

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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The Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 25th January 2022 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall.

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

In attendance: County Cllr J Thorne, Mr S Coles (Tetra Tech Planning), Mr S Godfrey (Chelston Heath LLP) and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

141/01/22. To accept apologies for absence. Apologies were accepted from Cllr C Silverlight. Apologies were received from District Cllr Habgood.

142/01/22. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. There were no disclosures.

143/01/22. Presentation from Tetra Tech Planning on plans for development on land next to the A38 and the M5 spur, Chelston Heath, Wellington. Standing Orders were suspended for this item. Mr Coles explained the masterplan had evolved since Samantha Thomas spoke to the Parish Council in September 2021. Application 46/21/0037 has been submitted by Chelston Heath LLP, which is owned by a local company who have a business at Galmington Industrial Estate. The development of Westpark 26 is coming to an end and the applicants feel this is an opportunity for a development with bespoke business units and business starter units. Use classes were outlined to Councillors. There is a big technical team behind the project. Detailed work on landscaping has been carried out and there will be a break in the tree line, a narrowing of some of the hedging and substantial green buffering. Flooding is a low risk and there will be drainage, including a pond, at the bottom of the site. A culvert from Chelston takes water down the side of the site. Chelston roundabout is a traffic consideration and this could be an opportunity to improve traffic flow on the roundabout. SCC are holding S106 contributions towards improvements to the roundabout and teamwork with SCC will be required to deliver any improvements. A whole season of ecology surveys were carried out in 2021. Bats fly along the hedges and low lighting will be required. Dormice need to be accommodated. There is additional land that could be used to deal with any concerns. Tetra Tech have been in touch with nearby homes and businesses and the plans have been drawn up to keep noise away from housing. It was reported that there had only been one objection. At this point there have been no objections from consultees but they are still waiting to hear from National Highways, SCC Highways and Ecology. They are expecting that there will be

policy hurdles to overcome. Measures for climate change and ecology have been included in the plans.

Cllr Ms Drury asked what the timescale for the build would be if permission was granted and was told two to four years.

Cllr Nutt asked if Tetra Tech had talked to the House of Somerset applicants as he was concerned there would be an overlap. He was told they had talked to the House of Somerset and it was explained that the plans for Chelston Heath are for uses more like those at Westpark 26. If there were local food, drink and craft businesses on this site it could be complementary.

Cllr Mitton asked how the applicants would ensure that the access to a Public Right of Way, adjacent to the site, wouldn't be interrupted during construction. He also asked if they had had any thoughts about the type of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) they would install. He noted that while flooding on this site is generally not a problem, run off into other areas can be a problem. He was told access to the Public Right of Way would be safeguarded and the hedgerow would be widened as a buffer. This is a legal right, and there is also an agricultural right of access, so it has to be maintained. Cllr Mitton said he was worried about claims that it would be maintained and it was further explained that they would need the access themselves. They have a local stake in the development and they realise that reputation takes a long time to build. They have had initial discussions with a couple of providers of EVCPs. Cllr Ms Drury pointed out that the EVCPs need to be ones that charge all types of electric vehicles. While water does run off, provision has to be made to contain and store water on site to allow it to run off at a slower rate. There will be an underground storage area at the top of the site to allow water to cascade to the bottom of the site. It was noted by Cllr Bellamy that the water storage and pond could be used by the Fire Service if necessary.

Cllr Bellamy asked if they were aware of plans for the proposed Taunton to Wellington Cycle Route and he passed on contact details for one of the organisers.

144/01/22. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 04/01/22 as an accurate record.

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and they were signed by the Chair of the meeting.

145/01/22. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda. There were no matters arising.

146/01/22. Democratic Period. No questions.

147/01/22. Update on broadband issues. The broadband issues are now being mentioned on the news. As mentioned in Cllr Thorne's report, Airband's programme has been slipping in recent weeks. He has asked about the impact on the roll-out of superfast fibre broadband for his county council division and not yet received answers. Cllr Ms Drury is continuing to raise her concerns with Rebecca Pow MP with no outcomes so far.

148/01/22. Planning:

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

46/21/0037 Application for Outline Planning with some matters reserved, except

for access, for the erection of a commercial development comprising of Class E g (i), (ii) and (iii), Class B2 with trade counters, food and drink uses (sui generis), other sui generis uses, access and associated infrastructure, parking, landscaping and drainage on land at Chelston Heath, Wellington.

It was noted that drainage will be looked at in more detail in the next stage of the application process. There was concern that the development could be used as a shortcut from the A38 to avoid Chelston roundabout and it was noted that left turn in and left turn out systems for vehicles are very abused. Mount Vets is an example of this. Another green field will be lost but the reasons for this could be seen. Housing developments cannot be built without creating more employment. There are no comments from National Highways or SCC Highways published on the SWT website yet. Parish Council decided to note the application at this stage and look again when the comments from the major consultees are published.

Mr Coles and Mr Godfrey left the meeting.

b) To note that 46/21/0034 Application for Outline Planning Permission, with all matters reserved, for the demolition of barn and erection of 1 No. dwelling in lieu of Class Q prior approval granted at Huntspath Farm, West Buckland Road, West Buckland has been withdrawn. Noted.

c) To receive decisions from planning applications determined by SWT Council. No decision notices received.

d) Any other planning matters. It was reported that Old Lake Cottage is due to be auctioned on 27th January with a starting price of £59,000. There is a great deal of interest.

149/01/22. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SCC. No required work reported.

b) To receive an update on any outstanding highways work. The damaged ditch at Buckland Farm Road/Ruggin Road has finally been repaired and sturdy posts have been put in where a van went into the ditch.

A hole in the kerb is alleviating the flooding problem at Frogs Lane but the water is draining into a Wessex Water system and SCC Highways will need to put in a new drainage system in the future.

The dropped kerb at the top of Dyers Close still needs attention.

c) Update on requests to Highways for a speed check and 40 mph speed limit request. This is still outstanding and the Clerk will follow up.

d) Any other highways matters. No other highways matters.

150/01/22. To note any reports from:

a) County Cllr. Cllr Thorne's written report was circulated by email prior to the meeting. The Structural Changes Order was laid before Parliament on 24th January and is expected to be passed in early to mid March ahead of the 22nd March start to the elections process.

County has now formally stood down physical committee meetings and instead put them online as 'advisory committees' until the council's annual meeting in May. They are finding it difficult to get enough councillors to attend physical meetings at the moment, and the pensions committee of which Cllr Thorne is chairman was recently inquorate despite having initially been postponed for three

weeks. Although legally the requirement is to hold physical meetings to take decisions, they can have online meetings which are 'advisory' with powers delegated to officers to carry out the decisions which the councillors would otherwise be taking. Cllr Thorne was strongly opposed to the move for several reasons, not the least being that it undermines the message that vaccination is the best form of defence against the virus but he was not consulted on the idea and was even told not to attend the meeting where the decision was taken because numbers were by agreement of all the group leaders restricted to just 17 councillors. He is also concerned about officers having more say.

Cllr Thorne is planning to present a certificate at the next meeting to mark the Climate Change project with the Village Hall that SCC awarded a grant for. Arrangements will be made to include representatives from the Village Hall Committee in the presentation.

Cllr Thorne asked whether anything had been able to be done about the dumping of pheasant and wild duck carcasses at the top of Buckland Hill. Although this had been reported to the Police, including the Rural and Wildlife Unit, and SWT Environmental Health there wasn't enough information to identify who had done this. There are no local organised shoots and it was suspected to have happened after an unorganised shoot. It appears to be the responsibility of the landowner to dispose of the carcasses.

An issue with Footpath WG14/14 was discussed. This is reported under item 154/01/22 so that it can be found easily in the future should that be necessary.

b) District Cllr. No report.

c) Police. No report.

d) Any other reports. No other reports. Cllr Bellamy reported that he will be attending a meeting about the proposed Taunton to Wellington Cycle Route and plans for the big safety ride on March 20th.

151/01/22. To consider the invitation to the next Local Government Reorganisation Advisory Board Meeting and advise that an online conference is planned for February. Cllr Mitton reported that he continues to attend these regular meetings as Chair of SALC. The meetings are open to members of the public. There is a virtual meeting on 17th February for Town and Parish Councils as a follow up to the meeting held in October 2021 which included discussions about Local Community Networks.

152/01/22. Finance:

a) To agree and authorise any payments. It was resolved to make the following payments: Mrs J Larcombe - £313.00 Clerk's salary and expenses (Payment ref: 2122/36).

Somerset West & Taunton Council - £93.60 emptying of dog bin for 3rd quarter 2021-22 once per week. The Clerk reported that the invoice she had received charged the Parish Council to empty the bin twice a week instead of once a week. SWT has been informed about the mistake and will be issuing a credit note. It was agreed to go ahead and pay for one collection per week. (Payment ref: 2122/37).

Blackdown Hills Parish Network - the Clerk explained that there was no set subscription. The suggested level of support is an annual contribution of 20- 25p per parish electoral register member, however parishes are free to subscribe a different amount. Parishes contribute varying amounts, from £50 - £250 towards the cost of running the group. West Buckland has 939 people on the current

electoral register and 20% of the parish in the AONB. Councillors agreed to pay £50 for the annual subscription this year and to review the level of payment next year (Payment ref: 2122/38).

b) To note any receipts and the bank account balances. There were no receipts since the last meeting. The current account balance is £4,660.70 and the Instant Reserve Account balance is £21,686.98.

c) To review the effectiveness of internal controls and the internal audit.

The Clerk had circulated a report prior to the meeting which reviewed the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal controls and arrangements for internal audit. The Council was satisfied with the internal controls in place and no changes were suggested. The Council was also satisfied with the internal audit arrangements and the scope.

d) To agree the appointment of the Internal Auditor for the financial year 2021-22. It was agreed to support Karen Ward.

e) To note that an application has been made to the Opening Up Safely and Reconnecting Communities Fund (Stage 3) for benches for the playing field. Noted that an application had been made for funding of £1,245.

153/01/22. Playing Field-

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

SWT has offered the Parish Council a second hand waste bin that has two compartments: one for recycling and one for general waste. The bin is still in a good condition and has been removed to be replaced with a larger one with more recycling options. It was agreed to accept the offer of the bin and SWT's quote of £75 to install the replacement bin in the playing field.

It was noted that the playing field hedges have been cut.

b) Results from the tree survey and the ordering of trees. Thirty three people responded to the online survey and thirty supported planting a seven tree orchard in a group in the lower corner of the playing field. The choice of type of fruit tree was evenly spread. Cllr Ms Drury will contact a supplier. There was some discussion about the best time to plant the trees. The representative from Wellington Transition Town had recommended November, which was before a decision had been made. It was felt bare root trees could still be planted while they were dormant. Councillors discussed who would dig the holes to plant the trees and felt a small mechanical digger would be helpful.

154/01/22. Footpaths: to discuss any footpath matters. The owners of 10 Crown Hill, West Buckland have emailed Rebecca Pow MP regarding an issue with Footpath WG14/14 which was brought to their attention when they tried to complete a sale on their property. As a result, they say they have been unable to sell the property or proceed with the purchase of their future home. They Clerk was cc'd into the email. The owners have alleged that the issue was caused by West Buckland Parish Council and TDBC failing to register the closure of original path when houses were built on it sometime between 1947 and 1952 and failing to register the deviation to a new footpath.

Copies of documents were provided to show the alterations to close the original footpath and open a new footpath, which has resulted in original path still being open and a new path apparently also open creating two paths with the same number. According to the Public Rights of Way Officer as the second footpath is

not on the Definitive Map it is not valid. According to the PROW officer the owners have three options:

- To have the definitive map altered which could take up to 20 plus years due to the current immense backlog.
- Pay to have legal completion of the original deviation order and registration of the new path taking up to 3 to 5 months
- Re submit the application to have deviation and closure of original and relocated to the new location for a cost to be met by themselves.

They feel it is unreasonable for them to have to pay the cost to correct what they believe is someone else's negligence and this should not be left to them.

The Clerk has found Parish Council meeting minutes from 1992 onwards referring to this footpath. TDBC transferred ownership of a piece of land referred to as WG14/14 in June 1998 for a nominal payment of £1 and Porter Dodson carried out the conveyancing.

Cllr Mitton reported that the information on the definitive map is different from the Path Statement. The map shows that the path cuts across two properties in Crown Hill. The producers of the map, however, always point out that people should refer to the path statement for accuracy. The Statement says the path is just west of the Crown Hill Council Houses, West Buckland and runs in a southerly direction along the western edge of two fields thence in a westerly direction for a very short distance and thence south again along the eastern edge of two fields, passing Cordings Farm and thence in a south south easterly direction along the western side of one field and across two fields to the Five Cross Way - Budgetts Cross County Road north of Georges Farm.

It was agreed that Cllr Mitton, in his role of Public Paths Liaison Officer, would contact the owners to explain this to them and he would also speak to the Footpath Warden to arrange for the footpath to be redrawn.

155/01/22. Correspondence. There was no further correspondence.

156/01/22. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion. There was no urgent business.

157/01/22. Date and arrangements for the next meeting. The next meeting will be held on 22nd February 2022 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall.

Signed:
Chair

Date: