

# Ilmington Parish Council

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held in Ilmington Village Hall on 22 May 2025 at 7:30pm

**Present:** Chairman Karen Peachey, and 18 residents including Parish Councillors Lara Lowe, Malcolm Lowe, Chris Plyming, and Martin Underwood

### 1. Welcome Remarks

The Chairman of Ilmington Parish Council welcomed residents, and introduced the parish councillors seated at the top table.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

The Parish Meeting minutes of 23 May 2024 were taken as read, approved by those present and duly signed by the Chairman.

### 3. Annual Review of the Year

- (a) **District Council:** Cllr Dominic Skinner had sent a written report which is appended.
- (b) **County Council:** The newly elected county councillor was not present.
- (c) **Ilmington Parish Council:** Cllr Karen Peachey reported that improvements had been made to security at the playing field with installation of a height barrier, and the management of the pavilion had returned to the Council, bringing responsibilities including risk assessments and planning. The external toilets had also been renovated and a cleaner engaged to maintain standards. A dozen new trees have been planted. Members were reminded that the Parish Council meets on the last Thursday of each month and currently has one vacancy. She also thanks the Ilmington Community Shop for continuing to allow Parish Council meetings to be held at the café.

### 4. Reports from Community Organisations

- (a) **Ilmington Show Committee:** Chair Paul Dakin reported that the 2024 Show was highly successful, attracting approximately 4,500 attendees and giving record disbursements of £14,000 was made, including £6,000 to Myton Hospice, Shakespeare Hospice, Shipston Home Nursing and the Air Ambulance, with the remainder distributed to local good causes. A further £1,000 is currently held for the war memorial fund. Traffic congestion had been identified as an issue, and plans are in place to improve traffic management this year. Plans for the current year include birds of prey, music bands, puppets, inflatables and cooking demonstrations. A flypast is provisionally planned, subject to confirmation. The Show continues to attract strong attendance and interest from visitors outside the village. While the current format is successful, concerns were raised about capacity and parking as the event grows. It was also noted that the number of village stalls is declining, with a risk that the event could become increasingly commercial if this trend continues. Volunteer recruitment is becoming more difficult, and paid marshals are now being used; however sponsorship income is increasing significantly.

- (b) **Ilmington Road Safety Group:** Since the last update, planning has continued, but the wheels of bureaucracy move slowly said Rick Burgess. The aim is to promote compliance with the speed limit and in due course reduce it to 20mph. Three speed surveys were carried out last year on Mickleton Road, Back Street and Campden Hill. Speeding was observed on Mickleton Road and Campden Hill, with Back Street having fewer issues consistent with expectations. He noted that, somewhat counterintuitively, lower limits cannot be introduced unless traffic is already compliant with those speeds. Highways officers undertook a suitability assessment for the installation of village gateways which could help to reduce speeds in the village. A consultation is currently underway to gauge community support for this approach.
- (c) **Sewage Group:** Steve Routly, leading the working group, reported that the project is nearing conclusion to address sewage flooding and odour problems in the village. The issue arises where three flows combine into a single sewer, leading to repeated sewage discharges during rainfall. Following a public meeting in July 2023, attended by senior Severn Trent Water representatives, the issue was taken seriously and multiple meetings have since taken place. CCTV surveys of the village sewers, alongside investigation of groundwater ingress and submitted video evidence, confirmed that the pipe is undersized. A solution has been agreed to upgrade the infrastructure, with a scheme costing in excess of £1 million now fully funded. While capacity at the treatment works will not be increased, all overflow will be directed through reed beds to prevent untreated effluent entering the brook. The works will involve installing a new 300m parallel pipe from Cross Leys Corner to Armscote Road, where flows will then join a single line to the treatment works. Construction is expected to take place this summer, which should prevent further flooding events over the coming winter.
- (d) **Water Testing Group:** A spin-off group has been carrying out water testing over the past 18 months, funded by grants from the Show Committee and Warwickshire County Council, administered via the Parish Council. Data is submitted to the SafeAvon group. In summary, Middle Street has recorded the cleanest water in the county, with low nitrate levels attributed to runoff from grassland. In contrast, treated discharge from the sewage works measures approximately 10.9ppm, compared with a legal limit of 0.5ppm. It was noted that the Environment Agency does not set limits for smaller sewage works due to lower overall discharge volumes. Work is ongoing to encourage Severn Trent Water to consider chemical treatment at smaller sewage works. The group thanked the Parish Council and Show Committee for their support and confirmed sufficient funding remains to continue testing, which requires consumables, until the end of the year.
- (e) **20:20 Wildlife Group:** Liz Garton described several projects currently underway. At the pond, tree cutting has improved light levels, increasing the likelihood of wildlife survival. Water testing has shown surprisingly healthy conditions with low nitrates, and frogspawn has been observed. Breaks in the pipe to the pond have been identified, which should make repairs more straightforward. Wildflower areas have been sown in several locations, including Upper Green with marker stakes installed. The work is supported by the Wildlife Trust. Significant preparation is required to remove thatch before further sowing can take place. Additional planting has taken place in the churchyard to create a pollinator corridor, including borage, 200 crocuses and a mahonia. Other activities include talks on hedgehogs and another on swifts, and sharing information to remind residents about dark skies. The group is working with the Parish Council on a

Biodiversity Plan, now in its third draft, which is expected to support better environmental decision-making. A wider concern noted is the global impact of herbicides and pesticides on pollinator populations, and the group is exploring alternatives where possible.

