ANSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting, held on Wednesday 14 October 2026

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

1. **Attendance and Apologies**
   Present: Cllrs Edwards, Parker, Pinnions and Leary; the Clerk.
   Apologies: None.
   Present: Unitary Cllrs Messenger and Hobhouse; Nine members of the public

2. **Declarations of interest**
   None.

3. **Parish Council vacancies**
   Members noted the resignation of Cllr Easeman.
   On behalf of the Council, Cllr Edwards thanked former Cllrs Houlton, Henderson and Easeman for their contributions during their service.
   The Council may co-opt members to fill two of the three vacancies while the statutory period for requesting an election for the third is under way. If no election is called, co-option could take place at the December meeting.
   Anyone interested should contact the Clerk or a councillor for further information.

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting**
   RESOLVED unanimously that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 23 September were a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair at the end of the meeting.

5. **Planning applications:**
   5.1 New applications to consider: None.
   5.2 Updates/enforcement matters
   Major applications pending decisions include: 200 homes north of Ansford Hill; 77 homes at Maggs Lane; and 49 homes in Phase II at Lovells Farm. There is suggestion of a possible application for 100 homes on Station Road, although this has not yet been submitted to Somerset Council.
   Construction of 29 homes by Redcliffe, off Station Road, is well under way.

6. **Grant and donation requests and proposals**
   6.1 Art Society MidSomerset
   The organisation requested £150 towards a community arts project offering ceramics workshops and show-and-tell sessions for elderly, frail and less mobile residents of Ansford and Castle Cary who may be unable to attend its regular lectures.
   RESOLVED unanimously to award £150. Councillors suggested wider publicity to reach the intended participants and maximise local benefit.

7. **Gazebo Hire Agreement**
   Members found the draft agreement acceptable in principle. However, storage and collection arrangements require further consideration because the current location may present access and practical difficulties for hirers. Caryford Hall may offer a suitable alternative, and Cllr Edwards will discuss this with the hall. DEFERRED to the December meeting.

DRAFT

8. **Social Media and Communications Policy**
   Members considered the draft broadly acceptable but requested further time to review it. The policy is intended to cover all forms of communication, including email. DEFERRED to the December meeting.

9. **Parish Council Logo**
   Members reviewed two further designs and considered one to be close to final. They favoured a semi-circular landscape design, subject to a minor adjustment and the addition of an "Ansford Parish Council" banner along the flat base.
   ACTION: Cllr Leary to circulate the updated design.

10. **Replacement Bench on Station Road**
    Further enquiries since the previous meeting confirmed that the bench had been well used and valued as a resting point by people using the route.
    RESOLVED unanimously to support its replacement, with APC contributing 50% of the cost of a proposed recycled-material bench in partnership with CCTC.

11. **Bartlett Square Play Area Rules**
    The play area, funded through Section 106 monies and an APC contribution, is complete and nearly ready to open.
    Signs will state that the play area is intended for children aged 12 and under, and that ball games, dogs, smoking and fires are not permitted.
    Costs are required for two signs, one at each entrance gate and will be considered at the December meeting.

12. **Heritage at Risk Register**
    Members reviewed the Heritage at Risk Register, which includes Hillcrest School.
    The Castle Cary History Society had prepared a detailed summary of the building's condition and associated concerns. Members noted that a possible Section 215 notice would address planning enforcement rather than heritage protection and might not, by itself, safeguard the building. The Council shares the concerns about Hillcrest School and will support appropriate action where possible.
    Members also noted overgrown hedges obstructing pedestrians, reports of rats, and spoil from a badger sett encroaching onto the footpath. These issues relate primarily to the potential Section 215 notice rather than the Heritage at Risk Register.
    RESOLVED unanimously to submit the History Society's summary to Somerset Council's Conservation Team for updating the register.

13. **A371 Bank Stabilisation Programme**
    Somerset Council has applied for £8.4 million to fund extensive bank stabilisation works. No further updates are expected until December. The Council will continue to monitor progress.

14. **Station Road Parking:**
    Members discussed concerns about parking near the A371 and Station Road junction, which is causing congestion. Members agreed that potential solutions should be investigated with SC Highways.
    ACTION: Cllr Edwards to liaise with CCTC and Highways to identify viable options.

15. **Fairfield Management and Events**
    15.1 Communication and delegated decisions: Members noted that the RFO and the Clerk had each held discussion with CCTC. These discussions will be reviewed alongside the existing trust document to consider appropriate management arrangements. An informal review will take place, and the matter will be reconsidered at the next meeting.
    15.2 Maintenance contract renewal: Members reviewed a revised specification for the Fairfield grounds maintenance contract, jointly prepared by CCTC and APC, and

DRAFT

considered it an improvement on the previous version. RESOLVED for the specification to be used to tender the renewal.

15.3 Fence Repairs: RESOLVED unanimously for APC to contribute a third of the cost of the repairs carried out, with the total cost being £376.20, equating to a contribution of £125.40.

15.4 Wildflower areas: RESOLVED unanimously for APC to contribute a third of the cost of the seeing of the Wildflower area, with the total cost being £200, equating to a contribution of £66.67. Members noted that ongoing management and possible future reseeding may be required to maintain the area.

15.5 Skate and scooter event: Members noted that 22 people attended the September event. Cllr Parker considered the events well attended in their current format and expressed concern that further promotion through local schools could lead to overcrowding, but will seek CCTC's views on the proposal.

16. Finance and Audit

16.1 Financial Reports: Members noted the latest financial report and had no queries or comments. A bank reconciliation was not presented at this meeting.

16.2 Banking: RESOLVED unanimously to add Cllr Parker as signatory on all accounts.

16.3 Payments

16.3.1 Members noted the list of payments since the last meeting, totalling £7,965.32 (incl. vat).

16.3.2 Members approved payments for authorisation, totalling £91.78. This included addition of Clerk's expenses claim for £29.79 not included in the published payment list.

17. Written and verbal reports and updates

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

17.1 Summary of actions from previous meeting not covered by other agenda items
No matter raised.

17.2 Chair's report
Notices inviting applications for the councillor vacancies have been displayed, and the council looks forward to receiving expressions of interest.
Planning for next year's precept will begin in the coming weeks.

17.3 LCN – Somerset Council (Cllr Edwards)
Notes from the previous meeting are awaited.

17.4 Local Highways
No additional matters raised.

17.5 Open Spaces & Footpaths (Cllr Edwards)
Hedges along paths continue to be cut.

17.6 Health and Safety (Cllr Parker)
Cllr Parker confirmed that the requested fair documentation had mostly been provided and that each ride was individually insured. No safeguarding policy was supplied, and this requirement will need to be considered for next year.

17.7 The Adoption of Maggs Lane Field
The position on sub-lease of the field is still unclear. ACTION: Clerk to establish position with Somerset Council.

17.8 Resilience Plan
With no representative currently appointed, members agreed that insufficient resources were available to prioritise the Resilience Plan. The item will be removed from future agendas until the work can progress.

17.9 Joint Neighbourhood Plan Update
Cllr Edwards will liaise with CCTC for information on the next planned meeting.

DRAFT

17.10 New Play Area, Bartlett Square, Lovells Farm (Mr Pritchard)
The area is due to be opened soon. The council will need to consider additional planting.

17.11 Parishioner contact verbal report (Clerk and Cllrs)
The next "Meet the PCSO" will be held on Thursday 22 September at the Market House, Castle Cary, 9.30-10.30am.

18. Items for the next meeting
None raised.

19. Date and time of next meeting: Wednesday 9 December 2026, 6.30pm at Caryford Hall

20. Annual Parish Meeting: Wednesday 28 April 2027, 6.00pm at Caryford Hall

Exempt Business: The following item was not considered exempt because the relevant information was already in the public domain. The press and public were therefore not excluded.

21. Local Government Pay Award 2026/27: Members noted the increase of 3.3%, effective 1 April 2026

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 19.54

DRAFT