

## WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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### **The Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held via Zoom on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 7.30pm.**

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

**In attendance:** County Cllr J Thorne, District Cllr R Habgood, PCSO V Henderson, three members of the public and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

**174/06/20. To accept apologies for absence.** Apologies were accepted from Cllr D Lacey.

**175/06/20. Police Report.** PCSO Henderson said she would be circulating the Police Report for June later in the evening. She reported that there were 156 calls into 101 and 999 for the Wellington Rural Beat for the month of June 2020. Eight calls involved Wellington Without. The calls were for RTC, abandoned vehicles, found property and domestic. A call was also received for a theft from a motor vehicle. There is now a scheme to register tools, following the recent spate of thefts of tools from vans. There were 17 calls to police for ASB across the whole of the rural beat in June. One was for Wellington Without and was for tractors working late into the evening, something they are entitled to do. The Police have also received a report of a green JCB being stolen from a farm at Sampford Moor.

PCSO Henderson left the meeting.

**176/06/20. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda.** Cllr Mitton declared a personal interest in item 187/06/20 as Chair of SALC. A report from SALC will be discussed during this item.

**177/06/20. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 08/06/20.** The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

**178/06/20. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda.** There were no matters arising.

**179/06/20. Democratic Period.** Three members of the public spoke in reference to the planning appeal. One person, whose property neighbours the former shop store, spoke about the two refusals for this scheme and attending the SWT Planning Committee meeting when the application was discussed, to make her objections. She had to wait seven hours for the application to be discussed before she could make her objections. There was a unanimous decision to refuse the application. She asked for the Parish Council to support SWT's decision to refuse permission.

Another member of the public felt the former store should have been made into garages for

the flats (the one above the former shop and the flat from the conversion of the former shop). She had joined the meeting to hear what the Parish Council had to say about the appeal. Although she had objected to the planning application, she had not received a letter with the details of the appeal.

The third member of the public said the application was for an inappropriate location, it was an over development of the site and would have a detrimental impact on neighbouring properties. They were pressing hard for the appeal to be rejected.

Cllr Habgood said he felt SWTC's reasons for refusal were strong and the decision had been unanimous. He encouraged everyone to respond so the Planning Inspector gets the local view.

#### **180/06/20. Planning:**

**a) To consider any planning applications received by the Parish Council prior to the Meeting.** No applications.

**b) To agree the Council's response to planning appeal APP/W3330/W/20/3240206 Change of use of former village shop store into 1 No. one bedroom dwelling and retrospective reconfiguration at 2a Dyers Close, West Buckland (resubmission of 46/19/0015).**

West Buckland Parish Council (WBPC) strongly recommends that the decision made by Somerset West and Taunton Council to refuse permission for application 46/19/0034 is upheld.

WBPC supports the reasons given by SW & T Council in their refusal of the application:

1. The proposal by reason of its position in relation to the flats at 2a Dyers Close and 2 Dyers Close would give rise to a loss of sunlight, daylight, overshadowing and an increased sense of enclosure, thereby resulting in unneighbourly development, harming the residential amenities of the occupiers of 2a and 2 Dyers Close contrary to Policy DM1(e) of the Core Strategy. WBPC would like it to be noted that the initial recommendation of the Planning Officer for conditional approval to be granted was made without visiting the site and without seeing any photos. The SWTC Planning Committee was presented with photos at their meeting by a resident of one of the neighbouring properties and members were able to see the true impact on the neighbours' amenity. The Committee made a unanimous decision to refuse this application. In the Planning Appeal Form submitted by the appellant's agent it states that a site visit is not necessary. WBPC requests that the Planning Inspector visits the site as they feel it is essential to check measurements and other relevant facts before making a decision.

2. The proposed development by reason of its design would be an awkward, arbitrary addition causing a conspicuously visual disruptive relationship with neighbouring properties. The proposal would not assimilate successfully with the character and appearance of the area, being a discordant intrusion. It is therefore contrary to policies DM1(d), CP1(g) and CP8 of the Core Strategy and Policy D7 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan. In WBPC's recommendation that the application be refused, one of the reasons given was that it would be over development of a very small site.

**c) To receive decisions from planning applications determined by SWT Council.** No decisions received.

**d) Any other planning matters.** It was reported that Belle View Camping Site is being advertised but there has been no planning application for change of use. Concern was also expressed about residential type use at Stable View. These matters will be reported to Planning Enforcement.

All members of the public had left the meeting by this point.

### **181/06/20. Highways.**

- a) **To note any required work to be reported to SCC.** Following torrential rain there was flooding by the Village Hall. After a second storm there was further flooding, but not by the houses. This problem has been reported to highways again, to get the drains cleared.
- b) **To receive an update on any outstanding highways work.** There was no update.
- c) **To discuss quotes for fingerpost sign repairs.** The quote from West Country Blacksmiths Ltd to repair Fingerpost 10 Blackmoor 28434734 has been accepted. The invoice will be made out to Hi-Line Contractors (SW) Ltd and they have agreed to pay the invoice as they will then be able to reclaim the VAT. West Country Blacksmiths have asked the Parish Council to agree to pay for the work if Hi-Line Contractors (SW) Ltd do not pay. It was felt they were a reputable company and were unlikely not to pay so this was agreed.  
West Country Blacksmiths Ltd have produced a new quote for the work to refurbish the signpost at Budgetts Cross. This quote includes all the work involved and the company will deal with the casting of a new arm by Cerdic Foundry. The quote was considerably higher than the previous quote but covers all the work. Councillors reviewed all the previous quotes discussed at the meeting held on 28.08.19 and decided no further quotes were needed. It was agreed to accept the quote of £2,140 plus VAT. The Clerk will accept the quotation.
- d) **Any other highways matters.** There were no other highways matters.

### **182/06/20. To note any written reports from:**

- a) **County Cllr.** A report was circulated by email prior to the meeting. There were no questions for Cllr Thorne.
- b) **District Cllr.** Cllr Habgood reported that SWTC are still meeting via Zoom. They are working with SCC on the response to COVID-19. Dealing with homeless people and getting them off the streets into accommodation has been a big issue. Most are now in college accommodation or are being housed in the Beach Hotel, Minehead. There has been a positive impact on reducing drug dependency since they have been moved off the streets. SWTC is waiting to see what happens next and is trying to keep them off the streets permanently. Further funding is expected, and they are waiting to see how much. Lots of businesses have applied for grants and Cllr Habgood is still trying to contact others. There is a full council meeting next week and there will be a discussion about the proposal not to reintroduce parking charges in SWTC car parks. The concern is that parking charges are a big income stream for SWTC. Coastal work that requires a large amount of money is needed at Blue Anchor and between Blue Anchor and Watchet. SCC, SWTC and the Environment Agency are all responsible for the cost of this protection work. SWTC is going ahead with building fully carbon neutral housing. In north Taunton a lot of former Woolaway housing has been taken down and redevelopment is taking place. Planning meetings have been held via Zoom but there have not been any big applications. The meetings have still lasted between four to five hours. Cllr Habgood said he did not agree with the stance SWTC has taken on SCC's proposal for One Council for Somerset.
- c) **Police.** This was dealt with earlier in the meeting under item 175/06/20.

### **183/06/20. Finance:**

- a) **To agree and authorise any payments.** It was resolved to agree the following payment: Mrs J Larcombe – £303.64 Clerk's salary and expenses including £14.34 for the Zoom monthly subscription (Payment ref 2020/06).

**b) To note 2019 -20 accounts while awaiting Internal Audit Report.** The accounts were noted. It was intended to resurface the area under the slide early this summer, but this has not progressed due to COVID-19. Money will be ear marked for this from the reserves.

**184/06/20. To discuss the reopening of the play area.** The Government has announced that play areas can reopen from 4<sup>th</sup> July. A site meeting will be arranged to carry out a risk assessment and then a decision will be made whether to reopen the play area. Guidance is expected from the Council's insurers. Cllr Mrs Drury, Cllr Nutt, Cllr Mitton and the Clerk will attend the site meeting.  
Cllr Nutt said he was concerned about the condition of the Under 5's play area at Lee Park, which is managed by SWTC.

**185/06/20. To discuss the future production of the Community Newsletter.** The Treasurer of West Buckland PCC has contacted the Clerk about the future of the community newsletter. The Editor would like to resign once someone can be found to put the newsletter together, and the PCC has said it can no longer afford to print the newsletter in its pre lockdown form and would like someone else, or another organisation, to take it on. The Church would like to be able to contribute to the newsletter once it was being produced by someone else. There was some discussion about the form the newsletter could take and the best way to communicate with people. A village Facebook page was suggested as a replacement for the newsletter but there was concern about moderation of the comments. The Pub Night Facebook page has become more of a community page since March, but the intention is to revert it to its original use in September. Cllr Mitton reminded councillors that the Parish Council has a responsibility to make sure it is communicating with parishioners, probably once a quarter. He suggested putting something in the Wellington Weekly to try and recruit someone to take on the newsletter and also to put a note through doors in the parish seeking volunteers. Cllr Mrs Drury was concerned that this style of communication is no longer relevant. It was suggested that the Parish Council works with the Church to put something together.

**186/06/20. Update on Parish Councillor Vacancy.** SWTC has been informed of the vacancy and the Clerk is waiting for a notice from them to advertise the vacancy and the right for ten or more parishioners to request an election.

**187/06/20. To discuss the consultation on One Council for Somerset.** A SALC co-commissioned LGR report that focuses on the potential role for our sector in the future, regardless of what happens with the unitary bid had been circulated following the last meeting. Cllr Mitton declared a personal interest as the Chair of SALC. The group of larger councils has met to discuss the report but this didn't take into account the views of smaller councils. There will be Zoom meetings for representatives of smaller councils on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> July. There are two other consultations, a general one and another for Town and Parish Councils, organised by consultants acting on behalf of SCC. SALC will not take a view as they will go with whatever is set up. Cllr Habgood said he was concerned about the lack of proper debate at present about what is the best for the residents of Somerset. The delivery of important services is important to everyone. Town and Parish Councils act as a conduit to get things done and in the future this could lead to networking and a clustering of parishes. Localism could also devolve to community groups.  
The proposals for either one or two unitary councils across Somerset were discussed. Cllr Mrs Drury said she was concerned about this as she has seen councils amalgamate and then devolve back again. There are strong concerns about devolution to Parish Councils who wouldn't be able to cope. Some councils will not want to take things on and will lose

councillors. Cllr Nutt was concerned about wasting tax-payers money and reminded councillors that COVID -19 still needs to be dealt with and Brexit is far away. They will both cause economic difficulties. Cllr Mitton questioned why we had an old fashioned system of three tiers but felt Parish Councils should not be loaded with responsibilities. This system causes confusion about who is responsible for the delivery of services and there should be cost savings by moving to a unitary council. It was felt the business case for a unitary council needed to be combed over. Cllr Habgood said an east-west split with two unitary councils would be detrimental to the west because of the high level of deprivation.

**188/06/20. Correspondence to note.** The meeting with representatives of the House of Somerset will be held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July via Zoom. An invitation to the meeting will be sent out by the Clerk and members of the public will be able to ask for an invitation. This meeting is part of the consultation process prior to the submission of a planning application.

**189/06/20. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion.** It was reported that an extensive BMX track is being created in Buckland Woods and there has been phenomenal damage to saplings. Bonfires have been lit. This has been reported to the Forestry Commission, who have put up warning signs.  
A request has been received to hold a stationary engine event on the playing field. This would be limited to members of a private group and would be organised responsibly. A proper risk assessment and more details were requested. Social distancing would need to be maintained.

**190/06/20. Date and arrangements for the next meeting.** The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> July at 7.30pm via Zoom.