

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman – Mrs M K Blogg
4 Peacocks Close
West Buckland
TA21 9JY
Tel 01823 663378
email margaretblogg@btinternet.com

Clerk – Mrs J Larcombe
6 The Old School
Chapel Street
Tiverton
EX16 6ND
Tel 01884 252647
email westbucklandclerk@gmail.com

www.westbuckland.org

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 20th May 2019 in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr's Mrs M Blogg (Chair), D Lacey, Mrs S Drury, D Mitton, J Nutt, Mrs L Peace and C Silverlight.

In attendance: One member of the public and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

01/05/19. Election of Officers

a) Chairman. Cllr Mrs Margaret Blogg was unanimously elected as Chairman.

Proposed by Cllr C Silverlight and seconded by Cllr D Mitton. Cllr Mrs Blogg signed an Acceptance of Office as a Chairman Form.

b) Vice Chairman. Cllr Lacey was unanimously elected as Vice-chair. Proposed by Cllr Mrs M Blogg and seconded by Cllr J Nutt.

02/05/19. Co-option of councillors to fill two vacancies on the Council following an uncontested election. It was unanimously agreed to co-opt Sarah Drury as a councillor. Proposed by Cllr Mrs M Blogg and seconded by Cllr C Silverlight.

It was unanimously agreed to co-opt Louise Peace as a councillor. Proposed by Cllr D Mitton and seconded by Cllr J Nutt.

Cllr's Mrs Drury and Mrs Peace signed their Acceptance of Office as a Councillor Forms and joined the meeting. Introductions were made.

03/05/19. To appoint a representative to attend the quarterly SALC Area Meetings. It was agreed to appoint Cllr D Mitton to represent West Buckland Parish Council at SALC meetings. It was noted that the Council can send two representatives to SALC meetings and it was agreed that Cllr Mrs Peace would be the second representative.

Cllr Mitton reported that SALC are trying to arrange a West Area meeting with James Hassett, the new Chief Executive of Somerset West and Taunton Council, in attendance in June or July.

04/05/19. To appoint a representative to the Village Hall Committee. It was agreed that Cllr Mrs Drury would represent the Parish Council on the Village Hall Committee.

05/05/19. To accept apologies for absence. Apologies were received from County Cllr Thorne.

06/05/19. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. Cllr Silverlight declared a personal interest in planning application 46/19/0016 as the applicant is a social acquaintance.

07/05/19. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 30/04/19. With the addition of June 2019 to item 190/04/19 Highways the amended minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

08/05/19. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda. There were no matters arising.

09/05/19. Democratic Period. The member of the public did not wish to speak.

10/05/19. Planning:

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

46/19/0014 Change of use of land from paddock to vehicle handover area at Chelston Motorhomes, Chelston Business Park, Wellington (retention of works already undertaken). Comment: West Buckland Parish Council consider there is a lack of clarity in this application and recommend refusal for the following reasons:

- overlooking and a loss of privacy for neighbouring properties,
- an excessive number of pitches,
- no plans or information about the disposal of waste

If this application is determined at a SW & T Council Planning Committee a councillor will attend to present the Council's objections.

46/19/0016/CQ Prior approval for proposed change of use from agricultural building to dwelling house (Class C3) and associated building operations to the barn at Huntspath Farm, Blackmoor, Wellington. Comment: West Buckland Parish Council has no objections to approval being granted.

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

46/19/0005 Relocation of stable block and erection of additional stable block in field to the south of Highwood Barn, Sawyers Hill, West Buckland. Decision: conditional approval granted.

c) Update on progress with a decision for 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. There was no update but it was reported that there had been a Road Traffic Collision on the A38 last week. Cllr Mrs Peace

d) SW & T Council decision to stop sending paper copies of planning applications. SW & T Council has advised that following the Local Government elections this month and the formation of the new Council the planning department will no longer be sending paper copies of planning applications received to Parish Councils. The Weekly Planning List will continue to be emailed to Parish Councils on a Tuesday and the applications will be available to view on the planning webpage. Two training sessions are planned for clerks and councillors.

It was felt that improvements needed to be made to the Council's website to make it more user friendly.

e) Any other planning matters. There were no other planning matters.

11/05/19. Highways.

a) Matters arising from previous meeting/s. The kerbing issue on the roundabout under M5 Junction 26 has still not been resolved.

b) To note any highway defects to report to SCC. No defects noted.

c) Fingerpost sign refurbishment and possible CIL funding. Cllr Silverlight will purchase paint to refurbish the fingerpost sign at Manleys. The Clerk noted the NALC Guidance Note on CIL says that the Council should consult to decide on a list of spending

priorities. A consultation with the parish will be carried out through the website and newsletter and it will be suggested that this money could be used to refurbish fingerpost signs in the parish. It was felt money could be used to refurbish the signpost at Budgetts Cross first. More enquiries will be made about obtaining quotes for this work. Cllr Mrs Peace will find out who Oake Parish Council used to refurbish their fingerpost signs.

d) Any other highways matters. This year only a single 1 metre swathe of verge will be cut, except on specific bends and at junctions where increased visibility is required. It is claimed that this is to save more of the verge for wildlife.

There was concern that patients from Wellesley Hospital are purchasing food and drink from the nearby petrol station, consuming this nearby and leaving behind litter. There has also been some concern because they are gathering outside the petrol station. It was questioned whether there was a Community Liaison worker at the hospital who could be contacted about these concerns. It was thought that Cllr Thorne had been some sort of 'Champion' for the hospital in the past and might know who to contact.

12/05/19. To receive reports from:

a) County Cllr. A report from Cllr Thorne was circulated by email before the meeting (Appendix A). Cllr Mrs Blogg noted the reintroduction of the County Councillor Health and Wellbeing Grants and commented that, in her opinion, the previous County Councillor had spread his Health and Wellbeing Grant money too thinly for it to be of real benefit. Cllr Mrs Peace suggested applying for funding towards adult gym equipment but that would need a sizeable grant from the £2,000 available for Cllr Thorne's entire ward. He will be asked how he intends to award the money.

b) Police. A report for April from PCSO Henderson was circulated by email earlier in the month. There were 244 logs for the Wellington Rural Beat for the month of April 2019. This is down by more than 40 calls for the previous month. PCSO Henderson also emailed the Clerk after the Police received a call about a sign that has been erected in Gerberstone Wood warning that people should not enter without the land owner's permission because firearms are in constant use night and day. She wondered if anyone knew who the landowner is and if the Council knew anything about the sign. It was not known who the land owner was but the woods are believed to be private with no public access rights. Cllr Nutt reported that the Police have a new website for submitting webcam footage.

c) Village Hall. A report from Cllr Mrs Blogg on the Village Hall Committee meeting held on 1st May was circulated prior to the meeting. This meeting followed the Annual General Meeting of the Village Hall Committee. The New Treasurer, Mrs Ball, has now taken over Mrs Blogg and Mrs Blogg resigned from the Committee. It is now three months since NatWest Bank were advised of the changes to be made to the bank account and very little has been achieved so far. This is very difficult for the new Treasurer who has no access to the online account and is unable to sign cheques. Prices had been received for metal notice boards which were less than the cost of a man-made timber board so a decision on the size required would be made at a later meeting. The next meeting will be on the 5th June 2019

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

13/05/19. Finance:

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

b) To agree the annual insurance premium. The insurance has been reviewed and it was agreed to accept the proposal from BHIB. The annual premium is £529.02.

c) To receive the Internal Audit Report. The Clerk has arranged for the internal audit to be carried out and a report will be ready for the June meeting.

d) To approve the Annual Governance Statement. This was deferred until the June meeting when the internal audit report will be presented.

e) **To agree the Annual Accounts for 2018-2019.** This was deferred until the June meeting.

f) **To agree the signing of the Certificate of Exemption for 2018-2019.** The Council qualifies for a certificate of exemption as both income and expenditure are below £25,000. There is no requirement to have a limited assurance review or to submit an Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor provided that the Council has certified itself as exempt at a meeting held after 31st March 2019 and a completed Certificate of Exemption is submitted notifying the external auditor, PKF Littlejohn, by 1st July. It was agreed to sign the Certificate of Exemption.

14/05/19. 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.** Inspections for May have not been completed but there have not been any matters to report to date. It has been noticed that the trunk of the Acer tree has been damaged and there were concerns that this might be strimmer damage. On closer inspection the damage was not found to be recent and is believed to have been caused by rabbits. Cllr Silverlight will look into providing protection against rabbits.

b) **Update on grass cutting.** The grass cutting problems are only partially resolved as the grass is still not being cut to a reasonable standard. The Clerk has already told the DLO the Council will not be expecting to pay the full amount quoted and accepted.

15/05/19. Footpaths: any footpath matters brought forward (Not for decisions). No matters brought forward.

16/05/19. Correspondence and items of interest. The following correspondence was noted: Somerset Waste Partnership Briefing: the waste specialists SUEZ have been selected for the new Somerset contract to deliver Recycle More weekly service of extra materials, especially plastics. Cllr Mitton said SWP will give presentations and suggested asking if a visit could be arranged to a recycling facility in 2020, possibly inviting other parishes.

17/05/19. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion (Not for Decisions). There was no urgent business.

18.05.19. Date of the next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 25th June 2019.

Appendix A – County Cllr’s Report

- **Finances:-** SCC has turned the situation around and finances are looking a lot more healthy now than even a few months ago, but the Council is still a long way from being out of the woods. A peer review team from the Local Government Association visited last year at the depths of the crisis and essentially said SCC needed to get a grip on finances at all levels of the council. SCC has done that and now the peer review team have been back a year on for a progress check. They have not yet published their findings formally, but the chief executive is saying that informally their message this time is: “We told you to get a grip and you clearly have. Our new challenge is that you continue to hold that grip and don’t slip back.”
- **Broadband:-** Cllr Thorne has lost all confidence that Gigaclear is going to be able to deliver the second phase of superfast rural broadband and he believes that CDS should now be looking at starting over again with alternative providers. He understands AirBand are now working in a wider area than originally intended and he has heard about communities in parts of Somerset which are already funding their own solutions, so it seems delivery of the service is becoming ad hoc and localised which will impact on any business case Gigaclear is preparing.
- **A358:-** SCC is still awaiting clarification as to any impact on plans for the A358 Expressway of Highways England’s decision to ‘pause’ 11 of its major road schemes. The affected schemes will be named in the agency’s annual delivery plan later this year but he doesn’t know when that is due to be published. The best guess of when the A358 preferred route is to be revealed is the latter part of June, so he is assuming that if an announcement has not been made by then it will be an indicator that the scheme is one of the 11. While some schemes will be scrapped, others will be pushed into the second Road Investment Strategy which runs from 2020-2025. Given that the A358 has already slipped into RIS2, it could be that it is in a stronger position to proceed.
- **Gritting:-** The review of winter gritting routes is now underway with feedback from winter 2018-19 being taken into account and the reinstatement of many of the previously gritted routes already acknowledged. SCC are putting £200,000 back into a pot from which they saved £120,000 last year, so Cllr Thorne expects that all of the routes will eventually be included again. There has been no mention of parish councils self-funding gritting routes if they want to do so, which he has queried. Once the gritting network for 2019-20 has been addressed, they will look at the issue of filling grit bins and provision of salt bags to see how they can work more closely with parish councils, as he knows a number of parishes did not have their bins filled last winter after the savings U-turn.
- **Small Improvement Schemes:-** An extra £1.4 million has just been pumped into the county’s SIS budget for this year, with a pledge to do the same next year. The SIS fund now totals £2.4 million which will enable 60 schemes to be completed this year, three times as many as previously forecast. The remainder of the currently accepted schemes will be completed next year. It is possible that SCC will be able to open bids for SIS again in two years’ time, which is a lot sooner than the six to seven years which was previously being forecast.
- **Health & Wellbeing Fund:-** This is a fresh off the press initiative so there is not a lot of detail on it yet, but each councillor is being given a £2,000 fund to allocate in their division for health and wellbeing projects. It is anticipated that bids will have to be submitted from September 1st and it may be a match-funding template.
- **BBC –** A BBC documentary team from the Panorama programme followed adult education staff, providers, and specific service-users over the course of 10 months last year and they have now produced two one-hour documentaries which will be broadcast on BBC1 at 9pm, Wednesday 29 May and Wednesday 5 June.
- **Grass cutting:-** Summer grass cutting is underway and this year only a single 1 metre swathe of verge will be cut, except on specific bends and at junctions where increased visibility is required. This will protect approximately an additional 3km sq of highway verge for wildlife, an area roughly the size of 191 Somerset County Cricket Club pitches. New this year is the use of a remote controlled mower affectionately nicknamed ‘Robochop’. This allows operatives to work safely away from the highway and also means reduced disruption for road users as in many locations there is no longer a

need for lane closures or slow moving tractors in the road. You can see a short video of Robochop in action at <https://youtu.be/bcQ7GFhaJlY>. SCC has launched an online mapping feature which allows you to keep track of the summer grass cutting programme as it progresses. This can be found at www.travelsomerset.co.uk/grass-cutting where you can also find more information about grass cutting and links so you can report any problems online.

Adopt A Path Volunteers:– A campaign has been launched for volunteers to sign up to ‘Adopt a Path’ and report back to the SCC any issues such as overgrown stiles or gates, missing or overgrown signposts or waymarks, and overgrown vegetation. They can also assist by helping to keep pinch points, signposts, stiles, and gates vegetation free. SCC will provide help and advice, insurance cover, secateurs, and gloves for volunteers. More information is available by emailing rowvolunteers@somerset.gov.uk and you can apply online at <https://volunteering.somerset.gov.uk/opportunities/rights-of-way-volunteer>. Any issues with paths can also be reported by anybody via the website portal at www.somerset.gov.uk/rightsofway