



ANSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting, held on Wednesday 23 September 2026

The meeting commenced following a public forum and update from Unitary Cllr Hobhouse.

1. Election of Chair of the Council

Cllr Parker proposed and Cllr Pinnions seconded the nomination of Cllr Edwards as Chair. With no other nominations, it was RESOLVED unanimously to elect Cllr Edwards as Chair, who duly signed their declaration of acceptance of office, witnessed by the Clerk.

2. Declaration of Acceptance of Office by the Chair

Cllr Edwards read and signed their declaration of acceptance of office, witnessed by the Clerk.

3. Attendance and Apologies

Present: Cllrs Edwards, Parker, Pinnions and Leary; the Clerk.

Apologies: Unitary Cllr Messenger

Present: Unitary Cllr Hobhouse; Ten members of the public

4. Declarations of interest

Cllr Pinnions declared an interest in item 9.2 - Castle Cary and Ansford Carnival Committee grant request, and will be required to leave the meeting during discussions.

5. Parish Council vacancies

Two council vacancies arose following the resignations of Cllrs Houlton and Henderson. As the statutory period for requesting an election passed without a request, the Council may now fill the vacancies by co-option. There were no applications to consider at the time of the meeting.

6. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8 July were a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair at the end of the meeting.

7. Appointment of members to the following roles:

RESOLVED to appoint representatives as follows:

7.1 Highways representative: Cllrs Parker and Edwards.

7.2 Joint Neighbourhood Plan representative: Cllr Edwards

7.3 Adoption of Maggs Lane Field representative/lead: Cllr Edwards, supported by Cllr Parker.

7.4 Staffing Committee: As the sole remaining committee member, Cllr Parker will act as staff liaison, with any necessary matters referred to the full Council.

7.5 Bank signatory: An additional signatory is required, but the decision was DEFERRED for further consideration.

8. Planning applications:

8.1 New applications to consider:

8.1.1 23/02083/HOU: 1 Ancastle Avenue Ansford BA7 7JE - Installation of new window opening to South East elevation of existing dwelling, and internal works

RESOLVED unanimously to comment that the council had no objection to the proposal, which was considered a very minor alteration.

- 8.1.2 Amendment to 25/03089/FUL: Land OS 4910 And OS 6011 North Of Burfitt Road And South Of Ansford Hill Ansford Castle Cary Somerset - Erection of 49 dwellings including affordable housing, access proposed from Burfitt Road, provision of pedestrian access and crossing over Ansford Hill, public open space and ancillary works (LOVELLS FARM PHASE II)

Members noted that a pedestrian crossing had already been agreed as part of the development.

Noting concerns from residents, it was RESOLVED to request a condition requiring construction traffic to access the site from Ansford Hill rather than through the existing Lovells Farm roads, to reduce congestion and the impact of dirt and debris on residents.

- 8.1.3 Amendment to 24/02946/REM: Land North Of Ansford Hill Ansford Castle Cary BA7 7PD - Reserved Matters application for the erection of 200 dwellings (70 affordable and 130 open market) with associated highways, drainage, landscaping and public open space - details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale following Outline Planning Permission 19/01840/OUT (Appeal reference APP/R3325/W/20/3259668)

Members noted that Somerset Council had imposed several conditions on the development and that the proposed amendments reflected those requirements.

The conditions covered matters including internal roads and footpath lighting.

RESOLVED that the Council had no objection to the proposed changes.

- 8.2 Updates/enforcement matters
No matters raised.

9. Grant and donation requests and proposals

Summary of grants/donations considered				
Project / Organisation	Requested Funds	Total Project Cost	Other Grant Funding	Self-Funding / Contribution
9.1 South Somerset Community Accessible Transport	£2,000	£35,995	£19,000	£5,000 reserves
9.2 Castle Cary & Ansford Carnival Committee	£500	£11,900	£8,800	Not stated
9.3 Caryford Community Hall Pantomime	£350	£1,610.40	£650	Not stated
9.4 Castle Cary Cricket Club (Youth Section)	£500	£720 (hall hire only)	£0	£220
9.5 Ansford Academy – Remembrance Project (KS3)	£300	N/A	Unknown	N/A

9.1 South Somerset Community Accessible Transport

The organisation requested £2,000 towards a nearly new minibus to replace its ageing vehicle. The service actively supports Ansford users with shopping, medical and social journeys, helping them maintain mobility and independence.

RESOLVED unanimously to award £1,000. This was less than the amount requested, recognising the other grant applications under consideration, but exceeded the usual maximum award in recognition of the service's importance.

Members agreed that the service should be promoted more widely to Ansford residents to maximise local benefit. Cllr Edwards will liaise with the organisation to obtain marketing materials.

9.2 Castle Cary and Ansford Carnival Committee

The Committee requested £500 towards the Children's Carnival, including materials, props, road-closure management and a circus-skills workshop. The event supports community participation and local organisations.

RESOLVED unanimously to award £500.

9.3 Caryford Hall Panto (the item was discussed after Cllr Pinnions left the meeting at 19.40)

A request for a donation of £350 was requested to help keep the annual community pantomime affordable and accessible to local families.

RESOLVED unanimously to award £350.

9.4 Ansford Youth Cricket Club

A grant of £500 was requested towards the cost of hiring Ansford Academy's gym for winter coaching. The growing youth section provides local children with access to sport, skills development and regular physical activity.

RESOLVED unanimously to award £500.

9.5 Ansford Academy Remembrance Project

Following last year's donation, renewed support was proposed for the 2026 KS3 Remembrance Project, which combines English, Art and History activities linked to the local area.

RESOLVED unanimously to support the proposal with a £300 donation.

10. Parish Council Logo

Although earlier designs had been circulated, members had not seen the latest version before the meeting and considered that the design required further development. DEFERRED until a future meeting, and the latest design will be circulated.

ACTION : Cllr Leary to circulate design. All Cllrs to suggest ideas for improvement.

11. Dog Waste Bin

The original proposal was to provide a dog-waste bin at Maggs Lane. During discussion, members also proposed installing a second bin at Tuckers Lane.

It was noted that each bin would cost approximately £183 and that the current collection charge is £338 per bin per annum.

RESOLVED unanimously to purchase two bins, one for Maggs Lane and one for Tuckers Lane, at a cost of up to approximately £183 each, and to meet the annual collection charge, currently £338 per bin.

ACTION: Cllr Edwards to consult with Somerset Council on locations and installation arrangements.

12. Replacement Bench on Station Road

Members considered CCTC's proposal for APC to contribute 50% towards replacing the missing bench at the Station Road sinkhole site. The original bench was removed before the works and cannot be located.

Members discussed whether the existing location remains suitable or whether an alternative site would be preferable.

DEFERRED while Cllr Edward contacts CCTC to discuss the options and seek clarification about the original bench.

ACTION: Cllr Edwards to contact CCTC.

13. Collaborative working with Castle Cary Town Council

The following matters were considered:

13.1 Dropped kerbs: Members considered locations where dropped kerbs would improve access for people with limited mobility or those using mobility aids.

This highways-led matter had been raised with CCTC, with the suggestion that suitable locations in Ansford should also be included.

The lack of a dropped kerb providing access to the green space at Mulberry Meadows was noted.

It was agreed that Cllr Edwards would compile a list of proposed locations for submission to the Clerk, and onward communication to Somerset Council for their consideration.

ACTION: Locations to be provided to the Clerk. Clerk to submit to CCTC for inclusion.

13.2 Newsletter: To note the decision by CCTC to rename the newsletter “Castle Cary Community Newsletter” with APC

The Council noted CCTC’s decision to rename the publication the “Castle Cary Community Newsletter”, with APC permitted to submit an article of up to 350 words alongside councillor and Parish Council contact details, subject to CCTC’s editorial discretion. No further action will be taken at this stage, although the council may revisit the matter in future.

14. Fairfield Management

14.1 Fence Repairs (wire perimeter fence behind pump track)

Members agreed in principle that the council should contribute towards works for which has a responsibility. Cllr Edwards will liaise with CCTC and the contractor to attend the site and establish the extent of the repairs and the Council’s responsibility before any contribution is agreed.

14.2 Governance arrangements

Mr Pritchard (RFO), is leading this work and will provide an update in October.

Cllr Edwards and the Clerk will attend a maintenance contract review meeting on Friday, the outcomes of which will support the overall governance arrangements.

15. Mulberry Meadows Construction Traffic Petition

The Council was aware that residents had organised a petition concerning the possible use of Mulberry Meadows by construction traffic, although the supporting petition figures were not available at the meeting. Members agreed to support residents in seeking to prevent construction traffic from being routed through the estate, but that it will consider appropriate actions when formal development proposals are submitted.

16. Youth Connect South West contract

The existing contract is due for renewal in 2027/28, with APC having previously declined participation.

A summary of the latest quarterly report was circulated before the meeting. Members reiterated previous concerns that the contract and service did not clearly demonstrate additional community benefit or financial viability. Feedback from other councils had also been unfavourable, and members preferred to support local young people through other means.

RESOLVED unanimously not to participate in the contract.

17. Resilience Planning

The former APC lead advised shortly before the meeting that they wished to withdraw from the project. The council notes thanks for their valuable contribution to the project.

