

## WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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### **The Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 22nd November 2022 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall.**

**Present:** Cllr's C Silverlight (Chair), Ms S Drury, S Bellamy, J Nutt and A Paul.

**In attendance:** County Cllr S Wakefield and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

**101/11/22. To accept apologies for absence.** Apologies were received from County Cllr R Henley and District Cllr R Habgood.

**102/11/22. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda.** There were no disclosures.

**103/11/22. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 06/10/22 as an accurate record of the meeting.** The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

**104/11/22. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda (for information only).** It was noted that the roundabout under Junction 26 M5 has all the signage and lighting that are required to be there by law. Even though everything required by law is in place the Parish Council considers that it is still inadequate and there is room for improvement.

**105/11/22. Democratic Period.** No members of the public present.

**106/11/22. Update on broadband issues.** Cllr Ms Drury told the meeting she had given up contacting Rebecca Pow MP for help to try and get the broadband issues at Ruggin resolved. She has been emailing her once a month. She also is not getting a reply to all the emails she has sent to Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS). An upgrade to a mast has improved the 4G signal for some people but it has made it worse for Cllr Ms Drury and her neighbours. Cllr Ms Wakefield asked how many houses in their group are struggling and was told there is 9, every house that is not along the road. She said she had heard that some of these areas were going to be gone back to as part of the community scheme and she would speak to the Councillor who has responsibility at SCC.

**107/11/22. Reports:**

**a) County Councillor.** Cllr Henley was unable to attend the meeting due to a

detached retina. Cllr Ms Wakefield referred to the written report she had emailed on the 8<sup>th</sup> November, which the Clerk did not appear to have received. The report will be sent again. She reported that there had been more than 500 responses to the Local Community Networks Consultation. Boundaries will be announced in the New Year. LCN's will start slowly and the Blackdown Hills Parish Network (BHPN) will be able to feed into the councillors on the LCN. Cllr Ms Drury reported on flooding at Ruggin following heavy rain. Some ditches were cleared recently but there is a lack of grips. The mud in the runoff from fields and hedge cuttings regularly block drains. The blocked drains are being reported. Cllr Silverlight asked about how the highways department works and was told the portfolio holder is aware that it is not fit for purpose.

Cllr Ms Wakefield said 2023-24 and 2024-25 would be difficult years financially for the new Council but she felt it might then improve.

**b) District Councillor.** No report.

**c) Police.** No report.

**d) Citizens Advice Taunton AGM on 19<sup>th</sup> October.** Cllr Nutt represented the Parish Council at the AGM. The 2021-22 Annual Review presented at the AGM is available [here](#)

**e) Blackdown Hill Parish Network AGM on 10<sup>th</sup> November.** Cllr Silverlight represented the Parish Council at the AGM. He reported that Catherine Bass, BHPN Co-ordinator, is leaving that position and an Executive Officer has been appointed. The Chardstock Ecogroup gave a presentation on founding and funding an ecogroup. A business plan was circulated. Cllr Silverlight felt you needed to be involved in a steering group to find out more about what is happening.

**f) Somerset Citizens – Wellington to Taunton Cycle Route Conference 'The Pathway Ahead' on 21<sup>st</sup> October.** Cllr Bellamy represented the Parish Council at the conference and his report was circulated. He reported that the speakers had spoken positively. The cycle route will cost around £6million to build and it will take 4 years to construct. Not everyone will be as keen because of the disruption that will be caused while it is being built. This is one of SCC's top 5 initiatives.

**g) Somerset Congress of Parishes – SCOP II Conference on 5<sup>th</sup> November.** Cllr Bellamy represented the Parish Council at the conference and his notes were circulated prior to the meeting. This included a presentation on solar energy for homes.

**h) An introduction to the Rights of Way Legislation 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> November.** The Clerk attended the Zoom presentation on 11<sup>th</sup> November and Cllr Bellamy attended the one on 18<sup>th</sup> November. A link to the recording was circulated with the PowerPoint presentation. Cllr Bellamy circulated his notes.

**i) Any other reports.** No other reports.

**108/11/22. Co-option of a councillor.** Adrian Paul was unanimously elected as a councillor. Proposed by Cllr Ms Drury and seconded by Cllr Bellamy.

**109/11/22. Planning:**

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

**46/22/0019** Erection of an agricultural building to serve as a grain store and Associated operational development including creation of a consolidated yard area on land at Hamlands, Chelston. Comment: no observations.

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

**46/22/0014/A** Display of 4 No. non-illuminated advertisement/sponsorship signs on Chelston Interchange A38/220, West Buckland. Application withdrawn.

**46/22/0005** Erection of 1 No. 3 bed detached house with garage and formation of access in the garden to the side of Llantarnam, Chelston Nurseries, Nursery Lane, Chelston (resubmission of 46/20/0023). Decision: permission refused.

**46/22/0012** Variation of Condition No's 2 (approved plans) and 4 (to extend the time to complete the road widening) of application 46/12/0007 at Blackdown Garden Centre, Wellington Road, West Buckland. Decision: conditional approval granted.

**c) Any other planning matters.** None.

#### **110/11/22. Highways.**

**a) To note any required work to be reported to SCC.** Flooding at Ruggin was discussed under item 107/11/22 a).

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

**c) Update on speed check.** Kate Brown, Traffic Engineer SCC, has emailed with regards to the request for a 40mph speed limit. SCC would not be able to consider this at this stage. Whilst acknowledging much of our rural road network is subject to the national speed limit of 60 mph, on many of these roads, the majority of drivers are travelling below – sometimes significantly below – the speed limit because of the characteristics of the roads. This is especially evident on the C and Unclassified roads where the geometric characteristics include many narrow roads, bends, junctions, and accesses. In terms of the request for a 20mph speed limit for the village the data supports the extents the Parish Council requested within the village being reduced from a 30mph to a 20mph speed limit.

Despite the Clerk replying and asking for the speed data that is supposed to have been collected there has not been a response. A further request for the data will be made.

**d) Update on repairs to fingerpost sign on Buckland Hill.** Contact details for Idverde are still awaited from Kate Brown.

**e) Fly tipping in Gerbestone Lane.** A member of the public reported to the Chair details of the fly tipping of a number of empty bottles and other materials, which included the name and address of a resident in the parish. The fly tipping should have been reported to SWT for them to take action but the member of the public did not want to do this and collected the fly tipping and disposed of it responsibly. Councillors noted that if this offense had been reported to SWT it would have likely resulted in a fine for the person whose details were included. If anyone asks someone else to dispose of waste for them they should check to ensure the person has the correct licence issued by the Environment Agency.

**f) Any other highways matters.** No other highways matters.

#### **111/11/22. Finance:**

**a) Agreement of NJC pay scales.** Since the last meeting the NALC Pay Scales

for 2022-23 have been agreed and the recommendation is that the increase should be backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022. It was agreed to pay the Clerk the increase to her pay scale and back date it to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

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

Mrs J Larcombe - £504.94 Clerk's salary and expenses for November including backpay (Payment ref: 2223/30)

Cllr S Bellamy - £21.60 mileage claim for SCOP II Climate Conference at Somerton (Payment ref: 2223/31)

Wicksteed Leisure Ltd - £144.00 play area inspection (Payment ref: 2223/32)

Cllr C Silverlight - £7.20 mileage claim for BHPN AGM, Otterford (Payment ref: 2223/33)

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

PKF LLP - £240.00 external audit (Payment ref: 2223/25)

SWTC - £664.20 grass cutting and emptying dog bin (Payment ref: 2223/26)

Mr N Richards – £290.00 grass cutting around the village and trimming footpaths (Payment ref: 2223/27)

Mrs J Larcombe - £301.94 Clerk's salary for October and office expenses (Payment ref: 2223/28)

Marmax Products - £792.00 accessible picnic bench made from recycled materials (Payment ref: 2223/29)

£1383.94 was transferred from the Instant Access Account to the Current Account.

**c) To note any receipts since the last meeting and the bank account balances.** No receipts since the last meeting.

The current account balance is £1,000.00 and the Instant Access Account balance is £30,556.71

£677.74 will be transferred from the Instant Access Account to the Current Account.

**d) To note the letter from the Leader of SCC and arrangements for the 2023-24 precept.** Cllr Bill Revans, Leader of SCC, wrote to all City, Town and Parish Councils on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022 to say that their 2023-24 precept would be paid as one payment in April 2023 and to update them on the challenges facing local government finances. He said the very significant national situation may lead City, Town and Parish Councils to consider carefully how they might use the greater flexibility they have in setting their precept.

**e) To start discussing the 2023-24 budget.** Councillors had initial discussions on the budget for 2023-24. The Clerk said this was the most difficult annual budget to prepare that she could remember because of the inflation rate of over 10%. She provided a comparison of budget v actual for 01.04.22 to 31.12.22 and a predicted comparison for the whole of 2022-23. For a number of years SWT has given the Parish Council an annual grant of £1705 towards the upkeep of the playing field, the Churchyard and footpaths in the parish and it is not known at this point whether this will continue when the unitary council takes control from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. The Clerk felt it would be unlikely. At present the Parish Council receives £800 towards the upkeep of the Churchyard which it pays to the PCC with an additional contribution of £450. Further discussion will take place at the next meeting when more details might be available. The precept will need to be agreed at that meeting.

**112/11/22. Update on application for funding for an EV charging point.** The Clerk has received an email to say that the grant has been agreed in principle, subject to the decision going through the proper Governance “call-in” process.

**113/11/22. Playing Field:**

**a) Any points to note from the regular inspections.** Cllr Nutt reported that a bracket on one of the goalposts has been broken.

**b) To discuss the report from the annual inspection.** The report was circulated prior to the meeting and the Clerk was asked to obtain a further quote for the repairs.

**c) Replacement of swings.** The Clerk reported that she had arranged to meet a local supplier of playground equipment to obtain a further quote for the replacement of the swings and the supply of other equipment. She suggested making an application of up to £10,000 to Awards for All for the replacement swings and another piece of equipment.

**d) New owner of field below playing field/right of access.** It was noted that the field below the playing field has been sold. The Clerk has the name of the new owner who has a right of access across the playing field.

**114/11/22. Footpaths:**

**a) Confirmation of SCC Footpath WG14/14 (Part) in the parish of West Buckland Public Path Diversion Order 2022.** Noted.

**b) Any other footpath matters.** Councillors discussed how problems on the Public Rights of Way in the parish can be reported online.

**115/11/22. Correspondence:** The following correspondence was noted:

Somerset Local Authorities Civil Contingencies Partnership - Somerset Emergency Community Contacts.

UKSPF Rural Fund. Cllr Silverlight will take a look at this survey and email his thoughts to councillors.

Councillors discussed how a warm space could be provided in the parish for those in need. Cllr Bellamy spoke about warm spaces that are already being provided in Wellington and volunteered to find out more about how they are organised and supported. It was decided to approach the Village Agent for West Buckland to ask whether they knew if there a need for this provision in west Buckland.

**116/11/22. Any urgent business at the Chairman’s discretion.** No urgent business.

**117/11/22. Date of the next meeting:** It was agreed that the Parish Council would meet on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

Signed:  
Chairman

Date: