

## WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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### **The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016 in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Cllr's Mrs M Blogg (Chairman), Mrs C Hannath, D Mitton, J Nutt, C Rayson and C Silverlight.

**In attendance:** County Cllr R Henley, three members of the public and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

#### **01/05/16. Election of Officers**

**a) Chairman.** Cllr Mrs M Blogg was proposed by Cllr Mitton and seconded by Cllr Silverlight. There were no other proposals. Cllr Mrs Blogg was unanimously elected as Chairman of the Council and duly signed the Acceptance of Office Form.

**b) Vice Chairman.** Cllr D Lacey was proposed by Cllr Mrs Blogg and seconded by Cllr Mitton. There were no other proposals. Cllr Lacey was unanimously elected as Vice –chair.

**02/05/16. To appoint a representative to attend the quarterly SALC Area Meetings.** It was agreed to appoint Cllr Mitton.

**03/05/16. To appoint a representative to the Village Hall Committee.** It was agreed to appoint Cllr Mrs Hannath,

**04/05/16. To accept apologies for absence.** Apologies were accepted from Cllr Lacey.

**05/05/16. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda.** There were no disclosures of interest.

**06/06/16. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 26/04/16.** The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting and they were signed by the Chairman.

**07/06/16. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda.** There were no matters arising.

**08/06/16. County Councillor's Report.** It was agreed to include this item at this point in the meeting. Cllr Henley referred to a letter sent by Headway Adolescent Resources Ltd to residents of Lee Park regarding their proposal to purchase 1 Lee Park to establish a small children's home. Residents are very concerned about the proposal and believe that a village with no facilities would not be the right place for a small children's home. Headway has not made an offer to the Estate Agents and it is believed that the owner of the property is unwilling to sell to Headway. It was reported that it is Headway's opinion that they will not need a change of use planning application for their proposal. Cllr Henley referred to SCC's decision to remove its subsidy for the Stagecoach No 20 bus

Service, despite him asking them to reconsider. Due to SCC's decision to withdraw the subsidy Stagecoach has decided to change its route, resulting in West Buckland losing its only bus service in July. It was noted there were plenty of other subsidised bus services running with less passengers. Cllr Henley said it was highly regrettable that the service is being withdrawn and has asked SCC to look at whether other services could be diverted to West Buckland. He is waiting to hear back from John Perrit. In a small survey that he carried out Cllr Henley found that there are 240 passenger journeys per month from the bus stop in West Buckland. Cllr Mrs Blogg mentioned a plan for the Parish Council to carry out its own survey (item 17/05/16).

Cllr Henley left the meeting.

**09/08/16. Democratic Period.** Mr Williams referred to an email he had sent to a number of people, including the Parish Council and the press, protesting at the loss of West Buckland's bus service. He said that Stagecoach would lose fares and would not make a great saving as they would only be cutting 1.15 miles from the journey. As well as people in West Buckland losing their service there is one person from Taunton who uses this bus service to get to work in West Buckland. He suggested that the Parish Council could consider subsidising this bus route so that the service would continue. It would be an example of a local council being able to make a difference as subsidising the bus service would make a difference to the lives of some of the people in the parish.

Mr Williams left the meeting

**10/05/16. Planning:**

**a) To consider any Planning Applications received by the Parish Council prior to the meeting.**

46/16/0012 Removal of conservatory and erection of rear lean-to extension and first floor side extension over porch and entrance hall at 13 Peacocks Close, West Buckland.

Applicants: Mr & Mrs T Paige.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council support the granting of consent.

The applicants left the meeting.

**b) To receive decisions from planning applications determined by TDBC.**

46/16/0005 Variation of condition 04 (implementation and completion of highway works) of application 46/12/0007 at Blackdown Garden Centre, Wellington Road, West Buckland. Decision: permission granted to extend the deadline for the highway works to be completed until 30<sup>th</sup> April 2017. The Clerk referred to the paragraph in the Planning Officer's Report which read "The Parish Council are raising objection and this is appreciated. However, it is considered that a practical solution would be to allow the implementation of the planning permission with a delay to the highways works. This would help deliver economic development without having a long term detrimental impact on highways safety. There will however, be a short term adverse impact on highways safety due to the increased use of the existing access road, although to date no accidents or known difficulties have arisen as a result of the delay and the condition has already been varied three times without harm to highway safety". Cllr Mitton said SCC only record accidents if someone is injured. It was noted that Wellington Town Council had also sent a comment about this application to TDBC "The Town Council are opposed to this time extension and request that the work is carried out soon in order to improve the safety of vehicles at this junction and enforcement action be implemented.

**c) Update on planning enforcement matters reported to TDBC.** It was noted that planning applications have not been received for either the change of use at Robinson's

Smokehouse or the contravention of a planning approval at Gerbestone Manor Farm. There has been no further update from Mr Horan, TDBC Planning Enforcement Officer.

**d) Any other planning matters.** Proposal from Headway Adolescent Resources Ltd to purchase 1 Lee Park for a small childrens' home. This is a five bedroom property with no land. Councillors were concerned that Headway didn't consider a change of use planning application would be required. Cllr Nutt said he understood that unless people are coming and going to service the business no planning permission is required. Cllr Mitton questioned whether there were any planning restrictions for Lee Park and suggested home owners in Lee Park should check their deeds. Cllr Mrs Hannath said she was aware there was a restriction about parking trailers and caravans on driveways. The Clerk will email Tim Corbin, Operations Director, and ask him to include the Parish Council in any consultations. If the plans are taken any further the Council will ask TDBC whether a change of use planning application is required.

The Clerk informed councillors that there had been two weeks when she had not received TDBC's Weekly Planning List and had to look this up on their website. She will contact TDBC about this.

### **11/05/16. Highways.**

#### **a) Matters arising from previous meeting/s**

**Sawyers Hill.** No further update, The verge is dry at the moment.

**Removal of BT phone box.** Contractors arrived to remove the phone box but were unable to do so as vehicles were parked in the way and the owners could not be contacted. Cllr Mrs Blogg gave her phone number to the contractors so that they could advise her when they were returning and the Parish Council could arrange for cones to be put out to prevent vehicles parking in front of the phone box.

**Request for removal of redundant brown tourist signs.** The signs have not been removed yet but are in danger of falling off the fingerpost signs.

#### **Guidance on maintenance of finger post signs and possibilities for funding this work.**

The Clerk referred to notes from a meeting of a group of Exmoor Parish and Town Councils who met to discuss how they could refurbish their historic sign post signs. They had received advice on the maintenance process and discussed making a bid for funding for the work to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The notes will be circulated. It was suggested that the Council could ask other Blackdown Hills parishes if they were interested in making a bid for funding.

**b) To note any highway defects to report to SCC.** No highway defects were reported. The sleeping policeman in Lee Park has been repaired.

**c) To inform Councillors about an email from a parishioner concerned about parking issues connected with the school.** The Clerk reported the Council had received an email from a parent who was concerned about parking and traffic outside of West Buckland School at pick up time. He was concerned about the risk of children stepping out between parked vehicles and being hit by a passing vehicle. He asked if cars could park in the centre of the village and the Village Hall car park. Mrs MacGregor, Headteacher, will be told that parents can park at the Village Hall if the car park is not needed.

**d) Any other highways matters.** There were no other highways matters.

### **12/05/16. Finance**

**a) To note the NALC/SLCC 2016-2018 National Salary Award.** The Clerk advised councillors that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services has reached agreement on new pay scales for 2016-2017 to be implemented immediately and backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 and new pay scales for 2017-2018 to be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017. This is an approximately 1% increase each year. It was agreed that the Clerk's rate of pay at SCP 22 would be changed accordingly for 2016-2017 and 2017-2018.

**b) To agree and authorise payments.** It was resolved to make the following payments:

Mrs P Lacey - £26.43 plants for the Peter Lacey Memorial Trough (Chq no 1317). It was noted that this is paid from ear marked reserves donated by SALC for this purpose.

Mrs J Larcombe - £268.63 Clerk's salary and expenses (Chq no 1318)

**c) To agree the annual renewal of the Council's insurance (second year of three year agreement).** The annual renewal was agreed. Came & Company - £431.32 (Chq no 1319). The Clerk will arrange for the insured value of street furniture to be decreased by £1000 and the value of sports equipment to be increased by £1000.

**d) To agree the payment of the Somerset Association of Local Council's Affiliation Fee for 2016-17.** It was agreed to renew the Council's membership and pay SALC the fee of £290.11 (Chq no 1320). The contribution to NALC has increased but the small increase to SALC has increased due to a change in the number on the electoral register.

**e) To approve the Annual Accounts for 2015/16 and the Annual Governance Statement.** The Clerk reported Mr Abrahams had been unable to carry out the internal audit on May 13<sup>th</sup> because he had been taken ill and admitted to hospital where he was undergoing tests. Grant Thornton will be advised and will be asked for a short extension. The Clerk will find out whether Mr Abrahams will be able to carry out the internal audit and if he is unable to do so the Council will find another internal auditor for this year. The Clerk said she was concerned that it was now two months since the end of the financial year and the accounts for 2015-16 had not been agreed. The accounts are not supposed to be agreed until the Annual Governance statement is agreed and that cannot be agreed until the Internal Audit is carried out. It was proposed by Cllr Mitton and seconded by Cllr Nutt that the Annual Accounts and Annual Governance Statement be agreed subject to the report from the Internal Audit, which should be presented at the next meeting. This was unanimously agreed.

**f) Review of Clerk's hours to consider whether extra hours are needed to update the website and contribute to the newsletter.** It was agreed that a Task and Finish Group would look at the Clerk's workload and hours and will produce a report and recommendation to be discussed by the Council under Part 2. The group will be Cllr's Mrs M Blogg, D Mitton and C Silverlight. The Clerk will produce a report on the work she does and the amount of time required to carry out that work, for the group to consider. SALC will be asked to give advice on the substantive benchmark range for the role.

**g) Update on the purchase of a defibrillator.** The British Heart Foundation has advised that grant applications for funding for a defibrillator can now be made for 2016-17. As they will not give grants for defibrillators in cabinets with key code access the Parish Council will not be able to apply. It was agreed to apply to Awards for All.

**h) additional item:- to note.** Cllr Mrs Blogg reported she had received a verbal complaint about the alleged untidy condition of the verge in Peacocks Close after it was cut by Heathfield Garden Contractors. The complainant asked Cllr Mrs Blogg why TDBC were no longer cutting the verge and why the grass hadn't been picked up. Cllr Mrs Blogg explained that the Parish Council had taken over the cutting of the verge to ensure that it was cut more frequently than TDBC were able to do it. TDBC do not pick up the grass. Cllr Mrs Blogg asked Heathfield Garden Contractors to pick up the grass on the verge in Peacocks Close the next time it was cut, but on that occasion only. The grass had grown quickly before it was cut which left a lot of grass on the verge. It was reported that the grass cutting carried out by TDBC in Lee Park was done in a hurry and did not produce a tidy finish.

### **13/05/16. To receive reports from:**

**a) Police.** The Police Reports for April and May have been circulated by email. It was noted an incident at Crown Hill was not included in the report.

**b) Village Hall Committee.** Cllr Mrs Hannath said there was not a lot to report. The gas boiler will be tested to see if it needs replacing.

**c) Any Other Reports.** There were no other reports.

#### **14/06/16. Playing Field:**

**a) Report from SPFA Play Area Inspection Training Session.** Cllr Mrs Blogg and the Clerk reported they had found the training session very useful. They had received advice on carrying out inspections of the equipment, surfacing, fencing, hedges, gates and signage. One useful piece of advice had been to always carry out the inspection in a clockwise direction so that you would always know what you had inspected if you were interrupted. There was also advice on risk assessment.

**b) Report from Play Area Inspections and implementation of new reporting form, To note condition of goal posts and discuss whether they should be replaced.** The training session had made Cllr Mrs Blogg and the Clerk aware that the Playground Inspection Form needed to be changed to a new format and contain more detail. An example had been given at the training and this had now been adapted. Cllr Mrs Blogg will continue to use the existing form until the end of June but will trial the new form to see whether any adjustments are needed. She will start to use the new form from 1<sup>st</sup> July.

