

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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The Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 8th January 2019 in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr's Mrs M Blogg (Chair), D Lacey, Mrs C Hannath, J Nutt, C Rayson and C Silverlight
In attendance: County Cllr J Thorne, PCSO Baker, eight members of the public and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

118/01/19. To accept apologies for absence. Apologies were accepted from Cllr D Mitton.

119/01/19. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. There were no disclosures of interest.

120/01/19. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 27/11/19. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed by the Chair.

121/01/19. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda. There were no matters arising.

Cllr Thorne joined the meeting.

122/01/19. Democratic Period. Cllr Lacey joined the meeting during this item.

Members of the public spoke about their objections to planning application 46/18/0031. The objections included the following points:

- The site was abandoned sixty years ago and has been heavily wooded for over fifty years. A recent appeal against an enforcement order said the use of the site was not agricultural.
- The site is in an AONB and it adjacent to a SSI. The plans are not in keeping with an AONB.
- Clearance of the site has already taken place to the detriment of the site. This area is a home to Bats, Dormice, rare butterflies and Bluebells.
- Concern about light and noise pollution.
- Access to the site is via a bridleway which is in disrepair and is unsuitable for vehicles.
- Risk of flooding. Previously a torrent of water poured off the hill and gouged out the bridleway.
- A water course runs through the site
- This is only a small site, one acre in size, and it wouldn't be big enough to keep sheep on.

- Only a small amount of equipment is required to maintain the site and this could be transported to the site.

The applicants spoke in support of their application and said they had owned the site for four years and had not experienced any flooding. They feel that it would be nice to see the site used and explained that their son does have a farming business.

123/01/19. Planning:

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

46/18/0031 Erection of an agricultural and woodland management building at Old Lake Cottage, Ruggin, West Buckland.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council recommends refusal for the following reasons:

- The design of the building is not commensurate with the use of the land.
- The storage use listed in the application does not justify a building of the proposed size. The site does not have an agricultural use.
- The majority of the storage would be for a small agricultural enterprise, run by a family member, and for which no supporting documentation has been provided.
- The site is accessed by a bridle path which is not suitable for vehicular access
- The site is not suitable for the keeping of poultry as an agricultural enterprise.

The members of the public left the meeting.

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

46/18/0027 Change of use of land to domestic with associated access and boundary treatment works at Highwood Barn, Sawyers Hill, West Buckland.

Comment: no objections.

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

46/18/0024 Change of use of land for the siting of a temporary agricultural workers dwelling with additional temporary unit for storage and office use at Pitt Farm, Wellington Road, West Buckland. Decision: conditional approval granted.

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. Decision: conditional approval granted.

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

124/01/19. To receive reports from:

a) Police. PCSO Baker reported that December had been very quiet and calls to the Police have been down month on month. There was one call for the Monument Beat for a Public Order/road related offence at Stoford Water and one report of ASB that related to a persistent caller in the Whiteball area. New dates will be announced for Beat Surgeries in 2019 and new posters will be circulated. PCSO Baker is using the Village Hall to work in on occasions and she has found that it really helps, she thanked the Village Hall Committee. There will be no changes to the Policing team until at least April and there might not be any changes then. Changes are being made to the Police ward boundaries.

PCSO Baker left the meeting.

b) County Cllr. Cllr Thorne outlined the points in his report circulated by email (Appendix A).

Cllr Thorne left the meeting.

c) Village Hall. Report from Village Hall Committee Meeting held on 5th December 2018 from Cllr Mrs Hannath. The water heater under the kitchen sink has been repaired and faulty taps replaced with new, the emergency outside light is now working okay and a solar security light will be fitted on the oil store wall. The speaker system in main hall will be sorted in the New Year. The total raised from the Christmas Fair was £610 and each of the 4 village organisations have received £152.50 each. Naomi Bell will be taking over as treasurer from Margaret at the AGM.

d) SALC AGM. No report. This item was deferred until the next meeting.

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

125/01/19. Finance:

a) To discuss the budget for 2019-20 and agree the Precept. The Clerk informed councillors that she had received the quotations for the Playing Field and Play Area grass cutting for 2019 and for emptying the dog bin near the motorway. Both quotations were a lot higher than for 2018. It was agreed to accept both quotes.

Cllr Silverlight volunteered to empty the litter bin in the play area when Cllr Mrs Blogg retires.

Election costs will be paid from reserves. If an election is held it could cost the Parish Council at least £2,000.

The draft budget presented by the Clerk was discussed and because the Parish Council has lost over £1,705 in grant funding for 2019 – 20 and the Council Tax Support Grant has been totally withdrawn it was agreed to increase the Precept to £9619.00. (2019-20 Budget included as Appendix B).

Cllr Mrs Hannath left the meeting.

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

West Buckland Village Hall Trust - £16.00 hire of meeting room (Chq no 1429)

TDBC - £820.80 grass cutting at the playing field (Chq no 1430).

The Clerk told councillors that she had received an invoice from TDBC for emptying the dog bin and for the second year running it was incorrect. The Council had been invoiced for emptying the bin twice a week despite the Clerk signing a Quote Acceptance Form to empty the bin once a week. A corrected invoice will be sent to the Clerk.

c) To discuss a grant application from West Buckland PCC for funding towards the cost of producing the newsletter. As a copy of the accounts had not been submitted with the application form it did not meet the application criteria and this item was deferred until the next meeting so the new PCC Treasurer could be asked to supply a copy of the accounts.

It was noted that a number of parishioners would be happy to receive the newsletter by email and this would reduce printing costs.