A draft joint statement of collaboration (drafted by the former APC lead), along with terms of reference proposed by CCTC had been circulated prior to the meeting. Following the lead’s withdrawal, members considered that they could not make any decisions at this meeting.

Members supported the principle of a joint resilience plan with CCTC but agreed that the matter required revisiting before any further action is agreed.

Cllr Pinnions left the meeting at 19.40

18. Annual Parish Meeting 2027

Members considered a joint open session with CCTC, with each council holding its formal Annual Parish Meeting separately before or after the shared session.

Members expressed a preference for a separate meeting to maintain a clear focus on Ansford parishioners and the parish's distinct needs and local matters, however, agreed that the option of a joint meeting will be reconsidered when additional councillors are in place. It was commented that a date should be agreed promptly because of limited venue availability.

19. Finance and Audit

19.1 External Audit Findings

Auditor's findings:

Members noted the external auditor's report. It included a minor requirement to restate the previous year's asset figure when completing the 2026/27 AGAR. No other matters affecting the audit opinion were raised.

The auditor also noted that the Council had declared non-compliance with Assertions 5 and 10 in Section 1 and had provided an adequate explanation and details of planned action. In addition, the auditor advised that the independence of the internal auditor should be reviewed annually as best practice, as evidence of such consideration had not been provided.

The auditor further considered the explanation for the variance between the previous and current year figures in Boxes 3 and 4 of Section 2 insufficient for review.

RFO's response:

The RFO considered some observations unjustified, as correspondence was ongoing when the matter was closed and the final report issued. The RFO considered that adequate explanations were being provided, but will focus on a clean audit for next year. Members suggested the RFO should consider making a formal complaint if the service received was considered unsatisfactory, noting that other councils had reported similar concerns.

19.2 Financial Reports: Members noted the latest financial report. A bank reconciliation was not presented at this meeting.

19.3 Banking: To agree addition/removal of signatories: DEFERRED (as 7.5 above)

19.4 Payments

19.4.1 Members noted the list of payments since the last meeting, totalling £26,925.53 (incl. vat).

19.4.2 Members approved the list of payments for authorisation, totalling £171.90

19.5 Asset Register

RESOLVED to add the following items to the asset register:

19.5.1 2 no. gazebo – gifted items, to be added with a nominal £1 value.

19.5.2 Handheld radios – to be added to the register at the original purchase value.

20. Written and verbal reports and updates

Written reports are available from the Parish Council's website.

20.1 Summary of actions from previous meeting not covered by other agenda items

20.1.1 Speed Indicator Device: Members noted that CCTC had accepted the previously approved gift of the device.

20.2 Chair's report

In the absence of a chair prior to the meeting, no report was available.

20.3 LCN – Somerset Council (Cllr Edwards)

The AGM was held in August, minutes are yet to be released.

20.4 Local Highways

There was no report as there was not an appointed representative prior to the meeting. It was noted that works to the embankment are a key matter to monitor.

- 20.5** Open Spaces & Footpaths (Cllr Edwards)
New galvanised kissing gates are being put on the PROW nearest the parsonage, with a programme of further replacements underway, which will replace old timber stiles.
- 20.6** Health and Safety (Cllr Parker)
Rubicon apologised for cancelling the summer skate day and accepted responsibility. The event was rescheduled for 19 September, but Cllrs Parker and Edwards reported lower attendance, possibly because it was held on a Saturday.
Save a Life training is scheduled for November, with details available on the website. A booking system is required to manage attendance.
ACTION: Cllr Parker/The Clerk to organise a booking system.
- 20.7** The Adoption of Maggs Lane Field
There was no report as there was not an appointed representative prior to the meeting.
- 20.8** Resilience Plan
No further updates in addition to minute 17 above.
- 20.9** Joint Neighbourhood Plan Update
There was no report as there was not an appointed representative prior to the meeting.
- 20.10** New Play Area, Bartlett Square, Lovells Farm (Mr Pritchard)
Mr Pritchard reported that the project was progressing despite delays with the land transfer, with completion expected by the end of the month. Further decisions would be required on tree planting, grass treatment and site rules. A litter bin would be installed by the gate as previously agreed, with collection costing £6.50 per week (£338 per annum).
ACTION: Mr Pritchard to prepare proposed site rules for consideration at the next meeting.
- 20.11** Parishioner contact verbal report (Clerk and Cllrs)
Members were provided with an update on communications received and any action taken, including referral to other organisations where appropriate.

21. Items for the next meeting

- 21.1** Fairfield maintenance contract renewal
21.2 Rules for play areas
21.3 Gazebo Loan Agreement and hire charges

22. Date and time of next meeting: Wednesday 14 October 2026, 6.30pm at Caryford Hall

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting.