

**Notes on Land Use Sub-Committee Meeting
held at The Shrubbery Hotel on 28 November 2005**

Present: Cllr N Campbell
Cllr D Miller
Cllr S Shepherd
Mr Stephen Fisher

1. Background

The Sub-Committee had been charged with exploring land use in the town as part of the strategic planning exercise.

Whilst the town Council owned a considerable amount of recreational land, most development would take place on land under the control of others. It was necessary therefore to make some educated assumptions on the likely strategies of those landowners.

2. Canal Way

- a. It appeared to be an open secret that the doctors in the town were intending to move their surgeries to a site to the west of the Hammerhead and south of Canal Way – a field currently part of Somerset County Council farm holdings. SCC were reported to be willing to release the land (subject presumably to appropriate planning consents) and the likely entry would be off the road about some 300M to the west of the Hammerhead.
- b. Some private discussions were taking place about the future of schooling in Ilminster. The Town Council was pressing for the current three-tier system to be dismantled and a secondary school provided in the town. Bearing in mind the increasing number of school age children in Ilminster, and the inadequacy of Greenfylde long term (with a least break at 2011), it seemed likely that a new school would be necessary. Speculatively that could be either a new secondary school with existing Swanmead premises being used for primary or a new primary provision with Swanmead being upgraded.

Either way, it seemed likely that any new school would be built on the same County Council land south of Canal Way.

In the circumstances, it would seem reasonable to view this County Council owned land as appropriate for the development of public facilities – medical centre, school and whatever other provision appeared reasonable. A Sports Centre for example could be considered, particularly since there would need to be adequate parking.

3. Greenfylde School

If Greenfylde School and the associated site became available, then it would appear to offer a possible location for public facilities which would be better placed in the town centre. Town/District Council offices, library, tourist centre, youth club, nursery facilities sprang to mind. The rear open space could be converted to a car park with a walk through into Silver Street which it is believed, will in the long term become pedestrianised.

4. Gooch and Housego

The future of the Gooch and Housego premises in the town will become an issue before Greenfylde. The Old Magistrates Courts, whilst requiring some work to comply with Disability legislation, could nevertheless be seen as appropriate for example for the Town Council.

5. Shudrick Lane

It was noted that the Planning Inspector had recommended inclusion of the area to the east of the Shudrick Lane for housing. the feeling was that consideration should be given to the development of that area, in particular for Shudrick Lane to be extended to the east to Townsend, thereby offering a distributor road to the east of town. Such a move would probably be necessary if there was a long-term intention of pedestrianising the town centre.

6. Horlicks Site

It was noted that a revised plan was expected for the Horlicks site, in advance of which it would be difficult to speculate on the future of land to the north of Station Road between Winterhay Lane and Southfields Roundabout.

7. West Crescent

The general view was that if the Town Council needed resources to deliver some of its objectives, serious consideration should be given to the use of West Crescent for building.

8. Next Meeting

It was agreed that it would be helpful to meet in January 2006 along with County Councillor Tony Shire.

OPEN SPACE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Ilminster is extremely fortunate in the open space that is available for public use both close to the town centre and on the periphery. It is well served for sport and recreation, children's play areas, general open space, woodland and nature walks.

Much of that land is under Town Council control and is therefore well maintained and managed. The town owes a debt to previous Councils who had the foresight to purchase/take over land when it was available and protect its use.

2. Whilst nothing is fixed for all time, the Town Council starts from the premise that the land it owns or leases on the Recreation Ground, the land it owns on Brittens Field and West Crescent as well as its holding of Herne Hill will be retained as green open space for the enjoyment of the people of the town for sport, recreation and general activity. As such it will continue to maintain the play areas, the play facilities, the green space and the woodland to a high standard and will commit the necessary resources to that end. The same applies to the play area and open space at Winterhay Lane which the Council owns.

3. The open space currently houses our successful football, cricket and youth football clubs and the Town Council will continue to give them a high level of support. If other sports clubs were to seek similar provision, the Council would no doubt address their needs as well.

The most contentious issue relates to parking for teams using the facilities. The present scenario involves some disruption of traffic particularly along Canal Way. The Town Council has not yet decided whether it would allow some limited parking on the Recreation Ground. There is a reluctance to identify areas for the exclusive use of the clubs. At present negotiations are in hand to purchase a piece of land close to the entry to Brittens Field with the objective of providing some limited amount of parking.

The issue of parking must be resolved, even if it means pointing out that the Wharf Lane public car park is within easy walking distance.

4. The Town Council would be failing in its duty if it did not consider whether there are areas of its land holdings that are under used and might realise capital by being released for housing.
5. Whilst the ownership of the land to the south of Canal Way and to the west of Brittens Field is part of the County Farms, it is clear that the County Council are not opposed to its development for community facilities. The Town Council is encouraging the building of a new school and new medical facilities and that does offer a possible location.

The Town Council will need to decide whether it is prepared to support development of that area, bearing in mind that housing cannot be ruled out as well.

OPEN SPACE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

There is also the promise of a Leisure Centre for the town which will no doubt be considered for the same site.

Alternatives do exist –notably on employment land adjoining the Station Road development or on the Horlicks site but they suffer from remoteness from the town centre.

It may be that areas along Shudrick Lane should be explored although the land is not in public ownership and would need some negotiation with landowners.

6. Part of the Horlicks site development was the offer of 14 acres of open space around the River Ile which might be given to the Town Council.

That land is on a flood plain and is presumably unsuitable for conversion to employment land. However it does offer the opportunity to provide open space with a 'water theme' which would offer an additional feature of the Council's overall portfolio.

7. There is of course more to open space than simply the land that the Council holds.

It is Town Council policy to encourage developers to provide open spaces and a general planting strategy which given an open and pleasant feel to an area. That approach applies to roundabouts and industrial complexes so that the overall appearance is one of well cared for, clean and open sites.

In the longer term that takes effort to maintain, a function which invariably falls to the District Council. Sponsorship of roundabouts can be encouraged but in general we will be pressing the District Council to put a high quality maintenance package in place for Ilminster.

If that fails to create the standards we demand, then the Town Council will consider whether we can take over the budget and the responsibility to deliver locally.

That review will need to encompass all public areas and their maintenance. Many areas of the town – Old Road or the Listers Hill bank for example, either fall to the District Council or to unspecified landowners and are largely left un-maintained. We have the option to take over but need to be clear that the community wants that service and will pay for it.

The key to a tidy appearance is adequate and regularly emptied litter and dog bins.

That is an area where we are falling between two stools. The Town Council will be positive in what it wants and press the relevant authorities to deliver. If that is not forthcoming then our only recourse is to provide ourselves.

OPEN SPACE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In many of these areas, if you want a clean and tidy town of an appropriate standard, the Town Council may need to take over the function and supplement whatever resources are currently allocated to that end.

8. The Town Council owns and manages the Town Cemetery and the Cemetery Lodge. We will continue to maintain the Cemetery at a high level and to properly manage the grave and cremation spaces as required by law.

The Cemetery Lodge will be let out in the Autumn and care will be taken to ensure that tenants respect their surroundings.

TRAFFIC ISSUES

Date created 3.06.06

Date modified 01-08-06

1. Like many similar market towns, Ilminster was never designed for the motor car. Whilst we all wish to retain the attractive characteristics, a way must be found to live in harmony with motor traffic which will develop and evolve as the pressures inevitably increase.

Vehicles seeking simply to pass through the town need to be able to do so without travelling through the centre. Those seeking to visit or access the town need to be able to park reasonably close and with ease.

2. The provision of Canal Way as a southern distributor road and High Street/Butts as a major northern by pass has a system in place. What is missing is a distributor road/by pass to the east which suggests that in the longer term consideration must be given to development between Shudrick Lane and the Townsend area. that would create an outer circle which should remove through traffic from the centre whilst at the same time passing sufficiently close to town centre car parks not to deter the casual visitor.

At the moment, signing for the distributor road is particularly poor and the Council will continue its pressure on the Highways Authority to improve the inadequate provision. That is an aspect which must be given high priority for the future.

It is important also that parking problems on roads which are designed for freely flowing traffic should be resolved. The Highways Authority and the Police are reluctant to introduce change in advance of a problem but the Town Council takes a contrary view and will continue to press for parking strategies that will seek to resolve anticipated problems rather than addressing them retrospectively.

3. The inner circulation is based largely on a one-way system, currently involving Silver Street and North Street and soon to embrace Ditton Street when the supermarket development is complete. That latter action has the benefit of enabling the pavements of Ditton Street to be widened and made safer for pedestrians moving between the supermarket and town centre. Furthermore it improves enormously the traffic conflict at the junction of Ditton Street and the Market square.

East Street will require some analysis with perhaps a re-visit to the plan for additional pedestrian crossing points.

4. Ilminster is fortunate in having a significant amount of street parking in its centre, mostly time restricted to encourage the short term shopper. However this advantageous position for the traders of the town is also the cause of a huge amount of frustration and complaint. Vehicles regularly outstay their parking time and park on double and single yellow lines with impunity. Dropped kerbs are regularly obstructed. Drivers can get away with this approach because they are aware that enforcement, which rests with the Police and Community Support Officers is virtually non-existent.

The situation requires review on two fronts.

TRAFFIC ISSUES

- a. The District Council has under consideration the Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement whereby they take over enforcement from the Police. That function can then be delegated to the Town Council who, in principle are anxious to take on the responsibility. There are resources involved but parking fines generate off-setting income and it should be possible to co-operate with neighbouring towns over staffing, particularly if an equivalent approach could be adopted towards other anti-social behaviour.
- b. Parking enforcement is not popular and motorists become particularly irritated if they see that their illegal parking is not actually inconveniencing anyone. There are some areas of town where this argument is probably valid.

The Town Council needs therefore to confer with the Highways Authority and the Police to maximise parking opportunity and then clamp down hard on those areas where it is clearly obstructive and dangerous.

5. The provision of adequate stopping places for buses, taxis and delivery vehicles is already in hand with the Highways Authority and will be treated as a matter of urgency.

However businesses need to play their part in ensuring that deliveries are made when they will cause least disruption to traffic and where possible use off-road provision.

6. There is, from time to time, pressure for residential parking permits for particular areas. The Town Council does not, in principle, believe that this can be implemented in all equity for a single street unless it experienced the specific problem that, for example, a hospital brings.
7. Some of the problems of increased traffic and parking can be alleviated by improved transport services. The one lack in Ilminster is proximity to a railway station and therefore long distance coaches should prove popular to local people. The move to give free transport to the elderly should be coupled with improved links to local towns such as Chard, Crewkerne, Taunton and Yeovil.

The Town Council will encourage the bus companies to see Ilminster as a hub for services.

There is already a healthy taxi population serving the town and we will encourage that provision by seeking to continue licensing through the Town Council and responding to their call for adequate ranks.

Community transport has an important part to play in the total picture and the Town Council will do what it can to support that element.

TRAFFIC ISSUES

8. Speed of traffic in the roads leading into town and through the town itself is a major issue and, in the view of the Town Council, is inadequately addressed by the responsible bodies. Problems appear to be considered on a piecemeal basis and strategies decided on statistical information which takes no account of local knowledge.

By way of example, the Town Council has been campaigning for years for 40 mph speed restrictions on the road between Listers Hill and Sea – and indeed for a winter salting programme as well. The road is well known as one of the most dangerous in the area. Traffic travels too fast and there are regular accidents. However data records only those incidents involving personal injury so the road remains unrestricted because it fails to meet county based criteria. This is a further example of decisions on local issues being made without account being taken of local knowledge.

What the Town Council would like to see is a 'joined up' approach to speed of traffic in towns with a consistent strategy toward speed limits both on roads leading into town and within the town itself so that there is no confusion about what is expected. That should be coupled with clear and defensible parking strategies and speed warning/calming measures at identifiable danger spots. The detail should be down to the professionals but we would welcome an overall review and strategy rather than adopting particular measures to address a specific problem.

In that way, we can demand enforcement if the parameters are clear.

The Town Council supports Community Speed watch in its effort to complement other enforcement and its avowed intent to educate rather than prosecute offenders, leaving that for the persistent.

9. Car Parks

Car parks in Ilminster are inadequate. That is the finding of an SSDC survey so it is axiomatic that we need to do something about it.

Whilst the Wharf Lane and West Street car parks are under the public control of SSDC, the largest car park in Shudrick Lane was always on land leased from a private individual (or group) and will in future be under supermarket control. That is a worrying situation and is why the Town Council fought very hard to ensure that it provided facilities no less advantageous to the community than at present.

However the Town Council has no control over the eventual negotiated solution and at this stage it remains unclear.

So we are left with a 250 place car park with an indeterminate regime and a report recording a deficit of places in a town we are seeking to develop.

TRAFFIC ISSUES

The Town Council needs to work hard on this issue with a first objective of seeking a possible site to make up the deficit. That will not be easy but it must be achieved in the near future.

There is then the question of car park safety. Strategies allowing housing development in town centres without car parking facilities work only if your town centre car parks are not only adequate but well managed, well lit and safe. That is not the case at present and the result is that cars end up in streets. The Police have been asked how we could make our car parks safer but are yet to report. It is likely that lighting and CCTV will figure highly in potential solutions, the latter of which is dealt with separately.

10. Pedestrianisation

Although it may be some years off, the Town Council can envisage the town centre ultimately being pedestrianised. Much will have to happen before that could become feasible. Car parks will have to be improved and provided near to the town centre so that walking becomes easier, as quick, and more pleasurable. There will need to be alternative routes for the car, probably by opening up an eastern link via Shudrick Lane and then into East Street.

None of the solutions are easy but the process of pedestrianisation could improve the attractiveness of the town centre whilst retaining its vitality.

11. One solution to the lack of town centre car parks may be a park and ride system. Such an arrangement can work effectively if transport is regular and the parking is safe and cheap or even free. In a town the size of Ilminster one or two circulating buses during shopping hours might be sufficient to provide a service which could be used by local people living on the outskirts as well as visitors.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Informal meeting of Councillors to discuss a Strategic Vision for Ilminster, held on Tuesday 3rd October at 7.30p.m. in the Council Chamber, Ilminster.

Present: Cllr C. Goodall (Mayor) - Chair

**Cllrs C. Cameron, G. Childs, M. Davis, M. Excell, C. Hall, M. Henly,
R. Jacobs, A. Kennedy, D. Miller, M. Rawstorne, S. Shepherd,
F. Walker, P. Whaites and L. Yeowell.
Mr. S. Fisher (Town Clerk)**

1. The meeting received a copy of a draft Strategic Vision which had drawn together the thinking of members in various subject areas following informal meetings held over the past 18 months. It was emphasised that the document was very much a draft and was confidential, as were the following discussions on its content and the way forward.

It was recognised that whilst the document provided a useful record of recent thinking, it contained some inaccuracies, required re-formatting to avoid repetition and to improve coherence and, if it were to be made public, would benefit from a summary and conclusion. More importantly however, before it could be promoted as a vision, it required clear objectives, setting out what we wanted to see happen and how those ideas might be realised. Those objectives would need to be prioritised, discussed with other interested bodies and put out for public consultation. In particular, discussion with the County and District Councils would be vital to ensure that the aspirations fitted in with the wider thinking of the Local Development Plan and Regional Spatial Strategy if the major funding that would be required might have a reasonable chance of being made available.

2. In pursuit of that objective, Councillors were invited to express personal views on what they particularly would like to see pursued in their vision. Cllr Henly outlined the main features of a paper he had prepared to stimulate thinking.

It was stressed that some of the proposals being put forward over the course of the evening would carry broad support; others however would prove more controversial.

In all cases, it was important that members reflected upon the wider implications of the various elements of the vision and were given the opportunity for collective debate before it became enshrined in policy. That would give the opportunity to think through all aspects of a proposal and assemble the pros and cons so that accepted policies could have a clear supporting argument.

3. Cllr Henly, in his paper, envisaged the development of a range of largely community service provision along the corridor of Canal Way, starting at the west with the industrial land associated with the Station Road development and extending in the east along Shudrick Lane and eventually through to Townsend. The detail encompassed a new school, swimming pool, medical centre, sports club, car parking, indoor recreation facilities and a 'one stop' shop for public service buildings. The attached Appendix outlines the thinking, including possible sources of funding.

There was strong support from members for the principle of what was being proposed. However, there were a range of views on the detail which would require further debate before a decision was reached.

4. Education

There was strong support for the arguments outlined in the draft Strategic Vision which concluded that the absence of secondary schooling to age 16 was having a detrimental effect not only on the children of Ilminster and its surrounding towns but also on the provision of a

range of other facilities for the community as a whole. In many ways it was the key to stimulating much of the improvements to the infrastructure that the Council had been seeking. However no-one wished to underestimate the task involved in persuading the County Council to fund a brand new 11 – 16 school in Ilminster and to upgrade the current Swanmead facilities so that that could become the 5 – 11 provider. The capital outlay was significant which, at the present size of the town, would be on the fringe of viability. Furthermore, the County Council would have to assess the impact on Wadham.

For the proposal to be successful, the Town Council would need to assemble all possible arguments ranging from the social impact on young people who are likely to feel more ownership of a local school to the financial implication of reducing the existing large transport bill.

In terms of location, most proposals place a new school to the west of the town centre either on SCC farm land to the south of Canal Way, on industrial land currently owned by Persimmon or on the Horlicks site. There are those who do not favour further building on land to the south of Canal Way, fearing that this would lead to eventual development up to the fringes of Herne Hill. The argument applies to the proposed medical centre as well. Others take the view that we should grasp the opportunity of infrastructure improvements and that some controlled building was the price we would have to pay. If a school was constructed in that area, it is argued that playing fields to the south could create the 'green' barrier between buildings and Herne Hill that is the goal.

If a swimming pool is ever to become a reality, its location next to a school would be seen as advantageous. However there did not appear to be much appetite for more housing in that area.

5. Medical Centre

Members are aware of the proposals to build a new medical centre on County Council farm land to the south of Canal Way and abutting Brittens Field. The arguments about location outlined in paragraph 4 above are not resolved but there is recognition that a new facility would benefit the town. Some will argue that it should be more town centre based.

It has also been pointed out that whilst a centralised medical facility could usefully embrace dentists, district nurses etc., those decisions rest with private not public sector bodies and the influence of the Council is somewhat limited.

6. Sports Club Facilities

Whilst not debating the matter in any depth, it was suggested that the Council would need to consider seriously the use of some of its green space land for other purposes – whether to alleviate parking problems or to raise capital to fund other projects.

There was support for indoor recreation facilities which it was understood formed part of the SSDC Sports Strategy for 2007/2008. It was pointed out that the County Council does own land to the south of Shudrick Lane where the Community Association sits and which would form a possible location for such a facility. The proximity to Swanmead School would be advantageous.

7. Shudrick Lane – Townsend/ Pedestrianisation

The majority of members felt that the extension of Shudrick Lane through to Townsend would offer a valuable relief road to ease traffic flows in the town and would be essential if the centre of town were to be pedestrianised. The concept of pedestrianisation was broadly favoured as a means of improving the quality of the town centre but it was recognised that this could happen only if there were clear alternative routes for traffic and car parks which were sufficiently close to the centre and reasonably priced to make them attractive.

8. Horlicks Site

There is some concern at the future of the Horlicks site and a view that the Town Council really needs to take the initiative in pressing for properly controlled industrial development. Some members feel that housing should not be supported; others consider that if a properly argued financial package demonstrates that some housing is needed to fund the works then it is the price to pay in achieving a more attractive entry to the town. Whatever happens, the Council should be involved in debate with the developers.

9. Representation

It was felt that the vision, once assembled and ready for floating with the public, should be presented as a glossy graphic model which would have a far greater impact than a written statement.

Members considered that the Council should be asked to release the £5000 set aside for regeneration to be put towards funding this venture.

10. It was agreed to set up a Working Group to take the above issues forward on a confidential informal basis providing regular reports back to the full group of all Councillors who would then make a decision on information that could be released on a public basis.

The Working Group was agreed as:

Cllrs Goodall, Henly, Jacobs, Shepherd, Davis, Cameron, Hall, Kennedy and Walker.

Meetings would take place on the following dates, all at 10a.m. with a time limit of 1½ hours: 13th October, 23rd October, 6th November, 24th November, 4th December.

TRAFFIC/TRANSPORT

25th October 2006

Cllrs Goodall, Henly, Jacobs, Miller. Mr. S. Fisher.

1. Horlicks Site and A303/A358 Upgrade

Too far ahead or indeterminate to propose anything other than adequate/improved signage and public transport to the town centre.

2. Shudrick Lane – Townsend

Definitely wish to see road extending along the Shudrick Stream and emerging at Townsend.

The preferred option would be for it to join the Crewkerne road/Whitelackington road to the west of the junction at Bay Hill so that it becomes the primary route. Traffic could then return into town (which makes it an eastern ring road, vital if pedestrianisation develops) or travel on to Whitelackington or Crewkerne.

The alternative is to join the Crewkerne road to the south of Knott Oak (as Phase 1) and then press on as Phase 2 to Whitelackington – both as independent ventures.

Development of the Shudrick Stream valley would probably be needed to pay for the road – difficult to foresee when land is in private ownership and Government policy is to develop Taunton – Bridgwater - Wellington first, Yeovil second and market towns last.

3. Town Traffic Flows

a) Pedestrianise the town centre. Much easier if road above is in place but not impossible without. Done on an incremental basis with East Street/Market Square first and others when effects are analysed.

b) Love Lane – access to Shudrick Lane.

c) Silver Street flows – see parking debate.

4. Speed of Traffic

Above enhancement/pedestrianisation needs speed controls. Cobbled streets when 20 mph in force would fit conservation area.

May have speed controls in vehicles before then.

5. Cyclists

Tony Shire to bring proposed town network of cycle paths to next meeting.
Need racks in car parks.

6. Pedestrian Safety

Need crossing points in High Street and other points where children cross on way to school.

7. Next meeting – Thursday 2nd November, 7.30p.m.
Parking, Transport Provision.

SF/CH/A/Traffic-Transport notes 25.10.06

A historic market town with a conservation area is ill equipped to cope with the communication needs of the 21st century. The Town Council feels that the situation could be improved by:

The creation of an eastern relief road along Shudrick Lane to join the Crewkerne/Whitelackington roads, which would:

- ease the pressure on the mediaeval road system in the town centre
- provide drivers wishing to get to the south side of town with an easier route
- enable, at some time in the future, the centre of town to be pedestrianised

Before any move could be made towards pedestrianisation of the town centre the following points would need to be addressed:

- provision of more off street parking/car parks
- provision of a more extensive bus service in and around town
- provision of coach parking facility in the town
- provision of more cycle tracks, including cycle racks, and footpaths around town
- provision of arterial routes to and from the surrounding villages to ensure that the connection between Ilminster Within and Ilminster Without is not lost

Some work can be done in advance of pedestrianisation:

- **the amalgamation of the Greenfylde School 'keep clear' in Silver Street with the bus stop to give a better 'pull in' facility**
- **provision of 'off loading' bays for retailers pre 10.00 am and post 4.00pm – available for on street parking at other times**
- **move taxi ranks to the west of the Market Square – the present rank is poorly positioned and quite often interferes with movement of buses in and out of the area.**

17 July 2007

Address Redacted as
it is personal information.

