



**Minutes of the Ansford Parish Council Meeting
held on Wednesday 13th March 2024 at 7.00pm, in Caryford Community Hall**

Councillors: Cllr C Edwards, Cllr F Houlton, Cllr D Henderson, Cllr B Williams
Parish Clerk: R.Coombes
County Councillors: Cllr K Messenger, Cllr H Hobhouse
Parishioners: 2 members of the public were present
CCTC: Judi Morrison

The meeting was chaired by Cllr D Henderson.

- 161/2023 Apologies**
Apologies were received from Cllr D Pinnions and Cllr R Leary.
- 162/2023 Declarations of Interest**
None.
- 163/2023 Resolve to exclude the press and public from the meeting for item 18**
It was proposed and resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting to discuss confidential matters regarding the Clerk's salary.
- 164/2023 To Approve Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th February 2024**
These had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was proposed and agreed that these minutes be signed as a true record of the meeting.
- 165/2023 Matters arising from the Minutes.**
None.
- 166/2023 Members of the Public**
A member of the public attended the meeting to speak regarding the newsletter, they felt a lot of people appreciate the delivery of the newsletter and would like the council to reconsider its contribution.

Another member of the public raised concerns regarding safety in relation to the lights at the school crossing on Maggs Lane. It was decided that this needs to be followed up again with the Highways Department as to why these lights have never been used. Cllr Hobhouse & Cllr Messenger agreed to investigate this further.
- 167/2023 Unitary Councillor and Police Reports**
Cllr Hobhouse reported that there is CCTV footage of drug dealing taking place within the Toybox car park, though the police have been unresponsive so far.
Somerset Council have set a budget, whereby they transferred capital receipts in to revenue for £76m. Somerset Council were not allowed to increase Council tax by 10%, however if the S114 option was taken, the Council Tax could have been increased by 21%.
There are further concerns over flooding in the local area and the run off water from the A303 upgrade. Further measures are being taken to monitor the flooding situation.

Cllr Messenger reported that the 54 bus route is likely to change route to add Yeovilton to the list of stops will potentially reach a further 4,000 people. The Number 1 bus has also been saved by making less journeys and less stops. Work to save Dimmer Recycling Centre is still taking place.

Police Reports

Latest police statistics were read out.

168/2023

Website Update

The new website is now live. It was proposed and agreed to increase the Clerks hours by 1 extra hour a week to maintain the website and run a blog. This will allow local groups to inform APC of local events and relevant information that should be published.

169/2023

Caryford hall

Construction is almost complete and still on schedule, a full report was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. It is expected the hall will be opened on 20th July. Further improvements to the car park are being considered by the committee. The website will be updated to show the available rooms for hire.

It was decided APC should have a page on their website about Caryford Hall and link to the booking system via Hallmaster.

The possibility of APC having a filing cabinet within the hall that the Council pay to rent was raised. Cllr Williams agreed to raise this with the committee. Discussions regarding emergencies highlighted the possible requirement of a generator to provide electric for heating, lighting and basic kitchen needs.

170/2023

Fairfield

Cllr Henderson had attended a meeting with CCTC to discuss a proposal to create an urban wood at Fairfield. A planting list has been provided and there are concerns about costs coming from Somerset Council but Councillors felt it was in alignment with the declared climate emergency. More information was felt to be required regarding costs and maintenance for the newly planted trees as they will require a lot of watering. The costs are likely to be incurred in one financial year but not be reclaimable from the scheme until the next financial year. Cllr Houlton agreed to be the representative from APC for this project. All Councillors voted in approval of completing the application for funding with CCTC.

171/2023

Flood resilience planning

Volunteer parishioners have been conducting a soft survey of Ansford where a grid can be produced. They have approached environmental agencies and asked for all the local information relating to flooding, it is hoped they can then identify the high risk areas. A meeting will be held on Friday 15th March for further discussion regarding how to proceed with publishing a volunteer assessment. Cllr Henderson has read the report produced by Stoney Stratton which has highlighted areas that could be impactful to Ansford, this has also been shared with CCTC.

It was highlighted that APC haven't been informed regarding emergency policies created by Somerset Council. Cllr Hobhouse suggested contact was made with Dr Paul Elliston, and also Queen Camel Council and Martin Lilley to see what emergency procedures they have put in place.

