

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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Present: Cllr's C Silverlight (Chair), D Lacey, S Bellamy, Ms S Drury, D Mitton and J Nutt.
In attendance: Mrs M Blogg, County Cllr J Thorne and one member of the public.

01/05/21. Election of Officers

a) Chairman. Mrs M Blogg took the chair, as the Chair since the last Annual Parish Council meeting in 2019 and asked for nominations. Cllr Charles Silverlight was proposed by Cllr D Mitton and seconded by Cllr Ms Drury. There were no other nominations. Cllr Silverlight was unanimously elected and signed the Acceptance of Office (Chairman) Form.

Cllr Silverlight took the Chair and Mrs Blogg left the meeting.

b) Vice-chair. Cllr D Lacey was proposed by Cllr Ms Drury and seconded by Cllr Bellamy. There were no other nominations. Cllr Lacey was unanimously elected as Vice-chair.

02/05/21. To accept apologies for absence. Apologies were received from PCSO Hallett. Cllr Thorne had advised that he would join during the meeting.

03/05/21. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. Cllr Silverlight declared a personal and pecuniary interest in item 11/05/21 a) as he had submitted an expense claim.

04/05/21. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 27/04/21 as an accurate record. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

05/05/21. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda. No matters arising.

06/05/21. To discuss risk assessment for meeting. A risk assessment for the meeting, written by Cllr Mitton, was circulated prior to the meeting. In addition to the Parish Council there would be space for fifteen members of the public to attend the meeting and socially distance as the meeting was being held in the main hall.

07/05/21. Democratic Period. The member of the public who has been leading on the Blackmoor Community Fibre Project updated the Parish Council and reported that Openreach had unilaterally closed the project down. After repeated unsuccessful attempts to contact Openreach a letter had been sent to Rebecca Pow MP. Openreach told her that they would have to reinforce the fibre connection to Wellington to be able to carry out the Blackmoor project. All their funding had been spent and it would cost £7,000/household. In addition, they said that the scheme was no longer eligible for funding. Airband have no immediate plans for a scheme for Blackmoor so there is absolutely nothing now. He said the whole thing is utterly shambolic and a disgrace. He had wasted hours and hours of his time and Openreach hadn't had the decency to contact him and inform him directly. Cllr Ms

Drury reported that she had attended a virtual meeting organised by the Blackdown Hills Parish Network where it was reported that Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) have said that they do not want any more government money as it would hinder another scheme and they will not be doing anything for the area until 2025. There was concern that everyone is being told different things. It was agreed that the Parish Council would write to Rebecca Pow MP to tell her that the information she has been given is not correct and ask her to investigate. Cllr Ms Drury to pass onto the Clerk the information that she has been told. Pitminster have got as far as a contract with Openreach but the vouchers they were going to use to pay for it are no longer eligible.

08/05/21. Planning:

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

46/21/0011 Proposal: Improvements to vehicular access to Pumping Station, Hockholler Road. West Buckland.

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

b) To receive decisions from planning applications determined by SWT Council. No decisions received since the last meeting.

c) To note that consideration of the Lidl planning application has been postponed and to decide whether the Council needs to give any further consideration to this application. Cllr Mitton advised the Parish Council that consideration of this application by the SWT Planning Committee had been postponed because SWT are involved in legal arguments with Lidl regarding this application. It was agreed that the Parish Council would voice support for the conditions laid down in the Officer's report.

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

09/05/21. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SCC. Cllr Ms Drury reported that the damaged ditch at Buckland Farm Road/Ruggin Road is now completely trashed and is causing flooding. The damage to this ditch and the verge was caused by an HGV and reported to SCC early in the year but has still not been dealt with. Signs put in place by SCC when they carried out work to the ditch just before the incident have still not been removed. The Clerk will contact SCC and ask when they are going to do something, pointing out to them how long ago this was first reported.

b) To receive an update on any outstanding highways work. It was reported that the high kerb at the end of Dyers Close has been freshly marked. As services have been marked it is expected that the work to put in a tactile crossing will be carried out soon.

d) Update on requests to Highways for a speed check, dropped kerb, sign at Hockholler and 40 mph speed limit request. The Clerk reported that the replacement sign for the A38 end of Hockholler Lane (Warning that the road is unsuitable for HGV's) should be put in place in July. There has been no response to the request for a speed check. Cllr Thorne warned that SCC might want to be paid to do this. Despite the Clerk emailing Kate Brown again about the request for a mph speed limit she has still not replied. There has been no response to the request for a dropped kerb. The Clerk will chase up all these issues again.

e) To discuss supporting West Buckland Primary School's request for

funding for signs to encourage better parking around the school. Mr Mann, the new Headteacher at the Primary School has contacted the Parish Council to say that since joining the school in September one of the biggest, and most persisting issues he has had to try and deal with is parking, particularly from parents upsetting the school's neighbours. He has recently purchased a large sign to try and reenforce his message in the newsletter each week, but he now feels that more needs to be done. Having worked in other schools and seen other traffic problems and thinking about the return to all children leaving at the same time in September, he is proposing to the school's governors that four additional signs are purchased at a cost of £165 each. He asked if the Parish Council had any grants for such schemes. Cllr Ms Drury said she didn't understand why there aren't double yellow lines opposite the France Lane junction. Councillors were concerned that parents would not take much notice of the signs. The Clerk will reply to Mr Mann asking him to get permission from SCC for the signs and to then come back to the Parish Council. It was noted that there are no longer any warning signs that drivers are approaching a school. It was believed that these were removed when the 20mph zone was put in place. There will be an item on the agenda for the next meeting to discuss parking around the school.

f) Any other highways matters. Cllr Ms Drury, Cllr Nutt and Cllr Silverlight have painted the fingerpost sign at Manleys. Cllr Lacey put the replacement arm on. The next signs to be painted are the ones at Birdcage Cottage and Chelston.

10/05/21. To note any reports from:

a) County Cllr. Cllr Thorne's written report was circulated by email prior to the meeting. He told the meeting that SCC are going to find an additional £350,000 to give grants to some of the Town and Parish Councils that were unsuccessful in their applications to the Climate Emergency Grant Scheme. Cllr Mitton asked if the Secretary of State had commented on the Stronger Somerset poll and the wastage of public money. Cllr Thorne said the Secretary of State had written to all four District Councils in the strongest terms and asked for an explanation as to why it had happened and what steps they were taking to put it right. It was felt that this was an appalling tactic and undermined democracy. One Somerset felt that it was a waste of time and money and would not get involved. The poll will have no bearing on the outcome.

Cllr Thorne left the meeting.

b) District Cllr. No report.

c) Police. PCSO Hallett's report of the 19th May was circulated by email. There had been 6 calls into 101 and 999 for West Buckland between 19/04/2021 and 19/05/2021. These calls involved two road related incidents, a missing person, a road traffic collision and two abandoned 999 calls. Between 19/04 - 19/05, AW053 beat (Wellington Town Centre and South) received a total of 298 calls. Only 6 of these calls involving West Buckland shows that West Buckland is managing really well and having very few incidents. There were 0 calls to police for ASB in West Buckland between 19/04 - 19/05. PCSO Hallett has been engaging with the school throughout the last month and has arranged to attend the school for a day of engagement on the 7th July 2020. This will include giving educational talks to all years within the school as well as completed a Q&A. He has completed further speed checks due continuous report of speeders in West Buckland and is encouraging all members of the public that showed an interest in being part of a

Community Speed Watch group to contact him ASAP. He has completed regular foot patrols in West Buckland to give reassurance to members of the community and would like to encourage members of West Buckland to make contact with himself regarding any issues or concerns they may have.

The Clerk reported that she had asked about the results of the speed check and had been advised that a forty minute session had been carried out and words of advice had been given to one driver.

d) Any other reports. No other reports.

11/05/21. Finance:

a) To agree and authorise any payments.

It was resolved to make the following payments:

Mrs J Larcombe - £404.49 Clerk's salary, home working expenses for May and website domain renewal (£76.79) (Payment ref: 2122/05)

Ms K Ward - £70.00 internal audit (Payment ref: 2122/06)

Nigel Richards - £45.00 grass cutting (Payment ref: 2122/07)

Cllr Silverlight declared a personal and pecuniary interest in the following payment and was not involved in agreeing that it should be paid.

Cllr Charles Silverlight – £78.86 expenses claim for paint for the finger post signs (Payment ref: 2122/08)

b) To note any receipts and the current bank balances. No receipts reported.

The Clerk had experienced difficulties logging into online banking and was unable to report the balances.

c) To agree the annual insurance for 2021-22. The Clerk reported on the quotes she had received and it was resolved to enter into a three year agreement with BHIB Ltd with the cost of the annual insurance premium £485.00 (Payment ref: 2122/09).

d) To note the signing of the contract with ARC solar. The Clerk reported that since the last meeting in April the contract with ARC Solar had been signed. The lighting in the Village Hall has already been replaced with LED lighting. The solar panels are due to be fitted shortly. As the contract has been agreed and signed arrangements will be made to pay invoices when they are received. Payments will be reported to the next meeting.

e) To receive the report from the Internal Auditor for 2020-21. The report was noted. There were no reports of non-compliance.

f) To agree the Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21. It was resolved to agree.

g) To agree the Accounting Statement for 2020-21. It was resolved to agree.

h) To agree to sign the Certificate of Exemption for 2020-21. It was resolved to agree to sign the Certificate.

12/05/21. Playing Field

a) Any points to note from the regular inspections. Cllr Nutt reported that he was concerned that additional cracks had appeared in the wall on the playing field. As it was getting dark it was agreed that Cllr Lacey would make an early morning check and appropriate action would be taken in conjunction with the Chair, Clerk and Cllr Nutt.

It was also report that a slat on the bench in front of the hall needed replacing. The Clerk will contact the person who donated the bench and ask for them to arrange repairs.

It was agreed that Cllr Nutt would arrange to get the brackets for the goal posts welded.

b) To consider a request to use the playing field in July for a birthday party.

The request was agreed subject to the person requesting the use having insurance and a risk assessment for the event. Insurance and certification are required if there is a bouncy castle. Parking will not be allowed on the field.

c) WI plans for Golf Croquet. The Clerk has provided the WI with the details of the contractor the Parish Council is using so that they can find out how much it would cost them to get the area for the croquet cut to their requirements.

d) Any other Playing Field matters. Cllr Lacey will get the new bench fitted. It was noted that a replacement plaque is need for the Acer tree planted for the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Any item will be added to the next agenda to discuss planting a tree for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

13/05/21. Footpaths: to discuss any footpath matters. Cllr Mitton reported that the SCC Rights of Way Warden has been out to look at the landowners proposed diversion of Footpath T29/33 and T29/34 at Reaphay. The landowner is looking at an alternative diversion. Cllr Mitton will be walking more of the footpaths in the parish.

14/05/21. Broadband issues in parts of the parish.

a) An update on schemes to improve broadband speed in the parish. This was discussed under item 07/05/21.

b) Broadband survey report from Cllr Nutt. Cllr Nutt reported that the areas experiencing difficulties are Blackmoor, Chelston, Hockholler. Parts of Ham and Gerbestone Copse. It was noted that while companies quote download speeds they do not give working upload speeds and this is also very important. It was recognised that broadband is not a luxury, it is an essential.

c) Improving broadband for Very Hard to Reach premises - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) The survey was noted. Cllr Ms Drury has completed it.

15/05/21. Policies:

a) Co-option. The policy was agreed and will be reviewed in four years' time.

b) Communication. Cllr Mitton reported that this was a work in progress.

16/05/21. Local Authority Remote Meetings: Call for Evidence. Cllr Mitton suggested that four meetings a year could have to be held in person (the number of meetings a council is required to hold) and there could be flexibility for other meetings. It was noted that there had been more public engagement while meetings had been held remotely.

17/05/21. Correspondence: to note. There was no further correspondence.

18/05/21. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion. There was no urgent business.

19/05/21. Date and arrangements for the next meeting. Current Covid restrictions mean that meetings need to be held in the main hall and that is not available at 7.30pm on 29th June. The Clerk will find out what dates are available that week.

Note: it was agreed to meet at a later time on 29th June.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

Signed

Date