- (f) **Ilmington Village Hall:** Chair Bryan Clifford provided a report, noting that the hall is well managed and in regular use for a wide range of activities. These include birthday parties for all ages, weddings, curling, table tennis, cinema screenings, the Wednesday Club, a drama group, exercise sessions for people with Parkinson's, as well as concerts and performances such as rock bands, jazz events, choirs and plays. However, the most recent production attracted only eight attendees, which brings the viability of continuing to hold these events into question. Several improvements have been made to the hall, including replacement of the servery roof, installation of additional heating, and new electrically operated blinds. Planned works include upgrading the disabled toilet facilities and replacing rotten window frames. Funding for improvements is drawn from previous grants, although reserves are gradually reducing. Fundraising activities help to keep hire charges affordable for users. Given that the hall is more than 100 years old, consideration is being given to the long-term future of the building, including the potential need for a replacement hall.
- (g) **Ilmington Community Shop:** The Chair of the Shop Committee reported that the shop remains in a strong financial position following another successful year. A key factor in its success is the contribution of around 8,000 volunteer hours annually, and they are incredibly grateful to all of the volunteers. Significant recent investments included £15,000 for resurfacing the car park and £10,000 for the installation of solar panels on the roof thanks to a £6,000 grant from Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Community Climate Change and Nature Recovery Fund. The solar array went live on 2 May and, in its first 20 days, generated 1.15 MWh of electricity, accounting for 38% of total electricity usage. Further improvements to the café included a new dishwasher to create an easier working environment. The meeting also heard that the constitution had been amended to allow money to be distributed back to the community or to shareholders.
- (h) **Wednesday Club:** The Club which meets on second Wednesdays, welcomes anyone over age of 50. Activities and outings have included energy savings advice, a Valentine singer, an antiques roadshow, an archaeological walk, first aid, Guide Dogs, Hidcote gardens in Warwickshire, music events, Batsford Arboretum and the Christmas party. Membership costs just £6 per year, with meetings charged at £2 for members and £3.50 for non-members including tea and cake. The club is largely self-funding, with support from Ilmington Show. The Wednesday Club has been part of the village for at least 60 years and features in photographs in *Ilmington Images* from 1967. Concern was expressed about the future of the club due to declining numbers and the vacancy for the position of chair. Unless a new chairperson can be found, the club may have to close.
- (i) **Ilmington 20:20:** A committee member reported that *20:20 Circulation* remains a key part of village communications, with 382 subscribers to its Wednesday briefing. The Village Directory is due for revision in 2026. In conjunction with the village shop, welcome bags continue to be provided for new residents, which include information on local events, clubs and groups, together with vouchers and tickets. The soft plastics recycling scheme proved very popular, although was hard work for volunteers and will be discontinued now that the district council has begun collecting soft plastics. Around 300 litres of soft plastics were collected that would otherwise have gone to landfill.

- (j) **Playing Field Committee:** Fred Edmunds reported that the playing field was well used over the weekends. The grass is in good condition and a donation had been received from the Show Committee towards its upkeep. He expressed concern that the field is no longer being used by adult football teams and that, without greater use by clubs, funding would reduce. No committee meeting has been held for six months.
- (k) **Cinema Club:** Now in its 19th year, the Cinema Club continues to operate “Screen on the Green”, with an average attendance of around 35. Highlights include recognition of Ilmington in *The Sunday Times*’ list of best places to live and improvements to heating in the village hall. The club is hoped to continue for the foreseeable future.
- (l) **Ilmington Defib Group:** The group has now disbanded, and despite advertising, no replacement volunteers have come forward. The devices are now maintained by Shipston First Responders, and contact numbers are displayed on the cabinets. Regular checks are being carried out to ensure the equipment remains operational.
- (m) **Ilmington Tennis Club:** A committee member reported that the facility continues to perform well and is maintained in good condition, providing a steady income stream with increasing “pay and play” use. The club has around 80 members, including approx. 60 adults and the rest juniors. Coaching is offered to both members and non-members, and the club participates in two local leagues, with additional use by the school. The Club is considering a plan to convert the practice court into a padel court..

#### 5. Public Question Time

There was an opportunity for residents to ask questions.

#### 6. Close of the Meeting

The Chairman invited people to stay for refreshments after the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9:05pm.

Signature of Chairman on approval of the minutes: \_\_\_\_\_