172/2023

Footpaths and Highways

CCA28 Traffic Working Group Update

The latest report from the Traffic Working Group had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

Concerns were raised by Councillors regarding the carparking scheme Ansford Parish Council currently pay in to. It was felt that local residents, commercial vehicles and those working in Castle Cary using the free carparks means we are being told some Ansford residents are avoiding shopping in CC as they cannot park. This is also not good for businesses parking their cars in the free carparks meant there was a lack of parking for Ansford residents who wished to visit the town centre. It also results in businesses losing out on potential business due to people being unable to park their vehicles easily.

It was agreed that the clerk write to Somerset Council, and notify CCTC, for this to be looked in to.

GWR Customer and Community Fund Application

APC would like to apply for the GWR Customer and Community Fund in relation to improvements that could be made to the station footpath. The Highways Authority are insisting the path should be 2m wide, which makes the project difficult to complete. Cllr Hobhouse & Cllr Messenger asked for the information to be circulated to them to see if there was anything they could do to assist.

173/2023

Finance

The financial report had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was proposed that this be signed. Resolved (5.0.0)

Online & cheque payments:

R.Coombes - Clerk Salary

Lighthouse - Payroll admin charge - £13.00

Caryford Hall - Hall Hire - £39.38

R Smith - Hedge Trimming - £130.00

Somerset Council - SID post - £188.74

C Edwards - Expenses - £29.

It was proposed and agreed that these payments be made (5.0.0)

Further financial discussions:

Grant application form – a new form has been designed to improve the grant application process. This will allow the council to ensure that we are given the correct information before discussion at the next meeting. It was agreed this form be put in to operation.

174/2023

To approve the internal auditor

It was unanimously voted to approve to use the same internal auditor as last year, Paul Russell from Microshade.

175/2023

Protocol for representing Ansford Parish Council at meetings

Councillors were reminded that if a Councillor attends a meeting on behalf of Ansford Parish Council, they are there in a listening role. The objective is to gather information to be presented at the next full council meeting, there is no delegated decision making power.

176/2023

Parishioner Contact

Emails regarding the newsletter

Emails had been received in response to the newsletter going online. It was noted that the majority of these were in favour of the newsletter being available online in a cost saving exercise.

Land on Ansford Hill

A resident had emailed with concerns regarding a land slip on Ansford Hill (A371) and the potential for more of his garden to be affected. It was

proposed Cllr Hobhouse raise this directly with Somerset Council and provide support to the resident.

Finance Papers

A parishioner had sent in a document comparing finances between the local councils. It was agreed this should be attached to the minutes for residents information. Please see Appendix 1.

177/2023 Any other correspondence

Noticeboards

Information from Cllr Pinnions had been sent prior to the meeting stating the noticeboard at Ancastle needs repairing and the minutes should be published. It was decided all noticeboards within the Parish should be reviewed and this information published on the website so parishioners can submit comments

Meeting closed to the press and public at 20:05.

In camera began at 20:13

178/2023 In camera Session

An in camera session was held to review the Clerks salary.

The meeting ended at 20:25.

The next Ansford Parish Council Meeting to be held on 10th April 2024, at Caryford Hall 7pm.

Signed..... Date.....

Appendix 1.

Ansford Parish Council Precept – a comparison

Unless indicated in a separate hyperlink, data is from the [spreadsheet](#) in this [Govt Website](#).

23/24 Band D parish precept

Castle Cary	£236.57	2.88 x bigger than Ansford
Ansford	£81.82	
Yarlington	£34.40	
North Cadbury	£34.40	
Pitcombe	£38.30	
Sparkford	£31.72	

Position in c10,250 parishes (in order of highest charging)

Castle Cary	41	in top 0.5% of parish councils
Ansford	1837	at £81.82 is in the 90% of councils who charge less than £100

Precept Income	23/24	24/25
Castle Cary	£201,350	£229,142 (up 13.8%)
Ansford	£46,432	£50,730 (up 9.26%)
	4.33 x bigger than Ansford	4.52 x bigger than Ansford

Total Income 22/23 (from AGAR)

	Precept	Other	Total
Castle Cary	£187,500	£80,709	£268,209
Ansford	£38,725	£3,246	£41,971

Staff Costs 22/23 (from AGAR)

	Total	% of income
Castle Cary	£96,806	36%
Ansford	£7,921	18%

Population from 2021 Census

Ansford	1,175	33%
Castle Cary	2,410	67%
Total	3,585	