

**EAST COKER PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**8<sup>th</sup> April 2026 7pm held at East Coker Pavilion**

**Attending Councillors:** Cllr Cowen, Cllr Costello, Cllr Sugg, Cllr Chauveau, Cllr Hall & Cllr Carter-Uren

**26/38** Apologies for non attendance were received from Cllr Hodge, Cllr Wintersgill, Cllr Mead, Cllr Walker & Clerk

**26/39** Minutes of the Parish Council meeting which was held on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026 were approved. **Proposed:** Cllr Costello **Seconded:** Cllr Sugg **Vote:** 5 in favour, 1 abstention

**Action:** Clerk to publish the minutes on her return

**26/40** There were no declarations of interest.

**26/41 Public Question Time**

a 1 member of the public was present but did not speak

b 1 Unitary Councillor, Cllr Mike Hewitson, was present who reported that Somerset Council's finances were still very stretched due to special educational needs in Somerset. Pothole reporting: during first 2 months of 2026 the council would normally get around 4,000 potholes reported – this year that figure rose to 15,000. There are now 35 teams within the area working on repairing these potholes. No update from Highways on when the Triangle works might start but it was suspected that it would now be in the summer holidays. Highways are undertaking a new project to improve road signage, remove graffiti and deal with gully maintenance. He also reported that the official opening of the new Ham Hill Visitor Centre will be Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2026. The site had 16,000 visitors in its first month.

**26/42 Chair's Report** Tim Foster's quote for installing concrete bases under each of the three existing benches in the cemetery for safety reasons has been accepted.

Chair reported that the Pavilion had been valued at £384,000 for insurance purposes.

Clarity of what this amount covers is to be obtained in writing. He also advised that having received complaints about the rabbit population in the cemetery that this had been dealt with by the pest controller.

**26/61 100 Club numbers were drawn 1<sup>st</sup> 5 2<sup>nd</sup> 25 3<sup>rd</sup> 11 Action:** Clerk to update winners and pay on her return.

**26/62 To discuss and make observations on SC Planning Applications**

a **15/01000/OUT Location:** Keyford. A date has still not been set by Somerset Council for the planning committee meeting. Concerns were raised regarding the re-opening of the A30 at Hendford Hill and the impact of traffic volume and disruption caused by Keyford construction traffic and residents' traffic in the area if it was not to be fully reopened, as has been muted by Highways.

b **Planning Appeal for Halves Lane** The period to appeal closes tomorrow, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2026 and the appellants have until 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026 to submit any further information. Planning Consultant, Simon Williams, advised of an increase in his charge due to the amount of work required. His invoice was substantially more than the initial estimate which had been agreed at the last PC meeting. Cllr Cowen explained to Mr Williams that he would need to bring this back to the Parish Council at the April Meeting and a figure would be agreed. Due to the council's satisfaction with his work and understanding of the level of work required it was proposed to increase the amount we could offer to pay to an intermediate figure.

**Proposed:** Cllr Hall **Seconded:** Cllr Carter Uren **Vote:** 6 in favour. **Action:** Chair to inform Mr Williams

The Parish Council wished to thank Cllr Oliver Patrick for all his hard work in visiting parishioners in the village to obtain signatures for the PC petition against the proposed development in Halves Lane. The Parish Council also wished to thank Sallie Leveridge for taking the petition around our sister village, West Coker.

**26/64 March Planning Decisions** There were no planning decisions in March.

**26/65 Memorial requests** approved for Keith Mogger, Eileen Hallet & Ann Boucher.

**Proposed:** Cllr Sugg **Seconded:** Cllr Carter-Uren **Vote:** 6 in favour. **Action:** Clerk to inform stonemasons.

**26/66 Matters for discussion and resolution:**

1. An hourly rate of £15 to hire the meeting room in the new Pavilion was agreed.
2. Clerk to obtain quotes for new cricket nets.

**26/67 Correspondence received from Somerset Council.** None received.

**26/68 Discuss Parishioner Correspondence.** The clerk had received an email from a parishioner about damage to a gravestone. Clerk had contacted the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as the stone belongs to them and they are yet to decide whether to visit or leave it to us.

**26/69 Clerks Report.** No report due to scheduled holiday.

**26/70 Working group updates:**

a **The Pavilion Modernisation** handover of the building from the contractor is to take place at 2pm on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2026. All Councillors who are available have been asked to attend. Clerk will be asked to be in attendance as well.

The discrepancy regarding the charge for the solar panels was discussed. It was felt that P H Hardwill Ltd had delivered more in other areas during the construction with no extra charge. They agreed that they had quoted without this cost, on the basis that a grant would be forthcoming to cover it, and without informing the PC. They had apologised for this error and Mr Philip Hardwill (who was in attendance) had previously suggested that we share the cost 50/50 Proposal: The extra cost for the installation of the solar panels on the roof of the pavilion should be shared 50/50 with Hardwills **Proposed:** Cllr Costello **Seconded:** Cllr Sugg **Vote:** 5 in favour, 1 against **Action:** Extra payment to be included in Hardwills' final invoice. Cllr Costello advised that he had waited for the electricity supplier to install a smart meter last week but they had not attended. Clerk to chase. He also said that the council should consider if the exterior wood should be stained; and to discover if the kitchen needs to be registered with SC's Health and Safety department.

**A List of Equipment Required to be Drawn up:** A folding disability ramp – quote being obtained by P H Hardwill Ltd. Pavilion Modernisation Group to draw up final list of what still needs to be purchased and to include: door stops, kitchen equipment, new stackable chairs for events and benches outside the Pavilion for footballers to use when putting on/taking off their boots.

The family of Mr Gerry Smith has asked to put a bench with a plaque on outside the new building and this should be considered by the committee

Cllr Cowen, Cllr Costello, Cllr Mead and Clerk to meet with the football club to formally discuss the use of the Pavilion going forward. It was suggested that we have a new working group to oversee the use of the Pavilion starting with the drawing up of terms and conditions of use. This working group is to be formed at the next meeting.

b Parish Communications. Cllr Chauveau requested updates and news for the website for the month of March. Cllr Carter-Uren asked for newsletter items to be given to her before the 11<sup>th</sup> June deadline.

c LCN. No report given as Cllr Haigh not present.

**26/71 Finance**

To approve the monthly items of expenditure and those paid under delegated powers.

**Proposed:** Cllr Hall **Seconded:** Cllr Carter Uren **Vote:** 6 in favour **Action:**

Clerk to Pay invoices.

**26/72 To discuss and identify Highways Issues.** Clerk to send to Cllr Hewitson exact location of serious/dangerous potholes in the Parish.

**26/73 To discuss and identify items for the Village Ranger.** Verges in the village to be cut and tidied. Dunnock's Lane is consistently waterlogged, Cllr Sugg to get quote for work to solve the issue.

**26/56 Agenda items for the next meeting** which will be on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at East Coker Pavillion.

- The future of the 100 Club.
- New Pavilion Working Group.
- Neighbourhood Plan update.

Meeting ended 8.35pm