Dear [Redacted]

Thank you for your letter of 19 June which I have read as an observation on the Council's draft Strategic Vision, even though it is headed Ditton Street One Way System. You also refer to a Local Plan which has a particular significance in planning terms, is in place and is not the same thing as the Strategic Vision.

The purpose of the consultative exercise on the draft vision was to provoke thoughts and reactions and I am grateful to you for taking the time to respond to the issues it raises. I shall certainly make sure that the contents are considered by the small working groups that will re-convene to review the feedback, but in the meantime I thought it would be helpful to comment on a couple of the points.

The concept of a road link between Shudrick Lane and Frog Lane is by no means new and was considered several years ago when the possibility of a food store on that site was first mooted. It was eventually rejected by the Highways Authority and I have asked them for chapter and verse on their reasons so that I do not misrepresent them.

Incidentally planning Application 06/02906/OUT has been determined, albeit after the date of your letter. It was, I understand, only waiting for legal details of the form of some of the subsidiary agreements.

An eastern relief road along the valley extending from Shudrick Lane, is a concept that the Council believes should be explored since it has the potential to remove traffic from the town centre. You are however reading too much detail into the idea. The Vision aims to ventilate the issue and to do so in plans being made available to the public, we had to draw a line somewhere to make the point. That route, if it ever came to fruition, would need to be fully investigated with not only people whose land is crossed but also professional highways officers.

Thank you for your observations, which, as I indicated, will be drawn to the attention of members at the appropriate time.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Fisher
Town Clerk

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **PLANNING COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Ilminster on Tuesday, 8 December 2009 at 7.30 p.m.

Present

Chairman: Cllr R Beardon

Vice Chairman: Cllr A Kennedy

Councillors: Cllr E Beattie, Cllr C Cameron, Cllr G Childs, Cllr M M Excell, Cllr M Henly, Cllr D Miller, Cllr L Vijeh, Cllr L Yeoell

Officers: Mr S Fisher, Mrs M Shelley

Public Question Time

Members of the public asked about the progress of gritting on Herne Rise during icy weather.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Davis, Shepherd, Swann, Turner and Whaites.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Cameron declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 5 Local Development Framework (Road from Shudrick Lane to Crewkerne Road) in view of family ownership of land in the area.

Cllr Yeoell declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 8.a. Highways Matters – Station Road Parking as one of the property owners is a friend and also his wife's employer.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 10 November 2009 be approved and signed as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Minute 8 d – Highway Matters – Listers Hill to Sea

Cllr Excell asked about progress on reconsidering the introduction of speed limits in the area. The Clerk reported that his understanding was that the signage and the speed survey had been ordered but that no further information was available.

5. Local Development Framework

The Chair welcomed Jo Manly, Policy Planner, SSDC to the meeting to discuss further the draft plans for Ilminster in the Local Development Framework document. Members had received an aide memoire of debate at the Cluster Workshop held on 26 November 2009.

The Committee remained of the view that in recent years, Ilminster had developed in an unbalanced way where considerable housing expansion had been delivered without associated community facilities and employment.

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Whilst it was accepted that employment land had been made available to the west of the town up to Southfields roundabout, there was concern that much of this lay within the flood plain. Bearing in mind that zones at flood risk were under continual review and that areas with potential to flood were often prohibitive financially to develop, it was extremely important that any land being proposed for employment use had confirmation from the Environment Agency that it was acceptable for this purpose.

The validity of the statistical information underpinning the analysis of job availability and employee mobility which was based on 2001 and 2006 data was questioned since much of it did not appear credible.

In relation to community facilities, the Leisure Services Department at SSDC had acknowledged the need for a Sports Hall and synthetic turf pitch in the town but saw its delivery as long term running to 2018. Ilminster was not seen as a priority for a swimming pool.

The education review were working on a population of around 13000 to justify a secondary school which clearly the town did not meet.

Car Parking had a perceived deficit of 120 places although the difficulty lay in identifying an appropriate site. However the deficit should allow the Council to argue for adequate parking associated with any new development in the town. It would be reasonable to explore alternatives such as a park and ride system to alleviate the problem.

Cllr Cameron declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the Road from Shudrick Lane to Crewkerne Road in view of family ownership of land in the area and left the meeting at 8.13 pm.

An analysis had been made of the costs of introducing a road from Shudrick Lane to Knott Oak set against the finances that might be released from introducing (say) 340 houses in the town. From the analysis, the development did not appear viable. Members were anxious to stress the benefits that would accrue to the community – reduced journey time for example. Some discussion was pursued on the extent to which Section 106 gains were ploughed back into the town which had not been easily seen from previous major developments.

Cllr Cameron returned at 8.30 pm.

Whilst the Committee was keen to find a mechanism for protecting the existing retail centre of the town, it was accepted that the provision of evidence was not feasible. Members felt that the absence of a clear retail boundary in the LDF programming was not helpful.

The Policy Planner agreed to research further some of the points raised and to provide the information along with the detail of her presentation to the Clerk so that the matter could be further discussed at the Finance & Policy Committee on 15 December 2009.

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

The Chair thanks Ms Manly for her presentation and for her support to the town in the LDF process.

6. Planning Applications

It was RESOLVED that the Committee's comments on the applications on the attached list be submitted to South Somerset District Council.

Cllr Kennedy left at 9.10 pm after discussion of the second planning application.

In relation to Planning Application No. 09/04401/FUL – Highways Agency Maintenance Depot at Southfields Roundabout – the Clerk reported notification of diversion of footpath CH14/8 to accommodate the development. The Committee had no objections to the proposal.

It was also noted that the Highways Agency were exploring with the Highways Authority the possibility of using the facilities and equipment at the new depot for works around the locality.

7. Planning Decisions

The planning decisions on the attached list received from South Somerset District Council were noted.

8. Highways Matters

(a) Station Road Parking

The Chair suspended the meeting to enable members of the public to express their concerns at the parking restrictions to the west of the entry to Samsons Office Supplies and opposite the entry to Coombes Builders.

The Clerk reported that whilst a section of double yellow lines outside the houses on the north side of the road were correct, the contractors had inadvertently extended the restrictions further to the west which were therefore unenforceable. He also reported that a letter had been received from Coombes seeking to regularise the restrictions since they felt that cars parking there were causing difficulties for their own vehicles leaving the site.

The Chair returned into Committee session. Cllr Yeoell declared a personal and prejudicial interest as one of the property owners is a friend and also his wife's employer and left the room for the debate.

After discussion the Committee agreed to ask the Highways Authority to correct the mistake in the double yellow lining at that site and then to undertake a review of parking restrictions in the area (including the proposed Zebra crossing to the west) so that proposals could be considered by the Town Council.

Cllr Yeoell returned to the meeting.

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

(b) Winterhay Lane Parking

The Chair suspended the meeting to enable members of the public to express their concerns at the parking situation at the entry to Winterhay Lane.

The Clerk reported that when the double yellow lines had been extended on Station Road, consideration had been given to relaxing restrictions at the entry to Winterhay Lane to accommodate any displaced parking. The Highways Authority had been unwilling to undertake the action because of the limited number of places that would be released and the lack of any apparent pressure.

The Clerk had already taken the matter up with the Highways Authority.

The Chair returned into Committee session.

Members agreed to await a response from the Highway Authority to the Clerk's initiative.

Cllr Vijeh left at 9.45 pm.

9. Town Clerk's Report and Correspondence

The Clerk reported

- (a) As from 5 November 2009 SSDC will be seeking affordable housing on all sites of 15 dwellings or more or of 0.5 hectare, irrespective of the number of dwellings.
- (b) Members were reminded of the Civic Carol Service on Sunday 13 December at 6 pm at the Minster Church.
- (c) Two spare tickets for Chard Town Council's Christmas Party on Friday 11 December at 7.30 pm.
- (d) He had been informed by SSDC that in an emergency sandbags will be delivered by SSDC on a 24 hour basis by ringing 01935 462462. The Clerk was asked to establish the definition of 'emergency'.
- (e) Receipt of a letter from the Leader of SCC asking all authorities to consider freezing Council Tax bills in 2010/2011.
- (f) Members received copies of the paper on Review of School Organisation in the Ilminster and Crewkerne areas which was being discussed by the County Council Cabinet on 9 December 2009.

10. Members Questions

The Mayor reported that the Town Council Christmas Tree had been installed in the Minster Church and the monies collected would be put to her charity – The Retired Greyhound Trust.

The meeting closed at 09.55pm

.....
Signed

.....
Date

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **PLANNING COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Ilminster on Tuesday, 9 November, 2010 at 7.30 p.m.

Present

Chairman: Cllr M Henly

Councillors: Cllr E Beattie, Cllr C Cameron, Cllr M M Excell, Cllr A Kennedy, Cllr D Miller, Cllr R Swann, Cllr P Whaites, Cllr L Vijeh.

Officers: Mr S Fisher, Mrs R Hope

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Beardon, Childs, Shepherd, Turner and Yeowell.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Henly declared a personal interest in Planning application 10/03947/FUL and 10/04171/LBC due to his acquaintance with the neighbour of the applicant.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 28 September 2010 be approved and signed as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Minute 7 – Street Lighting Upgrade

Cllr Excell asked about progress on the upgrade. The Clerk replied he was waiting for a response.

Minute 10 – Belisha Beacons

Cllr Whaites asked if the style of Belisha Beacons on zebra crossings could be clarified.

5. Planning Applications

Cllr Henly declared a personal interest in Planning application 10/03947/FUL and 10/04171/LBC due to his acquaintance with the neighbour of the applicant.

It was RESOLVED that the Committee's comments on the applications on the attached list be submitted to South Somerset District Council.

7. Local Development Framework

The Committee noted that the South Somerset Local Development Framework Draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options was now published and open for consultation. Members received extracts from the Draft Strategy where it related to Ilminster including maps showing options for future housing development.

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

It was felt that the document lacked detail or coherent arguments leading to choice of a preferred option which was compounded by the use of out of date maps giving no clear indication, for example, of car parking provision which was a major issue for the town and it was considered that the matter needed to be addressed in a final document.

The Town Council had undertaken considerable work on producing a Strategic Vision and had devoted time to preparing an input to the Core Strategy based on that document. Furthermore the Vision had resulted from full public consultation and it was disappointing that many of its recommendations had not been included in the final draft.

In particular the choice of Option 2 for proposed housing development in the land running up to the fringes of Herne Hill was totally opposed by the Council. The preferred Option allowed or expansion along Shudrick Lane where it offered the additional advantage of an eastern relief road.

The Clerk was asked to respond accordingly to SSDC, including a further copy of the contribution of December 2009 to amplify these views.

7. Highways Matters

(a) Pedestrian Crossing at the Triangle

The Clerk reported that the zigzag lines had been extended and that the alignment of the lights had been changed so that they were more visible to car drivers. It appeared that no further improvements could be made without changing the location of the crossing entirely which would be difficult to achieve.

(b) Annual Winter Services Guide

The Clerk reported that he had received the Winter Services Guide for 2010/2011. The gritting routes were as in previous years.

9. Town Clerk's Report and Correspondence

The Clerk reported

(a) SSDC had asked the Council to publicise the 2011 census

(b) He had had a request asking the Council's opinion on the new proposed Planning reforms

(c) Cllr Yeoell had resigned as Chair of the Planning Committee. Election of a new Chair would take place at the next Council Meeting.

10. Members Questions

(a) Cllr Whaites asked (i) if the double yellow lines on Station Road were enforceable, (ii) would it be possible to have an update on the crossing outside Trafalgar Court and (iii) the new speed humps on Dittion Street appeared to be ineffective and were not signed.

(b) Cllr Excell asked (i) what was the minimum distance from the road for an extension to be built and (ii) were the committee aware that the cottages on Shudrick lane have cracks in them Spar Shop on Station Road were not working.

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

(c) Cllr Swann asked for an update on the proposed Medical Centre

The meeting closed at 8.52pm

.....
Signed

.....
Date

Mr A Foyne
South Somerset District Council
Council Offices
Brympton Way
Yeovil
BA20 2HT
2 December 2010

Dear Andy

Local Development Framework – Draft Core Strategy

My Council has now considered the Draft Core Strategy published at the beginning of October.

I need to start by saying that members are extremely disappointed at both the presentation and the content in so far as it relates to the future development of Ilminster as an important market town in South Somerset.

1. It is considered that the document lacks detail in its presentation of a plan that will take the town forward over the next 15 years. The Town Council has worked hard at developing a Strategic Vision for Ilminster and our response to the various consultations in the autumn of last year was based on a summary of relevant parts of that Vision. I am enclosing a further copy for your information.

The content of the Vision resulted from detailed discussions over a long period and involved a whole range of public consultation events on specific issues as well as the broad approach of the initiative. Accordingly members are most unhappy that the Town Council input has been largely ignored.

2. The choice of Option2 for proposed housing development on land running up to the fringes of Herne Hill is at complete variance with the recommendations of the Town Council and would be totally opposed. The Council has long favoured expansion along Shudrick Lane which offers the added advantage of making a much needed eastern relief road more feasible. The arguments are outlined in the attached document including those against development of land to the north of Herne Hill.

The case for Option2 rather than Option1 in paragraph 5.4.12 based on the relationship to schools, shops, health facilities, employment land and the town centre with less dispersed loss of greenfield land is simply incoherent in our view.

It is also worth pointing out that the efforts of the Town Council to establish a Sports Centre on Brittens Field are in line with the thinking of the Core Strategy. However they require additional land to the west for both pitches and recreational space which would be frustrated by housing development in that area.

3. The maps in the document are so out of date that they give the impression that the proposals are based on historical rather than current data. Whilst that may not be the case, it is important for presentational reasons that the final Core Strategy does have appropriate supporting information.

Parking for example is an important issue for Ilminster with the District Council's own surveys reporting a lack of available places. The out of date plans could not be used to support an informed analysis of that problem area since they omit many of the developments that have taken place in recent years.

I am not entirely clear how responses to the draft LDF are to be handled but you will appreciate that my members feel that the strength of their reaction to what is being suggested does demand further discussion with them as the body elected to represent the Ilminster Community. It would be helpful to explore how that dialogue can be achieved with the objective of securing a Core Strategy that promotes the aspirations of the town within the formal framework required by SSDC.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Fisher
Town Clerk

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

RESPONSE TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PROPOSALS

There is consensus that Ilminster should be categorised as a Policy B settlement as meeting the criteria for Market Towns.

1. Settlement Role

There is a strongly held view that the growth of Ilminster in the last ten years has been unbalanced and that the LDF should seek to redress the situation.

The imbalance has been created largely by the development of a major housing complex around the western fringes of the town which was initially planned at around 200 dwellings, but by the time it was completed was well over 400. This development when set alongside more modest individual sites - but collectively significant - has resulted in population growth from somewhere in the region of 4500 to well over 6000 residents.

The situation has been exacerbated by the loss of major employers in Clarks, Horlicks and Theaks and reduced job opportunities at other major concerns in the town. Furthermore the town gained no improvements of any significance to its infrastructure from either the housing and population expansion of the last ten years or the introduction of a major supermarket into the town save a southern distributor road and a change to the traffic system in part of the town centre.

Accordingly the town lacks a breadth of local employment opportunities to provide a healthy balance between those working locally alongside the proportion that inevitably will commute. When set alongside a lack of local community facilities, there is a danger of Ilminster becoming increasingly a dormitory town, a trend which the LDF must seek to reverse.

