

NEWSLETTER

Tesco Supermarket

Whilst progress of the Tesco supermarket development in Shudrick Lane has been well documented in the local press, the Newsletter would not seem complete without some mention of what is happening.

At the Town Council meeting on 5 September, which drew a significant public presence, Mr Gerry Waller, a representative of the contractor responsible for the overall works, ran through the proposed timetable for action. Work on the Tennis and Bowling Club is already proceeding at some pace and will be followed in the Autumn by the new Car Park to the east of the existing site along with the pedestrian/cycle link to Frog Lane.

It is perhaps worth recording that whilst the current Shudrick Lane Car Park was administered by South Somerset District Council, it was not owned by them but was rented from private individuals.

The upgrading work on Shudrick Lane will be the next phase to enable the new Car Park to be accessed and the existing one closed. The works will be synchronised with the major re-vamp of Ditton Street which will start after Christmas and be completed by Easter. Work on the store itself commences thereafter.

During the Ditton Street works, that road will be closed completely to vehicular traffic, i.e. from Christmas to Easter, after which it will be opened in its new regime of one-way north to south. During the period of the works, pedestrian access will be maintained into town from the Car Park area both through existing routes and via the new Frog Lane link.

Council Reaction

The Town Council made a number of observations on the initial planning application but in this context, of particular concern was the future regime for the operation of the Car Park. Members were anxious that its operation should be no worse than the present arrangements both in terms of use and charging and are keen to hear how discussions between developer and District Council as the Planning Authority are proceeding on that point.

Furthermore there is concern that the closure of Ditton Street for the projected 10 weeks should create as little disruption as possible to the town and its traders. The Council is aware that in other towns faced with a similar situation, the responsible authorities have adopted a more liberal approach to parking during the period of the works and will be pressing South Somerset District Council to be equally sensitive.

Those are not the only details of the supermarket development that will be up for decision in the coming months. Please keep your eye on the Council Notice Board, these newsletters and the Press for information.

The Town Council is also keen to ensure that alternative routes, notably Canal Way, are kept free flowing and that other 'rat runs' are not created. Meetings are arranged with the Highway Authority and Police to find solutions to that issue.

Other Proposed Developments

Whilst the Town Council gets its regular menu of a dozen or so planning applications per month, perhaps the most notable recent proposal is for 42 additional houses on the land to the east of the new supermarket car park down Shudrick Lane.

Although the land is designated in the Local Plan for housing development, the Town Council in its response to the application was anxious to stress that the Planning Inspector, when allowing that inclusion, spoke of 'modest' expansion. There is also determination on the part of the Council that the style of any housing should be in sympathy with the local area, that parking should be available and that the local ecology and wild life should be respected.

Perhaps of more fundamental importance is our concern that the infrastructure of the town – schools, medical services, recreation facilities - are becoming increasingly stretched by an expanding population. Those with resources to resolve the situation must address this problem and the Council will be pressing that point most forcefully.

Strategic Plan

Ilminster is a fine old town with much to offer to residents and visitors alike. But it has expanded and we must be sure that the expansion is handled sensitively and the services keep pace so that we do not increase the size but reduce the quality of life for residents, old and new.

For that reason the Council has for the last eighteen months been working on a Strategic Plan which seeks to look at where we would like to see our town in five to twenty years time and how we might realise those ambitions.

The draft will be ready for discussion once we have established with our partner local government organisations – South Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council - that the format of our documentation and its content is presented in a way that can form part of their wider planning policy.

The Strategic Plan, when the time is right will be presented for public comment.

New Faces at the Town Council

The summer saw some changes to the composition of the Town Council. Two long standing Councillors, Norman Campbell and David Gooding, resigned and we pay tribute to their contribution over a long period of service to the local community. Several remaining Town Councillors, anxious to ensure that the electorate had the opportunity to choose their own

replacements, activated the procedures that allowed this process to happen – not something about which the general electorate seemed particularly concerned.

The Council was delighted when seven candidates put their names forward and very much welcome the two that were successful at the election on 27 July – Councillor Caroline Cameron from Whitelackington and Councillor Mark Davis who lives in Station Road. Both individuals have already made their 'debut' at Council meetings.

