



Minutes of the Ansford Parish Council Meeting held in
Caryford Hall, Maggs Lane, Ansford, BA7 7JJ on
Wednesday 10th June 2026 at 6:30pm

Present:

Cllrs. Fiona Houlton (Chairperson), Chris Edwards, Ray Leary & Annette Parker.

In Attendance:

Somerset Councillor: Kevin Messenger

Somerset Councillor: Henry Hobhouse

Mr Simon Pritchard: Responsible Finance Officer & Acting Proper Officer

Mrs Sam Mainstone: Locum Local Government Officer (minute taker)

Members of the Public in Attendance:

Four

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained to the public how the period of public comments worked. It was also declared that this meeting was being recorded to help with the production of minutes, which will then be deleted once the minutes have been issued.

Public Session started at 6:30pm

Public Comments:

Representative from The Newt summarised activity taking place at the Creamery leading up to the event 'Cary in Bloom', also noted an upcoming road closure on Castle Cary High Street (Weds-Fri), which is to allow a crane to install the glass at the development site. Referencing a recent Facebook post, it would be good to clarify the agreement in terms of maintenance along Station Path, where The Newt are happy to help and assist with maintenance, but this area is not their 'responsibility'.

A member of public wanted to give thanks for the efforts to date with the traffic problem on the A371, which has been positive and constructive. There remains an issue with traffic heading towards Station Road going left and round to the right, as it seems challenging for vehicles to stay in the appropriate lane and seem to be positioned over the white line. It was suggested that yellow rumble bars could help with this problem, and they are also effective in slowing traffic.

Reports from Somerset Council:

Somerset Councillors Kevin Messenger and Henry Hobhouse attended the meeting, no written reports were received.

Cllr Messenger welcomed Cllr Fiona Houlton as chair and gave an update on the following subjects:

Page 1 of 7

- Works at the sink hole are expected to continue until the end of July, there have been delays due to various issues discovered during works.
- The Planning appeal process gave opportunity for Somerset Councillors to give their representations; however this opportunity has now been removed, and it is also planned for this opportunity to be removed from Parish Councils. Cllr Messenger would like to highlight that without this opportunity, along with the decision that developments of 10 or less no longer progress beyond planning officers, is damaging to the democratic process.
- At the recent LCN Highways meeting Cllr Messenger requested repeater speed limit signage through Southway, as it seems the current signage seems frequently missed. If further signage is installed this may provide more adequate opportunity for drivers to slow down. It was clarified that Parish councils would have to cover this cost and would need to make the application.
- Cllr Sarah Dyke has been instrumental in the recent £50 million Flood Resilience Fund, with visits to the Moors, and revealing the extent of the problem in parliament.
- Politicians have also been raising awareness of the lack of adequate SEND services in this area and the need for extra support.
- Ansford Parish Cllrs were asked for any questions:

Cllr Edwards asked about the works at the Sink Hole, will works incorporate the sewer to the culvert? Cllr Hobhouse explained that the joint was discovered to be leaking, so this connection has been extended, and there are ongoing negotiations with ELAN Homes to recover these costs due to the original inadequate connection. There will be no further digging, and the culvert is in place with connection awaited.

Public session ended at 6:35pm

1. To receive any apologies for absence:

Apologies received from Cllr's Pinions, Henderson and Eastman

2. Declarations of interests:

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Adoption of previous council meeting minutes:

To adopt the minutes of: Wednesday 13th May 2026

It was proposed Cllrs Parker to adopt the minutes of 13th May 2026 as a true and accurate record of that meeting, seconded by Cllr Edwards. RESOLVED [for-against-abstain] [4-0-0].

The minutes were signed and dated by the Chair.

4. Planning & development:

To resolve on the council's response to:

Proposal:	Construction of a single storey annexe to provide ancillary accommodation
Location:	Little Orchard, Station Road, Ansford, Somerset BA7 7PD

Page 2 of 7

Application Type:	Householder Application
Application Number:	26/01058/HOU
Comments	Cllr Edwards summarised the application: The development is fairly screened, it will be single storey, living accommodation, there is a small gap between the existing house and proposed annexe. No further comments.

It was proposed by Cllr Edwards to respond with no objections to this application, seconded by Cllr Leary. RESOLVED [4-0-0]

5. Items for decision or requiring further action/decisions:

A. Fairfield Maintenance:

1. Pump Track repair costs – to agree on quote to accept and make recommendation to CCTC.

Quotes are still awaited.