2. Employment Land

The Town Council is content that the main thrust of future employment should be sited to the west of the town, on both sides of the main road and embracing the old Horlicks site. In that way, the residential area on the fringes of the town can move to industrial land to the west, where advantage can be taken of the excellent road links flowing from Southfields Roundabout.

However there is major concern that whilst the existing allocation may seem reasonable for expansion of the town over the next 15 years, much of that land lies on a potential flood plain.

It must be borne in mind that zones at flood risk are under constant review and that areas with potential to flood are frequently prohibitive financially to develop. The most recent plans for development of the Horlicks site are far more restrictive than their original ideas and may well be reflecting the problem.

Accordingly if the Town Council is to accept the proposed allocation, it would only be with an assurance from the Environment Agency that it is considered 'fit for purpose'. Otherwise alternative proposals will be necessary.

The Town Council is also concerned that employment land should be converted into jobs and will therefore expect to achieve a balance between (say) light industry B2 and warehousing (B8) where jobs per land area vary considerably. There is also some concern that the statistical

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

information underpinning the analysis of job availability and employee mobility is based on 2001 and 2006 data and does not always appear credible.

3. Community Infrastructure

a. Sports Facilities

The town is well served for outdoor grass pitch facilities although there is some need for additional space to the west of Brittens Field which is being negotiated with SCC.

The town however is lacking a Sports Hall, general indoor sporting facilities and Synthetic Turf Pitches, a factor recognised fully by SSDC in a recent PPG17 report.

These needs are immediate and are omissions in the portfolio of provision that lead to the imbalance described in paragraph 1 above. The Town Council does not accept that redressing the situation should be a long term 2018 strategy and would urge that such facilities be given a much higher priority. Efforts are already being made to develop a Sports Hall and with the community behind the initiative, it would be expected that SSDC would see its delivery as of fundamental significance in both the short as well as long term.

b. Swimming Pools

It is noted that the SSDC Report concludes that a swimming pool in Ilminster is not feasible, despite the fact that it was considered of high importance by residents in their contributions to the Community Plan.

The Council would not wish to see the prospect of a swimming pool removed from the infrastructure aspirations of the town.

c. Schooling

The Council has long taken the view that the coherence of a community is improved immeasurably if the statutory schooling of its young people is delivered within the town. Not only do the young people retain ownership of the locality but there are other socio-economic advantages and the spin off facilities of Sports Halls etc (see paragraph a. above) additionally improve community provision.

Furthermore children benefit from not having to spend time travelling, there is a reduction in the carbon footprint and on a purely financial argument, there would be a saving of a reported £1 million per year on transportation costs.

It is appreciated that the number of children within Ilminster may at present be insufficient to sustain a secondary school under current Somerset County Council viability criteria. However schools in rural areas have always served a wider catchment area and the number of properties (2734) in the cluster of villages viewing Ilminster as its focus exceeds the number of properties in Ilminster itself (2676) suggesting that the contributory population is already at the threshold level for a secondary school.

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

The two tier option favoured in the recent County Council review of schools in the area would make a new secondary school in Ilminster the more feasible.

The Council would therefore wish to retain the possibility in the Planning Framework.

d. Car Parks

There is a reported car parking deficit in Ilminster, expected to rise in the next few years to 120 by 2016. There is a need therefore to identify alternative sites.

In the meantime, the Council will expect to argue for the provision of adequate car parking spaces in all new developments in the town.

e. Road from Shudrick Lane to Knott Oak

In recent years the town has been provided with a southern distributor road – Canal Way – to allow traffic to skirt the town to the south west. There was also a change to traffic circulation in the town when Ditton Street was made one-way south as part of the development of a Supermarket along Shudrick Lane.

This leaves a pressing need for a relief road to the east on the extension of Shudrick Lane down to the valley to the Knott Oak area. Such a loop would allow traffic from the south the opportunity to travel east towards Yeovil and Crewkerne as well as coming back into town from that direction. As such the provision would be seen as satisfying the wider community needs for both circulation and by-pass purposes and would complement the revised town centre traffic flows and southern ring road.

Furthermore an eastern loop would facilitate the possibility of introducing some pedestrianisation of the town centre by maintaining and improving access routes and would additionally reduce the carbon footprint.

It is appreciated that the opening up of the eastern valley beyond Shudrick Lane would allow for some new housing development which would make a contribution to the costs of a new road. In the event that this was insufficient to meet the overall sum required, the Council would argue that roads of community benefit should expect adequate public funding and not be reliant solely on Section 106 contributions.

The Council would strongly urge that this development be introduced into the LDF and that equal efforts are made to secure its inclusion in the Local Transport Plan.

f. Section 106

The Council feels most strongly that in principle, a town like Ilminster should benefit directly from monies realised under Section 106 agreements relating to development in that town. They are not persuaded by the argument that such contributions should go to strategic facilities of benefit to other settlements as well as Ilminster. There is a history of that strategy operating only in one direction and there is no evidence of monies flowing into Ilminster from developments elsewhere to counter balance.

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

4. Town Centre

There is concern that a mechanism must be found to protect the retail premises in the town which should spread into West Street slightly beyond the present perceived commercial heart of Ilminster. In this context, the absence of a clear retail boundary in LDF planning is unhelpful and there is a strong feeling that the concept should be established in the LDF.

Whilst some housing, possibly at first floor level clearly helps to improve the balance of a town centre, the success of a market town relies on a vibrant commercial and retail centre which every effort must be made to preserve.

5. Housing Development

The Town Council is content to see some modest housing expansion over the period and has worked on a guideline figure of around 20 dwellings per year. However it is extremely difficult to prescribe a figure for the next 15 years when what is more important is achieving the balance between housing and employment argued in paragraph 1 above. The guideline therefore must be dealt with flexibly and the Council would insist that future development of Ilminster is not frustrated by strict adherence to a level of housing expansion whose quantification in 2009 could not predict the future.

It is felt that this expansion could most reasonably be accommodated on the eastern side of town beyond Shudrick Lane in association with an eastern ring road.

The Town Council is opposed to housing development to the south and west of Canal Way. Some public building (e.g. a school) might be acceptable but only if it offered overriding advantages to the town. That policy is aimed at protecting the views to and from Herne Hill and was part of the Town Council stance when housing to the west of Canal Way was first planned ten years ago.

Ilminster Town Council Response to Draft Core Strategy

My Council has now considered the Draft Core Strategy published at the beginning of October.

I need to start by saying that members are extremely disappointed at both the presentation and the content in so far as it relates to the future development of Ilminster as an important market town in South Somerset.

1. It is considered that the document lacks detail in its presentation of a plan that will take the town forward over the next 15 years. The Town Council has worked hard at developing a Strategic Vision for Ilminster and our response to the various consultations in the autumn of last year was based on a summary of relevant parts of that Vision. I am enclosing a further copy for your information. The content of the Vision resulted from detailed discussions over a long period and involved a whole range of public consultation events on specific issues as well as the broad approach of the initiative. Accordingly members are most unhappy that the Town Council input has been largely ignored.

2. The choice of Option2 for proposed housing development on land running up to the fringes of Herne Hill is at complete variance with the recommendations of the Town Council and would be totally opposed. The Council has long favoured expansion along Shudrick Lane, which offers the added advantage of making a much-needed eastern relief road more feasible. The arguments are outlined in the attached document including those against development of land to the north of Herne Hill. The case for Option2 rather than Option1 in paragraph 5.4.12 based on the relationship to schools, shops, health facilities, employment land and the town centre with less dispersed loss of Greenfield land is simply incoherent in our view. It is also worth pointing out that the efforts of the Town Council to establish a Sports Centre on Brittons Field are in line with the thinking of the Core Strategy. However they require additional land to the west for both pitches and recreational space, which would be frustrated by housing development in that area.

