

## WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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### **The Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Parish Council held via Zoom on Tuesday 23rd February 2021 at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Cllrs Mrs M Blogg (Chair), D Lacey, S Bellamy, Ms S Drury, D Mitton, J Nutt and C Silverlight,

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

**280/02/21. To accept apologies for absence.** Apologies were received from District Cllr R Habgood and PCSO Hallett.

**281/02/21. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda.** There were no disclosures of interest.

**282/02/21. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 26/01/21.** Following an amendment within item 270/01/21 the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

**283/02/21. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda.** There were no matters arising.

**284/02/21. Democratic Period.** The members of the public that were present did not wish to speak.

#### **285/02/21. Planning:**

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

**46/21/0003** Erection of a single storey extension to the side and porch to the front of Gortnell Farm, Gerbestone Road, West Buckland.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council has no objections.

**46/21/0004** Change of use of former village shop storeroom, with erection of single storey extension to the front, to form 1 No. self-contained dwelling together with parking and associated works at 2A Dyers Close, West Buckland.

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

- i) Overdevelopment of the site
- ii) The design is out of keeping with the streetscene.

**46/21/0005** Erection of industrial unit for use as workshop, store and sales space (Class B2) with associated trade counter, parking and works on land off Castle Road, Chelston Business Park, Wellington.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council are concerned whether customer parking is adequate.

- b) **To receive decisions from planning applications determined by SWT Council.** No decisions received.
- c) **Any other planning matters.** No other planning matters.

#### **286/02/21. Highways.**

- a) **To note any required work to be reported to SCC.** During recent heavy rain there was flooding around Park Bridge, Sawyers Hill and on the A38 at Willowbrook Nurseries. In February 2020 Cllr Mrs Blogg and Cllr Nutt met with Josian Lebrun, SCC Flood Risk Management Engineer, to look at the build up of silt under the bridge. It was hoped that work would have been carried out before the winter to remove the build-up of silt. The owner of West View has given permission for access through his property at any time. Details of other landowners were given to Mr Lebrun so that he could contact them. The Clerk will email Mr Lebrun for an update.
- b) **To receive an update on any outstanding highways work.** The damage to the verge and ditch at Buckland Farm Road/Ruggin Road has still not been repaired and it is a danger for cars. Cllr Ms Drury has reported this 4 times and Cllr Thorne was asked to follow this up. The signs used for previous work at this location have still not been removed.
- c) **Proposal from PCSO Hallett to restart the Community Speedwatch Scheme.** The Clerk reported that PCSO Hallett had emailed her to ask for help to advertise setting up Community Speed Watch on Crownhill. A parishioner who is a resident on Crown Hill had contacted him to raise concerns about the speed of vehicles around the village. The Clerk emailed PCSO Hallett the link to the Community Speed Watch (CSW) page on the parish website where there already is a request for volunteers. The Parish Council set up a CSW scheme several years ago, with the support of PCSO Fyne, but has been unable to keep it going because of the lack of volunteers. The details on the website page have been updated. It was noted that CSW schemes in other villages had found that most of the people who were found to be speeding were people who lived in the parish.
- d) **Monitoring of over-weight lorries using Sawyers Hill and Crown Hill.** The same parishioner also explained an issue with over-weight lorries using Crown Hill to PCSO Hallett and he will be monitoring this. If these lorries can be witnessed and identified Fixed Penalty notices can be enforced in order to prevent it from happening again.
- e) **To discuss the speed limit in the village.** Cllr Drury suggested a 20 mph Zone for the village rather than 20 mph speed limits in certain parts of the village. Councillors felt this was a better way forward. Cllr Mitton said he was concerned about the cost to parishioners. The Clerk will contact SCC Traffic Management about this suggestion. It was noted that Oake and Bradford-on-Tone both still have 30 mph speed limits.
- f) **To consider a request for a feasibility study on the implementation of a 20mph speed zone to replace the current 30mph speed zones in West Buckland as a whole and a stand-alone study for Dyers Close.** This request was subsumed by the proposal for a 20 mph zone for the village. If that is unsuccessful this request will be considered again.
- g) **Any other highways matters.** No other highways matters.

#### **287/02/21. To note any reports from:**

- a) **County Cllr.** A written report from Cllr Thorne was circulated prior to the meeting. He spoke about issues VPK (formerly Rigid Containers), Chelston Business Park, had had with Highways objections to a planning application that would provide a better working environment and secure jobs. Highways have now relented but a decision has not been made yet because the officer is on sick leave. The panel who will be looking at applications to the Climate Emergency Fund will be meeting in early March, but Cllr

Thorne is not expecting to hear their decisions before April. Further information has been requested and the panel will now be comparing projects against additional criteria in addition to the previous ones. Cllr Ms Drury was concerned that the quotes that had been requested in October were now out of date and costs are likely to have increased. There is a risk that there might not be enough money to complete the projects. Cllr Thorne said this issue had also been raised by other parishes. The Government has now started the consultation on the Local Government Review of the One Somerset and Stronger Somerset unitary proposals. The consultation period runs for 8 weeks until 19<sup>th</sup> April and responses can be made online, by email or in writing. The consultation asks for views on the 2 proposals but there is also room to respond that you want to keep the existing structure or to suggest another. Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, is suggesting postponing the County Council elections until May 2022. Purdah would start in late March so this could be quite confusing. Cumbria and North Yorkshire are also carrying out a consultation on unitary proposals. A decision should be made in June or July and work would start in the Autumn to become a shadow authority in 2022 and the authority in 2023. There will be an item on the consultation on the agenda for the next meeting. SALC will be holding meetings for parishes. Cllr Mitton felt the Wellington Network Group would also want to discuss this. Cllr Mitton was concerned about SCC staff involvement in Covid vaccinations. He has volunteered to help and has been turned down twice as the NHS has too many volunteers. He asked Cllr Thorne to take this up with SCC as he felt SCC staff should be carrying out their SCC work rather than working in Covid.

**b) District Cllr.** No report.

**c) Police.** PCSO Hallett's Police report for February was circulated by email on 14<sup>th</sup> February. He reported that there had been 11 calls into 101 and 999 for West Buckland since February's report on the 21/01/2021. These calls involved: one abandoned 999 call; two concern for welfare; one RTC; three road related incidents; two missing people and two suspicious behaviour. Out of the 11 Calls made to either 999 or 101, three of the calls were to the same address which is a registered care home. One of the concerns for welfare and the abandoned 999 call were from the elderly resident's address noted from last month. The resident is getting the assistance they need but unfortunately the dementia is getting worse. There were 0 calls to police for ASB in West Buckland in February.

**d) Wellington Parish Network meeting 10<sup>th</sup> February.** Cllr Mitton reported that he had attended a meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February but did not know why they had held a meeting as the the majority of the discussion was conjecture about the unitary proposals. The Clerk was unable to attend as she had another meeting. The next meeting is planned for the 17<sup>th</sup> March.

#### **288/02/21. Finance:**

**a) To agree and authorise any payments.**

SW&T - £213.41 5<sup>th</sup> November cut of grass at the playing field and dog bin emptying (Payment ref: 2021/30)

Mrs J Larcombe - £311.39 Clerk's salary, home working expenses for February and Zoom subscription (Payment ref: 2021/31).

Community Heartbeat Trust - £105.60 new pads for the defibrillator (Payment ref: 2021/32). Cllr Silverlight reported that he had fitted the new pads today.

The Clerk reported that an invoice from SALC for £25.00 had been paid since the last meeting (Payment ref: 2021/29). This was for the Essential Councillor virtual training course that Cllr Bellamy had attended.

The Clerk reported that the bank balances on 23.02.21 were Current account - £475.00

and Instant Access - £21,640.80. £655.40 will be transferred from the Instant Access account to the Current account to return the Current account to £500.00 once the payments agreed at the meeting have been made.

**b) To review the Council's Financial Regulations.** The Clerk had reviewed the Council's Financial Regulations and put forward the following amendments:

1.6 change to - Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.

Add - 11.1 c) The full requirements of the regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time)

Remove - 11.1 K) The European Union Procurement Directive shall apply and the terms of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 including thresholds shall be followed.

The amendments were agreed, and the Financial Regulations will be updated.

**c) Contract for grass cutting and path clearing.** A quote from SW&T for cutting the grass in the playing field and play area 12 times at £105.30 + VAT per cut, total £1263.60 + VAT, was accepted. This is for the period March – November 2021.

Their quote of £6 + VAT per collection to empty the dog bin 52 times, once per week was also accepted. The total cost will be £312.00 + VAT.

Mr Stansworth will not be carrying out work for the Parish Council in the next financial year and a new contractor will need to be found to cut the grass around the War Memorial, the triangle of grass at Church Drive, an area of grass at Peacocks Close and Silver Street Green and to clear 3 footpaths. This will be advertised on the Parish Council's Facebook page. Power was delegated to Cllr Lacey and the Clerk to find a contractor and arrange for them to carry out the work.

#### **289/02/21. Playing Field**

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

**b) Any other Playing Field matters.** When the weather improves the new seat will be installed close to the table tennis table.

**290/02/21. To discuss any footpath matters.** Cllr Silverlight reported that he had had a phone call from the owner of Reaphay who had told him that the footpath going through his property was a permissive path. He would like to pursue a diversion order for Footpaths T29/33 and T29/34 and has some suggestions. He has suggested a site visit and Cllr Mitton suggested that he met with the landowner as the Parish Paths Liaison Officer rather than the Parish Council. The Parish Council will avoid any problems with predetermination by not getting involved at this stage. It is not the intention of the landowner to stop walkers, he just wants to separate dogs and walkers from livestock. Arrangements will be made for a site meeting between the landowner and Cllr Mitton.

The blocked footpath had not been reported and Cllr Mitton has reported that it is blocked from both ends.

#### **291/02/21. Broadband issues in parts of the parish**

**a) An update on schemes to improve broadband speed in the parish.** Cllr Ms Drury has visited all of the West Buckland residents who are on the Pitminster exchange to make them aware of Pitminster's scheme to improve broadband speeds and to give them the opportunity to sign up. Mr Loveridge is working on a scheme for Blackmoor and the Clerk has put him in touch with Tony Watkins, Business Development Executive for Airband.

**b) To discuss what else the Parish Council could consider doing.** Cllr Nutt is putting together a survey to find out more about broadband speeds and issues in the parish.

**292/02/21. To review the Council's Standing Orders.** The Clerk had reviewed the Standing Orders and proposed an addition - 3y. Meetings can be held remotely until 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 following The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 coming into force April 2020 to allow local authorities to conduct meetings remotely. This was agreed and the Clerk will update the Standing Orders. She noted paragraph 22 - Relations with the Press/Media. Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media. The Council does not have a policy and she felt that this is something the Council should put in place. Her suggestion was to have a Communications Policy which could include the Social Media Policy and Policy of Recording of Council Meetings. A working group of Cllr Ms Drury, Cllr Mitton, Cllr Nutt and the Clerk will put together a draft Communications Policy for the next meeting.

**293/02/21. Correspondence.** There was no further correspondence.

**294/02/21. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion.** There was no urgent business.

**295/02/21. Date and arrangements for the next meeting.** The next meeting will be held on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021 via Zoom.