



Minutes of the Ansford Parish Council Meeting
 held in Caryford Hall, Maggs Lane, Ansford, BA7 7JJ
 on **Wednesday 14th January 2026** at 6:30pm

Present: Cllr. Debra Henderson (Chairperson)
 Cllr. Fiona Houlton (Vice-chair)
 Cllr. Chris Edwards Cllr. Diana Pinions
 Cllr. Ray Leary Cllr. Annette Parker

In Attendance: Mr Simon Pritchard: Responsible Finance Officer (minutes taker)
 Mrs Deborah Duffy: Assistant Parish Clerk

Members of the Public in Attendance: Three

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained to the public how the period of public comments worked.

Public Comments:

- o A resident commented that there were 15 to 20 potholes on Lower Ansford road. The Somerset Council website wants you to report everyone individually including information about the size. The Somerset Councillors should be doing more along with Somerset Council. Cars are being damaged. It was noted that no Somerset Councillors had attended the meeting.

Item no:	
1	<u>To Receive any Apologies for Absence:</u> Apologies received from Cllr. Summer Easeman due to childcare issues.
2	<u>Declarations of Interests:</u> None.
3	<u>To consider whether any items should be considered “in camera”:</u> It was confirmed that agenda item 11 will be taken in confidential session.
4	<u>To approve the Minutes of the Council Meetings held in September and December 2025:</u> The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10th September 2025 had been circulated. The requested update has still not been made so the minutes were deferred to the next meeting Action: Assistant Parish Clerk The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 3 rd December 2025 had been circulated. It was proposed by Cllr Leary to adopt the minutes of December the 3rd, seconded by Cllr Houlton. Resolved 4-in favour; 2-abstentions

5	<p><u>To receive reports from Unitary Councillors and Police, if any:</u> No Somerset Councillors or Police had attended the meeting, no written reports received.</p>
6	<p><u>Planning:</u> Proposal: Erection of 2 Storey extension on existing lounge. Location: Rossgreen Ansford Hill Ansford Castle Cary Somerset BA7 7JN Application Type : Householder Application Application Number: 25/02695/HOU</p> <p>The council debated the application. There was a general feeling of positivity. It was proposed by Cllr Edwards that the Parish Council; submit a ‘no objection’ response to Somerset Council, seconded by Cllr Houlton and resolved unanimously. Action: Assistant Parish Clerk</p>
7	<p>Items for decision or requiring further action:</p> <p><u>7.1 To consider a grant request from Castle Cary Library:</u> It was proposed by Cllr Houlton to award a £500 grant to Castle Cary Library and in addition make donations of £400 to the Primary School, £400 to Ansford Academy and £100 to the toddler groups (x2), all to be ringfenced for books, seconded by Cllr Pinions. Resolved 3-in favour; 3-abstentions. Action: RFO</p> <p><u>7.2 To consider a grant request from Cygnets:</u> It was proposed by Cllr Houlton to award a £150 grant to Cygnets, seconded by Cllr Edwards. Resoled 5-in favour; 1-abstention. Action: RFO</p> <p><u>7.3 To consider a grant request from Toybox:</u> It was proposed by Cllr Henderson to award a £150 grant to Toybox, seconded by Cllr Houlton and resolved unanimously. Action: RFO</p> <p><u>7.4 To approve online risk assessment training for 3 people:</u> It was proposed by Cllr Henderson that a budget of £100 be aproned to allow councillors to attend risk assessment training, seconded by Cllr Parker and resolved unanimously.</p> <p><u>7.5 To consider an offer from the Newt to help fund the cost of the Parish Council’s contribution to free parking in Castle Cary:</u> The Newt has offered to cover 50% of the Parish Council’s cost to provide free parking in the Millbrook Gardens and Catherines Close car parks, but there are concerns over how much parking is actually available for Ansford Residents. It was proposed by Cllr Henderson that the Parish Council graciously accept the sponsorship, but that an email is also sent to express the Parish Council’s concerns, seconded by Cllr Houlton and resolved unanimously. Action: RFO</p> <p><u>7.6 To approve the playground design for Lovell’s Farm:</u> Comment was made that the gate to the play area at Bartlett Square should be re-positioned, away from vehicles entering the Square from Lockett Drive. Also, needs a litter bin or two within</p>

the fenced area. Equipment should be better grouped together to allow for more equipment to be installed in the future.

It was proposed by Cllr Houlton to accept the design subject to the comments made, seconded by Cllr Henderson and resolved unanimously.

Action: Cllr Henderson

7.7 To agree to accept an off-site contribution of a MUGA for Lovell's Farm Phase 2:

- A new A371 zebra crossing has been agreed with the developer and is being fully funded by them.
- A second zebra crossing on Station Road has been asked for, promise of a contribution towards cost has been made, the Parish Council is looking for 50%
- A Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) is to be provided offsite in Melbury Meadows.

It was proposed by Cllr Parker to accept the fully fund A371 zebra crossing, the part funded zebra crossing on Station Road and the MUGA as off-site contribution for Lovell's Farm Phase 2, seconded by Cllr Edwards and resolved unanimously.

