

Ilam Parish Council

Serving the Parish of Ilam, Staffordshire

Clerk: Clive Andrews. Park Cottage, Ilam, Ashbourne DE6 2AZ Tel: 01335 350707

Parish Council Meeting Minutes – 07th July 2026 at 7.00pm Ilam School

Minutes of the Ilam Parish Council Meeting

Held on 7th July 2026 at 7.00pm, Ilam School

Present

C. Andrews (Clerk, Vice Chair), C. Wilderspin (Cllr), I. Frith (Chairman), H. Allen (Cllr, K Warrington (Cllr), K Tipper (Cllr), V Nottage Cllr), Adam Linnett (National Trust), Abby Chillingworth (National Trust), Karl Mortimier, A. Andrews, G Nottage, Rob.

1. Apologies for Absence

James Moffat

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th May 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman, I. Frith.

3. National Trust

Planning application for the replacement dipping pond platform has now been approved. The next step will be to submit a FiPL funding application to secure the necessary money to deliver the works.

Provisionally awarded almost £200k for habitat restoration work at New Hansen Grange – which will include botanical surveys and soil sampling, grassland restoration and scattered tree planting.

A species of plant – the fine leaved sandwort - has been found on Bunster Hill that's not been recorded in Staffordshire since 1947.

We've welcomed 2 new members of staff to the Peak District team. Bryony Sharpe is our new Visitor Operations Manager and will oversee our day to day operations including managing our car parks and welcome teams. Rachael Lyon is our new Visitor Experience Manager and will oversee our events and programming, signage and interpretation. They will also be providing additional on-site support on weekends.

The team have been litter picking at Dovedale every morning, and this is alongside our regular community litter picks that cover the surrounding areas of Thorpe, Ilam and Blore.

We are also working with Moorlands Greenpickers – a local litter picking group – to arrange more picks across the area.

Earthly Delights – the commissioned installation that celebrates 200 years since the completion of Ilam Hall – will be in place in front of the Italianate Gardens from 18th July, when Summer of Play begins. We are also welcoming Derbyshire Archaeology Scouts to Ilam that weekend, where they will be undertaking some test pit digs to see if they can find any signs of the previous ‘Nether’ Hall.

We are continuing to work with partners including Staffs Fire and Rescue, PDNPA, Staffs Police, Highways and SMDC to highlight issues and secure support with areas beyond our control.

4. Finance

- Balance in account – unable to update bank account balance by Finance officer due to undelivered bank statement.
- End of year 2025/2026 finance paperwork awaiting completion.
- Requested by finance officer new cheque book.
- Requested by finance officer account address name changing from C Andrews to Ilam Parish Council on bank statement mail.

5. Planning Matters

No objections were raised for two applications for Dove Cottage, Ilam Moor Lane, Ilam

6. Clerks Report and 7. Chairmans Report

a. Road Problems, Repairs, Signage, Road Markings, Littering and Visitor Incidents

Matters Reported to Staffordshire County Council by Clerk

- Road through Woodland up to Castern Hall – Damage reported. No action required. Enquiry closed.
- Lodge Lane (deep rut) – Reported to Staffordshire County Council. No action required. Enquiry closed.
- Yellow lines up to the corner of Lodge Lane on Moor Lane – Reported to Staffordshire County Council. No action required. Enquiry closed. Document sent in.
- Road surface damage on Lodge Lane, Moor Lane and Ilam Moor Lane – Tarmac surface lifting during hot weather was reported. No action required. Enquiry closed.
- Ilam Bridge – Damage to the top course on the left-hand side when exiting Ilam has been reported. Enquiry raised - Enquiry ongoing.

b. Incident Involving Visitors at Blore Pastures

An incident by the Clerk and wife involving a large group of visitors at Blore Pastures. Following concerns being raised regarding their behaviour, including entering private land and disturbing livestock and littering, members of the group alleged that they were being unfairly targeted and made accusations of racial discrimination.

Since the last meeting, concerns have continued regarding visitors trespassing onto private land at Blore Pastures. Reports have also been received of littering, the use of disposable barbecues, and other activities causing damage to the local environment.

The issue has been reported to the Peak District National Park Authority, they were invited to this meeting but didn't attend. The Parish Council notes that unauthorised access to private land and the associated littering remain a significant concern for local landowners and residents.

c. Littering

Concern has been raised by the Clerk regarding the volume of litter on the hillside between the two cattle grids on the road out of Ilam, together with litter along the approach roads into the village. Littering on private land is unacceptable and places an unnecessary burden on landowners.

Some members of Ilam Parish Council believe that further action is required to address these ongoing issues by the National Trust and consideration should be given to increasing the frequency of litter-picking and public road monitoring to help reduce the environmental impact on the village and surrounding countryside.

The Clerk strongly emphasised to the National Trust representatives that this matter requires considerably more attention than it is currently receiving. Concerns were met with reservations from both the National Trust and a member of the public. A heated debate followed regarding the extent of litter collection beyond the national trust boundaries and which organisation or landowner should be responsible for its removal.

Adam from the National Trust acknowledged that littering is an ongoing problem and stated that he had personally collected litter in his own time while leaving the village. Reference was also made to the National Trust's work with the Greenpickers initiative, as detailed in the National Trust meeting notes.

The Parish Council will continue to monitor the situation and seek updates from the relevant authorities.

CW suggested the possible introduction of additional smart litter bins within the village. IF and KT commented that standard litter bins had previously caused issues, with rubbish being left around the bins rather than being placed inside them. The Clerk commented that residents may not wish to have litter bins situated directly outside their properties. It was agreed that this matter could be discussed further.

CW also discussed the possibility of organising a community litter-picking event, and a member of the public suggested exploring whether community service operatives could assist with litter-picking activities within the village and surrounding area.

A request was made by a local farmer for the cattle grids to be cleaned and for the extension gate and gatepost in the lower area of the hill near Ilam Bridge to be repaired. The Clerk will report these matters to the relevant authority.

d. Illegal Parking on Footpaths – Ilam Village

- Since the last meeting, there have been two reported occasions where vehicles were illegally parked on the footpath within Ilam Village also double and single yellows.
- Photographs were taken, and the matter was reported to both Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Police.
- The police confirmed that the parking did constitute an offence but advised that they were unable to deploy patrols to attend and resolve the issue at the time. Keep reporting to staff traffic. Becky would pass through the village as often as she could and try to monitor.
- The matter was subsequently reported to Staffordshire County Council's Traffic and Network Management Team. The following response was received:

“Good afternoon,

Thank you for your email, I have requested enforcement to be completed by our enforcement partners. Unfortunately, whilst pictures are of assistance due to legislation our enforcement partners are unable to retrospectively enforce and can only enforce by viewing whilst on site and issuing a penalty charge notice on the windscreen of the car.

Due to the resource available our enforcement team are unable to be on location at all times however I have requested enforcement on weekends and evenings as you have stated weekend afternoons 12 -5pm”

Due to the very limited likelihood of illegally parked vehicles within Ilam being fined, removed, or otherwise subject to enforcement action, robust comments were made by the Clerk regarding visitor numbers, the availability of parking spaces, the closure of car parks when full, and the resulting impact on the village.

It was agreed that all instances of illegal parking should continue to be reported. However, concern was expressed that, given the lack of enforcement this will become a futile exercise.

A member of the public suggested that the National Trust should make additional land available for parking to help relieve the pressure on the village. This matter had been discussed at previous meetings, During the meeting the consensus was that increasing parking capacity would attract even more visitors and potentially create further problems. Adam commented on this point during the discussion.

e. Ilam Village Speeding

A response was received from Charlotte Kelly, County Councillor for Leek, following correspondence regarding concerns raised about speeding within the village and on the surrounding roads leading into Ilam.

"Good Afternoon,

An increase in speed limit signage would not be possible at this time. I have requested for the speed data from the highways officers. It does show across the roads that you sent to me (Moor Lane and Lodge Lane) that there is good speed compliance and that on average the speed across these areas is 23-25MPH.

This does not of course reflect the odd one or two that may breach, or travel too fast, there will always be those cases even with more signage."

Concerns were raised at the Parish Meeting regarding the age of the speed data being used, as circumstances have changed with Ilam becoming an increasingly popular visitor destination. The Clerk will investigate these queries and seek clarification on the data currently available.

f. Public footpath altered route

At a previous parish meeting Richard asked about a public footpath being altered in its location.

Response from Charlotte Kelly:

"Good Afternoon,

I have received the following explanation for the footpath being moved:

We have moved this footpath back onto the definitive line. We understand that the route which followed the riverbank was put in place by the National Peak Park many years ago, but this did not follow the legal line of the path. A few issues had arisen regarding this route, including several potentially dangerous trees along the bank, a fallen tree in Fishpond Wood and some old structures in need of repair.

We therefore relocated the footpath onto the definitive line, taking it away from the riverbank. This route is safer for the public and requires less infrastructure to maintain. Furthermore, it reinstates the route onto the original legal line, allowing the Local Authority to fulfil our statutory duties in respect to maintenance etc.

I've attached some notes which set out the issues and route deviations as they were last summer.

A Member of the public advised that the original footpath is still being used. Okeover Estates are looking to fence off the riverside boundary, which may affect the old route.

The exact location of the footpath remains in dispute, with ongoing discussions and differing views from residents. The information and data provided to the Clerk will be circulated for review, and any further comments or concerns will be forwarded to Charlotte Kelly if considered appropriate.

g. Dovedale

Antisocial behaviour and parking issues within Dovedale were discussed.

Comments were made regarding the lack of staffing within the area. It was suggested that, as a major visitor attraction, a greater National Trust presence should be provided to help monitor and manage any problems.

Concerns were raised that the car park gates were not being closed in the evening, allowing large numbers of visitors to remain in the area late into the night. This was contributing to antisocial behaviour, which was also impacting the surrounding villages of Ilam and Thorpe.

The National Trust advised that they would staff at Dovedale till 7.00pm over the summer period.

A member of the public asked the National Trust whether Dovedale was considered a visitor attraction or a nature reserve, given the significant number of visitors and the need for appropriate management and supervision.

The National Trust advised that staff generally work in pairs, and that approaching members of the public to challenge behaviour can sometimes create negative reactions.

It was also suggested by IF that the National Trust's social media presence should be improved to provide better communication with visitors. This could include updates when areas are at capacity, encouraging visitors to consider alternative locations or advising them not to visit during particularly busy periods.

The Clerk mentioned the impact of viral negative media coverage, which had created damaging publicity for the area. Concerns were raised that this also affects the residents of Thorpe and Ilam, who experience the consequences of increased visitor numbers and associated issues.

Further concerns were raised that, due to the volume of visitors and the behaviour being experienced, Dovedale was becoming more like a "Blackpool attraction" rather than a place of natural beauty. Questions were asked as to why there was not a greater National Trust staff presence to monitor and address the ongoing issues.

It was requested that a meeting be arranged with a National Trust manager to seek guidance and discuss potential improvements to the current situation. A meeting has since been offered, and a response is now awaited from the Ilam Parish Councillors regarding attendance and suitable arrangements.

The National Trust has secured a presence on two local working groups. One is the Public Space Protection Order regarding BBQs and fires. The second is the Safer and Stronger Communities Strategy Group. Other partners in these groups include local Police forces, Fire and Rescue, and both County and Borough Councils. The National Trust will use these groups to highlight the issues the area is facing and to lobby for additional resource from those partners to increase enforcement in the area to tackle all aspects of ASB. The next meetings for these groups are 9th and 30th July respectively, with an update provided to the PC from NT once the meetings have taken place.

8. Public Participation / Open Forum

- A member of the public queried the ownership and management of the coach park at the top of Dovedale entrance, stating that it had previously been passed from the owners for the benefit of the people of Ilam. They questioned whether the Peak District National Park Authority's current adoption of the site, including the introduction of a payment system, was lawful and whether income was being generated from land that may not belong to them. The matter was noted, and the Clerk will contact the relevant parties to seek clarification regarding the ownership, management arrangements, and current use of the site.
- A member of the public commented that Ilam should not become perceived as a place associated with vigilantism or racism. The comment was noted, with discussion focusing on the importance of addressing local concerns such as littering, parking, antisocial and visitor management.

The Clerk commented that illegal parking within Ilam was not attributable to any group or community. He stated that responsibility for parking issues involved a range of visitors, including British visitors.

9. Any Other Business

IF (Chairman) discussed commemorating the late Richard Wain with a memorial bench and plaque as a lasting remembrance of his contribution and many years of service to the community. Further details and arrangements will be considered.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday 8th September 2026 @ Ilam School 7.00pm