As is normal practice, a full list of the fifteen Councillors that constitute Ilminster Town Council appears at the end of this Newsletter along with contact details for the Town Clerk.

Anyone wishing to raise issues with the Town Council can get in touch with the Clerk who will be only too happy to guide them through the most effective process. That applies equally to individual Councillors who are there to help.

It is worth reminding everyone that whilst the Town Council has an extremely important role to play in what goes on in Ilminster, it is not itself, responsible for all provision and action. That is split between Town Council, District Council, County Council, Police etc – the list goes on. We all appreciate how frustrating that can be for the public but Council staff are all committed to directing people to the right Department or indeed doing it on your behalf. 'It's not my job' is certainly not the attitude in the Town Council office but please be patient if you find that your query has to go elsewhere for a solution!

May we also draw your attention to the regular surgeries when you can talk to Town and District Councillors – first Saturday of the month at the Meeting House from 9.00 am to 10.00 am.

Furthermore all Town Council meetings are open to the public. There is a period for public questions and whilst the public cannot take part in discussion at Council meetings, their presence is always welcome.

Citizens Award

2006 sees the first Citizens Award for Ilminster, organised by the Town Council.

The idea is to present annually an award to an individual – or individuals – who have contributed substantially and selflessly to the life and the people of our town.

The suggestions of individuals who would qualify for this recognition are coming not from the Town Council but from the community. Each year forms will be made available around the town for nominations to be put forward with a brief citation. The selection at the end of the process is made by a small group of Councillors – those who have in the past been Mayors of the town – but the contender list is clearly yours to compile. Please do think about it and watch for the adverts next summer.

This year the Citizens Award has gone to two people.

Jim Olds has spent a lifetime doing things for others. He is equally at home visiting the elderly or working for the Lifeboats as he is opening fetes and supporting the Victorian

evening in his role as Town Crier. Everything is done with a cheerfulness and good humour and his overall contribution makes him a worthy recipient of this Citizens Award.

Eileen Tutchner has for the best part of 25 years cooked lunches at the Ilminster Day Centre and helped the elderly in many other ways. That service has been done with cheerfulness and care without ever seeking personal reward or commendation.

She has been involved in the Womens Institute, Community Association, the Mothers Club and Flower Club and is a perfect example of someone who has contributed selflessly to the community.

Both were presented with a crystal bowl and a framed certificate at the Annual Awards evening at the Shrubbery Hotel on 28 September.

Ilminster in Bloom

The town has certainly looked a picture this summer and we pay tribute to the Chamber of Commerce for arranging hanging baskets outside shops and more importantly, their regular watering. The Town Council continues to manage the troughs at the town entry signs, troughs on Strawberry Bank and the Market House baskets but we cannot do everything. So the support of all those who have helped is much appreciated.

The Town Council is also extremely proud of the quality of its recreation areas, including Herne Hill which along with the Town Cemetery and the grass in the Minster Churchyard is maintained by its own Open Spaces staff. The only disappointment is the continued vandalism which blights the areas and simply creates unproductive and expensive work for our staff when they could be better employed in more appropriate activity.

The actual Ilminster in Bloom awards were presented to successful entrants at our Awards evening on 28 September which also saw recipients of Town Council grants take delivery of their cheques!

This year saw the inclusion of a 'Garden on a Plate' competition for the aspiring young gardeners and their presence at the Awards presentation certainly enhanced the evening.



ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Caroline Cameron	Chris Hall	Martin Rawstorne
Gordon Childs	Mike Henly	Stuart Shepherd
Mark Davis	Richard Jacobs	Fred Walker
Margaret Excell	Adam Kennedy	Paul Whaites
Carol Goodall	David Miller	Lawrence Yeoell

Mayor:

Cllr Carol Goodall

Deputy Mayor:

Cllr Fred Walker

Contact:

**Stephen Fisher, Town Clerk, Ilminster Town Council
Council Offices, North Street, Ilminster TA19 0DG
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NEWSLETTER

This is the Summer Newsletter of the Town Council aimed at keeping the public in touch with activities in Ilminster.

By tradition, the major part of the publication is devoted to the report by the Mayor, Cllr Carol Goodall to the Annual Town Meeting on 19 April. The report gives a general review of the work of the Council over the previous year; it is therefore to some extent historical but nevertheless refreshes the memory of what has been achieved.

Since that time, we have had an election for Councillors who will serve the town for the next four years. The list appears elsewhere in the Newsletter but it would be remiss not to recognise the contribution made by three councillors who did not stand again – Mike Henly, Martin Rawstorne and Fred Walker – and who put in many hours of time and work over a long period in the interests of the whole community of Ilminster.

TESCO

As a brief update, the Tesco development and associated work on Ditton Street is moving forward at a pace. Ditton Street with its wider attractive pavements should be completed soon and the store itself is programmed to open in early November.

STRATEGIC VISION

The Council's Strategic Vision which is now out for public consultation will be revisited by Councillors over the early Autumn so that it can be published hopefully later in the year. There is still the opportunity to contribute views so please do give some thought to the ideas that are being proposed and let us know your feelings.

CITIZENS AWARD

The Council is once again promoting the annual Citizens Award which allows the town to recognise those who have contributed significantly towards the benefit of Ilminster and its citizens.

It is you, the electors of Ilminster, who make the nominations, not the Town Council. Forms are available from the Council Offices in North Street and we would urge you to think about those who over the years, have given selflessly to the well being of our town. Last year's recipients – Jim Olds and Eileen Tutchter provided us with a splendid start. The presentation is made at our Annual Awards Evening in September when both grants and Ilminster in Bloom awards complete a splendid occasion.

MAYOR'S REPORT

No one could say that this has not been an eventful and challenging year for the Town Council and its Councillors.

There is no doubt that this year has been dominated by TESCO. The autumn of

2005 saw the development of a food store on Shudrick Lane site given approval by the South Somerset District Council, which in turn created much debate over the associated road scheme for Ditton Street. By May 2006 Somerset County Council, as

the Highways Authority, had finally agreed to Ditton Street becoming one way in a north to south direction. This was followed shortly afterwards by the resignation of two long standing Councillors Norman Campbell and David Gooding. Both had served the Council diligently over many years. After an election involving seven candidates, Caroline Cameron and Mark Davies were elected and joined the Council in the late summer and are playing their part in the Council's activities.

Come the autumn we found ourselves in the throes of more planning applications from the food store provider, TESCO, about the detail, the style and the actual location of the store. The application was finally resolved by the SSDC Regulation Committee in March 2007 and the work is now under way.

I suspect we could write a book on the machinations surrounding this development. What I will say is that this past year has demanded a huge amount of work on the part of Councillors and staff to ensure that the views of the Council, on what was in the best interests of Ilminster as a whole, were properly debated and clearly articulated. Unfortunately it is often the lot of a Councillor not to be able to please everyone - but please do not challenge the good faith of those who represent you.

Now is the time to move forward. There are things we can still do to shape the format and operation of the new store, to make it an integral part of the retail portfolio of Ilminster. Whether we like it or not, supermarkets exist and we must try to capitalise on the extra footfall to ensure the vibrancy of the wide range of the other outlets in the town.

Councillors have, this year, devoted an enormous amount of time and effort to developing a draft strategic vision for the

town. Some of you will have seen the displays outlining our thinking and there is an item later on the agenda when the main features will be highlighted. This is very much a consultative document. We want to know what you think – what is good, what is not so good.

A lot of time and effort has been spent on this work outside the normal weekly meetings of the Council and its Councillors. Early mornings, pre 8.00am and late evenings have been the norm. And both the Town Clerk and I appreciate the commitment made by of all concerned.

Mentioning the word commitment would perhaps be a good time to speak of the retirement in March of Carol Holtom after 32 years as a Secretary with the Town Council. As the Clerk said at her farewell presentation evening, officers of the Council are frequently held responsible by residents for every ill that befalls the town and are often treated to behaviour that is totally uncalled for. Carol Holtom knew how to cope and served the Council and Ilminster incredibly well over the years. For this we are all grateful.