There is consensus that Ilminster should be categorised as a Policy B settlement as meeting the criteria for Market Towns.

1. Settlement Role

There is a strongly held view that the growth of Ilminster in the last ten years has been unbalanced and that the LDF should seek to redress the situation. The imbalance has been created largely by the development of a major housing complex around the western fringes of the town, which was initially planned at around 200 dwellings, but by the time it was completed was well over 400. This development when set alongside more modest individual sites - but collectively significant - has resulted in population growth from somewhere in the region of 4500 to well over 6000 residents.

The situation has been exacerbated by the loss of major employers in Clarks, Horlicks and Theaks and reduced job opportunities at other major concerns in the town. Furthermore the town gained no improvements of any significance to its infrastructure from either the housing and population expansion of the last ten years or the introduction of a major supermarket into the town save a southern distributor road and a change to the traffic system in part of the town centre.

Accordingly the town lacks a breadth of local employment opportunities to provide a healthy balance between those working locally alongside the proportion that inevitably will commute. When set alongside a lack of local community facilities, there

is a danger of Ilminster becoming increasingly a dormitory town, a trend which the LDF must seek to reverse.

Road from Shudrick Lane to Knott Oak

In recent years the town has been provided with a southern distributor road - Canal Way - to allow traffic to skirt the town to the south west. There was also a change to traffic circulation in the town when Ditton Street was made one-way south as part of the development of a Supermarket along Shudrick Lane.

This leaves a pressing need for a relief road to the east on the extension of Shudrick Lane down to the valley to the Knott Oak area. Such a loop would allow traffic from the south the opportunity to travel east towards Yeovil and Crewkerne as well as coming back into town from that direction. As such the provision would be seen as satisfying the wider community needs for both circulation and by-pass purposes and would complement the revised town centre traffic flows and southern ring road. Furthermore an eastern loop would facilitate the possibility of introducing some pedestrianisation of the town centre by maintaining and improving access routes and would additionally reduce the carbon footprint.

It is appreciated that the opening up of the eastern valley beyond Shudrick Lane would allow for some new housing development, which would make a contribution to the costs of a new road. In the event that this was insufficient to meet the overall sum required, the Council would argue that roads of community benefit should expect adequate public funding and not be reliant solely on Section 106 contributions. The Council would strongly urge that this development be introduced into the LDF and that equal efforts are made to secure its inclusion in the Local Transport Plan.

Housing Development

The Town Council is content to see some modest housing expansion over the period and has worked on a guideline figure of around 20 dwellings per year. However it is extremely difficult to prescribe a figure for the next 15 years when what is more important is achieving the balance between housing and employment argued in paragraph 1 above. The guideline therefore must be dealt with flexibly and the Council would insist that future development of Ilminster is not frustrated by strict adherence to a level of housing expansion whose quantification in 2009 could not predict the future.

It is felt that this expansion could most reasonably be accommodated on the eastern side of town beyond Shudrick Lane in association with an eastern ring road. The Town Council is opposed to housing development to the south and west of Canal Way. Some public building (e.g. a school) might be acceptable but only if it offered overriding advantages to the town. That policy is aimed at protecting the views to and from Herne Hill and was part of the Town Council stance when housing to the west of Canal Way was first planned ten years ago.

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Ilminster on Tuesday, 16 October 2012 at 7.30 p.m.

Present

Chairman: Cllr R Swann

Councillors: Cllr Austin, Cllr C Goodall, Cllr A Lawson, Cllr D Miller, Cllr J Pallister, Cllr A Shearman, Cllr S Shepherd, Cllr S Sainsbury, Cllr J Sothern, Cllr P Whaites

In attendance

County Councillor: Cllr K Turner

Officers: Mrs M Clayton (Senior Administrator designate), Miss N McIntosh (Administrative Assistant), Miss J Norris (Town Clerk)

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2012 be approved and signed as a true and correct record

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Burton and Taylor

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made in respect of any agenda items.

4. Mayor's Announcements/Engagements

The Mayor or the Deputy Mayor's had attended the events detailed below between 4th September 2012 and 16th October 2012

Sunday 9th September 2012	Civic Service, Wilton Church Hall, Taunton
Thursday 13 th September 2012	Presentation Evening at the Shrubbery Hotel
Sunday 16th September 2012	Deputy Mayor attended "Battle of Britain" Memorial Service at the Minster, Ilminster
Wednesday 26th September 2012	The Deputy Mayor attended Somerset County Scout Council Annual General Meeting
Thursday 4th October 2012	Marshall Herbert's Funfairs, Freedom of fair rides for the handicap at the Recreation Ground, Ilminster
Sunday 7th October 2012	The Chapter of Wells Cathedral, Service of Thanksgiving & Reflection at Harvest Time.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes

No specific issues were raised or discussed.

Chair's Initials

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

6. Police Report

The Police report was circulated with the agenda.

PC Andy Stuart reported that since the last Police report Ilminster station have been kept very busy, not only with their usual work but also assisting colleagues with the recent major incident at Ashill.

The amount of crime reported in September 2012 is a reduction of 33% compared to the same month last year, fantastic it is hoped this downwards trend will continue. There had been one theft from a shop (shoplifting) and two non-dwelling burglaries (shed breaks). Other incidents had been domestic related (within the household/family) or small scale criminal damage, some reported incidents were not crime as they are genuine mistakes (e.g. pay at petrol pump confusion),

A small number of cannabis plants were found in a property in Ilminster a 45 year old male has been cautioned for this offence. A prolific disqualified driver recently a resident in the town has been put before the courts and given a 120 day prison sentence with the help of local staff. Also a 25 year old male had been recalled to prison following two handbags being stolen and this male being identified on business CCTV. The police are still working closely with Yarlington Housing Group who are the main housing provider in the town, to monitor and build links with some of their tenants.

In the Town and in the surrounding villages the recent weather has had a huge impact on resources particularly dealing with the localised flooding in the area.

The Civil Enforcement Officers who deal with on street parking issues have freed Police resources to deal with more important matters in the town.

The children have made good use of the skate park and the Summer holidays have been reasonably uneventful. Close links are maintained between the police and the schools in Ilminster to ensure potential problems can be identified at an early stage.

Neighbourhood Watch is being re-vitalised and new volunteer co-ordinators would be welcome, the Police Community Support Officers can be contacted for more information.

The carnival was well organised and passed without a hitch whilst the fair caused the usual spike in the rise of reported crime. The whole event was over shadowed by the major incident on the bend between Bay Hill and Dillington involving 2 vehicles and 6 casualties. This was a major critical incident for the force and involved a joint operation for all the emergency services along with the Coastguard. Appeals are still being made for witnesses to this collision

Chair's Initials

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

7. Report from County Councillor

County Councillor Kim Turner stated her thanks to the Herbert Family for clearing-up after the fair.

A meeting has been held regarding parking arrangements in East Street and the preferred solution is to remove the restrictions on the parking bays; this will be monitored.

Somerset County Council's Care Budget has increased to 1.4 Million to improve care this will be distributed between 22 new Social Workers, 26 Support Staff and various departments.

Taunton Museum of Somerset and Castle Green was opened 16th October, since work was completed there has been an increase in visitors.

Regarding Dr's Surgery Entrance, Somerset County Council have sent the contractors a report and provided advice on numerous occasions, further liaison is required with Persimmon Homes. Cllr Turner informed the Council that Swanmead School had been inspected by OFSTED using the new framework, which is described as being exceptionally challenging with considerably higher standards compared to previous years.

Cllr Turner also informed the Council that there had been problems at Gooch & Housego premises, concerning water on the road due to the pond overflowing this was because of the recent rainfall and the sluice gates not being open and dispersing the pond water appropriately. Gooch & Housego have been contacted by Highways about this.

Cllr Turner told the Council; she will be stepping down as a County Councillor at the elections due in 2013.

