

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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The Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 26th June 2018 in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr's Mrs M Blogg (Chair), D Lacey, Mrs C Hannath, D Mitton, C Rayson and C Silverlight

In attendance: County Cllr J Thorne and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

20/06/18. To accept apologies for absence. Apologies were accepted from Cllr Nutt.

21/06/18. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. Cllr Silverlight declared a personal interest in planning application 46/18/0008 because he knows the applicant and his wife is a friend of the applicant.

22/06/18. To agree the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 29/05/18. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed by the Chair.

23/06/18. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda. There were no matters arising.

24/06/18. To appoint a representative to attend the quarterly SALC Area Meetings. It was agreed to appoint Cllr D Mitton to represent the Parish Council at the SALC West Area Meetings.

25/06/18. Democratic Period. No members of the public present.

26/06/18. Planning:

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

46/18/0008 Part retrospective application for the retention of two field shelters and one fodder store and the erection of a shipping container to be used as storage at Umpa Lumpa, Blackmoor, West Buckland, Wellington. To consider amendments to application.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council has no concerns about the two field shelters and one fodder store. The Council recommends permission is refused for the storage building because they consider it is detrimental to the visual amenities and landscape character on a site adjacent to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. No business need has been identified for this building.

46/18/0017 Installation of first floor fire exit with outside staircase and installation of 2 first floor windows at 17 Knights Road, Chelston Business Park, Wellington.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council has no objections to the granting of approval.

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

46/18/0010 Erection of a new business unit for B1 and B2 use at Land to the rear of gate House, Chelston, Wellington. Decision: conditional approval granted.

c) Update on planning enforcement matters reported to TDBC. No update.

d) Any other planning matters. No other planning matters.

27/06/18. Highways.

a) Matters arising from previous meeting/s. The dumpy bags with the remainder of the salt and grit left after the winter have not been collected from Buckland Hill this spring and they have become buried in the vegetation. In previous years they have been collected in April. The verge has been cut at the top of Buckland Hill. Cllr Lacey has cut the vegetation around the village signs.

b) To note any highway defects to report to SCC. No defects reported at the meeting.

c) To receive quotes for fingerpost sign refurbishment and positioning. Cllr Lacey has been talking to a member of another Parish Council about how they have been refurbishing their finger post signs. Volunteers have been doing the ones that are considered to be far enough away from the road to be safe for them to work on. They have employed a blacksmith from the Minehead area, who has the relevant Chapter 8 qualification, to do the ones that are on busy roads and are considered too dangerous for volunteers to do. A quote is still awaited for the repositioning of the sign at the top of Buckland Hill.

d) To discuss proposal to leave cutting back the verge opposite Frogs Lane until the Autumn. Cllr Lacey has started cutting back some of the vegetation and the higher bits will be cut back by the hedge trimmer when the playing field hedge is cut.

e) Request from Camelot for a zebra crossing on the A38. A representative of Camelot Care has been in contact with SCC Highways to request a zebra crossing on the A38 near the care home to make it easier for residents, staff and visitors to cross the road to get to the bus stop and the two nearby garden centres. Staff are having difficulties crossing the road to catch buses. SCC has said it does not have the money to provide one and it would come under the Small Improvement Scheme budget, for which there is a long waiting list of schemes which will take several years to deliver. The representative has now contacted the Parish Council suggesting a bridge and the possibility of them helping to raise the money for this. It was noted that there is not enough room in the middle of the road to site an island which would have been another way of making the A38 easier to cross. The Parish Council has the greatest of sympathies but cannot see any practical situation. A bridge would be expensive to provide and there is no other funding available. There is no continuous footpath on the opposite side of the road for anyone walking to either of the nurseries. No personal injuries have been reported on this section of the A38.

f) Any other highways matters. The footpaths at the Causeway and between Lee Park and Crownhill have been cut.

28/07/18. To receive reports from:

a) County Cllr. Cllr Thorne gave the following updates:

- Electoral division name change consultation. There was very little support from the consultation exercise, but a lot of opposition, so no change of name will go forward. It was the same for the other three divisions which were consulted on, although the Wellington one might be revisited and proposed.
- Warning signs for horse riders: Following concern raised at last month's meeting in the light of the expansion plans for the Alexandra Dunn Stud Cllr Thorne has contacted SCC who say these signs can be very effective but need to be used sparingly so that they do not lose their impact. The usual criteria is traffic volumes above 300 vehicles per day and a minimum of 12 horses per day throughout the year using a particular stretch of

road. Highways would need confirmation of the numbers of horses on the road and are willing to look at it again once the development has been carried out.

