

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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The Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Parish Council on Tuesday 29th September 2020 at 7.30pm via Zoom.

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

In attendance: County Cllr J Thorne, one member of the public and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe

194/09/20. To accept apologies for absence. Cllr Thorne had emailed the Clerk to warn her he would join during the meeting.

195/09/20. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. Cllr Mitton declared a personal interest in item 207/09/20 as Chair of SALC.

196/09/20. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 25/08/20. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

197/09/20. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda. There were no matters arising.

Cllr Lacey joined the meeting.

198/09/20. Democratic Period. A member of the public told the Parish Council about his plans to set up a group to investigate the provision of fibre High Speed Broadband to Blackmoor through BT because the internet is terrible in Blackmoor. Rural premises with broadband speeds of less than 30Mbps can use vouchers worth up to £3,500 for each small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), and up to £1,500 per residential premise to support the cost of installing new gigabit-capable connections. Openreach will provide a no commitment quote for the work required.

The member of the public said he lived at Perry Barn and was increasingly concerned about the speed of the traffic using the road from Huntspath to the joinery and asked for the Parish Council to support putting in place a 30 or 40 mph speed limit. He pointed out that roads on the hills at Ford Street, Simonsburrow, Corfe and Blagdon had 30 or 40 mph speed limit even though they were safer than this stretch of road at Blackmoor, which justified the request.

199/09/20. Planning:

a) To consider any planning applications received by the Parish Council prior to the meeting.

46/20/0019 Replacement/rebuild of garage and store at The Meadows, Wellington Road,

West Buckland. It was agreed to note the application.

43/20/0086 Erection of a Class A1 foodstore with associated parking, landscaping and access works on land north west of the Nynehead Road/Taunton Road/Torres Vedras Drive Roundabout, Wellington. To decide whether to comment on this application in a neighbouring parish. The Parish Council were not opposed to the application.

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

No decisions.

c) Any other planning matters. Planning White Paper. Cllr Mitton felt the front loading was false and noted the risks that the Planning White Paper posed. He said that people can now complain at the planning application stage but under the new proposals they would need to complain at a very early stage. Many people will not be aware of this. In order to stimulate the economy some development would just be allowed to go ahead as permitted development. He pointed out Somerset Wildlife's comments and noted that the paper is skewed against the environment leading to a risk to wildlife and potential loss.

200/09/20. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SCC. None.

b) Update on flooding problem in Silver Street, near to the Village Hall. The Clerk has not received a reply to her email to SCC requesting to know what they are doing about the problem.

c) To receive an update on any outstanding highways work. Ruggin Road has been repaired in up to 84 places and is expected to be resurfaced. Cllr Ms Drury said she was pleased with the repairs despite the inconvenience she had experienced while the work was being carried out. Blackmoor and West Buckland Hill are covered in markings and repairs are anticipated.

d) Update on fingerpost sign refurbishment. A quote has been received from West Country Blacksmiths Ltd to produce the Ruggin replacement finger for the signpost at Manleys with double sided wording for £689.98 including painting. It was felt double sided wording was not required; single side wording would be sufficient. It was agreed to accept the quote after checking if the cost could be reduced if the wording was reduced to single sided.

It was noted that it is important to keep everyone involved with the project informed about what is happening.

Cllr Silverlight asked for health and safety advice on painting the signpost at Ruggin as it is close to a road with a 60mph speed limit. Cllr Lacey said the risk should be mitigated with a risk assessment and barriers and minimal signage, which he agreed to loan.

e) Request made to Cllr Silverlight that the Council considers supporting a 40mph speed limit in Blackmoor, from the end of the 30mph zone in West Buckland to just past Mole Hill at the bottom of Buckland Hill. Cllr Ms Drury felt the Parish Council should support the residents request even though the chances of enforcing the speed limit was slim to none and the chances of getting it the same. Cllr Nutt said the speed of vehicles travelling through the village was increasing. Cllr Mitton noted that although people do drive over the speed limit it does keep speed down. It was agreed to support the request.

f) Any other highways matters. A lorry trailer has been parked in the layby close to Foxmoor Business Park for more than three weeks without being moved and it was thought to have been abandoned. Markings on the trailer have been painted out and there was concern that waste was being stored in the trailer. Two councillors have reported this trailer as abandoned to SW&T but they have said it is too big for them to remove and closed the cases created when the reports were made.

A volunteer group, including Cllr Ms Drury, is repainting the railings around the war

memorial. More paint will be purchased by Cllr Silverlight and the painting will be completed before Remembrance Sunday. It was agreed the Parish Council should purchase a first aid kit for volunteers to use when they are carrying out manual work.

201/09/20. To note any written reports from:

- a) **County Cllr.** A written report was circulated by email prior to the meeting.
- b) **District Cllr.** No report.
- c) **Police.** The Police Report for August was circulated by email at the start of September. There were 181 calls into 101 and 999 for the Wellington Rural Beat for the month and 16 calls to police for ASB across the whole of the rural beat. It has been reported that a van has been seen driving around the Wellington town and Wellington rural areas taking metal left on people's drives. There was a warning to ensure items are put out of sight of anyone looking onto your drive/garden.

202/09/20. Finance:

- a) **To inform the Council of the pay award for Clerks agreed by NALC/SLCC and backdated to 1st April 2020.** The pay award was noted and the increase to the Clerk's salary authorised. The Council gave their grateful thanks to the Clerk for what had been a difficult six months.
- b) **To agree and authorise any payments.** The following payments were agreed:
Mrs J Larcombe - £363.61 Clerk's salary, home working expenses for August, Zoom subscription & Ordnance Survey map (Payment ref 2021/14)
Concrete Sports Ltd - £2,580.00 concrete table tennis table (Payment ref: 2021/15)

It was noted that the council had agreed to pay a grant towards the refurbishment of the listed sign for the Blackbird public house. As this has now closed as a public house and it has become a bed and breakfast establishment the sign will not be refurbished and the grant will not need to be paid. This could now be used for another project. It has been suggested that a bench be purchased and sited near the table tennis table.

203/09/20. Playing Field

- a) **Any points to note from the regular inspections.** Cllr Nutt reported that swing seats will need to be replaced. The Play Area Inspection has been ordered but there is a back log due to Covid. Once the report has been received replacing the swing seats can be done at the same time as any other work required.
- b) **Review of Playing Field Policy.** There was concern that someone organising a small and well organised dog training group would be expected to ask the Parish Council's permission to use the field while anyone could just walk a dog that was not under control in the playing field. It was explained that no set of rules covers everything, and you cannot legislate for everything. The policy shows intent. An explanation will be added to the large event section.
The Policy was agreed and will be reviewed in two years' time.
- c) **Any other Playing Field matters.** It was suggested that a bench should be purchased to site against the play area railings, at a safe distance from the concrete table tennis table. It was decided to obtain quotes for a bench made of recycled materials.

204/09/20. To report on the meeting hosted by Wellington Town Council to consider Parish Councils adjoining Wellington working together in light of the unitary bids for Somerset. To discuss West Buckland Parish Council's future participation in the group. The notes from the meeting had been circulated to councillors. It was widely agreed that the local Town and Parish Councils need to begin to work together now and

going forward rather than waiting until a Unitary Authority comes into effect, to best manage the change that is coming. The meeting agreed that the term Network Partnership would be used for this group which could also include community groups. Cllr Mitton and the Clerk represented West Buckland at the meeting. Cllr Mitton said that the town and parish councils involved would need to be equal partners and he would not want to see Wellington Town Council take over. The One Somerset business case talks about networking, and the network partnership group felt this should be bottom up. The Stronger Somerset business case tries to tie it in with commissioning groups which Cllr Mitton feels is not the right way. Cllr Mitton and the Clerk will continue to attend meetings to explore as a working group.

205/09/20. Update on work to meet website accessibility requirements. The Clerk is continuing to update documents on the website to make them 'accessible' and to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1.

206/09/20. Update on co-option of a Councillor. SW & T did not receive a request for an election and a councillor can now be co-opted. Details have been put on the website, notice board and Facebook page and anyone interested is asked to email or write to the Clerk saying why they are interested in becoming a councillor and to also provide some information about their background and the skills, they feel they could bring to the role of a councillor. The closing date for applications is 19th September and a decision will be made at the meeting on October 27th. It was noted that there is no representation from the Ham area on the Parish Council.

207/09/20. Correspondence on One Somerset and Stronger Somerset Proposals and report on Stronger Somerset remote meeting. Cllr Mitton had attended the Stronger Somerset Zoom meeting. This meeting was arranged at noticeably short notice. He pointed out that if Somerset is split in two as proposed there will be more areas of deprivation in the west area and less in the east area. The richest parishes are in the west area. There was talk about creating a Children's' Trust and taking child social care away from the unitary. Stronger Somerset wants to set up a combined authority with a mayor for strategic issues. He felt the problem with One Somerset was geography, what do Minehead and Wincanton have in common as they are two hours travelling distance apart? The Stronger Somerset business case has not been accepted by George Eustace, Secretary of State. Both unitary business cases want to devolve things down to parishes.

208/09/20. To decide either to pay to empty the rubbish bin at the entrance to the Village Hall or to remove it. SW & T have quoted £5.40 plus VAT per collection to empty the bin and it would need to be emptied weekly. The Village Hall Committee will be asked if they would reconsider their decision. A councillor was aware that one of their members has said they would be willing to empty the bin. While the hall has been closed their waste bin has been empty and has not needed emptying. The cleaners have also not been working regularly. If no one is willing to empty the bin it will be removed.

Cllr Thorne joined the meeting at this point.

209/09/20. Climate Emergency Fund: to discuss any possible projects that the Parish Council could apply for funding towards. Suggestions for projects included electric car charging points; a water fountain outside the Village Hall; a wildflower meadow in the playing field and extensive landscaping, perhaps including Taunton Model Engineers. It was suggested that the school should get involved. Waterrow has a community oil scheme where

residents put in a bulk order to a local supplier on a certain date in each month and deliveries can be made in a local area on the same day. This reduces the cost of the oil and reduces the carbon footprint. There can be difficulties for larger oil tankers trying to access some properties. Cllr Mitton said Wessex Water gave out grants for water fountains last year, The Clerk will contact the Village Hall secretary to find out if the Village Hall Committee would be interested in getting involved. Cllr Thorne encouraged the Parish Council to apply in the first tranche if they decide to make an application.

- 210/09/20. County Cllr.** Cllr Thorne said he would be happy to support the request for a 40 mph speed limit at Blackmoor. Highways will ask for accident figures and information from SIDS.
- 211/09/20. Remembrance Sunday arrangements (Covid-19 guidance required).** Due to Covid-19 there is uncertainty about arrangements. Cllr Silverlight has the wreath from last year and said he was willing to read out the names as usually happen. A donation will be made to the Royal British Legion but a new wreath will not be required.
- 212/09/20. To discuss the recent serious industrial fire at Pool industrial estate, the second in two years.** Cllr Nutt declared a personal interest as he has a studio there. It was decided to ask the Fire Service for a report on the fire and to discuss it at a future meeting.
- 213/09/20. Correspondence to note.** The following correspondence was noted:
Information on an online ‘Discover the River Culm’ event from the Connecting the Culm team.
- 214/09/20. Any urgent business at the Chairman’s discretion.** There was no urgent business.
- 215/09/20. Date and arrangements for the next meeting.** The next meeting will be held via Zoom on Tuesday 27th October at 7.30pm.