



MINUTES OF ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT CARYFORD HALL AT 6:30PM ON 3rd DECEMBER 2025

Present : Cllrs Henderson (Chair), Houlton, Edwards, Leary and Easeman

In attendance: Mr Justin Robinson (Locum Clerk), Mr Simon Pritchard (RFO) and 3 members of the public.

- 1. To receive apologies for absence,** and to note and approve the reason given
Apologies were received and approved for Cllrs Parker and Pinnions. Members wished Cllr Parker a swift recovery.
- 2. Declarations of interests.**
Cllr Easeman declared a discloseable pecuniary interest in item 7.13.
- 3. To consider whether any items should be considered “in camera”.**
It was agreed that item 11 would be held in confidential session as it related to individual staff members.
- 4. To approve the Minutes of the Council Meetings held in October.**
The minutes of the October ordinary and extraordinary meetings were unanimously approved. It was noted that the September minutes had not been formally approved and it was agreed that these would be considered at the next meeting.
- 5. To receive reports from Unitary Councillors and Police, if any.**
No representatives were present.
- 6. Planning**
No new items to report
- 7. Items for decision or requiring further action:**

7.1 To receive an update on the proposed improvements to the rights of way network and agree any actions.

Cllr Edwards reported that he is trying to arrange a site visit with Daniel Gordon to investigate potential upgrades to the ROW network and has already supplied him with a map of current parish paths and infrastructure.

7.2 To receive an update on the station signage project and agree any actions.

A site visit is required with Somerset Highways to consider the signage; Cllr

Houlton will contact Andy Barron to arrange this.

7.3 To note the outcome of the street naming project and approve a donation to the school.

Members noted that the project had been another positive example of a successful collaboration with the school and unanimously approved a donation of £100 to the English department, to be match-funded by the developer. Somerset Council has confirmed that the new road will be called Woods Drive.

7.4 To consider usage of remaining s106 monies for Fairfield and agree ideas to share with Castle Cary Town Council.

The chair reminded members that over £17k of S106 from Lovell's Farm still remained allocated to the pump track at Fairfield and could not be used for other purposes. It was agreed that the clerk should write to Castle Cary Town Council to suggest that the remaining funding be used to provide fencing at the pump track.

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.

It was noted that APC currently pay a third of the costs associated with keeping the car parks in Castle Cary as free car parks. The Newt has now offered to subsidise 50% of this cost. Members noted that this is a delicate matter and agreed that the issue should be discussed with Castle Cary TC at the planned joint meeting with Sarah Dyke, MP. It was agreed to defer any further actions until the January meeting of council.

7.6 To consider improvements to the SID post at Ancastle Terrace and agree any actions.

It was unanimously agreed to purchase a taller post at a cost of £120. Cllr Edwards will then fit the new post.

7.7 To consider appropriate action against overgrown trees and hedges blocking pavements.

The clerk was instructed to contact a homeowner regarding the potential obstruction of the pavement from overhanging foliage.

7.8 To receive an update on correspondence regarding the sinkhole and agree the next actions.

Cllr Houlton reported that work was now expected to start on the sinkhole repairs on the 8th December. Cllr Houlton was thanked for her diligent work in chasing for action.

7.9 To receive an update on the reported dangerous boundary wall at the Old Hillcrest Site.

Council noted that the path was now closed following an initial inspection. Cllrs Henderson, Houlton and Edwards were thanked for their quick action in reporting safety concerns, following an email from the Chair of Castle Cary TC.

7.10 To receive an update on the issues with dropped kerbs at Mulberry Meadows and agree any actions.

The developer is satisfied that the current layout meets current standards. Council will, therefore, need to wait until the site has been adopted by Somerset Council before further action can be considered. Cllrs Edwards and Easeman will liaise on the next steps and members agreed that this has been a learning experience when it comes to future planning applications.

7.11 To consider whether to respond to the Caryford Hall consultation

Members noted that the official consultation period has now closed but the Council has still been invited to submit any comments. While members did not wish to express an opinion on the potential sale of land, it was agreed that any proceeds should ideally be used to pay back the public work loan board loans taken out by Ansford PC and Castle Cary TC. A letter to this effect will be prepared by the chair and clerk.

7.12 To consider whether to support the next Skatepark event planned for April 26.

Members were concerned that an attendance register was not taken at the last event. Cllr Parker will read the latest government guidance and council will consider the matter further at the January 2026 meeting.

7.13 Appointment of contractor to move SIDs.

It was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting to allow the clerk and RFO the opportunity to consider the proposal further.

7.14 To approve the siting and purchase of a Bleed Kit.

Ansford Academy has confirmed that it is very happy to site the kit near the school entrance. Avon and Somerset Constabulary will then maintain the kit. It was unanimously agreed to purchase the Bleed Kit.

8. Items for report only

8.1. *To receive and note portfolio holder reports*

The written reports were duly noted by members.

8.2. *To receive and note any other items for report*

Cllr Houlton is chasing some new street lighting issues with Highways. The SID Memorandum of Understanding also needs to be updated.

Cllr Henderson noted that Highways have been approached re the inconsiderate parking in Station Road although any potential actions would need to be proportionate in order to ensure that the problem is not just moved to other streets.

8.3. *Clerks report*

There was nothing new to report.

9. Finance

9.1 To approve the schedule of payments

It was unanimously resolved to approve the schedule of payments.

9.2 To agree that the donation previously earmarked for Ansford School to do a VE Day inspired project can instead be used for a Remembrance Day project at the school.

It was unanimously agreed to approve the donation.

9.3 To consider acquiring a debit card for the RFO.

It was unanimously agreed that a debit card could be acquired for the RFO.

9.4 To receive the financial reports and bank reconciliation.

Members noted the financial reports and the bank reconciliation.

9.5 To consider the budget for 2026/27 and level of precept required.

The RFO circulated a draft budget and reminded members that the tax base would not be available for another week. The council remains in a strong financial position with very healthy reserves. The RFO felt that the precept would not need to be increased at this stage. It was agreed that the final budget and level of precept will be considered by members at the January 2026 meeting.

10 Date of the next meeting.

Council will next meet on 13th January 2026.

11 Staffing Matters

The chair announced that the locum clerk will be leaving on 16th January to take up a post in the East Midlands. The locum clerk was thanked for his work and support throughout a difficult year and he, in turn, expressed gratitude to councillors for all the hard work they do for the local community.

It was unanimously agreed that the RFO would also act as Proper Officer of the council from 16th January 2026 (for approximately 6 hours per week, in total).

It was noted that a resident had expressed an interest in providing locum admin support to the council for 6-8 hours per week. It was unanimously agreed to delegate this potential appointment to the locum clerk, in consultation with the chair of council, should satisfactory terms be agreed by both parties.