- Budget - the past financial year's budget outcome shows a £2.1 million overspend. It does not sound good but represents only 0.7% of the total budget and is down from the start of the year when the forecast was a £9 million overspent. There may be some headlines coming up soon about unrealistic savings targets and council services not taking ownership of savings plans, which are as a result of an audit report, but it is not quite as simple as the report makes it sound. The finance director is leaving after 31 years to go to work at the Donkey Sanctuary. A temporary finance director has been recruited on a six-month contract while a permanent replacement is sought.
- The update on broadband provision demanded by Cllr Thorne on Connecting Devon and Somerset finally came to the scrutiny committee last week. He felt it was a very disappointing report which glossed over the issues and again presented historical data as if it was new. The more important information was not included in it, which is that nobody has yet been connected to superfast broadband in Phase 2 of CDS. He described it as a 'scandal' at the meeting and hopes it might get picked up by the press who were present.
- Air quality: SCC is going to consult with public on a draft air quality strategy. There are places that are designated 'air quality management areas' (AQMA) because they are in breach of EU law – Henlade, East Reach in Taunton, and the whole of Yeovil. Everywhere else is apparently good or okay and there are no other areas heading towards AQMA designation. It has implications for rural communities because it is not all about traffic, 37% of harmful particulate matter emissions now comes from domestic wood burning, the largest single contributor to the problem. Diesel vehicles account for 8%.
- Blue badges: the process for applying or renewing blue badges is now all online. Information on how to do it is available on the SCC's website. The administration changed about a month ago from the Adult Care Services Department to Corporate Services and there have been some resulting delays in dealing with applications, which should be settling down now. Although it is supposed to be online, the staff in the contact centre can do most of it over the phone, and they can send out paper copies as a last resort to help people not comfortable with online applications..
- Blackdowns AONB: Cllr Thorne reported he had attended a landscape characteristic types workshop in Honiton which looked at the many different types of landscape in the AONB and East Devon AONB to identify what makes them different from each other, what makes them valuable, what pressures are on them, and how we might want them to look in the future. It was part of an exercise East Devon DC is doing to update its existing policies.
- Care leavers: there is a desperate need for more Stepping Stones carers, people who give a home to those who are leaving the county council's care. There have only been three new recruits since 2014 while four have been lost in the past year and there are now only 11 carers. The target is to increase to 20 and to help achieve it the fees have been increased to a range between £212.50 and £375.50 (previously £158.17-£210.66) a week which could make it attractive for people as an alternative to regular employment. Any publicity that can be given to the Stepping Stones scheme will be welcomed: similarly for anybody who would like to adopt or foster, where there is also a shortage.
- Libraries: a public consultation on the future shape of the library service closed a fortnight ago and a summary of the outcomes will come to the Scrutiny Committee next month. The actual recommendations come to scrutiny in October before going to cabinet about a week later for a final decision to be taken. Any changes will start to come in for the 2019-20 financial year.

- **A Block:** Cllr Thorne attended his first committee meeting, the Audit Committee, in the Library Reading Rooms, in Paul Street as a trial last week. He reported that it is not very satisfactory as there was a lot of background noise and tables which were slightly wobbly and uncomfortable to rest your arm on plus a few other issues. All committees meetings will be in there from 1st September for 12 months so councillors will just have to make the best of it.
- **Bus subsidies:** Cllr Thorne has met with the commissioning officer and reported he came out of the meeting thoroughly depressed! There's no slack at all and no grey areas etc. The only way SCC can really help parishes is via Section 22 services. This means using SCC's fleet of mini buses to provide services where they don't compete with a commercial service, but will require a guaranteed minimum income which is likely to be unaffordable by a single parish council. He still think there is scope for parishes to work together on a joint service.
- **Highways:** there has been a lot of criticism about the state of the county's roads recently and Cllr Thorne is concerned about how potholes are repaired. However, Somerset is recognised by the Government as being a band 3 council for highways, which means among the best in the country, and this gives them access to extra funding, which by 2020 will reach almost £4 million.
- **Small Improvement Schemes:** as Cllr Thorne has been anticipating, there will be no new window for applications for at least the next three years and he would not be surprised if it is even longer. That is going to be a real problem as there are around half-a-dozen highways projects he want to see carried and he has only been a councillor for just over a year, so there are likely to be more in the future (another one was requested only yesterday).

b) Police. An email report for May was circulated at the start of June. There were 12 Police calls for the Monument Beat in May.

c) Village Hall. A report from the meeting held on 6 June 2018, written by Cllr Mrs Hannath, was circulated prior to the meeting.

St Margaret's Hospice did not require the loan of tables from the Village Hall as they found another source.

In the Treasurer's report the largest expense was the purchase of the new chairs and trolleys for the main hall. The brown plastic chairs have gone to the local Scouts group, who were very grateful for them. The committee has kept 29 of the older red chairs as a backup. 50 of the old chairs have been purchased for £450 by Bridgetown Village Hall, near Dulverton. The lights in the main hall will be inspected at the weekend as one or two are playing up. and the taps in the kitchen will be checked and possibly replaced.

Thanks were given to the Treasurer for setting up the flower trough at the front entrance. An enquiry was made by the pre-school regarding a possible machine for users of hall who smoke outside and leave smoker's debris .Enquiries were made into this and it was established that because the outside is still a no smoking area this is not possible.

At the school event on 14th July the theme for the scarecrows will be pop idols. The Village Hall Committee has agreed to run the book stall as they did last year. The school would like to borrow crockery from the village hall for the fete.

The pre-school committee are considering whether it would be possible to buy a piece of land and a porta cabin to site on it, in which they could hold their sessions in the future. Massive fund raising would be involved. A long standing helper at the pre-school is retiring in July.

The Friendship Club would like to have a clip on collar microphone. It was thought the hall had one already but if not the Friendship Club have offered to share the cost.

The fence will now be painted as the weather has greatly improved.

d) Report from SALC West Area Meeting. Cllr Mitton verbally reported on the meeting, held on the 25th June, which had informed those present about the progress of the merger of

West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council. At present TDBC has 56 district councillors who have, on average, an electorate of 1,500 each. WSC has 28 district councillors who have, on average, an electorate of 1,000 each. The major objective of the Boundary Commission is to equalise wards within a 10% difference either way. Following the first consultation there is a proposal to reduce councillor numbers to 58 using projected electorate figures for 2028. The Boundary Commission are due to report at the start of July and there will be another consultation lasting until the end of August. This will be discussed at the Parish Council meeting on 31st July.

Staff are going through a transition period which ends in October. A new IT system is being introduced.

The parishing of the unparished area of Taunton will be considered after the merger. There will no longer be a Mayor of TDBC and Taunton would need a Town Council to have a Mayor.

As part of the consultation the Parish Council will have to consider whether the new ward is sensible for the parish and it will also need to look at the effect on neighbouring parishes.

There will be a say in the name of the ward and also a say in any splits which would lead to the parish being warded. The merger will not alter any existing parish boundaries.

Relationships between Town and Parish Councils and the new District Council were not discussed.

e) Any Other Reports. There were no other reports.

29/06/18. Finance: to agree and authorise any payments. It was resolved to make the following payments:

West Buckland Village Hall Trust - £28.00 room hire for meetings (Chq no 1407)

Cllr Mrs Blogg declared a personal interest as Treasurer of the Village Hall Committee and Cllr Rayson declared a personal interest as Secretary of the Village Hall Committee.

Mrs J Larcombe - £298.03 Clerk's salary and expenses (Chq no 1408)

The Clerk reported she was still waiting to receive an invoice for the correct amount for emptying the dog bin by the motorway once a week in the 2017-18 financial year. She informed TDBC the initial invoice was incorrect at the beginning of April, nearly three months ago. She has made a formal complaint to TDBC about this matter.

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30/06/18. Playing Field:

a) Any matters to report from inspections carried out during the previous month; any actions taken or to be taken as a result. The field is drying up in the hot, dry weather.

b) Any other matters to note. The Council should have received the report from the play area inspection by the next meeting.

31/06/18. Footpaths: any matters brought forward. Cllr Mitton reported he had walked some of the footpaths in the parish and had found some footpaths are not properly signposted which is leading to some confusion over the direction of the paths.

32/06/18. Updating of the website. Details have been provided to update the Church page on the parish website. The Clerk is waiting for details from other organisations. She is researching how website security could be improved.

33/06/18. Correspondence and items of interest. Cllr Silverlight said a parishioner had suggested looking at having a social club at the village hall.

A cardiac nurse has contacted Cllr Mrs Blogg regarding her interest in holding another training session for the defibrillator. She is trying to get other people interested.

The following correspondence was noted: Somerset Waste Partnership News.

34/06/18. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion. There was no urgent business.

35/06/18. Date of the next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 31st July 2018.