 months.

First Bus have decided it wasn't a viable option to continue the 54 bus from the village to the base and the museum. Local people need to use 54 bus otherwise it will potentially be lost.

Refurbishment of the runway is still being surveyed, which means that the air show will not happen until 2029. RNAS continue to work with the school and support curriculum activity, they also provide flood lit facilities for the local football team.

275/2024 Somerset Councillors' reports

Cllr Pearlestone provided an update from Somerset Council. It was noted that some of the bins have been removed from the Hainbury Meadow development, this has been logged with Somerset Council and is being investigated. Cllr Bailey informed the council that he has yet to receive notification that the fosseway can be turned into a green lane.

276/2024 Reports from Village Organisations

Graham Mottram provided a report from the Town Trust which can be viewed at *Appendix 1*.

Cllr Binns provided a report regarding IDCA. "The last year for IDCA has been another successful one, with many events enjoyed all. We trialed combining the flower and produce elements of the village show with the village fete, to better take advantage of the growing season. This was successful, but left the craft show in September a little bare and so this year we will be combining both events into one date in July. We also ran our regular Halloween and Christmas events, and this year we have kicked things off with the annual bunny hunt. We purchased a new printer to enable us to keep producing the IDCA newsletter and have extended our production to include copies to be delivered to the newer houses in the village. The Lendinae Explorers have been delivering these copies for us in a partnership beneficial to both sides. As always, we are in need of more volunteers – either to join the committee – or more importantly to help out on event days. We are grateful for the ongoing support of the Parish council and local businesses and organizations."

Cllr Marsh provided an update from IRINEC. "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 13th century. Further income is derived from the interest on charity investments.

During 2024/25 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 2024/5 IRINEC has supported more than 27 students. Trustees have also provided grants for individuals and organisations where a need is established.

The charity is in a stable financial position and aim to support the community during 2025/26. The annual financial accounts for the charity are on the Charity Commission website. Any enquiries can be made through the clerk; Kaye Elston and her email address is kayeelston@aol.co.uk"

Rev Faulkner had sent a report which can be viewed at *Appendix 2*. It was noted there is work required to the war memorial, Rev Faulkner agreed to seek quotes.

The school provided a report which can be viewed at *Appendix 3*.

277/2024 Other issues raised

No further issues were raised.

The meeting ended at 19:36

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 1

ILCHESTER TOWN TRUST ANNUAL REPORT

Financial Year ending 31st December 2024 The Town Hall and Pavilion continue to be a popular venue for hire by both the local community and clients further afield. Both venues are a valuable source of revenue. The Town Hall continues to be used regularly: as a polling station for official elections; a provider of meeting rooms for local organisations; a place for community events such as the charity coffee mornings and for rentals for events such as wakes and christening celebrations.

The library and museum within the Town Hall were open to the public, the museum seasonally, and the library throughout the year. Both are dependent for their operation upon volunteers; the museum on a small team; and library by a single committed individual.

The Trust hosted teas for the annual Remembrance Day service and procession in November this year, plus the annual Christmas Lantern Parade, and Carols on the Green during December.

The sports grounds continue to be used regularly by the Ilchester Youth football club throughout the year. The Pavilion hosts a variety of activities such as exercise classes, band practice and a base for the local Brownies. The weekly car boot sales between April and October are a very important source of income for the Trust and the voluntary help from the local community plays a major and essential part in their running.

As well as routine maintenance for both the Town Hall and Pavilion buildings, both are ageing and invoking notable expenditure. Throughout 2023 the Town Hall suffered with severe water ingress on the main stairway leading to the Main Hall. A roof survey revealed major works to the second-floor dormer windows was required and the works were conducted in 2024. Unfortunately, later in the year, further leaks were discovered on the other side of the roof, by the main hall windows and the flat lounge. Scaffolding was erected and the problem areas were found and repaired, the roof has cost the Trust in the region of £16k this year. A rolling program for installing LED lights at the Town Hall has been conducted during 2024, will continue into 2025, and will extend to the Pavilion. Not only does this reduce consumption costs and is more environmentally friendly, but the replacement of extremely old lighting brightens up the corridors and rooms.

The Museum continued to be manned by a small but dedicated group of volunteers, every Wednesday, and alternate Saturdays from Easter through to October half-term, in 2024. The total donations to the museum fund came to just over £800, a good increase when compared to 2023. It is hoped that the museum will open on Wednesdays and the last Saturday in the month during the 2025 season, due to a slight reduction in volunteer availability.

A long overdue new front door and code system was installed at the pavilion at a cost of approximately £4,500. This provides enhanced security for the building and is part of the improvements required for staff and customer safety. Ongoing safety improvements included the installation of driveway fencing to prevent children from running out in front of cars. Fencing has also been installed to protect an area designated as a safe children's play area. Costs for fencing came in at just under £5k. Flooded fields and pitches prevented the car boots sales starting until late in April. Sadly, the weather has again had a massive impact on sales, with takings reduced to £16.5k for the season. The serious flooding caused Ilchester Youth Football Club to suffer reduced usage. The flooding is also causing the Trust a significant problem, as any cars which park on the fields after severe weather cause extensive damage to the grounds. The pavilion has never had a constructed car park, yet the activities planned for the ground (car boot sales, event hire and

football matches (Ilchester Football Club has some thirty teams), all require, and in some cases, extensive parking.

At the Ilchester Roman Cemetery, a project of clearance work to investigate the best route for public access, made satisfactory progress in 2024. A boundary wall and gateway in extremely poor state of repair, was rebuilt and a gate reinstated. A REPF grant for the wall, gate and the purchase of some benches and storyboards was approved and will be received in January 2025.

2024 was another expensive year for the Trust and saw another financial loss. Charges have been increased for 2025 because the Trustees are conscious that they are eroding their reserves year on year.

Appendix 2

The Parochial Church Council of Ilchester with Sock Dennis and Northover Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2024

The aims of St Mary Major's church council

St Mary Major's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Bruce Faulkner, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the Church building of St Mary Major, Ilchester and the church hall buildings (also known as the Old school rooms) located next to the church.

The PCC has continued to focus its activities and those of the church community throughout 2024 on its sense of vocation, 'Open to God; to grow in faith and to serve God's vision for our community with all our talents', within the parish of Ilchester with Northover.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable 'every member of the parish of Ilchester with Northover' to be 'open to God' through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Ensuring that the church building is both an accessible and welcoming environment and fit for purpose in people's explorations of 'their gifts in service of others and their worship of God in Christ Jesus'.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the Church of St Mary Major.

2024 – Our Celebrations and Challenges

Although regular attendance is usually around a dozen we do have regular and irregular visitors join us when staying with friends or relatives or researching ancestors in the area. We welcome a new member, who has actively joined the team caring for the grounds and is now a member of the PCC. The re-wilding area in the church yard remains and we look forward to the emergence of wild flowers and grasses as the seasons progress. There are several large trees in the grounds that attract bats and birds. The inside of the church is regularly cleaned and beautified with flowers by members of the congregation and opened to all daily for those seeking privacy for reflection and prayer.

We have for some time joined in community events such as coffee mornings in the Town Hall and helping out at other events. This last year we have taken steps to make the church and grounds open to the community for events such as Flower, Produce and Craft show and Village Fayre. It is hoped people who are wary of entering a church with familiarity will feel more comfortable and perhaps join us. To this end the Ilchester Community school mounted a display of their art work in the church over the summer. This followed a display of their work by Ilchester Art Club. We hope these events will be repeated. The school children visit the church to learn of its history and purpose from Rev. Bruce Faulkner and Christingle services at Christmas are a great favourite and well attended.

St Andrew's Families @ 4 continues to be held monthly in the Infant Department hall. We have core of families who regularly attend and others who come when they can. The format of the service is changing as we work 2 with the families and try to tailor it to meet their needs in the

faith. Recently we introduced a 'family cube' whereby each family, or each member as they wish takes home a cardboard cube. The aim is that any questions arising from the service, or otherwise is written on the cube and discussed at home then brought to the next service for wider discussion. As some of the children are very young we helpers try to keep them occupied allowing others freedom to talk to Bruce and ask questions. This seems a popular way of enabling discussion.

The 'Sonrise' service at Easter held in the grounds of St Andrew's Northover at 6.30am continues for those who are early birds. Standing on the bank outside the church facing east as the sun rises is very moving and there's bacon butties at the Rectory after!

In 2025 a new monthly Contemporary Morning Prayer service (Together for God) will be introduced and to that end we have, through generous donations purchased copies of Mission Praise hymn and song book to replace the previous hymn books. The new book contains nearly all the content of the old but many up to date offerings.

This year, the Harvest Festival once more saw the church donate a large amount of produce to the local food bank, 'The Lord's Larder' in Yeovil. Also the Christmas shoe box appeal saw an amazing 108 shoe boxes collected with contributions from Ilchester Community Primary School and dispatched to Eastern Europe, to Ukraine, in time to bring some cheer for Christmas.

As well as our regular services, we look to serve and care for our community as they celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commend the person into God's keeping. We have celebrated 5 baptisms, 2 weddings and held 5 funerals, also in our church.

It has been an unsettling year financially with the decision to sell the Old School Rooms making slow progress. Whilst not able to make any in come from their rental we still have to insure and pay standing charges. We are hoping 2025 will see the sale and completion of all legalities to allow the church to recoup costs from the sale money.

We are also anticipating the finalizing of the boundaries of the new Ivelmeads benefice. We look forward to becoming familiar with the new churches and getting to know their members. We will be sharing clergy, lay reader and lay worship assistants across all parishes.

We are hoping 2025 will be a more settled year!

Appendix 3

Ilchester Community Primary School Academic Year 2024/2025

In September 2024, we welcomed children, staff and parents (old and new) to join together and embrace our school, and the wider, community. 'Child Centred Learning in the Heart of the Community' continues to live and breathe at ICPS where the children thrive due not only to the care, encouragement and support of the whole team here at school but also from the enrichment of experiences with our families and friends in the Ilchester environs; not forgetting RNAS Yeovilton.

Focusing on our time spent with the community -

The Autumn Term saw visits to Burrow Hill Cider for our Reception children causing great excitement for their first school trip; our KS1 children went to the Water Buffalo Farm to find out about food from 'field to fork' and KS2 went farther afield to visit the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester to enhance their historical learning about Roman Britain and the Rural Life Museum where they had the fantastic opportunity to experience life as an evacuee linking into their World Wars history project.

Our generous families opened their food cupboards and donated a total of 532 food items for our Harvest Festival collection to support, via The Lord's Larder, those who are hungry and in need in our local area.

Our annual British Legion Poppy Appeal raised a staggering £520.54 this year. We are very proud to support this charity which offers support to serving personnel, veterans and their families; a cause which is very close to our hearts here at Ilchester Community Primary School. This is the largest amount we have raised since supporting this charity.

To support KS1's new History topic on Grace Darling, we had a workshop with three medics from the Army Air Corp. They showed us how they help injured soldiers now. We had great fun bandaging each other up and trying out the stretcher.

It was a privilege to welcome Captain Bolton and members of the 1 Regiment Army Air Corps to our Remembrance Service. Our Year 6 pupils were also invited to attend the Remembrance Service at RNAS Yeovilton. They represented our school brilliantly and felt an immense sense of pride.

The year groups worked in harmony to learn about and make Christingles which culminated in visiting the church for a Christingle celebration led by Rev Bruce.

We were fortunate to have help from Julie Stapleton and her team from IDCA to make lanterns for the second year running. It was magical to see over 200 people making the pilgrimage from school to the Town Green for the Lantern Parade to witness the turning on of the Christmas lights.

Our singing club represented the school beautifully when they attended the Diners Christmas lunch. They performed the songs they had been learning with Mrs Faulkner and enjoyed spending time talking with the older members of our community. The Diners and wider community were presented with handmade cards and baked treats from the children of ICPS. We also took festive treats to many of the local businesses.

The children were able to experience the magic of flying Santa once more. They gave their Christmas lists excitedly to Santa and some of them were even lucky enough to speak to him through the radio as he took off on his journey back to the North Pole!

In the Spring Term we welcomed John Bailey, our Town Councillor, and Jeremy from Ilchester Parish Council for an assembly about how to care for and improve Ilchester. The children were invited to support the councillors with some traffic data and contributed to the initiative 'Truck Watch'.

KS1 followed a map and walked through the village, adding features such as the church and garage to the map as they walked. The children used this information to create their own maps of Ilchester.

KS2 participated in a Flooding Assembly and Workshop. The assembly focused on what flooding is; where flooding might happen; what to do if faced with any flooding and how we can look after the environment. The workshop involved exploring the flood map of Ilchester – identifying key areas and suggesting ways that we could prevent flooding from happening in the future.

As you will be aware, Storm Bert removed the roof from our mobile classrooms at the Infant Department which led to the children being relocated to other spaces across the school. The community spirit we experienced was phenomenal and enabled us to keep the disruption to learning to an absolute minimum.

KS2 participated in an exciting and engaging STEM Workshop from RNAS Yeovilton which centred around the fascinating world of drones fostering a deeper understanding of aerodynamics in a fun and engaging way.

KS2 children started swimming at the Leisure Centre in Huish Episcopi

Reception children learnt about people who help us in our local community. They have had visits from our school cleaners and site manager, the police and armed forces, and Reverend Bruce. The children have learnt lots about crossing patrols and road safety, water safety and coast guards, postal services and much more!

The Year 6 children had the unique opportunity to participate in a workshop led by local police officers focused on anti-racism and understanding the legal implications surrounding criminal age. The session aimed to educate young minds about the importance of diversity, inclusion, and respect for all individuals, regardless of their background.

It was wonderful to see the children celebrating World Thinking Day. The children looked very smart in their Brownie, Rainbow and Scout uniforms. It was lovely to see the support for this global event from our local groups.

World Book Week was an amazing time. We shared our love of reading by inviting parents to workshops, listening to visiting authors and fully embracing dressing up as our favourite characters. Many Easter activities were enjoyed including the SSAFA Easter Egg Competition, Easter Bingo and many families joining the IDCA Bunny Hunt.

We began the summer term with a full-on celebration of VE Day. The diary is packed full of adventure with residential trips, Ilchester Museum, Bugfest, Ilchester's Got Talent! and sports day to name but a few.

The school and wider community provide comprehensive learning enrichment and a busy social calendar for all our age groups alongside improving academic achievements in an inclusive and supportive environment.