Rubicon have given some feedback on the design of the Pump Track and its current state;

- Some areas were noted as weathered
- The design was built for bikes so some bits are not suitable for scooters/skateboards due to areas that will cause grounding.
- Rubicon suggested that a new design is necessary for scooters/skateboards but it is unlikely that this will happen due to cost. Therefore, patch repairs will need to be undertaken, which will be cheaper than replacement of the full surface.

It was noted that the area in need of repair is the very same that was repaired last year. This was a particularly hot time of year when it was last repaired, which may have caused problems, but the warranty for this work could be checked. It was also noted that weeds are breaking the surface apart, which needs addressing. Castle Cary Town Council will be notified of this issue. A non-glyphosate weed killer could be suggested (trialled by same contractor in neighbouring town).

This item will return to the next meeting.

2. Fence repair costs - to agree on quote to accept/or not and make recommendation to CCTC.

Cllr Edwards has received a quote from CCTC in the region of £450 for 30m of repair, but it is unclear where the exact start/finish points are, and this needs clarification. Also discussed there were multiple entry points to the area so a fence would not resolve trespassing on site as access was widespread. Cllr Edwards to request exact positioning on map of the new fencing from CCTC and where the fence actually needs replacing.

It was agreed that the council cannot vote on this at the moment as too many unknowns

B. Fairfield Event: Rubicon Skateboard Day:

To resolve if to support and pay 1/3 cost of £800

The event is due to take place on 12th August. The cost to Ansford Parish Council will be £267. Background checks have been completed. An alternative councillor will need to attend on the day as Cllr Parker will be away. Cllr Parker to write to CCTC to confirm decision. **It was proposed by Cllr Leary to confirm support of this event at a cost of £267, seconded by Cllr Edwards. RESOLVED [4-0-0].**

C. New Parish Council Logo:

2 Logos were reviewed. It was commented that the church may not be the best illustration and suggested that the view over Station Green may be preferable (same photo as the website which Cllr Edwards can access). An offer from a member of public has been accepted to take this forward. Mr Houlton will continue to update Logo.

D. Caryford Hall:

To receive offer of not being charged for APC bookings; to resolve on the offer.

This kind offer was fully considered to examine the possibilities of a conflict of interest and clarified that Ansford Parish Council is not a sole Trustee. Cllr Houlton expressed that the 'free of charge' could be considered as a discount on the £7K loan that the Parish Council has in its name that was to pay for the second room. Against the annual repayments the parish council has to make on the loan, it is approx. 3% discount, as the annual fee to rent the hall is approx. £500.

It was proposed by Cllr Leary to accept the offer of Hall hire free of charge, seconded by Annette. RESOLVED [4-0-0].

E. Drop-in Days:

To agree the next two dates will be 19th of Sep & 17th Oct.

A third date in November (21st) has also been booked. It was suggested that drop-ins will then restart from January on a monthly schedule.

It was proposed by Cllr Houlton to agree the next three dates (19th September, 17th October and 21st November), seconded by Cllr Leary. RESOLVED [4-0-0].

It was noted that communication in the community needs to be clear, using the term 'Drop-in' for these bookings.

F. Hedge and Grass Cutting in Parish:

Update and quotes

Cllr Edwards noted that last year's works were not undertaken by the usual contractors which resulted in reduced quality of work. This year, the original contractor has returned and has already completed Maggs Lane, Solomon's Lane and the linking lane. Cllr Edwards requested payment as soon as possible to encourage this contractor's return for remaining smaller works. The RFO asked what other quotes had been received for this work, however, due to the urgent nature of this work no other quotes were received. Mrs Mainstone commented that

Bruton Town Council uses the [Somerset Council online reporting tool](#) effectively, which Cllrs will explore. In the meantime, payment agreed as soon as possible, with use of this preferred contractor to continue. This will be reviewed in the Autumn.

G. Grant Application:

Cary Carers – to receive application for up to £500, to resolve on application.

This application is specifically for the community Larder.

It was proposed by Cllr Parker to grant £500 to Cary Carers for the purpose of the community Larder, seconded by Cllr Houlton. RESOLVED [4-0-0].

6. Written & verbal reports (items for report only):

NB: the written reports are available from the Parish Council's website.

A. Chair's report (Cllr Houlton)

Circulated and noted by all.

B. LCN – Somerset Council (Cllr Edwards)

The notes of the last meeting are awaited and will be reported once they have been received.

C. Local Highways (Cllr Houlton)

The LCN Highways meeting led to exploring the possibility of a Speed Indicator Device (SID) located on land at Castle Cary Bowls club, enquiries have been made and confirmation is awaited.

D. Open Spaces & Footpaths (Cllr Edwards)

The footpath on Monarchs Way through Ansford is very heavily overgrown. This is a historical route and Cllr Edwards suggested getting quotes to clear this overgrowth, including the boarder parts owned by house owners. This will be a considerable cost due to the work requirements (quoted for complete clearance over a year ago in the range of £500, this work did not take place at that time).

It was agreed for Cllr Edwards to obtain some quotes to return to the next meeting.

It was reported that the new Monarchs Way display board installation, purchased by Castle Cary Town Council, is delayed due to the cost and need for non-standard post brackets. Adequate brackets have been found and will cost in the region of £40-45. As the budget is already in place for this it was agreed for Cllr Edwards to proceed with this purchase to get this display board installed.

E. Fairfield Governance (Mr Pritchard)

1. Legal advice on management

In hand, working with Cllr Parker, nothing to report

2. Talks with CCTC Clerk

A site visit has raised a few more questions, which ties in with meeting to be held with the Castle Cary Town Clerk. A provisional date has been booked in. CCTC to ratify Town Clerk's authority to have talks.

F. Health and Safety (Cllr Parker)

The dates of the Rubicon Skateboard Day are to be confirmed. Once confirmed, will need adding to website, and Cllr Parker will review the Rubicon publication.

G. The Adoption of Maggs Lane Field (Cllr Henderson)

Cllr Henderson absent, to return to next meeting.

H. Emergency Procedure Policy progress

The [DRAFT policy](#) was circulated for review and is available on the website. This is planned for formal adoption at the meeting next month.

I. Resilience Plan (Mr Houlton)

Mr Houlton summarised the process so far and thanked Cllrs for their comments.

Power outages and communication failures is currently being assessed, Mr Houlton has attended training courses and has now engaged with Caryford Hall, with a tour and meeting arranged.

J. Joint Neighbourhood Plan Update

Will return next month when Cllr Henderson is present.

K. Parish Survey Update

Survey results highlighted traffic and road safety as the primary concerns. The council will refine the survey to focus on actionable items. Cllr Leary will prepare a survey for proposal, the drop-in sessions will also support this process.

L. New Play Area, Bartlett Square, Lovells Farm (Mr Pritchard)

A total of four tenders were considered by the council, with Playdale selected. S106 funding is pending panel approval, with installation expected in September. In the meantime, a letter has been prepared and delivered to residents in the area notifying them of the future installation of the Play area as per the planning agreement.

M. Parishioner contact verbal report (Clerk and Cllrs)

There has been significant contact regarding speeding on Churchfield Drive. Two more SIDs have been purchased and are due to be set up for installation by the end of this week.

At 7:50pm Cllrs Messenger and Hobhouse left.

7. Parish Council finance:

A. To receive the payments made since the last meeting list.

Circulated, noted and approved by all. Payments **26 to 43** totalling **£9,268.77**

B. To approve the payments requested list.

Information is awaited regarding two of the payments to CCTC

It was proposed by Cllr Houlton to approve payment of £43.10 to Simon Pritchard for travel and home-working allowance, seconded by Cllr Edwards. RESOLVED [4-0-0].

C. To note the financial reports and bank reconciliation.

The budget Vs spend report hadn't been circulated, this was an oversight and will be done after the meeting.

Bank balances as per bank rec:

- Community Account £41,867.87 – 29/05/2026
- Reserve Savings Account £87,167.38 – 29/05/2026

8. Parish Council Insurance Renewal 2026/27:

To receive a verbal update.

The pump track was discussed regarding insurance, the RFO confirmed that notification that there is a pump track is not required by the insurance company. Castle Cary Town Council are responsible for carrying out a risk assessment on the pump track because of the result of the annual inspection report that there is a risk due to the condition of the track. No response has been received from CCTC as to if this assessment has been carried out.

9. Date of the next meeting:

To agree the time and date of the next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 8th July at 6:30pm, at Caryford Hall.

10. Confidential session:

To pass a resolution to exclude the press and public from the next agenda item as it relates to a staffing matter.

It was proposed by Cllr Leary to exclude the press and public for the next agenda item, seconded by Cllr Parker. RESOLVED [4-0-0].

At 8:09pm Members of public left the room.

11. Staffing matter:

There have been a number of applications for the post of Parish Clerk. Three applicants are scheduled for interview tomorrow. Interview questions were considered and agreed.

Cllrs Houlton, Edwards and Parker will conduct the interviews and return the recommendation to the next meeting.

It was agreed that the interview panel's recommendation will be accepted, so when the panel has made the decision on who to offer the role to, then the offer should be formally made, references obtained and a contract drawn up, ready for the new person to formally ratify and start on 8th July 26 (the day of the next meeting).

Meeting ended at 8:18pm