Minutes of the Ansford Parish Council Meeting
held on Wednesday 8 July 2026 at 6:30pm

Present: Cllrs. Houlton (Chair), Pinions, Parker, Leary, Edwards and Henderson;
Mr Pritchard (RFO), Mrs Larsson (incoming Clerk)

In Attendance: Cllr Kevin Messenger (Unitary Councillor)
1 member of the public

Public Session
There were no matters raised.

Reports from Somerset Council
Written monthly report was received, which has been circulated to councillors and a copy will be uploaded to the parish council's website.

Apology for absence was given on behalf of Cllr Hobhouse, and Cllr Messenger attended and provided the following updates:

- Completion of works to the Sinkhole are delayed by a further 14 days. A sewer connection is understood to have caused the issues and efforts are being made to recover costs from the parties responsible.
- A new planning enforcement officer in place and their contact details were provided to the Clerk.
- Cllr Messenger attended Cary in Bloom, reporting it was well run and the judge was very complimentary on community efforts across both Castle Cary and Ansford.
- A contractor for the bank works on Ansford Hill has not yet been announced. Cllr Hobhouse is following up for information.

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1. **Appointment of Parish Clerk (Proper Officer)**
In accordance with the resolution made at the previous council meeting, it was agreed that the interview panel's recommendation would be accepted. Following the panel's decision, an offer of appointment was made to Mrs Kim Larsson, who accepted the role subject to receipt of satisfactory references (noted as received), and formal ratification by the Council at this meeting.
Members RESOLVED to ratify the appointment of Mrs Kim Larsson as Parish Clerk and Proper Officer, effective 8th July 2026.
Mrs Larsson was welcomed to the meeting as Clerk.
Vote: 6-0-0 (For-Against-Abstentions)

2. **To receive any apologies for absence**
Apologies received and noted for the late arrival of Cllr Henderson to the meeting.
Apologies for absence received from Cllr Easeman.

3. **Declarations of interests**
There were no declarations of interest.

4. **Adoption of previous council meeting minutes:**
RESOLVED that the minutes of Wednesday 10 June 2026 were a true and accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were duly signed by the Chair after closing the meeting.
Vote: 5-0-1 (For-Against-Abstentions)

5. **Items for decision requiring further action/decisions**

   A. **Fairfield Maintenance:**

      1. **Pump Track Repair Cost**

         The repair quote was sent to CCTC in May, but no response has been received to date.
         No response has been received to the request for sight of the risk assessment following identification of the required repairs.
         Action: RFO to forward the repair quote to the Clerk.
         Action: Clerk to follow up with CCTC regarding the outstanding risk assessment and the repair works. Repairs are to be carried out when weather conditions are suitable.

      2. **Fence Repair Cost**

         Cllr Edwards has been liaising with CCTC regarding the proposed fence repair. Members noted that the adjoining property owner is willing to contribute towards the cost of the proposed wire fence; however, the fence does not belong to that property owner.
         Members also commented that the length of fencing proposed appeared excessive in relation to the actual repair requirements.
         Action: Cllr Edwards to forward the information on this matter to the Clerk.
         Action: Clerk to contact the CCTC Clerk for clarification on the proposed repairs. Update to be provided at the next meeting.

      3. **Bench Repair Costs**

         Members noted that two benches had been removed and one repaired by CCTC without prior consultation with APC and an invoice for £312 was received from CCTC for the works. Quotes for the works had not been shared in advance.
         RESOLVED that APC would not contribute towards the repair costs, as there had been no prior consultation and insufficient information had been provided regarding the required works.
         Action: Clerk to advise CCTC of the council's decision.
         Vote: 6-0-0 (For-Against-Abstentions)

      4. **Giant Hogweed**

         Members noted that the giant hogweed had already been de-headed by SLR (Grounds Maintenance contractor).
         Suggested closure of Fairfield while treatment took place was considered impractical, and it was agreed that the affected areas should instead be securely fenced off with appropriate warning signs erected while treatment is carried out.
         An initial quote of £380 was received for spraying; however, this does not include provision of fencing, and a revised quote will be required.
         RESOLVED that works should be arranged, with APC's contribution to be a maximum of one third of the total cost. The resolution is subject to receipt of an updated quotation, appropriate insurance, risk assessment and a method statement for the works.
         Action: Clerk to contact CCTC regarding the treatment arrangements and cost contribution.
         Vote: 6-0-0 (For-Against-Abstentions)

   B. **Emergency Procedure Policy:** to receive and adopt.

      All members confirmed they had received and reviewed the draft policy.
      It was agreed that the document should be renamed Emergency Plan for Parish Council Meetings.
      RESOLVED to adopt the Emergency Plan for Parish Council Meetings, subject to the agreed change of title and inclusion in the annual policy schedule.
      Action: The policy is to be added to a policy schedule for annual review and signature at the APCM. The policy will also be added to the council's website.
      Vote: 6-0-0 (For-Against-Abstentions)

C. **New Parish Council Logo**
Members reviewed the circulated logo design. Cllr Henderson commented that the design may appear too rural in its current form and suggested adding a rural railway station building and train in the background to better represent the parish.
Action: Cllr Leary to liaise with a graphic designer to develop the logo in line with the proposals discussed. The revised design is to be brought back to the next meeting for further consideration.

D. **Maggs Lane Field Development**
Discussions are ongoing with Somerset Council regarding the devolution of the land. An initial discussion has also taken place with a recommended project manager.
RESOLVED to engage Phil Davis to prepare an initial feasibility document and outline costs for development of the land at a cost of £250.
Action: The RFO, as the Council's appointed project lead, will instruct the appointed project manager to arrange the feasibility survey and prepare cost estimates.
Vote: 6-0-0 (For-Against-Abstentions)

E. **Bartlett Square Play Area Rules**
Members discussed possible restrictions and it was suggested that Parish Council byelaws may be required to allow proper enforcement of any agreed rules.
Members noted that any new byelaws would require approval by Somerset Council.
Action: Cllr Parker to investigate the process for introducing new byelaws
Action: Mr Pritchard to establish whether any existing Somerset Council byelaws already apply, or could provide a suitable model for any byelaws required for public recreation spaces.

F. **Parish Survey**
Members agreed that residents should be given a range of opportunities to provide feedback, including attendance at local events where possible. Three drop-in sessions have been arranged and the events on 3rd and 4th August were identified as good opportunities to promote the survey and gather feedback. The survey should also be made available online and promoted through social media where possible. The use of SurveyMonkey as a survey tool is to be explored.
Action: Cllr Houlton to look into using SurveyMonkey.
Action: Cllr Leary to print a further 50 copies, in addition to the 30 already printed, so members have copies available at events and during informal conversations with residents.

G. **Fingerpost Hillcrest School**
Somerset Council Rights of Way has been approached regarding the proposed fingerpost. Further investigation is required to confirm whether the location is suitable for a new post, and feedback is awaited.
Action: Cllr Edwards to provide an update once feedback has been received.

H. **Superfluous SID:**
RESOLVED that, as the spare SID is an older model and is not compatible with the newer units for data collection and reporting, it will first be offered to CCTC free of charge. If CCTC declines the offer, the SID will be advertised for sale.
Vote: 6-0-0 (For-Against-Abstentions)

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

NB: the written reports are available from the Parish Council's website, with further updates as reported below.

a) Chair's report (Cllr Houlton)
- Dog waste signs for Mulberry Meadow are expected to be installed shortly.
- Members noted the ongoing delay in relation to the sinkhole works.
- Cllr Houlton reported that Redcliffe Homes had been visited regarding concerns about lorry movements, and the matter is being addressed by them.

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- Fairfield hire: CCTC has notified APC of the Funfair arriving in autumn. In addition, CCTC and has been contacted about hiring Fairfield before the funfair. Hire charges are due to be discussed on 17th July. Members agreed that APC should be consulted on the proposed charges and should understand how the income is used, as APC does not receive any of the hire income.