7.8 To receive an update on the embankment at Elms Lane and agree any actions:

A soil survey has been undertaken. The cost has increased from £1.5m to £3m. There is damage to residents back gardens. Was number one priority on the Somerset Council risk register but has now dropped to second place.

It was agreed to ask Somerset Council for a copy of the inspection report, to ask what methods are being used to monitor movements and to ask for a copy of the risk assessment.

It was noted that the Portfolio Holder for Highways at Somerset Council had not visited. Should the road be closed during heavy rain? Comment was made that it's the sort of story the press would be interested in.

Action: Cllr Houlton

7.9 Appointment of contractor to move SIDs:

This was advertised on social media, but with no response. Will re-advertise.

Action: Assistant Parish Clerk

7.10 To approve the provision of a mobile phone for the new assistant clerk:

It was proposed by Cllr Henderson to set a budget of up to £130 to purchase the new Assistant Parish Clerk a mobile phone for Parish Council business, seconded by Cllr Houlton and resolved unanimously.

Action: The RFO

7.11 To consider the proposed newsletter SLA with Castle Cary TC:

Some suggestions had been emailed around: 1) 3-months' notice period to be added 2) Conditional on Ansford PC having an equal word 'editorial' contribution to CCTC 3) Price per copy to be reduced if APC wanted more than 50 printed copies 4) Re-word the first paragraph which says CCTC cover all costs because APC are paying a percentage of them.

It was proposed by Cllr Henderson that the Parish Council pay for the next edition only at the proposed price, to give time for the SLA to be redrafted to incorporate the Parish Council's changes and be agreed by both parties, seconded by Cllr Houlton and resolved unanimously.

Action: Assistant Parish Clerk

7.12 Purchase of graffiti remover:

It was proposed by Cllr Henderson that the Parish Council spend up to £100 on some graffiti remover, seconded by Cllr Houlton and resolved unanimously.

Action: The RFO

7.13 Purchase of padlock for SID:

It was agreed that the Parish Council would spend up to £30 on a padlock for the SID.

The RFO confirmed that items such as this did not need to be on the agenda as he held delegated power to make such purchases.

8 **Items for report only:**

8.1 To receive and note portfolio holder reports:

Councillors had submitted their written reports before the meeting. These are posted onto the website.

8.2 To receive and note any other items for report:

- Noted that a Fairfield reporting item on the agenda would be useful

Action: Assistant Parish Clerk

- Could Caryford Hall be persuaded to have a defibrillator on the outside of the Hall? – feedback last time was that they are not keen.

8.3. Clerks report:

The Locum Clerk had not attended the meeting. Noted that tomorrow (Thursday 15th January) is his last day in the role.

9 **Finance:**

9.1 To approve the schedule of payments:

The payments list had been circulated to members before the meeting and is posted onto the Parish Council's website. The list included approval of quote to repair a bench at Fairfield for £260 (APC pays 33%).

It was proposed by Cllr Houlton to approve the payments list, seconded by Cllr Edwards and resolved unanimously.

Action: The RFO

9.2 To agree the purchase of book tokens for £10 for the 3 students involved in the street naming project:

It was proposed by Cllr Houlton to approve the expense of £30 for students' book tokens, seconded by Cllr Parker. Resoled 5-in favour; 1-abstention.

Action: The RFO

9.3 To receive the financial reports and bank reconciliation:

The reports had been circulated before the meeting and were received.

9.4 To consider the budget for 2026/27 and level of precept required:

The Parish Council had held an online workshop to examine all the budget lines. Each line had been worked through in turn, applying the best practice zero budgeting approach. The resulting

	<p>total from the workshop was a total budget spend of £50,790.00. setting the precept at this level would see a 5% Band D council tax reduction for the Parish Council's share. Cllr Henderson stated that she was keen to go even further in reducing the precept and that some serious consideration was given to this at the workshop. It was proposed by Cllr Henderson that the Parish Council adopt the workshop budget giving a total predicted spend of £50,790.00 and set the precept at £50,790.00. seconded by Cllr Pinions and resolved unanimously. This moves a Band D property to £80.84 for the 26/27 financial year, a reduction of £4.30 on this year (25/26) (-5.05%)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: The RFO</p>
10	<p><u>Date of the next meeting:</u> Confirmed as Wednesday 11th February – 6:30pm at Caryford Hall. This being in keeping with the councils patten of meeting the second Wednesday of the month.</p>
11	<p>It was proposed by Cllr Henderson that the council exclude the press and public from the next agenda item as it related to confidential staffing matters, seconded by Houlton and resolved unanimously. At this point the remaining members of the public left the meeting.</p> <p><u>Staffing Matters – Appointment Assistant Clerk:</u> The Assistant Parish Clerk had already had her engagement to the role confirmed to her verbally by the Locum Parish Clerk, under delegated powers, this was reconfirmed. Deborah was welcomed to the role by the Council.</p>

19:49