

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 a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 26th November 2019 in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall at 7.30pm.

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

In attendance: County Cllr J Thorne, District Cllr R Habgood and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

98/11/19. To accept apologies for absence. Apologies were accepted from Cllr J Nutt.

99/11/19. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. There were no disclosures of interest.

100/11/19. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 29/10/19. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chair.

101/11/19. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda. Cllr Mrs Blogg reported that Cllr Vivienne Stock-Williams, Wellington Town Council, has been into Wellesley Hospital and was told that there are plans to provide a structure in the grounds of the hospital for smokers to use.

102/11/19. Democratic Period. There were no members of the public present.

103/11/19. Planning:

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

46/19/0032 Change of use of building from children's play centre to Class B1 (light industrial) at Unit 7d, Castle Road, Chelston Business Park.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council support the granting of approval.

46/19/0034 Change of use of former village store into 1 one bedroom dwelling at 2a Dyers Close, West Buckland. Resubmission of 46/19/0015.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council recommend refusal because this is over development of a very small site. The Parish Council did not object to the application to turn the shop into a dwelling but this is one step too far. This is a repeat of the comment submitted for 46/19/0015 although the Planning Authority claim no comment was submitted.

46/19/0035 Erection of single storey side and rear extensions at Llantarnum, Chelston Nurseries, Chelston.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council support the granting of approval.

46/19/0036/LEW Application for a Certificate of Lawful Development for the existing lawful implementation of application 46/13/0007 with the erection of a plant store under that consent at Gerbestone Manor Farm, Gerbestone Road, West Buckland.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council recommend the Certificate of Lawful Development is refused and request that this case is reviewed by the Planning Committee. The visual evidence continues to suggest that the differences between the approved plans and the resulting dwelling are not minor. This was documented in West Buckland Parish Council's response to 46/17/0009, dated 30 March 2017. The Planning Authority's legal assessment of the applicant's legal arguments and their response has not been made public and in the interest of transparency it would be helpful if that information was made available.

b) To receive decisions from planning applications determined by SWT Council.

46/19/0029 Conversion of garage into habitable accommodation with erection of single storey extension at 5 Lee Park, West Buckland (Retention of works already undertaken)
Decision: conditional approval granted.

County Cllr Thorne joined the meeting.

c) To note the withdrawal of 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. The withdrawal of the application was noted. The planning officer has asked for further information to be submitted by the end of November.

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

It was agreed to bring the following item forward on the agenda.

104/11/19. County Cllr Report. A written report had been circulated by email prior to the meeting (Appendix A). Issues around purdah and councils different approaches was discussed.

Cllr Thorne left the meeting.

105/11/19. Highways.

a) Matters arising from previous meeting/s. It was reported at the last meeting that one of the bollards around Silver Street Green had been knocked over. The bollard had broken off because it is rotten and the other bollards could also be rotten as they have been in place for some time. It was thought they could be replaced using CIL funding.

b) To note any highway defects to report to SCC. There were no defects noted for reporting. Cllr Mrs Drury reported that a car had gone into the ditch near Calways Cottage and had caused damage to the ditch and created potholes in the road. She has reported this to Highways and was told it would be attended to in three days but it has now been a week and no repairs have taken place.

c) Fingerpost sign refurbishment – booking of Chapter 8 training. A place has been booked for Cllr Silverlight on a training session due to be held on 8th January 2020.

d) To discuss the problem of increasing traffic driving through the village. An email was received from a parishioner complaining about the amount of traffic travelling through the village, particularly during the busy periods when people are travelling to and from work. On that occasion additional traffic was travelling through the village because of roadworks on the A38 at Picadilly. There is no easy answer to the problem.

e) Any other highways matters. Three temporary road closure notices have been received. On 18th December School Lane will temporarily closed from the junction with West Buckland Road, eastwards for a total distance of 50 metres for 3 days to enable

Wessex Water to install a Meter. The initial map provided was incorrect but a new map was provided when the details were questioned.

Taunton Road from the junction with Chelston Roundabout, north-westwards for a distance of 75 metres will be closed on the weekends of 11-12 and 18-19 January 2020 to enable Wales and West Utilities to carry out gas mains works.

106/11/19. To receive reports from:

a) County Cllr. Dealt with under item 104/11/19.

b) District Cllr. No report.

c) Police. The report for October was circulated by email in early November. There were 220 calls into 101 and 999 for the Wellington Rural Beat for the month of October 2019, 28 less than last month. This does not include calls involving Wellington Town and no calls involved Wellington without. There were 8 calls to police for ASB across the whole of the rural beat in October, none of these were for Wellington without. There was a warning about hoax calls from HMRC.

d) NALC Conference. This was deferred to the next meeting on January 7th.

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

107/11/19. Finance

a) To agree and authorise any payments. The following payments were agreed:

Online payments

Coram Construction Training Ltd - £261.54 Chapter 8 training course (Payment ref: 1920/23)

Mrs J Larcombe - £359.94 Clerk's salary and expenses for November – includes repayment for 3 hi-vi jackets (Payment ref: 1920/24)

Mrs J Larcombe – Clerk's salary and expenses for December. Payment date 31.12.19. {Payment ref: 1920/25}

Cheque payments

Mr J T Stanworth - £569.00 grass cutting at War Memorial. Silver Street Green and verges in Church Drive and Dyers Close; cutting back footpaths and hedge trimming inside the play area (Chq no 300002)

F J Orchard & Sons - £276.00 hedge trimming around the playing field and outside hedge of the play area, Steart Lane and Sawyers Hill (chq no 300003)

b) To agree to pay a grant to Taunton & District CAB. It was agreed to pay a grant of £100 (Payment ref: 1920/26). This was £25 more than budgeted for and it was agreed to take this from reserves.

c) To discuss the budget and Precept for 2020-21. The Clerk presented a draft budget which was discussed by councillors and agreed with some small amendments.

It was agreed to request a precept of £9891.00

108/11/19. 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. Cllr Nutt had emailed the report sheet and there were no points to note. Cllr Nutt will be asked to check whether the seat has been repaired.

b) To note the hedges have been cut. Noted.

c) Any other playing field matters. No other playing field matters.

109/11/19. Footpaths: any footpath matters brought forward. No matters brought forward.

110/11/19. Parish Council Facebook page. The Facebook page has been set up as a group page and has been well received. Twenty one members have been approved. Details about the precept and the comments on planning applications will be posted.

- 111/11/19. Correspondence and items of interest.** The following correspondence was noted:
Reimaging the Levels – Trees for Somerset: Trees for your Parish. 29th January 2020 at West Monkton Village Hall. It was agreed that Cllr Silverlight could book a place at a cost of £11.67 plus mileage.
Somerset Waste Partnership – Newsletter and waste collection dates for Christmas and New Year.
- 112/11/19. Any urgent business at the Chairman’s discretion.** There was no urgent business.
- 113/11/19. Date of the next meeting.** The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 7th January 2020 in the Main Hall..

Appendix A – County Cllr Report

- **Purdah** – Notice of the General Election has been published, which means the county council is now in ‘purdah’ until 10 pm on 12th December when the polls close. This means the council can do nothing, say nothing which could be interpreted as political. The full council meeting scheduled for tomorrow (Wednesday) has therefore been cancelled and will instead be held in January. In contrast Cornwall Council is going ahead with all of its scheduled meetings. ‘Purdah’ also means a number of ongoing initiatives have been paused and will resume in the New Year, as mentioned below. Even things like the naming of a new road in Bridgwater has been postponed!
- **Members Improving Lives Grant Scheme** – I now have three projects coming forward and I can only make four bids maximum, so I have room for one more. However, I am told that because of ‘purdah’ the scheme has been suspended with immediate effect and will now be opened again from 2nd-30th January. There is a difference of opinion on whether or not I can progress anything in the meantime,
- **Finances** – The financial resilience of the council is continuing to improve with the level of reserves now being projected as £56.347 million by the year end. Currently, reports continue to show an overall projected balanced budget position for the council by the end of the financial year, with the main ‘adverse variance’ being within children’s services (£1.768 million). I have previously explained that this is not unusual, because if a child presents then the council is required by law to provide the necessary level of care, and some children can individually cost over £500,000 a year because of their complex needs. To illustrate the costs involved, current average weekly rates for residential and fostering placements are £4,221 and £920 respectively. Some of the council’s corporate contingency fund is being ‘notionally’ allocated to offset the extra children’s services costs while work continues to mitigate the situation. This still leaves £6.127 million of the corporate contingency budget currently unallocated and therefore potentially available to further improve the council’s financial resilience. Savings of £21.5 million are built into the current year’s budget and the projection is for £21.316 million to be delivered.
- **Superfast broadband** – CDS has launched a public consultation exercise to identify remaining areas where there are no current or credible future plans (ie, in the next three years) to deliver broadband infrastructure capable of download speeds of at least 30Mbps. They say this will give suppliers an opportunity to check if the CDS mapping of the area is accurate or not. In the meantime, of course, there has been an interesting national party political announcement on the subject of superfast broadband which could impact on CDS if the General Election goes a particular way.
- **Park & Ride** – County has been working with the district council on this one and the Saturday service which was paused about 18 months ago was restarted at the beginning of the month. I have asked for the signs to be removed which say the Saturday service has been withdrawn. I’m pleased that the district extended the revenue funding it picked up a year ago to subsidise the service and keep it running and while this currently is only until next March, I am hopeful a solution will be found to maintain it beyond that date. I noticed how poor the paved surfaces and walkways were across the PR site at Henlade, covered in moss and other vegetation, so I have asked for this to be cleared as part of the regular maintenance contract, which should have happened last week.
- **Hinkley Point C** – I had another tour of the site recently to see the progress that is being made. It continues to impress with the statistics that are quoted at you. I saw what 5.6 million cubic tonnes of excavated soil looks like, and I saw the world’s largest crane, Big Carl, which will be there until 2024/25 and is as tall as The Shard building in London. The key message to come out of the visit is that there is still plenty of work available for local companies to bid for. While the first and second tier contracts have been awarded, there are a lot of contracts in the third tier still to be awarded. So local companies should take a look and see what there is that they might be able to do.
- **Climate change** – Again, because of ‘purdah’ all the climate change strategy consultation has been paused and will be restarted with new dates announced in January. So, the local consultation which should have been held the Saturday before last in Taunton Library was cancelled. I am unsure how it affects the timing of a draft strategy and action plan which should have been ready for consultation by February/March 2020, and the final strategy document which was to have been brought forward for adoption next July.

- Avatar robots – County has secured funding for 50 AV1 Robots to help youngsters who are off school for medical or anxiety reasons. The AV1 is an avatar robot that becomes the pupil’s ‘physical presence’ in the classroom while the pupil accesses the robot from hospital or home, allowing them to take part in class lessons through an inbuilt camera and microphone, and also letting them maintain school friendship groups who buddy up and look after the AV1 during the school day. The robot works through live streaming (which cannot be recorded) to the pupil’s tablet or phone and allows the teacher and youngster to communicate with each other so they can keep up their education while physically away from school. The impact of young people being out of education for a long time can be huge and becoming socially isolated can also become a major barrier to re-engagement once the young person is well enough to attend school again.