

## WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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### **The Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2018 in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Cllr's Mrs M Blogg (Chair), Mrs C Hannath, J Nutt, C Rayson and C Silverlight

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

**86/10/18. To accept apologies for absence.** Apologies were accepted from Cllr's D Lacey and D Mitton.

**87/10/18. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda.** There were no disclosures.

**88/10/18. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 25/09/18.** The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chair..

**89/10/18. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda.** There were no matters arising.

**90/10/18. Democratic Period.** There were no members of the public present.

**91/10/18. To receive reports from:**

**a) County Cllr.** A written report from Cllr Thorne had been circulated by email prior to the meeting (Appendix A). Speaking at the meeting he referred to an open meeting, due to be held on November 6<sup>th</sup>, when plans for a House of Somerset Project will be presented. This is a joint venture between the County and District Councils to showcase all that is best in the county and will be sited at Chelston, close to Foxmoor Business Park. Although the site is in West Buckland parish the Parish Council has not received a formal invitation to the meeting.

Cllr Thorne was asked whether SCC was under funding the Childrens' Services or overspending? More money is required before spending can be reduced to meet the budget. Cllr Thorne was also asked if he had received an explanation regarding the increase in the forecast deficit from £13million to £26million. He said the projected overspend is now £3.32million with £4million in reserves and he has not received a real explanation. Cllr Thorne gave his apologies for the November meeting.

Cllr Thorne left the meeting.

**b) Police.** The Police Report for September was circulated by email at the beginning of . There was no real update on the burglary in Frogs Lane. There were 40 calls for the Monument Beat during the month.

**c) Village Hall.** A representative from TV Licencing is coming to see the secretary regarding a TV licence on 10th October 2018. The Village Hall does not possess a TV. Audio visual will be discussed at the next meeting. The fridge freezer in the kitchen stopped working and a new free standing one has been purchased. The units have been made good where the fitted one was removed. Enquiries are to be made into installing a light for the original car park. There will be no Father Christmas at the Christmas Fair this year. Committee members and local groups will be encouraged to have a stall. Walking Books will also be available to buy.

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

#### **92/10/18. Planning:**

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

No planning applications received.

Taunton Model Engineers submitted their planning application in early October but the Parish Council has not yet received a copy to comment on

**b) To receive decisions from planning applications determined by TDBC.** No decisions received.

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

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

#### **93/10/18. Highways.**

**a) Matters arising from previous meeting/s.** Now the vegetation on the verges of Buckland Hill has died back the dumpy bags and remainder of the gritting material from last winter can be seen.

**b) To note any highway defects to report to SCC.** Potholes in the parish are being repaired. There will be a one day road closure in Silver Street on the 14<sup>th</sup> November for utility work.

**c) Fingerpost sign refurbishment.** Cllr Lacey and Cllr Silverlight have looked at the fingerpost sign at Budgetts Cross and are looking at putting in a metal insert. This will need to be robust enough to support the arms of the signpost safely. If this can be done it will be a cheaper alternative for repairing the sign.

**d) To consider the SCC Winter Highways Arrangements 2018-2019 and how they affect West Buckland.** Due to financial cutbacks SCC will not be supplying bags of de-icing material to Town and Parish Councils this year. They will also not be supplying dumpy bags of salt for Buckland Hill but the Parish Council has the option to purchase them if they decide to do so. Councillors said they did not have a legal responsibility to purchase dumpy bags of salt and had not budgeted to do so. Cllr Silverlight will have a look to see how much salt is left in the dumpy bags on Buckland Hill. There are some 20 kg bags in store in the village and there will be a check to see how many. The gritting route for the 2018-19 winter has also been reduced to cut costs.

