

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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The Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 31st July 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.

36/07/18. To accept apologies for absence. Apologies were accepted from Cllr J Nutt.

37/07/18. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. There were no disclosures at this point.

38/07/18. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 26/06/18. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed by the Chair.

39/07/18. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda. Referring to item 28/06/18 - Report from the SALC Area Meeting, Cllr Mitton said a piece of information given at the meeting had been corrected. It was reported that there will no longer be a Mayor of TDBC and Taunton would need a Town Council to have a Mayor. This was incorrect as the unparished area of Taunton could create a Mayor under the power of Charter Trustees and there is a likelihood that people will ask for this.

40/07/18. Democratic Period. There were no members of the public present.

41/07/18. Planning:

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

46/18/0019 Change of used of land to site 2 mobile homes for travelling show at Orchard Court, Chelston, Wellington (retention of part works already undertaken.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council has no objections to the conditional approval of this application.

b) To receive decisions from planning applications determined by TDBC. The following applications were conditionally approved:

46/18/0005 Change of use of light industrial and retail units, and conversion of buildings to form 3 dwellings at Morrishes Farm, West Buckland Road, West Buckland.

46/18/0006 Erection of stable block at West Buckland Stud, West Buckland Road, West Buckland.

46/18/0007 Erection of agricultural building for lambing, storage of machinery and fodder with erection of hay barn at Moonview, Manleys Farm, Calway Lane, West Buckland (part retention of works already undertaken).

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.

46/18/0011 Erection of extensions to dog agility/training building and associated works at Buckland Farm, Ruggin Road, West Buckland.

c) Update on planning enforcement matters reported to TDBC. There is no update on E/0010/46/16 which is the only enforcement matter outstanding.

d) Any other planning matters. Taunton Model Engineers have contacted the Parish Council as part of their community consultation for a proposed new open space off Steart Lane, West Buckland where they would like to hold their weekly meetings, build and run a miniature railway as well as providing an environmentally friendly open space for wildlife and the local community. Due to legislation on pre-determination the Council cannot comment on the proposal until they receive a planning application. The following response will be made to Taunton Model Engineers ‘We note with interest the idea and will consider our position when plans are submitted’.

42/07/18. Highways.

a) Matters arising from previous meeting/s. None.

b) To note any highway defects to report to SCC. None. It was noted that more pothole repairs are being carried out in the parish.

c) To discuss quotes for fingerpost sign refurbishment and positioning. Cllr’s D Lacey, J Nutt and C Silverlight held a working party meeting to discuss the refurbishment of the fingerpost signs. The notes of their meeting have been circulated to the rest of the Council. The Clerk has contacted Somerset Forge Ltd and West Country Blacksmiths to get quotes for the refurbishment of the sign at Budgetts Cross. Two lengthmen will be contacted to see if they would be interested in repainting signposts.

A quote has been received from R W Gale Ltd to reinstall the fingerpost sign at the top of Buckland Hill.

Cllr Lacey declared a personal and pecuniary interest as a director of this company and left the room while the quote was discussed.

Due to the difficulty in finding three contractors to quote for this work it was agreed to accept this quote even though it was the only quote received.

d) Any other highways matters. Cllr Mrs Blogg has contacted highways about the dumpy bags that contained salt and grit, which have been left on Buckland Hill since the end of the winter.

A branch is reported to have broken off one of the Oak trees in France Lane

43/07/18. To receive reports from:

a) County Cllr. A written report was presented prior to Cllr Thorne joining the meeting. Budget - There has been a lot of media coverage of the financial situation at SCC recently, prompted by the auditors warning SCC could run out of money in the next one to two years if they did not do anything to turn around the situation. This has been misunderstood in many quarters, because the auditors were looking at last year’s budget, and even before SCC had reached the end of that financial year, a lot of measures were being taken to turn things around. So, SCC was doing something about it already, which was also recognised in the auditor’s report but not widely reported in the media. SCC has larger reserves than many other counties, and every member of staff is being encouraged to take part in an exercise

called 'Financial imperative' to come up with money-saving ideas. The senior leadership team meets every week with a single-item agenda – money. The forecast at the moment is to be £11.5 million overspent by the end of the financial year. However, the past financial year's budget started with a predicted £9 million overspend which was reduced by the end to £2.1 million, which still sounds a lot but represents only 0.7% of the total budget.

Broadband – the update Cllr Thorne demanded on Connecting Devon and Somerset finally came to the scrutiny committee with, what he felt was, a very disappointing report which glossed over the issues, again presented historical data as if it was new, and didn't include the more important information that nobody has yet been connected to superfast broadband in Phase 2 of CDS. However, Gigaclear finally seem to have got their act together because there is a series of temporary road closures to allow them to start laying their fibre network, starting early August through to November, in Corfe, Pitminster, and Churchstanton parishes.

Libraries – A summary of the outcomes of the public consultation on the future shape of the library service came to scrutiny committee. The actual recommendations will be presented 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. The update turned out to be just a run through of how they conducted the consultation and the timetabling, with some stats such as 6,410 questionnaires returned, 198 individual responses, 118 organisations responding with 250+ pages of comments, and seven petitions containing 3,867 signatures

A38/Camelot House – There is continued pressure to provide some sort of crossing point for Camelot residents to reach the Blackdown Garden Centre side of the A38. Cllr Thorne has explained the situation regarding small improvements schemes, and that it would be many years before he could promote any scheme here.

Sheltered housing support – From October the way the county funds support for sheltered housing tenants is changing. Instead of paying TDBC, who in turn commission care for their tenants, the money will be used to directly commission services via Community Connect, which is run through the Community Council for Somerset. This means that care can be provided for people wherever they live, whether that is in their own home or sheltered accommodation. Anybody who needs help with things like paying bills, correspondence, shopping, etc, will be able to have the help. Across Somerset there are only about 3,500 tenants in sheltered housing, whereas there are thousands more who live at home.

Committee meeting locations –The Taunton Library Reading Room is no longer going to be regularly used for committee meetings until early October. We are able for the moment to keep using A Block at County Hall.

b) Police. The email report for June was circulated in early July. There were 15 calls to the Police from the Monument Beat in July and 2 Police logs. Sheep worrying and straying from footpaths have been an issue again and advice and leaflets have been given.

c) Village Hall. Report from the meeting held on Wednesday 4th July. The Treasurer announced that she will retire at the end of the financial year but continue to assist with the accounts until leaving the Village Hall Committee at the AGM in May. No Smoking signs have been purchased and will be attached to the exterior wall at the rear of the Hall. One quote has been received to install temperature regulating taps in the Gent and Ladies toilets and the Kitchen, a second quote is awaited. The temperature of the water in the toilets and kitchen will be checked - 60 degrees is the present temperature. The rubbish bin which was previously near the village shop has now been re-sited in the Village Hall car park

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

44/07/18. 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. There were no matters to note from the last month's inspections.

b) To discuss the Play Area Inspection Report and agree any work required and purchase of new equipment. The report was discussed on the following actions agreed: the Clerk to contact TDBC DLO to find out if they can carry out a structural survey of the top bar of the swings. If they cannot do this ask if they can recommend someone else. If the top bar is structurally safe the chains and shackles on the swings will be replaced. The Clerk will also ask TDBC DLO if they can remove the cracked plastic backing from behind the basketball net.

The surfacing needs replacing under the slide. If the swings need to be replaced it would make sense to carry out the resurfacing under the slide at the same point.

Some minor work is required on the springies and this will be looked at.

c) Any other matters to note. There were no other matters to note.

45/07/18. Finance:

a) To agree and authorise any payments. It was resolved to make the following payments.

Cllr Lacey declared a personal and pecuniary interest in the payment to R W Gale Ltd as a director of the company and left the room while the payment was agreed.

TDBC - £177.84 emptying dog bin by motorway 2017-18. After nearly four months of asking TDBC to charge the correct amount for emptying the dog bin once a week for 52 weeks, credit notes for the correct amount have finally been issued and payment can be made. The Parish Council was initially invoiced for emptying two bins twice a week for 52 weeks which was incorrect. The Clerk made a formal complaint and one incorrect credit note was issued. Richard Burge, Open Spaces Manager, has dealt with the complaint and arranged for the second credit note to be issued. With regards to the complaint Mr Burge has said the matter has been addressed and steps taken to ensure this doesn't happen again.

Mrs J Larcombe - £309.58 Clerk's salary and expenses (Chq no 1410)

Cllr Mrs M Blogg - £27.72 expenses claim for ink cartridge (Chq no 1411)

R W Gale Ltd - £1,222.08 new surfacing at entrance to playing field, replacement spring on pedestrian gate, move litter bin to Village Hall and reposition dog bin (Chq no 1412)

b) To receive a report on spending compared to budget for the period 1st April to 30th June. The report was noted. There were no matters for concern.

Cllr Thorne joined the meeting.

46/07/18. Questions for County Cllr. An additional item was added to the agenda to allow councillors to ask questions about his report. Cllr Mitton said Cllr Thorne's report about the budget makes it sound optimistic but he has heard there is a risk of SCC going broke and there is talk about forming a unitary authority for Somerset because of financial concerns. Cllr Thorne responded that the auditors had warned SCC that if they carried on as they were in 2017-18 without doing anything they could run out of money in one to two years. SCC started to do something about their finances including asking all staff to make suggestions about where money could be saved. They have made more than three hundred suggestions and about two hundred of those are being pursued. Councillors will no longer receive paper copies of documents for meetings which will save about £60,000. There is a financial imperative meeting every week. Spending on Adult Social Care and Children's Services accounts for 67p in every £1 spent by SCC. Money has to be found for these services as they are demand led. The number of children in care has increased by 30% since January

and there is an overspend of £1.5million a month in Children's Services. Some individual children with a high level of need cost around £12,500 per week to look after. He reported Adult Social Care is being turned around. There will be no Government support for councils in two years' time and money will get really tight. SCC will have to do things differently as services will still have to be provided. Cllr Thorne doesn't feel that a unitary authority is the answer and he doesn't think it will happen. The Chair and Vice-chair of the Audit Committee have resigned.

Cllr Thorne left the meeting.

47/07/18. Footpaths: any matters brought forward. No matters were brought forward.

48/07/18. Consultation on warding for new District Council. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is consulting on the new pattern of wards. Their proposal is for 59 councillors representing 6 three-councillor wards, 12 two-councillor wards and 17 one-councillor wards across the council area. for Somerset West and Taunton Council. At present the Monument Ward, which West Buckland is part of, has a variance of 15% from the average number of electors per ward with 2,229 electors. Under the proposed warding arrangements it is predicted this variance would drop to 3% in 2023 with 2,095 electors. West Buckland Parish Council has no objections to the warding arrangements for the Monument ward.

49/07/18. Updating of the website. The Clerk is continuing to update the website. Documents required under the Transparency Code have been added for 207-18.

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50/07/18. Correspondence and items of interest. Cllr Mrs Blogg will put a poster on the Parish Council notice board advertising 'Rock with the Docs', a fundraising event for the Wellington Medical Centre.

SALC - Rural Economy Survey. The House of Lords Select Committee on the rural economy has recently made a call for evidence. NALC will respond to the consultation on behalf of the councils it represents. The short consultation period, over the summer when many councils do not meet, ends on 27th August. Councillors can respond individually to the consultation if they wish to do so.

Cllr Mrs Blogg was planning an event to mark the 100 years since the ending of World War One but due to lack of interest has decided to cancel. Information about the men named on the West Buckland War Memorial is still available to anyone who is interested.

51/07/18. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion. There was no urgent business.

52/07/18. Date of next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 28th August 2018.