

ONE ILFRACOMBE MEETING MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 21st May 2025

Venue: The Ilfracombe Centre

Meeting No: 2503

Time: 14:00

1. Welcome & Apologies – Ken Miles welcomed the assembled.

Attendees –

- Cllr Sara Wilson – Devon County Council
- Cllr Paul Crabb – Ilfracombe Town Council (late arrival 14:25)
- Rod Donovan – Independent
- Andrea Beacham – NHS RDUHT
- Steven Seatherton – Ilfracombe Town Council
- Neil Ingram – Ilfracombe Town Council
- Charmain Lovett – Ilfracombe Town Council
- Laura Donovan – Ilfracombe Town Council (late arrival 15:05)
- Simon Kitchen – Devon County Council (remote)
- Jody Le Bredonchel – Ilfracombe Junior School
- Hannah Harrington – North Devon Council
- Ken Miles – North Devon Council
- Catheryn Hewitt – Devon Family Hubs
- Dr Sarah Williams – Combe Coastal Practice
- Sarah- Jane Mackenzie – Shapland – North Devon Council
- Dominic Dunbrook – North Devon Council
- Cllr Dan Turton – Ilfracombe Town Council (remote)
- Sheila Roles – Independent
- John Roles – Independent
- Sarah Maddocks – Ilfracombe Town Council

Apologies –

- Mary Midson – Ilfracombe Town Council
- Richard Preston – D&C Police
- Marc Rostock – North Devon Homes
- James Lander – NHS RDUHT
- Kier Duffin – Devon County Council
- Peter French – Independent

2. To agree minutes from last meeting (all)

- The minutes were agreed and noted by members.

3. Financial Report (S Seatherton)

- The PM noted that due to OI being prudent with finances through the past financial year, there is a £17,000 surplus. Since OI requires a minimum of £7,000 to remain operational, this leaves £10,000 available for projects.
- The 2024 Accounts (full and filleted) were approved. These to be noted at the AGM which it is agreed to be delayed so that further conversations on governance and structure can take place.

4. Programme Update (including OI)

- a. Quick general overview of projects** – Project Officer Charmain provided an update on her current initiatives. The Living Well team has been addressing concerns related to family hubs, which will be discussed later in the meeting as a dedicated agenda item. Ian Fleck (DCC) is expected to attend an upcoming meeting to respond to further questions on the matter.

The Emmanuel Church is being considered as a potential community space, and Charmain is currently seeking £15,000 in funding to develop a comprehensive business plan. It is noted that approximately £1 million would be required to purchase and refurbish the building.

In addition, smaller projects such as the walking trails and the Beach of Dreams are progressing, along with plans to explore the use of Oxford Grove Park as a potential community garden.

Project Officer Neil added that he has been collaborating with the Culture Team to audit the town's notice and information boards. This effort aims not only to create an up-to-date inventory but also to explore alternative methods of sharing information with both visitors and residents of Ilfracombe.

The Town Team continues to operate as usual, with members of the public regularly using the direct reporting system to address local issues. Progress also continues on the Ilfracombe Regeneration initiative, which is now focusing on potential improvements to shop fronts.

Finally, Neil and Charmain have spent the past five months preparing for a major project, "Into the Blue," which offers children the chance to participate in sea-based activities such as coasteering, paddleboarding, and swimming—making the most of Ilfracombe's natural coastal environment.

- b. Update on PCN contract** – The PM explained that the contract will restart on 1st July 2025 and will run for another two years. A slight reduction in

hours was achieved through natural wastage, allowing the service to continue operating in both Ilfracombe and South Molton.

5. Focused Town Issues

a. Family Hub

- Concerns have been raised by both officers and members of the public following the announcement that Family Hubs will replace the current Children's Centres structure.
- The 30 existing Children's Centres across Devon will be consolidated into approximately 6–7 Family Hubs. Ian Fleck (DCC) is currently overseeing the staffing restructure involved in this transition.
- Catheryn Hewitt noted that the new model is intended to be an improvement. While the Children's Centres primarily focused on early years, the Family Hubs will cater to a wider age range—0 to 19 years, and potentially beyond—offering broader support for those with additional needs. She emphasised that the range of services will remain the same or even expand as a result.
- Ken Miles suggested creating a diagram to clearly illustrate the differences and changes in services under the new structure.
- Catheryn also explained that all staff were offered roles within the new model. However, some chose not to transition, which may account for the reduction in staff. Despite fewer personnel at the Ilfracombe site, services will continue to be delivered.

b. Belles Place (funding)

- A £20,000 funding provision has been allocated for Belles Place this year, with contributions from ITC, NDC, DCC, and the NHS. However, it was agreed that some paperwork will need to be completed before the funds are released. This documentation should outline the available services in greater detail than in previous years.
- To explore this further, the PM proposed forming a working group, potentially including an independent representative, a member of the Poverty Truth Commission, and representatives from both NDC and DCC. The PM will take the lead in coordinating this group.

c. Youth Provision / Centre

- It was noted that Ilfracombe Futures aims to establish a youth hub designed to address several challenges currently affecting the community. Issues such as anti-social behaviour, support for home-schooled children, poverty, and other social concerns could potentially be addressed within a single dedicated space. Existing services, such as Delta—delivered by I.C.E and providing 12 hours of mentoring at Ilfracombe Academy—as well as other community-based youth clubs, are already making a difference but are limited in both resources and capacity.

- Potential venues for the hub include the Emmanuel Church and the Link Centre, the latter of which is owned by DCC and currently underutilized. The Devon Mental Health Alliance has expressed interest in being involved with the project.
- This proposal gained momentum following a concerning statistic revealing that 83% of children in Ilfracombe reported feeling lonely or as though they didn't belong. Dr. Sarah Williams urged members to consider the need for a sustainable, long-term funding model to avoid ongoing financial struggles similar to those faced by Belles Place. She also stressed the importance of recruiting a team of skilled youth workers—something that can be challenging.
- It was suggested that a detailed business plan or model be developed before any premises are confirmed. The PM will write to DCC to request an update on the Link Centre and introduce the proposal for consideration.

6. Theme Focus

a. **Agree on the overall aims and objectives of the four theme / working groups**

- The PO suggested using the ITC strategic plans objectives to help decide which OI should agree on. It was decided that there was not enough time to agree on these items therefore the theme leads will pin point these and send them over to the secretariat to finalise and circulate before the next meeting.

b. **Identify projects and activities that will have the greatest impact in delivery those objectives**

- The projects and activities will also be decided by the secretariat and circulated with members. Andrea Beacham suggested creating a 12 months' timeline of the projects, although most will not see an immediate impact.

c. **Review the current projects**

- All current projects can be seen in the attached google spreadsheet.

7. Coastal Navigators Network

- ### a. **Programme Overview** – Andrea presented a proposal to join the network at a discounted rate of £15,000, reduced from the standard fee of £20,000. The network was established in response to the strong governmental influence of the North West, in contrast to coastal communities which, due to their geographic dispersion, often struggle to have their voices heard—despite experiencing significant impacts from national policy decisions. Data clearly highlights the inequalities faced by coastal areas.



As part of the membership, the network would conduct data analysis specific to Ilfracombe, which could inform local action plans and strengthen funding bids submitted to government bodies.

Andrea will organise two meetings: one with a town currently benefiting from the network to understand its impact, and another with a network representative to gather further details. It was also suggested that Ilfracombe explore the possibility of collaborating with a similar town, such as Minehead, to share the costs.

8. Agree AGM date – This will be decided online.

9. Any other business – Andrea provided an update on a new project aimed at supporting prison leavers and individuals on probation, with a focus on addressing challenges related to addiction, inadequate housing, and mental health. Cllr Crabb recommended reaching out to the Wynstay as a potential source for participants. Further updates will be shared in due course.

The Chairman declared the meeting was closed at 16:00hrs.