Action: Clerk to contact CCTC to note that the historical charges for Fairfield appear low compared with similar events at other locations, and to request copies of the insurance, risk assessment and any other relevant documentation for hires are provided for APC records.

b) LCN – Somerset Council (Cllr Edwards)
The meeting scheduled for 22 April was cancelled and rearranged for 15 May. Minutes have not yet been received.
Action: Clerk to contact LCN Link Officer to ensure APC is included on the mailing list.

c) Local Highways (Cllr Houlton)
Arrangements are in place for future Speedwatch sessions.

d) Open Spaces & Footpaths (Cllr Edwards)
Cllr Edwards is making enquiries regarding Monarch Way and hopes to provide an update soon.

e) Long-term Fairfield Governance Agreement (Mr Pritchard)
1. Legal advice on management
2. Talks with CCTC Clerk

There was no update to report since the last meeting. Mr Pritchard is seeking to arrange a meeting with the CCTC Clerk. Members concerns remain regarding agreement of responsibilities and potential liability where APC has no direct control.

f) Health and Safety (Cllr Parker)
- The skateboarding event is booked for 12 August. Rubicon is distributing flyers, which should include both councils. The arrangements, including the risk assessment and safeguarding information, remain as for the previous event and are up to date. Cllrs Henderson and Houlton will attend, as Cllr Parker is unavailable.
- Cllr Henderson raised concerns about the Yeovil football club event and lack of safeguarding information to date. Cllr Parker is to follow up, with the required information to be received by 27 July for the event to go ahead.

g) The Adoption of Maggs Lane Field (Cllr Henderson)
Refer item 5D. No additional updates.

h) Resilience Plan (Mr Houlton)
An email update was circulated in advance, with apologies from Mr Houlton as he was unable to attend the meeting. A joint resilience plan with CCTC was suggested.

i) Joint Neighbourhood Plan Update (Cllr Henderson)
APC received late notice of a meeting arranged by Castle Cary Town Council on 26 June. Further dates were set by CCTC to discuss the joint Neighbourhood Plan without consultation on APC councillor availability. Cllr Henderson, as lead member, was unavailable, and no other APC councillors were able to attend.
It was noted that Cllr Houlton is awaiting a response to a proposal of a meeting between the Chairs and Vice-Chair of both PC and CCTC regarding the Neighbourhood Plan.
APC did not receive notification of the Local Plan information session due to an administrative error at Somerset Council. The deadline for responses is 25 July.

j) New Play Area, Bartlett Square, Lovells Farm (Mr Pritchard)
No updates.

k) Parishioner contact verbal report (Clerk and Cllrs)
- Concerns regarding Redcliffe construction vehicles was received from a member of the public, which has been raised with the developers, who have taken action.
- Litter was reported in the planters near the Creamery and at the eastern entrance by the railings. It was suggested that The Newt be asked to provide a bin.

Action: Cllr Houlton to make request for a litter bin to The Newt.

Mulberry Meadows access concerns: Members noted that an agenda item had been omitted regarding residents' concerns about the potential use of Mulberry Meadows as access to a proposed development site. Residents have already been contacted by the developer for their views. Councillors present supported the proposal to assist residents with a petition opposing the use of Mulberry Meadows for construction access. Cllr Henderson volunteered to prepare a draft petition.

7. Parish Council finance

a) **To receive the payments made since the last meeting list.**
Members noted the payments, totalling £8,358.80

b) **To approve the payments requested list**
Invoice for water at Fairfield was queried as to its use and whether it relates to hirers. Members agreed that APC should not meet costs linked to hire use as it does not receive the associated income, and that APC would not cover the cost of watering trees which was previously communicated to CCTC.
Action: Mr Pritchard to clarify payments 1–3 before they are approved.
RESOLVED to approve Payment 4, working from home and mileage allowances for Mr Pritchard.
Vote: 6-0-0 (For-Against-Abstentions)

c) **To note the financial reports and bank reconciliation.**
Members noted the report and reconciliation, no queries were raised.

9. Dates and Times of all meetings until May 2027:
RESOLVED that regular ordinary meetings will be held on the following dates:
9 September 2026, 14 October 2026, 9 December 2026, 13 January 2027, 10 February 2027, 10 March 2027 and 14 April 2027.
Vote: 6-0-0 (For-Against-Abstentions)

10. Confidential session
RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the next agenda item as it relates to a staffing matter. The member of the public left the meeting.

11. Staffing matter:
RESOLVED that the following arrangements are confirmed in relation to Mr Pritchards ongoing responsibilities in addition to the RFO role:
Fairfield: Mr Pritchard to lead discussions on the governance arrangements, but not day-to-day management.
Bartlett Square: project is to continue being managed by Mr Pritchard as previously agreed.
Vote: 6-0-0 (For-Against-Abstentions)

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 8.43pm, having been extended by resolution at the appropriate time.