126/01/19. Highways.

a) Matters arising from previous meeting/s. No matters arising from the previous meeting.

b) To note any highway defects to report to SCC. Concern was expressed about the potential for an accident to be caused by a lorry parking adjacent to a property on Sawyers with its front protruding onto the highway. It was suggested that PCSO Baker to asked to speak to the person responsible for the lorry.

It was reported that drains in France Lane are blocked by fallen leaves.

c) Fingerpost sign refurbishment. There was no update on works the signpost at Budgetts Cross. It was reported that people are grateful that the sign at the top of Buckland Hill is back in place.

d) Any other highways matters. Cllr Nutt reported there had been a road traffic collision between two cars and a lorry on the A38, close to Blackdown Garden Centre, earlier in the day. The Clerk was asked to write to the Head of Planning and ask for a prompt decision to be made regarding planning application 46/17/0053 Removal of Condition No 03 of 46/16/0005 (Restrictions to trading of retail building) at Blackdown Garden Centre, Wellington Road, West Buckland.

127/01/19. 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 or any actions to be taken.

b) Any other matters to note. No other matters to note.

128/01/19. Footpaths

a) Parish Paths Consultation. This was deferred until the next meeting as there was no report to discuss and Cllr Mitton was unable to attend the meeting due to illness..

b) Any other footpath matters brought forward. There were no other footpath matters.

129/01/19. Review of Code of Conduct. This item will be discussed at the January 29th meeting.

130/01/19. Correspondence and items of interest. SALC has been given an allocation of places at the Buckingham Palace Garden Party on Wednesday May the 29th this year and is now seeking nominations of persons to attend the Garden Party from Member Councils. Nominations are for long serving Chairman or members who have just retired, or are just about to, that have given exceptional service to the Parish. Cllr Mrs Blogg said she had already attended a Garden Party and did not want to be nominated.

131/01/19. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion. Cllr Silverlight informed councillors that new pads are required for the defibrillator as the existing ones are coming close to their 'use by date'. He will make enquiries and arrange for them to be ordered. Succession planning and the elections will be discussed at the next meeting.

132/01/19. Dates of next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 29th January 2019 at 7.30pm at West Buckland Village Hall.

Appendix A. County Councillor Report

- Junction 26 – Cllr Thorne has finally succeeded in getting a commitment from SCC to sort out the kerbing and other issues on the roundabout at Junction 26. He had originally chased Highways England thinking it was their responsibility but it turns out to be SCC's and they have scheduled it for March. The work involves placing the existing kerbs and the side entry road gullies back into position, where kerbs are missing or damaged new kerb will be used.
- Junction 25 – Cabinet has now awarded the contract but the contractor will not be made public for another few weeks as there are some legal bits and pieces to get out of the way first. Contrary to what he was told a month ago, it is now costed at £19.2 million against the previous £18.328 million. He thinks the difference represents a £1 million capital funding request on which Councillors will vote in February. If councillors don't agree the bid, then the shortfall would have to be made up by savings elsewhere. He believes March has been pencilled in for the start of the work.
- 2019-20 finances – Councillors have been receiving a series of briefings on SCC's financial situation and how the budget might look for the coming financial year. It is going to be another round of very difficult savings proposals. Bear in mind that in September when a series of emergency savings plans were passed, it was being said that everything had been cut to the bone, then there are no further savings left to be achieved without a lot of pain. He is still awaiting a report from the temporary finance officer on what a 'core council' might look like – this is where SCC provides only those services which they are legally required to provide, as this has been the direction of travel for some time.
- Highways Capital Grant – Separate from the above, SCC has received a £9.98 million highways grant as a result of the Budget. It can only be spent on capital projects and has to be used before the end of the financial year, and because Skanska have to scale up their workforce to be able to complete any new and unplanned work, it's not certain SCC can spend it all, but they will do their best. One idea being looked at is whether some revenue projects can be turned into capital projects so the money can be used for those and the revenue spend would then be released to help with the financial situation. In addition £4 million was received for pothole repairs.
- Local Government Funding Settlement - SCC received £6.5 million additional funding for social care and was accepted this time as a Business Rate Retention pilot area for 2019/20. This should bring in around £6.8 million for the county, of which half is assigned to projects that support economic activity.
- Broadband – An update on the Connecting Devon and Somerset superfast broadband phase two roll-out is due to come to a Scrutiny Committee meeting in March. Cllr Thorne complained it is far too long to wait and said pressure needs to be kept on CDS to get on top of Gigaclear and get things moving, and so he wanted an update brought to the January meeting. However, the officers said there would not be anything substantial to say before March, so there was no point having a committee update in January – which again tells him how poorly CDS are managing this situation. They did agree, though, to prepare a briefing paper for members in January. His position on this subject has not changed.
- Bus subsidies – Given the improving state of SCC's finances it has been agreed to reverse an earlier decision taken last September to consult on the future of all subsidised bus routes across the county. This consultation would have looked at the future for all such routes, which are currently part-funded by SCC. The decision effectively protects subsidised routes from any cuts as part of the 2019/20 budget process.
- Fire safety – As part of the fire service's ongoing prevention and protection strategy, residents are encouraged to ask for Home Fire Safety Checks by calling 0800 05 02 999. Equipment that can be provided for vulnerable people includes smoke and heat detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, hard of hearing alarms, and arson proof letter boxes. Any publicity that can be given to this would be welcome.

- Somerset Wood – Volunteers are being sought to help plant the first batch of 1,200 trees, which are being delivered in the first two weeks of January and need to be in the ground by the end of February. Anybody interested should contact Alan Hall, of West Monkton PC, who is co-ordinating the work on alanhall@westmonkton.net.