

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 Virtual Meeting of the Parish Council held via Zoom on Tuesday 24th November 2020 at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr's Mrs M Blogg (Chair), D Lacey, S Bellamy, 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.

235/11/20. To accept apologies for absence. Apologies were received from PCSO V Henderson.

236/11/20. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. There were no disclosures.

237/11/20. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 27/10/20. With the following amendments the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting: 223/10/20 Buckland Hill was changed to Ruggin; 224/10/20 amended window to first window.

238/11/20. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda. There were no matters arising.

239/11/20. Democratic Period. There were no questions from the members of the public.

240/11/20. Co-option of a Councillor. Two applications had been received for the vacancy and both candidates had confirmed their eligibility to be co-opted. Candidates answered the following questions:

1. Why do you want to become a Parish Councillor?

Mr Bellamy said he was going to retire in eighteen months and was looking at what contribution he could make to village life. He was looking to have the ear of the people and acting on that. He was asked about his involvement with the Baptist Church but explained he had come from St Michael's Church, Galmington where he had been a Sunday School teacher, had cut the grass, run a Fair Trade stall once a month and had been on the PCC and Deanery Synod.

Mr Ball said he was someone who liked to beat a drum if he had something on his mind. Having listened to conversations he felt he could offer a different viewpoint to future conversations. He explained he had been influential in setting up the Village Pub Night. A friend in Chedzoy had suggested it and he had spent a year doing market research and finding out about licencing. People had taken some convincing that it would work.

2. What involvement have you had in community projects?

Mr Ball said he had spent most of his spare time for twenty one years as an Army

Reservist where he had carried out a lot of recruiting work at County Shows, schools and town centres. As a unit they had carried out community work through volunteer days. Mr Bellamy said his community involvement revolved around church life as the centre of the community. He had organised Mens' Awareness Weekends, cycle trips and walks and had been involved with the Christian Fellowship.

3. Are you willing to attend training sessions?

Both applicants confirmed they were willing to attend training sessions.

Both applicants were asked if they had any questions for the Parish Council. Mr Bellamy asked what the Council's number one priority for West Buckland was. Cllr Mitton said it was to serve the people of West Buckland and to make sure their interests are represented, including at district and county level. Cllr Silverlight said it was to deliver value for money for the people of West Buckland. Cllr Mrs Drury said she agreed with Cllr Mitton and Cllr Silverlight and added the Council had a genuine interest in making things better for the people in West Buckland and to get things going for them.

A Zoom poll was used for councillors to vote for their preferred candidate. Simon Bellamy received the most votes. He was witnessed signing a Declaration of Acceptance of Office Form and joined the meeting as a councillor.

Cllr Bellamy thanked Mr Ball for starting the Pub Night.

241/11/20. Planning:

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

46/20/0016 (Amendments to plans) Development of site with the erection of a visitor centre, pannier hall, artisan workshops and beacon for the House of Somerset with associated access improvements, parking and drainage infrastructure on land adjoining Foxmoor Business Park, Chelston, Wellington.

It was noted that the tower had been removed from the plans. Wellington Town Council had commented that the proposed tower would detract from the visual attraction of West Buckland Church. The Department for Transport has asked for a six month delay so they can assess the impact of the proposed development on Chelston Roundabout

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council has noted the changes in the amended plans and consider this a better proposal.

46/20/0020 CQ Prior Approval for proposed change of use from 3 agricultural barns to 4 dwellings (Use Class 3) and associated building operations at Silver Street Farm, Silver Street, West Buckland.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council recommends refusal because of concerns about the safety of the entrance and egress from the site onto a narrow stretch of Silver Street as the visibility splay is not wide enough for a road with a 60mph speed limit.

The member of the public was concerned about the loss of the farmyard and said it was difficult for land based businesses to find premises to store their equipment and operate from. It was explained that this was not a planning consideration for this application.

46/20/0022 Erection of a single storey extension for storage to the side and a single storey extension to the north corner to enclose delivery hardstanding area at VPK UK Holdings Ltd, Ham Road, Chelston Business Park, Chelston.

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

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

46/20/0019 Replacement/rebuild of garage and store at The Meadows, Wellington Road, West Buckland. Decision: conditional approval granted.

c) To inform councillors the virtual training session for Parish Councils will now be held on Tuesday 26th January 2021 6.00 – 8.00pm. This is the same night as a Parish Council meeting but councillors could attend the first part of the training. The Clerk will recirculate the link to the session.

d) Any other planning matters. It was noted that there had been some rewrites for 46/20/0015 Erection of 8 No. three storey dwellings with associated works on the car park to the Blackbird Inn, Wellington Road, West Buckland (retention of part works already undertaken) because some information in the original application was incorrect. Councillors will keep an eye on the progress of this application. Somerset West and Taunton Council has published a draft of ‘Climate Positive Planning: Interim Policy Statement on Planning for the Climate Emergency’ for public consultation. The Statement can be found on their website and via their consultation portal. The consultation will run from Monday 23 November 2020 through to Monday 4 January 2021.

242/11/20. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SCC. Nothing required to be reported.

b) To receive an update on any outstanding highways work. No update.

c) To discuss request for support to get ‘Unsuitable for large vehicle’ signs replaced at the entrance to Hockholler Lane from the A38. It was noted that there is a sign at the village end of Hockholler Lane and councillors agreed that it made sense to have a sign at both ends. The Parish Council will ask highways to provide a sign at the junction with the A38.

d) To discuss the need for verge ploughing at Sawyers Hill following hedge trimming. Since the hedges have been cut back by the contractor paid by the Parish Council, traffic has been doing a good job of taking the verge back. Cllr Lacey will speak to the local superintendent to find out how this can be completed properly.

e) Update on fingerpost sign refurbishment. The refurbished sign is now in place at Budgetts Cross. The fingerpost sign damaged by a Hi-Line vehicle has been repaired and put back in place. West Country Blacksmiths Ltd have sent the invoice to Hi-Line. Cllr Silverlight has the arm for the signpost at Manleys but needs assistance to put it back in place. Cllr Lacey agreed to help with this.

f) Any other highways matters. There were no other highways matters.

243/11/20. To note any reports from:

a) County Cllr. Cllr Thorne’s report was circulated by email prior to the meeting. He told councillors he had queried with the SW & T Planning Department why the statement of affordable housing which accompanies application 46/20/0015 talks about providing seven affordable homes because the application was for 15 houses when it is actually for eight. The answer was that they didn’t know why the agent did that, and he was asked to submit a second statement, which he did, and which was also wrong because that one talked about the site being larger than 0.5 hectares, which it is not. So, the agent has been asked to submit a third statement! However, the planning officer did point out that because West Buckland is a designated ‘protected area’ its trigger point is five homes, which means 25 per cent affordable housing would be required within the proposed eight dwellings scheme, of which 60 per cent need to be social rent and 40 per cent intermediate properties. As it would actually only be two properties which were social, it would be challenging to achieve that split, so it is under discussion. There were concerns about parking arrangements for the Blackbird Inn’s bed and breakfast business as vehicles could be backing out onto the A38. There was a question about whether it was in Cllr Thorne’s division and he thought it was in Upper Tone. Cllr Mitton said he thought County wards

stuck to parish boundaries. The B & B parking arrangements will be added to the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.

He reported that he had spoken to SCC highways engineers about the problem of HGVs getting stuck in Hockholler Lane. Their response was that they are not aware of any signage ever being on the A38 saying the lane is unsuitable for HGVs. Looking at Google images going back to May 2009, there have not been any signs in that timeframe, although there are at the other end. Even so, lorries still have the right to use the road if genuine access is required and there are a couple of farms on the lane which would need to be accessed. One of the traffic staff will drive the route to check it out after the current lockdown has been lifted, probably early January, and will give him a further opinion then. Personally, he feels if there are signs at one end, it makes sense that there should also be some at the other end.

He noted that more and more parishes are organising their own broadband schemes due to the debacle with CDS.

Cllr Mitton made Cllr Thorne aware of an issue regarding a previous informal consultation for a proposed diversion on Footpaths WG T29/33 and WG T29/34 at Reaphay. The footpath concerned goes straight across a field and the applicant proposed a diversion to take it around the field. There was an objection to the proposal, and it came back to the Parish Council who didn't respond as they felt the matter was between SCC and the landowner. SCC did not approve the diversion and the landowner has now closed the path. Cllr Mitton has been in contact with the Rights of Way Diversion Officer who has clarified SCC's situation with regards to diversion. Under S119 Highways Act 1980 they cannot confirm an Order that receives an objection. Instead, they have a decision to make and can either choose not to proceed with the diversion or can submit the matter to the Planning Inspectorate (PINs). PINs would then hear evidence and arguments from both sides before deciding whether or not the order can be confirmed. If they choose the first option, then the applicant is normally entitled to a refund. On the other hand the second option is a time consuming process for them and one which they are unable to recharge our costs for. Both options have significant resource implications and given those implications, they say they have to be very careful about which cases they take forward to order making. If they felt that an order was likely to be opposed then it is very unlikely that they would be able to give it any priority unless it offered substantial public benefit. One of the many reasons that the informal consultation stage is so valuable is that it allows them to gauge whether there is any opposition to the proposal. Even if the Parish Council had responded further they would not have proceeded because of the objection. Cllr Mitton said it was another example of officers making decisions and not involving councillors. Cllr Thorne has been dealing with a bridleway issue in another parish and has spoken to the Footpaths Officer about the process to divert when there is an objection. He said that SCC had a legal duty to remove any obstruction on a footpath and agreed with Cllr Mitton's comments about officers running the Council. Officers not telling him what is happening makes it look like he is not doing his job. Cllr Mitton will forward the email exchanges to Cllr Thorne.

b) District Cllr. No report.

c) Police. The Police Report for October was circulated by email in early November. There were 153 calls into 101 and 999 for the Wellington Rural Beat for the month of October 2020. 0 calls involved Wellington Without. Due to boundary changes Wellington Without became the responsibility of the Wellington Town Beat Team. The change over has been delayed as they were waiting for a new PCSO. The new PCSO has now arrived and the Town Centre team will take over WW in the next few weeks.

d) Taunton & District CAB AGM. Cllr Nutt attended the virtual AGM on behalf of the Parish Council and his written report was circulated prior to the meeting.

e) **Stronger Somerset – Locality Engagement Sessions.** Cllr Mitton reported that he had attended the five sessions which had involved seven and a half hours of networking. The idea of parish network groups has been around a while. The Wellington Parish Network Group is meeting on 25th November, but they are still at the getting to know each other stage. He felt there were problems with both unitary bids. Stronger Somerset talks about linking with commissioning groups. The message has been given that it should be brought up from the parishes and not down from the unitary and SS might change what goes into the final bid. One Somerset wants to tie in with the commissioning groups and that will not always work. Parish groupings need to be made up of parishes with common interests.

Cllr Thorne left the meeting.

244/11/20. Finance:

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

Mrs J Larcombe - £325.59 Clerk's salary and home working expenses for November, printing & Zoom subscription (Payment ref 2021/20).

Cllr C Silverlight - £6.97 Paint brushes, mini roller kit for painting fingerpost sign (Payment ref: 2021/21)

Kedel Ltd - £231.41 Bench for playing field (Payment ref: 2021/22)

SW & T - £600.91 Grass cutting at playing field & emptying dog bin (Payment ref: 2021/23)

West Country Blacksmiths Ltd - £3155.98 Repairs to fingerpost signs (Payment ref: 2021/24)

Wicksteed Leisure Ltd - £72.00 Playground inspection (Payment ref: 2021/25)

Mrs J Larcombe - £311.39 Clerk's salary and home working expenses for December (Payment ref: 2021/26)

An invoice for £223.20 is awaited from Community Heartbeat Trust for a new battery for defibrillator. It was agreed this could be paid when it is received (Payment ref: 2021/27)

Bank charges of £18.00 will be taken from the account on 31.12.20

£4,945.45 will be transferred from the Instant Access account to the Current account to return the Current account to £500.00 on 31.12.20.

b) **Budget planning for 2020-21.** A draft budget for 2021-22 was discussed (Appendix A). The Precept will be agreed at the meeting on 5th January when SW&T will have provided the correct tax base for West Buckland for 2021-22.

245/11/20. Playing Field

a) **Any points to note from the regular inspections.** There were no points to note.

b) **Update on the purchase of a bench and installing.** The bench has been ordered and an invoice received. Arrangements will be made for it to be delivered to Cllr Lacey's business address. Once it is delivered a decision will be made on its installation.

c) **Any other Playing Field matters.** The report from Wicksteed for the play area inspection was discussed. Wicksteed have provided a quote for the work. Two further quotes will be obtained, one from GB Sports and Leisure and one from SNC (South West).

246/11/20. Footpaths:

a) **An update on issues on Footpaths WG14/11, T29/34 and T29/39.**

WG14/11 - SCC Rights of Way Department has agreed to replace the stile in the field below the playing field with a kissing gate.

The issue regarding Footpaths T29/34 and T29/39 was discussed under item 243/11/20. It will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

b) Any other footpath matters. Cllr Mitton reported that he had been checking some of the other footpaths in the parish and had noticed that the footpath map provided to the Parish Council reads differently to the Definitive Footpath Map.

247/11/20. Climate Emergency Fund: to report on a funding application for solar panels for the Village Hall. Quotes for solar panels for the village hall roof were obtained from ARC and Lightworks. An application for £8,500 of funding was made in the name of the Parish Council, in the first window for applications. A decision is expected in January 2021. If the application is successful funding will be awarded to the Parish Council and if the Parish Council orders and pays for the solar panels it will be able to reclaim the VAT. The solar panels can then be given to the Village Hall Committee. A third quote was received after the application was submitted and this one is more expensive than the first two quotes. If the application is successful there will need to be further discussion on which quote to accept and if further money is required, where that will come from. There had been concern about the height of the leylandii in Frog Lane causing a shading problem. Cllr Mrs Drury said the solar panels would be facing East/West and it wouldn't be a problem.

248/11/20. Correspondence to note. There was no further correspondence.

249/11/20. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion. The Chair reminded councillors to email the Clerk if they need procedural advice rather than sending an email which included everyone on the council.

Fifteen to twenty people attended the Remembrance Service at the War Memorial on 8th November. Cllr Silverlight will remove the remembrance wreath from the memorial after Christmas.

250/11/20. Date and arrangements for the next meeting and meeting dates for 2021. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 5th January via Zoom.

Other 2021 meeting dates will be on the last Tuesday of the month: 26th January; 23rd February; 30th March; 27th April; 25th May; 29th June; 27th July; 31st August; 28th September; 26th October and 30th November.