

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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The Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 30th July 2019 in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall at 7.30pm.

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

In attendance: County Cllr J Thorne, eight members of the public and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

35/07/19. To accept apologies for absence. Apologies were accepted from Cllr D Mitton and Cllr Mrs L Peace. Apologies were received from District Cllr R Habgood.

36/07/19. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. Cllr Silverlight declared a personal interest in item 40/07/19 a) planning application 46/19/0025 because he lives in that neighbourhood.

37/07/19. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 25/06/19. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chair.

38/07/19. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda. There were no matters arising.

39/07/19. Democratic Period.

A member of the public said he had no objections in principle to an extension being added to Perrymeade but felt the new design doesn't conserve the existing property. The mixture of stone, wood and steel cladding instead of the render used in local buildings will give a disjointed appearance. It was noted there is no specification for the colour and finish of the steel cladding and the proposed new gable end is higher and will be out of proportion to the existing. The point was also made that the application states that no trees or hedges will be pruned but it was felt there could be a need to cut down trees at the eastern end of the site. The site map doesn't appear to match the site as it is now and possibly encroaches onto agricultural land. The extension might impinge onto a footpath and it is out of proportion to the aims of the AONB.

Some other members of the public from Lee Park asked the Parish Council for permission to put up signs in Lee Park, the play area in Lee Park and Silver Street asking people to pick up after their dogs. They were also concerned that dog poo is being put in the bin in the play area at Lee Park. Cllr Nutt said the Lee Park Residents Association might be able to help with putting up signs. The Parish Council supported residents putting up signs and will look into obtaining some signs. A reminder to dog owners about picking up after their dog/s will also be put in the newsletter.

Another resident said they had been told about the proposed new development in the

village and wanted to know what is happening. Cllr Mrs Blogg said the proposal was speculative at the moment. The developer has spoken to the Parish Council but is not at the point of submitting a planning application. Once the developer has decided on their plans they will hold a public consultation meeting and this will be widely publicised to make as many people aware as possible.

The Parish Council was asked who had the responsibility for the maintenance of the ditch at Lee Park. It was confirmed that it is the responsibility of Somerset West and Taunton Council.

7 members of the public left the meeting.

40/07/19. Planning:

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

Cllr Silverlight declared a personal interest in application 46/19/0025.

46/19/0021 Erection of a single storey extension to the side of 1 Church Drive, West Buckland.

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

46/19/0025 Erection of replacement and additional two storey side extension at Perrymeade, West Buckland Road, West Buckland.

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

- The proposal (size, shape, location, materials, layout and colour) is out of keeping with the existing building. The proposed extensions are of a very modern and industrial appearance and would substantially alter the appearance and character of a charming and traditional period cottage;
- The proposal does not appear to conform to the Blackdown Hills AONB objective to avoid modern developments;
- The immediate proximity to footpaths WG14/30 and WG14/31 and their use by walkers as they approach the building will highlight the stark appearance of the proposed extensions,
- their obviously modern design and the lack of conformity with other buildings in the AONB;
- Whilst the applicant claims that no trees or shrubs will have to be removed or pruned to carry out the proposal the Council feel there is a real risk some will have to be, particularly on the eastern elevation.

The Council has no objection in principle to extensions to the property, which will benefit the owners and increase their living area, but the proposal needs to be more in keeping with the character of the existing building and its position and relationship within the AONB environment. The design and integration of the proposed extensions with the existing structure needs to be better thought out to reduce the impact of its appearance.

46/19/0012 Erection of porch to front of Ham House, Ham Road, Ham.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council recommend refusal. This is a building of historical interest and the proposed design of the porch is not in keeping.

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

46/19/0015 Change of use of former village shop store into a one bedroom dwelling at 2a Dyers Close, West Buckland. Decision: permission refused.

d) 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. No update.

e) Somerset West & Taunton Council Consultation on Statement of Community

Involvement. The consultation period started on 19th July and ends on Monday 30th September at 5pm. At present the new Council has a Statement of Community Involvement from West Somerset Council and another from Taunton Deane Borough Council. A single document has been produced and is being consulted on. The Council has no comments regarding the proposed Statement of Community Involvement. .

f) To decide how the Council will view planning applications at meetings. The Clerk will print the documents that are needed to discuss the application at a meeting. She is able to print A3 copies. Councillors should also view the documents online, before the meeting at which the application will be discussed.

g) Any other planning matters. No other planning matters.

It was agreed to bring forward the following item:

41/07/19. County Cllr's Report. A written report was circulated prior to the meeting.

Cllr Thorne has tried to make contact with Wellesley Hospital but hasn't received a reply. He has also spoken to a Wellington Town Councillor regarding concerns raised at the last meeting that residents and staff from Wellesley Hospital are congregating besides Budgens, Westpark 26, to smoke and eat snacks but they lack privacy and have to sit on blocks because there is no seating. There is also no rubbish bin and litter is being left behind. Cllr Thorne will contact SCC to see what is happening regarding the provision of a turn off lane at Blackdown Garden Centre as one condition of the approval for planning application 46/16/0005.

Cllr Thorne and the remaining member of the public left the meeting.

42/07/19. Highways.

a) Matters arising from previous meeting/s

- **Verge cutting.** Verges including those on Sawyers Hill and Junction 25 have just been cut. In most cases the cut has only been one metre in width.
- It was noted that a number of potholes have been filled in on Buckland Hill. There was concern that while the work was carried out Buckland Hill was blocked and there were signs warning that there would be long delays.
- The work at France Lane has been completed. A lot of work has been carried out to repair the lane and prevent flooding and it is looking good.

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

c) Fingerpost sign refurbishment. Cllr Nutt has obtained three quotes for the refurbishment of the fingerpost sign at Budgetts Cross and is waiting for three more. Further enquiries have been made about Chapter 8 training for the painting of some of the fingerposts but it has not been possible to book a place on any training yet. Painting will start on the signs that are not too close to the highway.

d) Any other highways matters. A letter has been received from a parishioner concerned about the increasing danger of the junction onto the A38 at the Worlds End and the amount of traffic and its speed making it increasingly difficult to gain access to the A38 and travel towards Taunton from West Buckland. The Council were asked to make this a priority issue for consideration/pursuance with the relevant channels, ie MP. The parishioner felt that traffic lights should be installed. The Parish Council has raised this issue with SCC on

numerous occasions over the year with no success. The speed limit is due to be reduced to 40 mph on this stretch of the A38 following a consultation. The Clerk will write to the parishioner and suggest they contact Cllr Thorne, County Councillor and Rebecca Pow MP. The Chair was contacted by a person complaining about overgrown hedges along Silver Street. It is the responsibility of the land owner or tenant to cut the hedges.

43/07/19. To receive reports from:

a) County Cllr. Covered under item 41/07/19.

b) District Cllr. No report.

c) Police. The Police Report for June was circulated by email at the beginning of July. There were 239 calls into 101 and 999 for the Wellington Rural Beat for the month of June 2019 and 1 call for ASB on Wellington Without.

d) Village Hall. Cllr Mrs Drury reported on the Village Hall Meeting held on 3rd July. The online banking transfer is still causing major issues and the complaint has been reopened. Nat West now say online banking can and cannot be a feature for a Trust, depending on who is spoken to! The Treasurer continues to try and resolve this. Further compensation will be sought.

The treasurer is seeking alternative energy quotes.

The music licence renewal is in hand.

Initial have submitted their invoice and an amount is included that has not been seen before for 'Waste Transfer'. The Treasurer will follow this up to clarify.

There is to be a free valuation on the premises to ensure the building insurance for the hall is at the correct rate.

The addition of reflective material pinned to the posts in the car park is to be costed to try and prevent damage by vehicles reversing into them in the dark. A split lower rail is to be repaired.

The new noticeboard should be in place this month and the key safe will be moved to a position nearer the door and under the light to assist those using it. It is currently difficult to see the codes at night.

Hallmark visit will be made on 5th August 2019 and all the relevant parties are aware of the need to attend.

The sound system needs some attention due to operating issues and this is in hand.

It is proposed to hold Pub Nights once a month. This is in an effort to get village residents out to a social event once a month. It will be held the first Friday of the month and hall bookings have been made for 4th October 2019 and the next on 1st November for a trial run. It will follow a model already in place in other village halls. Further information will be given at the next meeting.

VE Day Celebrations. It appears there may be some appetite to provide a daytime event. Enquiries are to be made of various Village Groups and this will be discussed again next meeting. This may well tie in well with the Pub Night proposal.

If the Parish Council do purchase a projector, secure storage will become available as the pre-school vacates.

There were several ideas put forward regarding the refurbishment of the play area and additional equipment or maybe the provision of some 'Trim Trail' equipment for adults. Those ideas will be sent to the Parish Council by email as requested by the Parish Council in the recent village newsletter

e) SALC Code of Conduct training session. This was attended by Cllr Mrs Drury and Cllr Mrs Peace. Cllr Mrs Drury said that she had found it very useful. The presentation slides have been circulated to councillors.

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

44/07/19. Finance:

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

Mrs J Larcombe - £321.25. Clerk's salary and expenses.

Somerset Association of Local Councils - £60. Two places on the Code of Conduct training. Cllr Mrs Drury declared a personal and pecuniary interest in this payment and took no part in its approval.

Cllr Mrs S Drury - £22.50. Mileage expenses for Code of Conduct training.

b) To agree to pay the Churchyard Grant for 2019-20. It was agreed to make a payment of £1,250.00 to West Buckland PCC once all the money from the Nat West accounts has been transferred to the new accounts with Unity Trust Bank.

c) Financial Regulations update for online banking. The Clerk had updated the Financial Regulations to include arrangements for online banking. It was agreed to increase the amount in paragraph 4.1 from £100 to £350 excluding VAT. The updated Financial Regulations were agreed.

d) Closure of NatWest bank accounts. NatWest Bank has been instructed to transfer all of the money in the Reserve Account to the Current Account and to close the Reserve Account. All of the money in the Current Account will be transferred to Unity Trust Bank and the Current Account will be closed.

45/07/19. 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.

b) Update on standard of grass cutting at the playing field. The standard of the grass cutting has improved and the field is looking much tidier.

The contractor who cuts the hedges in the playing field and at Sawyers Hill and Steart Lane will be asked to carry out this work as soon as possible after 1st September when hedge trimming is allowed again

c) To discuss the Report from the Annual Inspection and agree any actions/spending. The report was discussed. The Clerk has asked three companies for quotes for the work required for repairs to the swings, see-saw springie and the horse springie. As the fault on the chain swings is marked as high risk the Clerk will get this work carried out as soon as possible. If the work cannot be carried out quite quickly the swings will be taken out of use. Quotes are also being obtained to replace the surfacing under the swings and slide.

46/07/19. Footpaths: any footpath matters brought forward. No matters brought forward.

47/07/19. To appoint a representative to act as a Trustee on the Village Hall Committee. When Cllr Mrs Drury agreed at the Annual Meeting to be the Parish Council representative on the Village Hall Committee she was unaware that she would have to be a trustee and registered as such with the Charity Commission. She said this had not been explained to her when she gave her contact details to the secretary. She is unable to agree to become a trustee at present but is likely to be willing and able to do so in the future.

48/07/19. Councillor information and communication. Councillors discussed having individual Parish Council email addresses but the majority of councillors did not want to manage another email address. The implications of GDPR and personal email addresses were discussed. Councillor contact details on the website will be through the Clerk or Chair.

49/07/19. VE Day 75th Anniversary – update on any events planned or interest shown. It was

reported that this had been discussed at a Village Hall Committee meeting and interest in organising events had been shown by some of the village groups and organisations. A suggestion had been made that the group who are planning to hold monthly pub evenings in the village hall could hold a pub evening or pub day.

50/07/19. Correspondence and items of interest. The following correspondence was noted:
Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Consultation – The Parish Council were very concerned about the proposals and could not agree with them. A response will be made to that effect.

51/07/19. Any urgent business at the Chairman’s discretion. There was no urgent business.

52/07/19. Date of the next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 27th August 2019.

Appendix A

- **Finances:** the 18/19 financial year underspend was £5.9 million. £4.2 million of it has been used to increase general reserves to just over £16 million, which is considered a prudent level for an authority the size of SCC. The auditors become concerned when reserves fall below about £15 million. SCC still faces tough times and there remains a ‘significant level of uncertainty’ about this year’s budget due to a reliance on one-off grants, increasing demand, and the unknown outcomes from the ongoing Government reviews of funding for local government. Of the £328 million net budget, £58 million can be described as ‘uncertain’ or ‘one-off’, which includes more than £30 million of funding for adult social care.
- **Members Improving Lives Grant Scheme’** – the money comes out of the pot mentioned in the next bullet point. Councillors can submit bids between September 1 and November 30. It is intended to support projects which reduce loneliness and isolation, improve emotional health and wellbeing, and bring people together, particularly vulnerable or less advantaged groups. A maximum of four bids can be submitted, which would of course mean 4 x £500, but there is no minimum or maximum sum. It is likely that only parish councils or established voluntary sector organisations will receive the grants as they cannot be made to individuals or to directly help an identifiable individual. There is quite a lot to explain on this one, so Cllr Thorne will shortly issue a briefing paper with more of the detail for all parishes to consider.
- **Improving Lives to Prevent Demand Fund** – This differs from the above in that it is a larger pot of money - £850,000, and it will be officers who bid for the grants. Bids that are accepted will then have to be worked up into a full business case. The principles are similar to the above, but bids have to specifically show how the project will help to reduce future demand on council services. There will be more detail about this one in a briefing paper for all parishes.
- **Broadband –Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS)** has given Gigaclear to end of this month (which is tomorrow – Wednesday) to produce plans which are acceptable to it and to the Government. It is believed that CDS won’t be able to approve any plans anyway because they cannot commit to funding them until the Government’s funding review in the autumn, when they will find out if the public subsidy will be extended until the end of the period Gigaclear is asking for, which is 2023.
- **Libraries outreach vehicle** – Originally designed as a children’s services vehicle for Oxfordshire Libraries, the vehicle has now been re-branded with a striking new design which reflects the dynamic and vibrant Somerset Libraries service offer and kitted out with cutting-edge technology to provide an exciting new way to further extend the reach of the service. Somerset Libraries has an established outreach programme which has also been highlighted through the recent service redesign process and by the autumn there will be outreach officers in post to further develop this offer. The vehicle presents additional opportunities to showcase the diverse range of Somerset library services, with targeted activities for hard to reach communities throughout the county. SCC will soon be supporting a variety of activities at schools, community events, business support activities, and family fun days. The existing mobile library service is unaffected by this addition.
- **A358** – the announcement of a preferred route is essentially the pink route from the three on which Highways England consulted, with a few modifications. It should connect to the motorway via J25, a proper by-pass should be provided for Henlade, a junction was needed to connect the A378, and it should stick as close as possible to the existing carriageway. There will be a statutory consultation later in the process of approving the route and the community forums will continue to operate with the next meeting coming up quite soon. Work will start in the second Road Investment Strategy period of 2020-25. There is still quite a lot to be agreed in terms of the section of road from Hatch Beauchamp to Ilminster for access via a new junction and closure of side roads. There has been a little bit of confusion about some consultation dates which are happening currently, but these are only for affected landowners and they will each have received a letter from HE inviting them to attend.
- **Park & Ride** – SCC is now working on a scheme to prevent incursion by travellers on the Gateway P & R which could be carried out as part of the Junction 25 enhancement. Nothing is definite yet, but it does look hopeful that SCC will be able to put a stop to these events once and for all.

- Mental Health Training – Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a two-day introductory course, aimed at people who want to feel more confident, competent, and comfortable in dealing with mental health problems. The next course is running on Fridays August 9 and 16. Anyone wishing to apply for a place should email PublicHealthTraining@somerset.gov.uk by Monday, July 15.
- Foster Carers – County has recently launched a new scheme to encourage friends, family, and communities to consider fostering. Anyone submitting a recommendation that leads to approval of new foster parents will receive a £150 ‘thank you’ payment. County will also put £100 into a fund that can pay for or subsidise activities for children. To find out more, call the fostering team on 0800 587 9900.
- Surface dressing programme – This year’s programme to improve roads and stop potholes forming is now underway. Surface dressing seals the road to improve skid resistance and stop water getting under the surface which helps stop potholes forming and can add 10 years to the life of a road. This year SCC is covering 140 miles of road at 138 different locations. The work is weather dependent. You can check which roads are included as part of this year’s programme, check provisional dates and find out more about surface dressing at www.travelsomerset.co.uk/surface-dressing and you can also stay up to date by following @TravelSomerset on Twitter.