

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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The Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 27th July 2021 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall.

Present: Cllr's C Silverlight (Chair), S Bellamy, Ms S Drury, D Mitton and J Nutt.

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

36/07/21. To accept apologies for absence. Apologies were accepted from Cllr D Lacey.

37/07/21. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. Cllr Mitton declared a personal interest in item 46/07/21 d) as Chair of SALC.

38/07/21. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 29/06/21 as an accurate record.
The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed by the Chair.

39/07/21. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda. Cllr Nutt reported that he had spoken to Devon & Somerset Fire Service about the amount of computer waste building up outside of units at Poole Trading Estate and the waste has been removed.

It was agreed to move the County Cllr Report forward on the agenda.

40/07/21. County Cllr Report. Two written reports from Cllr Thorne had been circulated by email since the last meeting. An 'In between meetings' briefing was circulated following the Secretary of State's decision and this was followed by the usual monthly report. He spoke about the bus service improvement plan (BSIP) that SCC has to prepare as part of the Government's national bus strategy 'Bus Back Better'. This will shape future bus services in the county, and the Parish Council was asked to publicise SCC's survey through its Facebook page and website and to encourage everyone to respond, even if they don't use the bus service. Elections for the new unitary council will take place in May 2022 and there could be a shadow authority for 12 months. Holding the elections in May 2022 will mean that they will be out of line with Town and Parish Council elections which are due to be held in May 2023. The Secretary of State will be looking at bringing terms of office in line for both. The new authority will be looking at parishes to take on more and some councillors might not be willing to serve for an additional 3 years if their

current term of office is extended until 2026. From September 2021 there will be a restriction on what can be spent and major spending will need the approval by all district councils and the county council. Cllr Mitton said he was concerned about the response of the district councils to the Secretary of State's decision and was worried that any possible challenge would waste public money.

41/07/21. To note the Secretary of State's decision that there will be one unitary council for Somerset. It was agreed to bring this item forward on the agenda as the new unitary council had just been discussed. The decision that there will be one council was noted. A letter sent to all Town and Parish Councils by Cllr David Fothergill, Leader of SCC, following the decision refers to One council with 15 to 20 new Local Community Networks (LCNs) to be established to reach every corner of Somerset to give local people the chance to shape their own communities. These will have real constitutional powers to scrutinise, impact and take decisions. At its next council meeting Wellington Town Council will discuss whether they should volunteer to become part of one of the pilot LCNs. Cllr Mitton felt the Wellington Community Network should hold another meeting now the unitary decision has been made.

42/07/21. Democratic Period. Mr Loveridge, who has been leading on the Blackmoor Community Fibre Project, told the Council that he had finally been able to arrange a meeting with Rebecca Pow MP through her constituency office. The meeting is arranged for 30th July and he has also invited Cllr Ms Drury and Cllr Threlfall, who has been leading on the Pitminster Community Fibre Project. The three will meet prior to the meeting with the MP, to ensure they have all the information ready to present to her as they are concerned that she doesn't understand the issues and isn't being supported by her aides. They want to get her on side rather than alienate her. It was noted that both The Festive Lighting Company and Cave Veterinary Specialists have put in fibre broadband. As commercial businesses they will have had to pay for this at the full cost. Cllr Thorne commented that CDS were not filling in the gaps and there was a lack of joined up thinking. The Clerk noted the number of traffic orders in the Wellington area because of work being carried out by Gigaclear but they are only looking at Fibre to the Premise rather than Fibre to the Cabinet. They are not putting in new cabinets so are not looking at solutions. It was an action from the last meeting for the Parish Council to write to Rebecca Pow MP and after the meeting on 30th July Cllr Ms Drury will look at putting a letter together to keep up the pressure.

Cllr Thorne and Mr Loveridge left the meeting.

43/07/21. Planning:

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

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).

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council has considered the amended plans and recommend that this application is refused for the following reasons:

1. This would be development in the open countryside and outside of the parish settlement limit.
2. Over development of the site.

3. The design of the three storey dwellings is not in keeping with other dwellings in the area.
4. The access is unsuitable taking into account the garden centre on the opposite side of Hockholler Lane.

There was concern that people who had objected previously might not be aware of this amended application and it will be brought to people's attention through the Council's Facebook page.

46/21/0017. Conversion of an outbuilding into an annexe at Chelston Manor, , Chelston Road, Wellington. Comment: West Buckland Parish Council has no objections.

46/21/0018/LBC. Conversion of an outbuilding into an annexe at Chelston Manor, Chelston Road, Wellington. Comment: West Buckland Parish Council has no objections.

b) To receive decisions from planning applications determined by SWT Council. There were no decisions.

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

44/07/21. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SCC. Cllr Silverlight reported that he had recently walked the bridleway at Ruggin (WG14/28) and was concerned about the condition of the surface, particularly from Lake Cottage downwards. He was aware that seven years ago a torrent of water washed away part of the bridleway and the repair work included putting in cross channel tracks to try and prevent this happening again. The cross channels are now blocked, ditches need cleaning out and it was felt that there was a risk that the bridleway could suffer further significant damage if there was very heavy rain. Cllr Silverlight and Cllr Mitton (as PPLO) will take this up with the SCC Public Rights of Way Department. Cllr Ms Drury declared a personal and pecuniary interest as the joint owner of one of the properties that has responsibilities regarding upkeep of the bridleway.

b) To receive an update on any outstanding highways work. Cllr Nutt reported that he has been continuing to try to get SCC to address the removal of the silt and vegetation under Park Bridge at the bottom of Sawyers Hill. There seems to be no record of the discussion with Josian Lebrun, SCC Flood Risk Management Engineer, in February 2020 and information about landowners will need to put together again.

The road between Buckland Farm and Mousehole Nursery has been resurfaced. There are orange markings alongside the damaged ditch at Ruggin and it is hoped that repairs will soon be carried out.

It was reported that a Police Staff Enforcement Officer had been seen on a bike at the top of Sawyers Hill and by the school.

c) Update on requests to Highways for a speed check, dropped kerb and 40 mph speed limit request. The high kerb at Dyers Close is still marked for what is believed to be a dropped kerb but nothing has been done. There was no further update on the request for a dropped kerb at Frogs Lane and a 40mph speed limit on part of Buckland Hill. A map was marked to show where the Parish Council would like speed checks to be carried out in the village and this will be returned to Kate Brown, SCC Traffic Engineer.

d) Update on fingerpost sign refurbishment. The fingerpost sign close to Birdcage Cottage has been painted. The Council is now half-way through the

project to refurbish the fingerpost signs in the parish. The next sign to be painted will be the small one at Chelston and then the one at Crossways, which will be more difficult.

e) Any other highways matters. The sign that was sited beside Horseshoe Cottage to warn motorists about the ditch along the side of France Lane has been damaged and only the post remains. Cllr Bellamy will take a photo and this will be reported to Highways.

45/07/21. To note any reports from:

a) County Cllr. Discussed under item 40/07/21.

b) District Cllr. No report.

c) Police. No report.

d) Any other reports. No other reports.

46/07/21. Finance:

a) To agree and authorise any payments. It was resolved to make the following payments: Mrs J Larcombe - £310.50 Clerk's salary and home working expenses for July (Payment ref: 2122/16).

Nigel Richards - £45.00 grass cutting at Church Drive, Peacocks Close, Silver Street Green and the War Memorial (Payment ref: 2122/17).

Somerset Association of Local Councils - £310.33 annual affiliation fee (Payment ref: 2122/18).

Somerset County Council - £349.95 repayment of Climate Fund overpayment (Payment ref: 2122/19).

The Clerk reported that since the last meeting the following payments have been made:

Somerset West & Taunton Council - £725.40 cutting grass at the playing field and play area. Emptying dog bin (Payment ref: 2122/14). The invoice arrived right after the last meeting and needed to be paid before this meeting and the Council had agreed the contract for the work.

ARC Taunton Ltd - £8,328.06 for the solar panel installed on the Village Hall and a 4G router (Payment ref: 2122/15). This was paid from the SCC Climate Fund Grant and a contract had been signed for the work.

It was agreed that Cllr Silverlight could purchase more paint and paint brushes for fingerpost painting.

b) To note any receipts and the bank account balances. There have been no receipts since the last meeting. It was reported that the current account balance was £4,809.80 and the Instant Reserve Account balance was £21,686.98.

c) To receive a report on actual v budget for Quarter 1 2021-2022. The report was noted and there were no concerns.

A parishioner from Ham has emailed the Clerk to ask if the Parish Council could look at providing play equipment for an area of open space at Cobb Castle owned by SWT. It was noted that funding would have to be found from an external source before the Council could consider purchasing any play equipment and at present it is difficult to find any funding sources. Cllr Silverlight, Cllr Nutt and Cllr Mitton will have a look at the site before the next meeting.

d) Funding for Opening Up Safely and Reconnecting Communities. Cllr Mitton declared a personal interest as Chair of SALC. As part of its commitment to empowering local communities, SCC has allocated £500,000 for town and parish councils to help support the safe reopening of parish/community facilities and

ensure good prevention control measures are in place. SALC is working with SCC on this project and are managing the fund on their behalf, with support from SCC officers. Eligible items would include provision of increased cleaning, cleaning equipment and hand sanitiser, COVID-19 signage/posters, or other resources needed to support infection control measures in parish and town facilities. A grant can also be provided to a community group to do any of this and any expenses since 1st April can be applied for. Applications can also be made for funding towards projects to reconnect communities and support and re-engage people who have been very isolated during lockdown and may be concerned about mixing again. Initially all parishes can apply for up to £1,500 of funding but, if there is still funding left at the end of September, applications for projects over £1,500 and up to £5,000 will be considered. Initial applications need to be made between 1st and 30th September. Projects must commence before the end of this financial year with delivery completed by end of May 2022. Councillors were urged to think about schemes and this opportunity for funding will also be highlighted on Facebook so that ideas can be suggested. Funding opportunities for a larger project could be discussed with the Wellington Network Partnership.

47/07/21. Playing Field

a) Any points to note from the regular inspections. The hole in the surfacing under the swing is getting bigger and the Clerk will investigate how this could be repaired. It was noted that the fence around the village hall is starting to rot.

b) To discuss planting a commemorative tree/s for the Platinum Jubilee. The Clerk will contact the person who was responsible for organising the planting of the tree for the Diamond Jubilee to get their advice on a suitable variety of tree to plant for the Platinum Jubilee.

Cllr Silverlight and Cllr Ms Drury will arrange to meet with Helen from Transition Town Wellington at the playing field to discuss planting fruit trees.

c) To agree to purchase a replacement plaque for the tree planted for the Diamond Jubilee. It was agreed to purchase a 8" by 6" brass plaque at a cost of £73 to replace the damaged one beside the tree. Cllr Silverlight will arrange for the plaque to be engraved with the same wording.

d) Request to use the Playing Field for an aid station for the Ciderthon half marathon on August 15th. Permission was granted.

48/07/21. Footpaths: to discuss any footpath matters. Cllr Mitton reported that there had been a massive increase in the growth of vegetation on public rights of ways due to the weather and some have become unwalkable. He has cleared Footpath 37. Footpath 19 where it joins Footpath 37 is very difficult and Footpath 21 is also difficult. Larger scale clearance of vegetation shouldn't take place until 1st September when the bird nesting season has ended.

49/07/21. Councillor co-option. SWT did not receive a request for an election and a councillor can now be co-opted. The vacancy will be advertised.

50/07/21. Update on broadband issues. This was discussed under item 42/07/21.

51/07/21. To discuss how the Parish Council can react to the Climate Emergency. This item was deferred to a future meeting as Cllr Ms Drury will be attending Carbon Literacy training during August. The Clerk attended this training on 19th July.

52/07/21. Policies for agreement: Communication. It was resolved to adopt this policy. At a future meeting the Council will discuss how it uses Facebook to communicate with the community.

53/07/21. Correspondence: to note. The following correspondence was noted:
SCC - Somerset Bus Back Better: Stakeholder Feedback Form

54/07/21. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion. There was no urgent business.

55/07/21. Date and arrangements for the next meeting. The next meeting will be held on 31st August 2021 in the committee room of the village hall.

Signed:
Chair

Date: