EAST COKER PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
9th September 2026 7pm held at East Coker Pavilion

Attending Councillors: Cllr Cowen (Chair), Cllr Sugg, Cllr Costello, Cllr Hall, Cllr Walker, Cllr Mead, Cllr Carter-Uren, Cllr Wintersgill, Cllr Chauveau and Clerk Jude Heggarty.
There were 5 members of the public present.
26/152 To receive and approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 12th August 2026. **Proposal**: To approve the minutes. **Proposed**: Cllr Mead **Seconded:** Cllr Walker **Vote:** All Agreed **Action:** Clerk to publish.
26/153 Apologies for non-attendance. Cllr Haigh and Cllr Hodge
26/154 Cllrs declaration of interests. None
26/155 Public Questions
A Members of the public.
One member of the public spoke about item **26/164/1** regarding parking and noise concerns at the Recreation Ground when the football club is using it.
One member of the public spoke about a section of footpath Y9/26 being blocked. This will be investigated by Cllr Walker & Cllr Sugg.
B Unitary Councillors: None were present
26/156 Chair's Report. Cllr Cowen announced that a parishioner had donated anonymously £700.00 to the Parish Council. He took this to be an affirmation of the hard work the Parish Councillors carry out and therefore the Cllrs should be congratulated. He asked for thoughts of how this generous donation could best be spent before the next meeting.
26/157 100 Club number draw 1st **11** 2nd **6** 3rd **24** **Action**: Clerk to update winners and pay.
26/158 To discuss and make observations on SC Planning Applications
A **15/01000/OUT Location**: Keyford. Cllr Walker advised there is to be a Somerset Council meeting on the 29th September. Cllr Cowen noted that £20k had been allocated to the ECPC in the draft s106 agreement to be spent on alleviating the car parking/traffic problem outside the school. Cllrs agreed that this was not enough to do anything meaningful and that it would be years before it was actually received. He asked for thoughts before 29th about any future works/projects that we need to undertake that would be suitable for the longer term and how much money should be asked for.
B **Halves Lane Appeal:** Cllr Cowen said that the Appeal Hearing on 27/28th Aug had been very well attended by parishioners, several of whom spoke along with the Parish Council. Apart from the Appellant's legal representatives there were no people present who supported the Appeal. He felt that the PC had done everything that it could to represent the feelings of the parishioners and to try and stop this development. He said that he had been advised that a decision would be made before Christmas.
C **26/01936/HOU Location:** 10 Nash Lane **Application:** Garage extension, steps and bin store. This application was discussed and there were no objections. **Proposal**: ECPC has no objections to this application **Proposed**: Cllr Sugg **Seconded**: Cllr Mead **Vote**: All agreed **Action**: Clerk to advise SC planning.
26/159 To consider any recent planning applications from Somerset Council (South), received in the days after the agenda has been circulated and prior to this meeting. None received
26/160 August Planning Decisions: Both 25/01735/OUT Land East of Yeovil Road Plackett Lane & 25/01735/OUT 32 Helena Road have both been approved.

26/161 Memorial Requests None received

26/162 Matters for discussion and resolution:

1. TS Eliot walking trail from Naish Priory to St Michael's Church. Cllr Sugg advised that members of the TS Elliott Trust are still away and she will contact them on their return.
2. Co-option of a new Cllr. A letter of interest had been circulated prior to the meeting, from Chris Thornton. He spoke about what he could bring to the Parish Council and then was asked to step out of the meeting. Cllrs agreed that due to his experience in planning and architecture, his knowledge of the parish and his availability he could be a great asset to the PC. **Proposal**: To co-opt Chris Thornton on to the ECPC **Proposed**: Cllr Cowen **Seconded**: Cllr Walker **Vote**: All agreed **Action**: On his return to the meeting Clerk informed him of his co-option and Cllr Cowen welcomed him to the PC. Cllr Thornton to fill in paperwork and return to the Clerk.
3. **Upgrading of the play area**. The working group, which comprises of Cllr Carter Uren, Cllr Sugg, Cllr Chauveau, Cllr Hall and Cllr Hodge will arrange a meeting and bring proposed figures back to the October meeting.
4. **Possibility of purchasing recycle bins for the Rec** was discussed and Cllr Walker will bring costs back to the October meeting. To make storage space for any new bins in the garage lock-up a working party was agreed for Sunday 20th at 9:00am.
5. **Plan for October meeting:** The chair advised that both he and the Vice Chair are away for the October meeting and there would probably not be a new Clerk in place by then. He asked if Cllrs thought it would be a good idea to cancel it, however it was felt that the meeting should go ahead. Cllr Sugg will Chair and Cllr Walker will take minutes. Agenda publication will be arranged.
6. **Placing a picture of the King in the pavilion:** If it is free it was thought it would augment the meeting room **Proposal**: To hang a portrait of the King in the meeting room. **Proposed**: Cllr Chauveau **Seconded**: Cllr Mead **Vote**: All agreed **Action**: Cllr Cowen to organise.

26/163 Correspondence received from Somerset Council. None received.

26/164 Discuss Parishioner Correspondence.

1. Email received re a quad bike being ridden on the recreation ground. Cllrs said that a post had been placed on East Coker Past and Present Facebook page about the individual who was doing this so the Chair will write to them and advise that this is not permitted.
2. Email and phone call received about parking and noise at the Rec. Cllrs were sympathetic to this complaint but felt there was little they could do about parking. However it was also pointed out that they were bound to promote the use of the pavilion and grounds. Cllr Cowen will contact the football club to ask them to inform their members that they should share cars whenever possible and to be considerate about levels of noise. This would also be put on the website.

26/165 Clerk's Report. Clerk suggested that the PC should investigate getting the mapping at the cemetery digitised as she said the current system was not accurate or easy to use.

26/166 Working group updates

A **The Pavilion**

Cllr Cowen said he had had a meeting with an acoustic specialist who, after measurement, had agreed there was a significant echo in the meeting room and advised on the best materials to use to counter this. The subsequent quote came to almost £3000.

Another specialist gave an estimate of £3.5k-4.0k. After discussion it was agreed that this was too expensive for the budget and by adding more mats and other pictures it was hoped to make enough difference to make the acoustics better.

1. Wash Up from Pavilion Opening. Cllr Cowen said that the event was a great success with an estimated 250 people attending and that there was a lot of very positive feedback about the pavilion facilities. The pavilion was officially opened by an 'Elton John' tribute act who then performed for the rest of the evening. Cllr Haigh is to write to SALC to update them on how the event went and how monies were spent. It was noted that no members of the Coker Cockerels Football Club attended the event. Cllr Mead suggested a letter should be sent to thank Mr Timmis for the use of his land for parking.

B **Parish Communications**. Cllr Chauveau reported that she was still having problems getting updates loaded onto the website by the webmaster in a timely fashion. It was suggested that a meeting between Cllr Cowen, Cllr Chauveau and the webmaster be arranged to try and improve this.

C **LCN** Cllr Haigh had no updates.

D **2026 Nativity play**: Cllr Sugg advised that she was still struggling to get a choir booked but would keep trying. There will be a working group meeting held before the next parish council meeting in October.

26/167 Finance

1. To approve the monthly items of expenditure and those paid under delegated powers. **Proposed:** Cllr Wintersgill **Seconded:** Cllr Carter-Uren **Vote:** All agreed **Action:** Clerk to pay invoices.

2. Adoption of Internal Audit – Terms of Reference had been circulated prior to meeting and Cllrs were happy to adopt these**: Proposed:** Cllr Walker **Seconded:** Cllr Carter-Uren **Vote:** All agreed **Action**: The terms of reference to be put on the website.

3. Clerk reported that the new SALC pay scales 2026/27 had been promulgated and were effective from 1st April 2026

26/168 To discuss and identify Highways Issues: Clerk reported that the road works at the Triangle had been scheduled for the October half term. Cllrs Walker and Mead felt that they had done all they could to warn SC about the oak leaning on to the road outside the village hall but had got no positive response.

26/169 To discuss and identify items for the Village Ranger.

26/170 Agenda items for the 14th October 2026 meeting. Play Area Costings, recycling bins costs, new clerk applications.

Clerk left meeting

26/171 Resolution sought to exclude the Public.

1. Discuss Ts & Cs for New Clerk Position. These had been circulated by the HR Committee prior to the meeting and no objections were raised. **Proposal**: agree to the terms and conditions for the Clerk position including an uplift of monthly hours to 80 and a new pension arrangement. **Proposed**: Cllr Hall **Seconded**: Cllr Carter-Uren **Vote**: For: 8 Abstained: 1

2. Approve advertising For Clerk Vacancy. **Proposal**: to agree the wording for the advert and to place it on the SALC website, the PC website and local agencies. **Proposed**: Cllr Wintersgill **Seconded**: Cllr Mead **Vote**: For: 8 Abstained: 1 **Action**: HR committee to start advertising.

Meeting concluded at 9:14pm

Chair……

Clerk……..

Date ……