8. Report from District Councillor

Cllr Goodall reported that there are workshops about Neighbourhood Plans on the evenings of on 14th, 27th, 28th November 2012 which Councillors are recommended to attend Cllr Vijeh asked whether Officers are welcome to attend; the Town Clerk will look into this.

9. Planning Committee

There were no recommendations from the Planning Committee Meeting held on 11 September 2012.

10. Finance & Policy Committee Meeting

Minute 6 Queen's Diamond Jubilee

RESOLVED that the following outstanding payments regarding the jubilee celebrations be made:

St John's Ambulance – On receipt of Invoice

Carnival Committee (for the Marshalls)

Talent Competition

PA System

Minute 7 CILCA Training

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk be reimbursed of fees for attending the CILCA training course.

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Minute 9 Town Clerk's Report & Correspondence

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Town Clerk be a signatory on the Council's bank account and
- (ii) is authorised to place orders in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

11. Open Spaces Committee

Minute 7 Ilminster Experience Banner

RESOLVED that the design for the banner should be referred to the next Town Council meeting

Minute 8 item c) Football Stand

RESOLVED that qualified tradesmen take down southern end of football stand and use cladding to seal open/exposed side.

Minute 9 Machinery Report

RESOLVED that the machinery review should be included in the Terms of Reference for the Rec Review Group

Minute 10 Street Furniture

RESOLVED that ten bins should be purchased and receive one free at a cost of £3749.20.

12. Reports from Sub Committees

None

13. Representatives on Outside Bodies

Cllr Goodall reported as the Council representative to the Ilminster Forum.

Town App -- There was a presentation given by the District Officer, Zoe Harris, on the proposed Town App for Ilminster. The Chamber thought that this was a good idea and welcomed the opportunity to trial it.

Local Plan -- The Chamber had surveyed its members regarding the local plan but response was not huge and it was agreed that their stance would be that development in either location (Shudrick Lane or Canal Way) was acceptable from a business prospective.

A request has been received to extend the waiting time in the on street parking enforcement areas to two hours and Somerset County Council have been asked for their view

It was reported that the First Tuesday event was doing extremely well and the Chamber was not out of pocket.

Town Crier: the Gooch Trust have agreed in principle to grant some funding for a wardrobe for a Town Crier. It is hoped to interview a candidate for the post in the near future.

Victorian Evening 23rd November --The Committee were hoping to recreate a better Victorian feel to the evening. They were considering having events at the Triangle to encourage visitors to walk the whole length of the centre of town. There were plans to reduce the amount of catering

Chair's Initials

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

done by outsiders and have a greater contribution from the community. One of the highlights would be a Lantern Parade from Greenfylde by local schoolchildren.

Market Towns Investment Group

The Meeting on 29th November was given an update on the Priority Programme and the timetable for the Town App Project. However the focus of the meeting was the Portas/Town Centre Investment Programme and members were given a presentation on how the market towns might take advantage of this project and what the priorities were. Money is available to improve town centres and that any grant application should be centre around one or a combination of the following themes:

- **Community Facelift** – use a creative / innovative approach to improve a derelict site or empty building located in a prominent part of the town. This might involve a community arts or heritage project that is used to improve a site that will otherwise sit empty and look a mess. For example engaging an artist to carry out workshops with residents to create artistic hoardings that help screen a derelict site.
- **Meanwhile Use** – support the temporary occupation of identified empty properties by community groups or new enterprises. For example setting up a pop-up shop for local crafts people or a temporary space where local community groups carry out workshops or drop-in sessions.
- **Rents & Rates Package Incentive** – working with specific local landlords to devise a reduced rent and rate package that encourages new local businesses to set up in specific empty properties. Identify one or more empty shops / units in your town that would be suitable for new businesses and broker an arrangement between the landlord and SSDC Business Rates for a time limited package that would encourage new local start-ups.
- **Markets** – development of a new regular market or improvements to an existing market. This may be as a pilot making use of an empty property to house a market on a temporary basis. Alternatively, this could be to extend and improve an existing market making it more attractive to shoppers and helping to increase footfall within the town centre.
- **Town Image** – successful promotion and marketing of a destination requires good brand development which conveys a clear image of the type of experience visitors are likely to have.

In Ilminster the branding/town image is already being addressed and a new visit Ilminster.co.uk website that will go live in November. The considered opinion was that the themes of 'Community facelift', 'Meanwhile use' and 'markets' might be the themes under which Ilminster could apply for funding. A facelift might include the installation of some lighting suitable for conservation areas as is mentioned in the draft vision document and/or improving some of the shop frontages in the centre of town.

Meanwhile use and markets might also prove worthwhile as they would bring people into the town which is whole purpose of this exercise.

Chair's Initials

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority,
following consultation with the Council's representative to the Ilminster
Forum, to convene a small group to consider suitable projects and expressing
an interest in receiving funding from the Market Towns Initiative Group.

14. Authorisation of payments

RESOLVED that the accounts listed in the schedule presented to the Council, totalling
£14,589.85 be approved.

15. Action Plan

The following amendments were agreed:

Adjust numbering to Action Plan – Missing 13

Item 12 Strategic Vision – Re-word

Item 14 Silver Street Car Park – Re-word to reflect item 12

16. Town Clerk's Report and Correspondence

- a) The Clerk reported that since taking up appointment she had attended two training courses which included Councillor's Code of Conduct and Clerk's training on law and procedures with finance training booked for 18 October.
- b) The Clerk reminded Councillors of Code of Conduct practices.
- c) The Clerk reported that the recreation ground experienced the worst damage yet, due to the fair visiting, work was due to start on levelling the ground at the worst affected areas/ruts and the Clerk is looking into what action can be taken to avoid similar damage in future.
- d) The Clerk asked the Council to agree to hire a Projects Officer from Crewkerne Town Council for use of ten hours service.

RESOLVED to hire a Crewkerne Town Council Projects Officer for ten hours service.

- e) The Clerk informed the Council of the new Council Tax Option to pay over a twelve month period, anyone interested, will need to re-apply to the District Council.
- f) A thank you letter had been received from Ilminster Entertainment Society, for financial support for new stage lights dimmer.
- g) The Clerk informed the Committee of the Insurers mandatory requirements regarding risk assessments and an asbestos survey.
Weekly inspections (other than Children's play areas where a weekly inspection is already undertaken) will be implemented and checking the insurance of organisations, using council properties for events - the Market house booking form has been amended to state that public liability is now required.
- h) The Clerk informed the Council of correspondence relating to a Freedom of Information request regarding the Strategic Vision
- i) The Council was notified of works commencing in the next couple of weeks on the former

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

toilets at West Street, and asked for comments regarding the location of the directional sign

RESOLVED to inform Somerset County Council

- j) A request has been received from Greenfylde School for financial support for the purchase of replacing armbands and floats etc.

RESOLVED that the Finance & Policy Committee Meeting be given delegated authority to determine the request from Greenfylde school for a contribution towards the cost of replacing armbands / floats etc subject to the limits set out in Financial Regulations

17. Access to the Dr's Surgery on Canal Way

Concerns were raised about the temporary access to the Drs' surgeries off Canal Way and the number of "near-miss" incidents involving both pedestrians and vehicles

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Clerk writes to Somerset County Council stating that there have been several "near miss" incidents and asking for Ilminster Town Council to be informed what matters are outstanding and the timescale for resolution
- (ii) That the Clerk writes to both surgeries and the facility developer requesting copies of the risk assessment for the temporary access and requesting timescales for completion of the permanent access
- (iii) That the Clerk writes to South Somerset District Council as the planning authority expressing Ilminster Town Council's concern at the current arrangements

18. Meeting Dates

23 October 2012 – Open Spaces/Budget

13 November 2012 – Finance & Policy/Budget

4 December 2012 – Council

11 December 2012 – Open Spaces

18 December 2012 – Finance & Policy/ Budget

The Meeting closed at 9:24 pm

Chair's Signature & Date

