



**Minutes of the Ansford Parish Council Meeting
held in Caryford Hall, Maggs Lane, Ansford, BA7 7JJ
on **Wednesday 11th February 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
 Cllr. Summer Easeman

In Attendance: Mr Simon Pritchard: Responsible Finance Officer & Acting Proper Officer
 Mrs Sam Mainstone: Local Government Officer/Minute Taker

Members of the Public in Attendance: Twelve

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

Public Comments:

- A resident raised concerns regarding the speed and volume of traffic along the A371.
- Concerns were raised regarding the planning application for 49 houses, with potentially 12 of them being on land that has a no-build covenant.
- The planned green space within the Backhouse development is of some concern to residents as there does not appear to be planned maintenance and management. Homeowners in Lower Ansford Road, with gardens bordering the Lovel's Farm site have already suffered overgrowth of weeds encroaching into gardens and vehicles causing damage to fencing. Although residents have contacted developers there has been no direct response. Residents would be reassured if annual maintenance of this area could be confirmed. The protection of residents' privacy is also a concern in view of the proposed positioning of the houses in relation to the viewpoint from current residents.

Item no:	
1	<u>To Receive any Apologies for Absence:</u> Received from Cllr D. Gill of CCTC
2	<u>Declarations of Interests:</u> Cllr Pinions wasn't sure if her links to item 7.2. was a declarable non-pecuniary interest, agreed that she would abstain from any vote. The Acting Proper Officer reminded councillors that he was happy to give opinion on councillors' interests, but that this should be sought before the start of the meeting.
3	<u>To approve the Minutes of the Council Meetings September 2025 and January 2026:</u>

	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10th September 2025 had been questioned for amendment, however, it became clear on reviewing these minutes there is no need for amendment.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Henderson to adopt the minutes of September 2025 and January 2026, seconded by Cllr Houlton. RESOLVED (6-1-0) (For-Abstain-Against).</p>
<p>4</p>	<p><u>Short presentation on Monarchs Way:</u> Cllr Gill had been unable to attend the meeting, so this item was deferred.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p><u>Short presentation re a bus service connecting Glastonbury to CC Train Station:</u> A representative from Glastonbury Train Link Campaign and from the LCN Active Travel came to promote and provide an update to the proposed pilot scheme bus service between Glastonbury and Castle Cary Train Station, to be extended to Ansford, following requests from residents:</p> <p>This is currently with Somerset Council for a decision on a bid for grant funding which will enable this service in time for the summer. This will only happen with support from the community, fliers were handed around at the meeting, with further information and a link to the website; www.glastonburytrainlink.org. The information will be published on the council website. Cllrs and Glastonbury TrainLink would like to encourage as much support as possible in order for this pilot service to go ahead which will provide access from the newer estates to the station and as far as Glastonbury.</p> <p>It was agreed that Ansford Parish Council will write to Cllr Wilkins at Somerset Council in support of this pilot service.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action – Assistant Parish Clerk</p>
<p>6</p>	<p><u>Planning & development:</u></p> <p>Proposal: Erection of 49 homes - Location: Land South of Ansford Hill Application Type : Developer 25/03089/FUL</p> <p>Resident feedback has been collated by Cllrs and highlighted at a pre-application meeting. It was noted that any maintenance plans of the green space will not be revealed at this stage as is normal practice, although the council will take advantage of the established good relationship with developers to check this since it has been raised, with any response to be shared with residents. Residents are encouraged to continue to report concerns to the council in future in order that they can be addressed with developers.</p> <p>The material considerations were addressed one by one, assisted by projecting the form for the response to the planning department at Somerset Council. There appeared to be no material planning considerations that the council could object on.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Houlton that the Parish Council return a response of No Objection with comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A request for access during construction to be via the A371 • Raised concerns surrounding pollution and noise to the houses along the A371. • Request more social housing mix within the development and avoid locating social housing only along the A371. • Clarification is required to provide assurance of adequate drainage in light of the issues during phase 1. <p>Seconded by Cllr Henderson. RESOLVED (7-0-0)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">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 the Church:</u> It is noted that the agreed grant maximum is £500, except in exceptional circumstances. This wording needs review to ensure the limitation is made clear next year. It was wondered if more effort can be made by the Church to encourage community events enabling community donations. Cllr Houlton will make contact and share ideas from St Mary’s Church in Bruton by way of support. Ansford Parish Council have undertaken maintenance responsibilities of the perimeter pathways, although the frequency of grass cutting is uncertain. It was proposed by Cllr Henderson to provide the maximum grant of £500 for this year, noting that further information will be requested to support future applications, seconded by Cllr Pinions. RESOLVED (7-0-0)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action – RFO</p> <p><u>7.2. To consider a grant request from Castle Cary Scouts:</u> The application was noted to be of high quality, with much fundraising efforts by the scouts noted. It was proposed by Cllr Parker to provide the requested grant of £150 to Castle Cary Scouts, seconded by Cllr Henderson - RESOLVED (6-0-1)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action – RFO</p> <p><u>7.3. To consider contribution to skatepark event in April 2026:</u> This is to support a skateboarding and skate park training event at Fairfield, with Castle Cary town council requesting a contribution from Ansford parish council. A similar request was declined last year due to safeguarding concerns raised by Ansford parish council and there are similar concerns this year. Although it has been clarified that children will be pre-registered for attendance, it was noted by the event providers that there will be children who have not been registered but attend on the day. It was proposed by Cllr Henderson to provide a grant contribution at a maximum of £250, provided safeguarding concerns in line with statutory and non-statutory guidance¹ have been satisfied, seconded by Cllr Houlton. RESOLVED (7-0-0)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action – RFO</p> <p><u>7.4. To consider a letter to be jointly sent with CCTC to Fair organisers:</u> The letter provided by CCTC was reviewed and noted that the amendments could be made to evidence the council’s support of the highlighted concerns that have been raised. Noted that everyone wants the fair, but there is a feel that concerns have been dismissed too easily. Cllrs would like to work on the letter with CCTC on this and to request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification and commitment as to which rides will be in attendance to manage any potential further concerns from residents. • Identified mitigation in the event of urgent weather warnings <p>It was agreed that Cllr Parker will return to CCTC with these suggestions.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action – Cllr Parker</p> <p><u>7.5. 20mph speed limit costs – to agree a fair split of the £5,571.00 est:</u> The original agreement involved a 1/3 and 2/3 split, which did not include the extra works involved for South Street. It was agreed to find out the extra cost of the South Street works so the cost can be separated from the cost split, in line with the original agreement.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action – Cllr Houlton</p>
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Items for report only:**8.1 Chair's report (Cllr Henderson):**

The Chair's report is available on the APC website with the agenda and meeting papers. In addition to this report:

Sadly, a poison pen letter has been received at a Cllr's home address, this has been passed on to a department that deals with threats and harassment of people in public office at Avon & Somerset Police, who are dealing with this. Avon & Somerset Police have provided valuable advice to APC Cllrs in order to protect themselves from any further threat. This has been a very shocking, frightening and unpleasant experience.

It was celebrated that the Somerset Councillors who sit on the scrutiny committee, looking at the proposed merger of APC & CCTC, recognised the views of Ansford residents and have agreed to support only a very slight boundary change. A comment was noted at the meeting that disagreements between CCTC and APC originated in 2023, however, these disagreements are evidenced to be historically over a much longer period, it is simply not true to say that they are only recent occurrence.

Cllr Edwards, a former Chairman of APC, stated that the relationship had always been cordial, until a number of unjustified financial demands were made in 2018 for facilities beyond our parish, that had resulted in disagreements.

The council agreed that it is hoped that now a line has now been drawn and that these differences remain historical.

8.2. LCN (Cllr Edwards):

The recent LCN meeting took place in January, and the notes will be circulated once available. It was noted by the council that according to Somerset Councils own fingers the LCN cost £600,000 to deliver but not really clear what the value is.

8.3. Highways (Cllr Houlton):

A spray has now been purchased to remove graffiti from road signs.

The sink hole repair at Station Road is scheduled for 2nd March. It was noted that the Temporary Traffic Road Order (TTRO) is applied in advance in order to successfully complete these repairs as planned.

There were noted concerns regarding the potential of further landslip on the A371 during these works, which would incur a closure of both routes simultaneously. It was agreed to check what emergency measures Somerset Council have considered in this event to mitigate against this disruption. Cllrs noted thanks to parishioner Mr Houlton who attended to assess the collapse recently. This site is being further assessed by way of 2 weekly visits and monthly photographic tracking to maintain a measure of the rate of deterioration. There will be immediate response to any future reports in addition to these planned assessments. It was considered that this deterioration is down to the notable increase in speed and volume of traffic along this stretch of road. A meeting has been scheduled with Somerset Council at the end of March, although a sooner virtual meeting may preclude this in the next 2 weeks.

Criteria for signage is currently being researched, with a view to pinch-point signage being moved further out, allowing drivers more time to view.

A meeting has taken place to collate all information, including the FOI requested from the police, however, it does seem that some incidents are missing from this. A document is to be drafted documenting the need to support a reduction of speed along this road.

8.4. Fairfield & Footpaths (Cllrs Parker & Edwards):

Fairfield events and safeguarding:

	<p>The circus last year was very successful, however, success could be extended by inviting residents from the local care homes. This would require a safeguarding policy covering both children and vulnerable adults. This has been raised with the circus, with no response to date. APC are in support of this event provided adequate safeguarding measures can be evidenced.</p> <p>Footpaths: A quote has been received for handrails to be installed both sides at the far side of Fairfield over the watercourse, at a total cost of £650, however, it is suggested that only the steeper side would require a handrail which would be half of this cost. This expense is for vote later on the agenda (item. 9. Finance). The Somerset Council rights-of-way Officer has kindly offered a donation of two large kissing-gates, two small single gates, plus timber for further repairs. Labour for fitting these gates was discussed and it was raised that the landowner could be approached to support with installation. An invoice has been received for hedge cutting in the football field that does not belong to APC, this appears to have been a historical and undocumented arrangement. It was agreed to respond to the contractor with the instruction to not undertake these works in future without clarifying the instruction. In the meantime, Somerset Council as lease holders of this area of land, are to be approached for payment of this invoice.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action – Cllr Henderson</p> <p><u>8.5. Health and Safety (Cllr Parker):</u> A bleed kit is now in place which has been registered on the national live map. Although contact has already been made with Caryford Hall to request moving the Defibrillator to the exterior of the building, with the offer from APC to cover the costs of a cabinet, Ansford Academy have now offered to do this on their site. This will incur additional electrical works which Ansford Academy have agreed to manage. It was agreed that the budget for this project can be used to support Ansford Academy. The original CPR/Defib training that was cancelled is planned to be rescheduled.</p> <p><u>8.6. Maggs Lane (Cllr Henderson):</u> The dog fouling signs have been found to be very effective and popular. It was agreed that further signs be purchased from the “Improving Ansford” fund.</p> <p><u>8.7. Parishioner contact (Clerk and Cllrs):</u> All contact that has been received has been actioned. A report was received regarding damage to the hedge on Maggs lane during a cut-back. This has been assessed and appears to be an appropriate cut-back for the time of year. Unfortunately, the original email has been misplaced to report back directly.</p> <p><u>8.8. Parish Clerk’s report:</u> An IT policy is required to satisfy the new Assertion 10 of the 2025/26 AGAR. A template policy is available for adaptation, this will be worked on for return to the next meeting for adoption.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action – Cllr Henderson</p>
<p>9</p>	<p><u>Parish Council Finance:</u></p> <p><u>9.1 To review the effectiveness of the audit; to appoint the internal auditor:</u> The previous audit was reviewed and noted as effective. A cheaper quote was reviewed from an alternative auditor at £333.30, which includes travel and attendance onsite with the RFO.</p>

	<p>It was proposed by Cllr Henderson to approve the alternative auditor quote for £333.30 and to appoint Claire Morrison-Jones as the new internal auditor, seconded by Cllr Houlton RESOLVED (7-0-0).</p> <p><u>9.2 To approve the payments list:</u> The list of payments was reviewed and approved. It was proposed by Cllr Henderson to approve the list of payments, seconded by Cllr Leary RESOLVED (7-0-0)</p> <p><u>9.3 To note the financial reports and bank reconciliation:</u> It was reported that the design that Somerset Council is putting forwards for the play equipment for the Lovells Farm development has been costed at £96,296 (+vat), but Somerset Council is only holding £63,500 of S106 developer contribution money. Not understood why the proposed scheme has not been designed in accordance with the budget available. The option of obtaining a new design independently was discussed, however, in view of the timescales, this will not be explored. The RFO sought confirmation of who is drawing down the s106 money, it was confirmed that Somerset Council are managing the whole project and that none of the money will pass through APC accounts It was agreed to support Somerset Council’s play area design but, removing the benches and Spider House to reduce these costs. APC will negotiate the excess costs following this and leave space for these items to be installed during the next phase of S106 funding for this development.</p> <p><u>9.4 To approve Fairfield handrail costs:</u> The £325 cost for the single handrail was approved.</p>
10	<p><u>Date of the next meeting:</u> Confirmed as Wednesday 11th March, 6:30pm at Caryford Hall. This being in keeping with the councils patten of meeting the second Wednesday of the month.</p>
11	<p><u>Confidential Session:</u> It was proposed by Cllr Henderson that the council go into confidential session as the next agenda item relates to a confidential matter, seconded by Cllr Leary RESOLVED (7-0-0) Members of the public were thanked for their attendance and left.</p>
12	<p><u>Legal Matter:</u> The council agreed that no further action was required in relation to the legal matter. Now that APC is to continue following the decision of the Somerset Council Scrutiny Committee, it was noted that recruitment for permanent Parish Clerk can begin. It was agreed to review this in three months’ time to allow an appropriate period to assess workload and staffing structure before making an appointment by the end of the summer.</p>

End of Meeting at 20:33pm