

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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The Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 27th November 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: One member of the public and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

103/11/18. To accept apologies for absence. Apologies were received from County Cllr J Thorne.

104/11/18. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. Cllr Mitton declared a personal interest in item 114/11/18 as Chair of SALC.

105/11/18. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 30/10/18. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chair.

106/11/18. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda. There were no matters arising.

107/11/18. Democratic Period. The Chairman of Taunton Model Engineers (TME) said he was attending the meeting to answer any questions there might be about their planning application. They are very eager to progress with the application and feel that local people, including the primary school, are keen to support the application following the response to their local consultation. He said they were humbled by the response.

108/11/18. Planning:

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

46/18/0029 Change of use of land for creation of miniature railway with the erection of building and formation of access on land off Stoford Lane, West Buckland.

Cllr Mrs Blogg noted that though it is only a short walk to the site from the village via France Lane this is not a suitable route for vehicles because the road is very narrow.

TME are willing to issue guidance asking users not to use this route for vehicles.

If a request for a brown direction sign to the site it would be for tourist use and not for a private business. Cllr Mitton asked about foul water disposal and it was explained there would be two toilets and a kitchen and drainage would be to a domestic septic tank.

There is outline agreement to purchase the site if planning approval is granted.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council wholeheartedly support the granting of approval for this application. The Council is excited at the prospect of having such an exciting,

interesting and educational venture in the parish. This proposal would be an asset both to the parish and to the wider community and will put back something into the West Buckland community that has been missing.

If the application is approved in January TME could move into the site in February and the first train could run in early Summer.

46/18/0022 Change of use of agricultural land to residential and creation of access onto public highway at Sunnymead, West Buckland Road, West Buckland.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council support the granting of approval because it will provide this property with an access with improved visibility and road safety generally will be improved.

46/18/0025 Insertion of first floor in the garage for home office and store room with alterations to roof at Pollards, Silver Street, West Buckland.

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

b) To note the comments made on the following applications for which a response was due before this meeting.

46/18/0026 Replacement of rear single storey extension with the erection of a single rear extension, two storey side and rear extension and porch at 2 Holway Cottages, Silver Street, West Buckland.

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

46/18/0027 Variation of Condition No 2 (approved plans) and No 5 (boundary treatment details) of application 46/15/0022 at Highwood, Sawyers Hill, West Buckland.

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

c) To receive decisions from planning applications determined by TDBC. No decisions noted at the meeting.

d) House of Somerset. Wellington Town Council booked and paid for a room at Wellington School to host a public consultation meeting to discuss proposals to build a 'House of Somerset' facility to showcase Somerset producers and direct people to their businesses. The proposed site is adjacent to Foxmoor Business Park and in West Buckland parish. Tourists would be encouraged to come in off the M5 to visit the facility. Cllr Mitton reported he had attended the meeting as a Parish Councillor but not as a representative of West Buckland Parish Council. Planning has taken place over the last four years and it is proposed to invest £10 million in the scheme. Some of this money will come from the managing directors of Fox Brothers and finance from banks. The running costs will be paid for by the traders who sell produce there. Space will be provided for artisan producers to set up and trade. Petrol will not be sold but there will be electric charging points in the parking area. Bicycles will be available for people to use to travel locally and to visit Wellington Monument. Cllr Mitton expressed his concerns about the effect this would have on the viability of farm shops but was told this facility would attract different people. There were positive remarks about enhancing the appearance of the roundabout under the motorway but concern that the proposed 210 parking spaces would not be enough and any additional parking spaces would be on a flood plain and wildlife area. It was suggested that the Parish Council should ask the developers to hold a consultation meeting in West Buckland. This will be an agenda item for the January meeting.

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

f) Any other planning matters. No other planning matters.

109/11/18. Highways.

a) Matters arising from previous meeting/s:

- **Reserves of de-icing material in the parish.** There is still some salt/grit in the dumpy bags which were left on Buckland Hill at the end of last winter. There are still some small bags of salt stored in various places in the parish but the condition of the bags is deteriorating. SCC has received additional funding and will be able to fill grit bins/provide dumpy bags this winter. There is no certainty that they will be able to do this next Winter.

b) To note any highway defects to report to SCC.

No specific matters to report.

c) Fingerpost sign refurbishment. The finger post sign at the top of Buckland Hill has been put back in place and will be cleaned and repainted in the spring. It is sited far enough away from the road that this does not need to be done by someone with a Chapter 8 qualification. The possibility of placing a metal insert in the sign at Budgetts Cross is still being investigated but this could be quite involved to do.

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

110/11/18. To receive reports from:

a) County Cllr. A report (Appendix A) from Cllr Thorne was circulated by email prior to the meeting.

b) Police. A Police Report for October was circulated by email at the beginning of November.

c) Village Hall. The Friendship Group representative has resigned from the committee. TV Licencing didn't turn up regarding the supposed need for a TV licence. Audio Visual Aids have sent details of their goods for use in the Village Hall. The Water Board has carried out a 10 year inspection of the water supply and there were no problems. A check will be carried out to see if the plumber used by the Village Hall Committee is on the Water Board approved list of plumbers. The Committee decided there is no need at present to increase charges. Margaret was thanked for planting up the trough near the front door of Village Hall. A solar light will be put on the oil store wall as it is rather a dark area in the car park. There is a problem with the speaker system in the Hall not working properly. At the Christmas Fair: the WI will run a produce/gifts stall, the Church will run a Tombola stall, the Village Hall Committee will sell teas and mince pies and will organise the raffle. There will also be a stall selling jigsaws and books and another selling honey..

c) Any Other Reports. Cllr Mitton circulated a report on the SALC All Area Meeting held on 27th October (Appendix B).

111/11/18. Finance:

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

Mrs J Larcombe - £309.75 Clerk's salary and expenses (Chq no 1425)

Somerset Playing Fields Association - £15.00 annual subscription (Chq no 1426)

Cllr Lacey declared a personal and pecuniary interest and left the room while the next payment was approved.

R W Gale Ltd - £204.00 resiting of fingerpost sign at the top of Buckland Hill (Chq no 1428)

Cheque dated 28.12.18 Mrs J Larcombe - £280.08 Clerk's salary and expenses for December (Chq no 1427)

The payment to the Royal British Legion for the Remembrance Wreath was £30.00 (Chq no 1424).

b) To discuss the budget for 2019-20 and agree the Precept. The Clerk presented a draft budget for 2019-2020 and the two following years. It is very unlikely that the Parish

Council will receive a grant towards the upkeep of the playing field, footpaths and churchyard once TDBC merges with West Somerset Council in April. The draft budget showed that the Parish Council's reserves would reduce dramatically over the next three years, due to this loss of funding, if the Precept is not increased. It was agreed that the precept would need to be increased. The Clerk explained where budget lines would need to be increased. TDBC DLO has been asked to provide a quote to empty the litter bin in the play area. The budget will be discussed again at the 8th January meeting and the precept agreed.

112/11/18. 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.** No matters to report.
- b) **Any other matters to note.** No other matters to note.

113/11/18. Footpaths

- a) **To further consider the proposed diversion of public footpaths T 29/33 and T 29/34.**

The Council discussed the proposed diversion again and noted the objection. The Council decided not to write a letter of support and to stay with the response that was initially made to the consultation which is:

The Parish Council supports the proposed diversion. The diverted path needs to be properly signposted using wooden signposts and this should be at the expense of the applicant.

- b) **Parish Paths Consultation.** Cllr Mitton will prepare a report for the next meeting when this consultation will be discussed in more detail. Councillors were asked to feedback.
- c) **Any other footpath matters brought forward.** No other matters brought forward.

114/11/18. Review of Code of Conduct. Cllr Mitton declared a personal interest as Chair of SALC.

There is a need to update the Parish Council's Code of Conduct and this will be done when Cllr Mitton has had an opportunity to discuss this in more detail with the Clerk.

115/11/18. Correspondence and items of interest. There was no further correspondence.

116/11/18. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion. The Parish Council will start raising awareness early in the New Year about the Parish Council elections which will be held in May 2019.

117/11/18. Dates of meetings for 2019: The following dates were proposed: Tuesday 8th January; 29th January; 26th February; 26th March; 30th April (APM); 7th May (AM); 28th May; 25th June; 30th July; 27th August; 24th September; 29th October and 26th November. Cllr Mitton expressed his concern that the Parish Council might not be allowed to meet during purdah, the six weeks before the Parish Council elections.

Appendix A

- Junction 26 – Cllr Thorne has previously tried to get Highways England to do something about the state of the roundabout below Junction 26, where much of the kerbing is either displaced or missing. He has found out that it is the responsibility of SSC, and not HE, so he is now chasing up SCC highways to see if improvements can be carried out.
- Grit bins – One grain of good news amid all the doom and gloom. Due to the additional funding coming from the Chancellor's Budget, SCC can now afford to fill grit bins for free this year, after all. It may be a one-off for this year only, the detail is still being worked on. There is no information . SCC should be emailing parishes with the details shortly.
- Superfast broadband – the gravity of the situation seems now to have dawned on other councillors, and also a recognition that responsibility lies squarely with the board of CDS. Cllr Thorne put a proposal that the committee should call for the board to be replaced as a matter of urgency, but the Scrutiny Committee Chairman refused to accept it as a proposal, saying it was outside the Committee's remit. The CDS/Gigaclear stakeholder briefing says Gigaclear want an extension to June 2022 and that they will still deliver to everybody who has been promised it, and that it will still be a full fibre network. However, the new proposals from Gigaclear to CDS are still being examined and it will be 'several weeks' before a decision is taken on whether the proposals are practical and acceptable. It might all be for nothing anyway, because the main public funding streams have to be spent by March 2020 and it is not known if that deadline can be extended. F]#####/or communities such as Pitminster and Corfe, which should have been connected in January/February of this year, it is not a two-year delay, it is a four-and-a-half-year delay.
- Rights of Way – the Scrutiny Committee also received a presentation on this service from Pete Hobley. There were some staggering statistics. There are currently more than 3,100 live issues being dealt with by a very small team of officers and it is one of the largest backlogs in the country. Twice as many applications are being received as are being determined, so it is a worsening position. An application submitted today could take up to 30 years to be determined. At least four extra staff would be needed just to make a start on tackling the backlog but there is no funding to do this..
- Pollinator action plan – an action plan to protect pollinators (bees and other insects) has been agreed and is available on the council's website. SCC wants to take a lead for other councils and organisations to follow and will try to educate as many as possible on actions which can be taken and the importance of doing so. In practical terms, it is about reducing things like grass cutting so that areas of wild flowers etc are left for insects to thrive on, and obtaining S106 money from developers to create new green wildlife areas.
- Libraries – proposals for the future look of the library service were approved on 5th November by the Cabinet following earlier consideration by the Scrutiny Committee. There is no change to the main libraries in Taunton and Wellington which will continue to be run by SCC but fifteen other communities have been asked to create community library partnerships or their libraries will be closed and replaced with mobile or outreach services. Cllr Thorne understands only thirteen of them are taking up the idea.
- Unitary conversation – discussions are still underway between the county and the five districts (soon to be four) about the future delivery model for local authority services in Somerset. Consultants have been appointed at a cost of £100,000 to prepare business cases for the various options, with the cost being shared between all the councils.

Appendix B

The meeting was addressed by three guest speakers, received an update on the change of status for the Association and gave some consideration to. the future of the new organisation.

Mr Flaherty, the CEO for Somerset County Council gave an overview of the financial restraints the County Council is now facing and how the services it offers will need to change in the coming years.

£12m cuts last year, £13m this year and looking like £19m next year. This will mean a smaller workforce, more finger posting and the community helping its self.

Among many questions that were asked was where things were in the unitary conversations with the District Councils, Mr Flaherty replied that the principal Councils needed to ask themselves 'what is the best things for Somerset'? It's a difficult conversation to have as people are rightly proud of their own Councils. We won't see any movement on this until after the May 2019 elections.

The meeting received a PowerPoint presentation from Mr Justin Robinson the CEO of SALC setting out the reason for a change in the status of SALC and the process of the change. If approved at the AGM the new company will start trading in April 2019 and all Member Councils will be switched over to membership of it when they renew their membership on the 1st April 2019. The new company will have to charge VAT, but this is reclaimable by the member council. It was reported that many other county associations had already made this change and it didn't change the relationship with NALC in anyway.

Mr Green, from Somerset Waste Partnership, talked to members about the latest recycling rates in Somerset, new initiatives the SWP were undertaking and what the future could hold with the SWP investing in the latest technology to continue to improve services.

Dr Owen, the CEO of NALC talked to members about the work of NALC nationally and how it spends its £1m budget. He also spoke about the future of local government and the possible effects of changes on our sector. He emphasised the need for NALC to be ready to support members in future and asked for views on the service being provided at present. One comment from the floor was that the legal topic notes that NALC provide (via SALC) were invaluable.

The meeting then split into areas to elect members to the County Committee. The delegates from the West Area to the County Committee are Jean Allgrove from Comeytrove Parish Council, Loretta Whetlor from Watchet Town Council and Dave Mitton.

Justin Robinson the CEO of SALC sought views on what SALC needed to do in the future to support local councils, what NALC needed to do in the future to support local councils, what ideas member had for future training courses, other ways of providing training and if training should be made compulsory. He also asked members to consider the biggest challenges facing our sector now and in the future.

Feedback from the floor included:

Could SALC

- Help with procurement?
- Have an insurance scheme?
- Make members more aware of what SALC offers?
- Support member councils to promote the elections in 2019 and the search for new people to stand?
- Encourage youth councils?
- Develop training on devolved services to help local councils deliver them?
- Increase the information given to new councillors about the SALC / NALC services.
- Offer Councillor refresher courses to encourage long standing members to attend training.

It was suggested that Code of Conduct training should be mandatory. Other challenges for the future included replacing members that have left and the possibility of capping.