**e) Any other highways matters.** No other highways matters.

#### **94/10/18. Finance:**

**a) To agree and authorise any payments.** It was resolved to make the following payments: Wicksteed Leisure Ltd - £54.00 inspection of swings (Chq no 1420)  
F J Orchard & Sons - £276.00 hedge trimming at various locations (Chq no 1421)  
Mrs J Larcombe - £310.23 Clerk's salary and expenses (Chq no 1422)

Mr J Stanworth - £522.00 grass cutting, strimming etc (Chq no 1423)

A donation of £10 has been received towards the upkeep of the Peter Lacey Memorial trough from a newly retired Parish Clerk who didn't make a contribution in 2013 when donations were requested and decided he would like to now.

**b) To agree to order a Remembrance Wreath.** It was agreed to order a Remembrance wreath and donate a maximum of £30.00. The receipt must be for the same sum as that donated and in the past the receipt has been made out for the same sum as donated previously. Cllr Mrs Blogg pays for two small wooden crosses which she puts on the WW2 war graves in the churchyard.

Cllr Mrs Hannath asked who owned the tree on the area of grass to the side of the former shop as it needs a stake to support it. It was thought that it didn't belong to the former owner of the shop and it was suggested that it could be moved during the autumn/winter period as it was still a young tree

**c) To compare spending against budget for Quarters 1 & 2 (1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> September).** The report was noted. The budget for 2019-20 will be discussed at the November meeting

**95/10/18. 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 report from the inspections carried out during the month.

**b) To discuss the Wicksteed inspection report for the swings.** The conclusion of the report is that structural integrity was satisfactory at the time of the inspection and the swing frame is safe for continued use. As there is no need to replace the swing frame the chains will be replaced and 3 quotes obtained for replacing the surfacing under the swings and slide in the spring.

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

**96/10/18. Footpaths: any matters brought forward.** Cllr Mrs Blogg has been contacted by the landowner who has applied to divert footpaths T29/33 and T29/34. There has been an objection and he was seeking the Parish Council's support. He was not aware that it had already been discussed by the Parish Council.

**97/10/18. LGBC – Final recommendations for new council ward boundaries in Somerset West and Taunton.** The final recommendations for ward boundaries from the Local Government Boundary Commission have been published. It is proposed that there should be 59 councillors. Changes will be made to the parish electoral arrangements for Wellington and Minehead and these will need to be agreed by Parliament. The new arrangements come into place after the elections in May 2019. West Buckland remains in the Monument Ward and will be represented by a single councillor.

**98/10/18. Review of Council Policies.** Following a review the following policies were agreed:

- Anti-fraud, Corruption and Whistleblowing Policy
- Grants Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Playing Field Policy
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Publication Scheme

The Code of Conduct will be reviewed at the next meeting.

**99/10/18. Website – to note changes made to website.** The Clerk reported she had changed the theme of the website and it now worked better on tablets and mobiles. The photo on the home page has been changed and a plugin has been to the website to carry out regular back-ups. A security plugin has also been added

**100/10/18. Correspondence and items of interest.** There was no further correspondence.

**101/10/18. Any urgent business at the Chairman’s discretion.** There was no urgent business.

**102/10/18. Date of the next meeting.** The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 27th November 2018.

### **Appendix A: County Cllr’s Report/**

- **Finances –** An extraordinary meeting of the full council was held on the 17th. It was requested by the leaders of opposition groups who wanted to debate what Plan B would look like if SCC is not able to deliver all of the savings plans which went through recently. I predicted the occasion would be used for political grandstanding and did not think anything useful would come from it. I was right. I take the view that we are already in Plan B territory, because Plan A was the budget which we agreed only six months ago with £13 million of savings. To then come back with a further £13 million of savings which have to be urgently approved (or else!) smacks very much of Plan B thinking. And nobody has yet satisfactorily answered the question why we could have got it so wrong in February! I should also mention at this stage that I will no longer be a member of the council’s audit committee.
- **The Government Budget –** Early thoughts are that SCC could benefit by about £6.5 million from the extra funding being put toward adult social care and children’s and learning difficulties, £4 million for potholes, and an opportunity to apply for an £85 million fund to transform the children’s services operational model over the next few years. On the subject of children’s care, Cllr Thorne learnt this week how volatile the service’s budget can be. This month a single family with substantial care needs move to Somerset and have also had a child remanded in custody by the courts – together adding up to £700,000 this year to the cost of the service, and Councils have no control over such demands and no choice but to meet the costs.
- **SIDS –** SCC is not now going to run its own scheme hiring out SIDS at £100 a time.
- **Superfast broadband –** Also a subject of the above IBM briefing. Essentially, Gigaclear have now admitted they have failed to deliver the roll-out (in Somerset) and have no hope of meeting the original contract, so are putting new plans to CDS by the end of this month. Despite the concerns that Cllr Thorne has been expressing for the past 12 months, this appears to have come as a complete surprise to CDS. He is calling for heads to roll on the CDS board because they have clearly shown poor oversight and management of the contract.
- **Footpaths -** A regional training day for Local Access Forum members from across the South West is being organised on Thursday, November 29, in Ruishton, and he has been invited as a county councillor, but unfortunately cannot attend this time. Training will be given on recording public rights of way, because the ability to claim rights of way based upon pre-1949 evidence will cease in 2026, and there is a growing interest among communities in knowing how to record any unrecorded historical rights of way.
- **Surface dressing –** The surface dressing season has closed with more than 200 miles of roads in Somerset being treated. More details on surface dressing, including frequently asked questions and a short video showing how surface dressing works, is here [www.travelsomerset.co.uk/surface-dressing](http://www.travelsomerset.co.uk/surface-dressing).
- **Highways winter service –** An email has gone to all parishes explaining the changes as a result of the recent savings round, principally for precautionary gritting of roads and for salt bins. Fewer roads are being gritted and a map of which ones will be covered is here [www.travelsomerset.co.uk/gritting](http://www.travelsomerset.co.uk/gritting). The

criteria for gritting roads is set out in the email. For salt bins, county will supply 25kg bags or 1 tonne dumpy bags and the costs are in the letter. They are also looking at training community snow wardens.

- Potholes - The number of potholes being reported on the highways fell to a record weekly low, down to 164 against 1,034 at the beginning of May, although 182 were filled in the last week of September. People can help SCC Highways stay on top of carriageway repairs by reporting defects through [www.travelsomerset.co.uk](http://www.travelsomerset.co.uk).

- Libraries – Proposals for the future look of the library service have now been published, and the cabinet will take a final decision on it on Monday (5<sup>th</sup>). The proposals were considered last Wednesday by the scrutiny committee on which I sit, and I tried to introduce a little more flexibility by calling for ‘community supported’ libraries to be considered as well as ‘community partnership’ libraries – but I did not receive any support from any other committee member so the proposal fell. There is no change to the main libraries in Taunton and Wellington which will continue to be run by SCC. But 15 other communities will be asked to create community library partnerships or their libraries will be closed and replaced with mobile or outreach services.

- Dementia care – A further workshop is to be held in Wellington on 15<sup>th</sup> November to discuss the new provision of day care services for people with dementia. A series of drop-in sessions were held recently and were well attended, Wellington’s being the best attended of all, but there is considerable community concern about the changes and so a further event is being planned. As reported previously, day service provision will change from February next year when the existing contract with Somerset NHS Partnership expires. The Partnership does not want to continue it because it is not a social care provider. The budget will be spent differently, with development of personalised community-based services and/or personal payments direct to patients or their carers to purchase the services they choose.

- Home First – The Home First initiative has in its first year of operation helped more than 2,000 patients avoid 7,500 bed nights in hospital. This has produced significant savings for the NHS and improved quality of life for patients. Delayed discharges are now down 75% from 3,500 bed nights to 800 across the county.

- Blackdowns AONB – The draft AONB management for 2019-2024 plan is now available for public comment until 30<sup>th</sup> November. It can be found with this link <https://blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/our-work/management-plan/>