During a year dominated by Tesco and strategy, the Council's care of business continued:

Members have considered numerous planning applications giving each one the time and thought it deserved. We certainly do not see ourselves as a rubber stamp – we want and try to ensure the best development possible for a town of so much character.

Our Open Spaces – the main Recreation Ground and its play areas, the sports pitches, Winterhay Lane Recreation Ground have all had the devotion of our Wardens - and for these two men it is a case of devotion as they strive to make our open spaces a resource for the whole community. Herne Hill is an absolute

picture. The work they do up there, the coppicing, sensitive removal of trees to encourage the growth of others and the dead hedging is a credit to them. Any one who wants to see how a natural resource can be managed so that it provides both a habitat for trees, animals and insects as well as a pleasant area for humans should spend time up there.

This year we are hoping to involve the Cubs and Brownies in the planting of trees on the Hill. Not just any old tree but those that fit the environment in locations where they can flourish. We hope it will create in those young people a sense of ownership and pride in their community.

Which brings me to a particular hobbyhorse – vandalism. Our men work extremely hard on our open spaces to offer an environment that we can all be proud of. It is very frustrating for them to be faced with trashed fencing, damaged toilets, young trees snapped off, mature trees with damaged bark, skate park facilities unbolted or torn from their moorings. Our policy is to repair the damage as soon as possible - to leave it looking uncared for would only encourage more vandalism. Some of this drink related. But, whatever the cause its contribution to this town is wholly negative and we would urge those who see it happening to the Police or the Town Council know who is doing it. Anonymously of course.

To be more positive, the Recreation Ground gets a huge amount of use – make sure you capitalise on a facility that few towns enjoy.

It is easy to forget that the Town Council also manages the Cemetery, licenses the taxis, looks after the troughs and town signs and a myriad of other things. Once again our income for doing all this is amongst the lowest of any comparable town. Far be it from me to draw comparisons but do have a look at what you would pay in our neighbouring towns.

The Civic event in March, a charity dinner in aid of the Children's Hospice South West, raised over £2000. I would like to thank not only those who attended but also all those who gave so generously to the cause.

Finally to the future. May 3rd will see local elections taking place and here in Ilminster we have 16 candidates standing. Three of our long standing Councillors are retiring and I would like to thank them for their contribution to the life of the town during the years they have been in office.

The new Council will have lots to do and I only hope that they can work as honestly and diligently as our present complement with an underlying good humour that has made my year as Mayor so interesting and pleasurable.



ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL 2007/2008

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CAMERON, Caroline	Whitelackington Manor, Whitelackington, Ilminster TA19 9EF	01460 52448
CAMPBELL, Norman OBE	Yatford Farmhouse, Broadway, Ilminster TA19 9RE	01460 54492
CHILDS, Gordon	14 Springfield, Ilminster TA19 0ET	01460 54464
COURT, Nicci	10 Duke House, The Mead, Ilminster TA19 0HE	01460 259391
DAVIS, Mark	14 Station Road, Ilminster TA19 9BD	01460 259358
EXCELL, Margaret M Deputy Mayor	10 New Buildings, Dowlish Ford, Ilminster TA19 0PE	01460 54043
GOODALL, Carol MAYOR	2 Eames Orchard, Ilminster TA19 0BZ	01460 57564
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MILLER, David	Acacia House, 37 Station Road, Ilminster TA19 9BG	01460 52604
SHEPHERD, Stuart	28 Station Road, Ilminster TA19 9AR	01460 52108
TURNER, Kim	19 Orchard Vale, Ilminster TA19 0EU	01460 55523
WHAITES, Paul	Ambleside, 4 Long Close, Ilminster TA19 0EP	01460 54186
YEOELL, Lawrence	26 Fairfield, Ilminster TA19 9PE	01460 55188

<u>District Councillors</u>		
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TURNER, Kim	19 Orchard Vale, Ilminster TA19 0EU	01460 55523

<u>County Councillor</u>		
SHIRE, Tony	Magnolias, 30 Barn Close, Crewkerne TA18 8VL	01460 76652

<u>Town Clerk</u>		
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