Following the training course Cllr Mrs Blogg and the Clerk met to carry out a thorough inspection of the play area and playing field. Some small faults had been identified and have now been dealt with. The inscription plaque beside the Maple tree in the playing field had come off its wooden base. It has now been secured to the base with screws. Cllr Mrs Blogg said the play area does need work from time to time and asked whether the Council needed to use a handyman to carry out this work or whether the Council could have a working party. Cllr Mitton and Cllr Silverlight said they were happy to help.

During the inspection it was noted that the goal posts are rocking slightly. There is no risk of them coming out of the ground at the moment and this will be monitored. They are starting to rust in places. It was questioned whether full size goal posts are still needed. The Rospa annual inspection is being carried out in June and was decided to see what the report said about the goal posts before making any decisions.

**c) Update on purchase of new signs for the playing field and play area.** The new sign has been purchased and is now in place.

**d) To agree order of product to remove moss/algae in the play area.** Handouts at the training session included one on a product to remove lichen and algae. Cllr Mrs Blogg recommended the Council purchase a 5 litre container to use to control the algae under the roundabout. The product is reported to be easy and safe to apply and has no use by date. It is also reported to be highly effective and is reactivated each time it gets wet. It was agreed to purchase a 5 litre container of Wet and Forget from GB Sport and Leisure Ltd..

**e) Any other matters to note.** Cllr Lacey has replaced the two flat swing seats.

#### **15/05/16. Footpaths**

**a) To note the installation of the integral pedestrian and field gate on the road side of WG 14/22.** Sally Vickery, SCC Rights of Way Officer, has emailed the Clerk to confirm the land owner has now installed the gate.

**b) Update on the Adopt a Footpath Scheme.** Cllr Silverlight has emailed a map confirming which paths he will adopt. Another volunteer has offered to adopt Footpaths WG 14/11, 14/33, 14/10 and 14/14. Cllr Mitton said, as PPLO, he would try to walk all paths twice a year and would produce a bi-monthly report. If paths are used very little they can be checked less frequently. He will contact 'Adopt a Path Volunteers' and asked for contact details. If volunteers see a problem they should contact him. Cllr Nutt asked about risk assessments for people who were walking paths as part of this scheme. Cllr Mitton said this was covered by SCC and they also provide insurance for volunteers involved in this scheme.

**c) Any matters brought forward (Not for decisions).** No matters brought forward.

**16/05/16. Update on forming a speed check group in West Buckland.** Only two volunteers have come forward despite information being put on the website, in the newsletter and on the notice board. This is insufficient to form a group and more volunteers are needed.

**17/05/16. To discuss whether the proposed bus service meets the needs of parishioners and what alternatives might be available when the service through West Buckland is lost.**

During July the No 20 bus service will cease its service through West Buckland. The Parish Council agreed to carry out a survey in the parish to see how the loss of the service would affect people. Copies of the survey will be available in the shop, the Village Hall and Church for people to complete. A copy of the survey will be available on the website for people to download, complete and return and a notice will be put on the notice board saying where the survey is available. The Council will consider the responses at the next meeting. The survey will ask people who use the bus service the following questions:

- How often do you use it?
- What time of day do you use it?
- What do you use it to do?
- Do you have any mobility issues?

The Council will look at alternative and community schemes. Cllr Mitton mentioned Wivey Link and wondered if they might be able to help if drivers could be found locally and they were given a subsidy to form an arm in this area. They have a £10 per year registration fee and are able to take people with disabilities.

**18/05/16. Correspondence and items of interest.** The following correspondence was noted:

Fields in Trust – information about the Centenary Fields Programme. The objective of this nationwide programme is to secure recreational spaces in perpetuity to honour the memory of the millions of people who lost their lives in WW1.

SALC – spaces are available on Good Councillor training sessions, including one at West Buckland on 29<sup>th</sup> June.

Somerset Towns Forum – Conference ‘Bridging the Gaps in Health and Wellbeing’ on June 28<sup>th</sup>, McMillan Theatre, Bridgwater.

It was noted that people in the Wellington area have received letters from Rebecca Pow MP concerning the proposed restoration of the Wellington Monument and the money that would need to be raised to do so.

**19/05/16. Any urgent business at the Chairman’s discretion (Not for Decisions).** No urgent business.

**20/05/16. Date of next meeting.** The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm.