

## WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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### **The Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 6th December 2021 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall.**

**Present:** Cllr's C Silverlight, D Lacey, S Bellamy, Ms S Drury, D Mitton and J Nutt.

**In attendance:** District Cllr R Habgood and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

- 110/12/21. To accept apologies for absence.** Apologies were received from County Cllr J Thorne.  
This meeting had been due to be held on 30<sup>th</sup> November but due to the number of apologies received from councillors the meeting was postponed and rescheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> December.
- 111/12/21. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda.** There were no disclosures of interest.
- 112/12/21. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 26/10/21 as an accurate record.**  
The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed by the Chair.
- 113/12/21. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda.** There were no matters arising.
- 114/12/21. Democratic Period.** There were no members of the public present.
- 115/12/21. Update on broadband issues.** Cllr Ms Drury said Rebecca Pow MP had involved Matt Barrow, Stakeholder Engagement Officer for Connecting Devon and Somerset, when they had a meeting with her. He initially replied to her emails but is no longer doing so. The MP has been informed. Airband will be installing FTTP broadband in the parish but their schedule was reported to be slipping.
- 116/12/21. Planning:**  
**a) To consider any planning applications received by the Parish Council prior to the meeting.**  
**46/21/0025** Formation of vehicular access and track at Morrishes Farm, West Buckland Road, West Buckland.  
Comment: West Buckland Parish Council has no observations to make.

**46/21/0033** Erection of spray shed at SRK Scaffolding, Haywards Road, Chelston, Wellington.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council has no objections.

**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.

Comment: West Buckland Parish Council do not support the application. The barn has been granted permission for conversion to a dwelling as a Class Q application. Councillors felt that allowing the barn to be demolished in order that a completely new dwelling, with a different footprint, can be built would amount to development in the open countryside, on the edge of an AONB, and could set a precedent of allowing development way beyond Class Q. No mention has been made about the footpath which is close to the site.

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

**46/20/0023** 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 46/20/0001).

Decision: conditional approval granted.

**46/21/0027/LB** Replacement of windows and doors with widening of access door on north west elevation, installation of woodburner and flue and erection of outbuilding in the garden of Wisteria Cottage, Chelston Road, Wellington.

Decision: conditional approval granted.

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

**117/12/21. Highways.**

**a) To note any required work to be reported to SCC.** The surface of Calways Lane is in a poor condition and Cllr Ms Drury has reported this.

**b) To receive an update on any outstanding highways work.** The news regarding the flooding along Silver Street is not good. The contractors have replaced the seized hidden gully cover outside number 3, Silver Street and the drainage system connected to it has now been jetted. Unfortunately they could only clear around 30 metres of pipe, before they came to a complete stop. The only option is to replace this section of drainage and join it into an existing system in the vicinity of Meadow Bank. This drainage scheme will be added to their list and the Parish Council will be kept updated on possible dates in the 2023-24 financial year. Glynn Hughes, SCC Assistant Highway Service Manager, is hoping that this uncovered gully will act as a temporary outlet and will therefore prevent the flooding witnessed further up Silver Street. If this works, then water will flow out of this gully onto the highway and then be captured by the gully in the vicinity of Meadow Bank. We will have to wait and see what happens during the next weather event. He appreciates this is not a good outcome and he will make a Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) bid when the window for new applications opens next year, as there is the potential of flooding to residential housing. Martin Stone the area Highways Superintendent will monitor the situation.

**c) To note the completion of the dropped kerbs at Dyers Close and Silver Street/Frogs Lane.** Glynn Hughes, has emailed the Clerk to say their contractors have completed the work to lower the kerbs around Dyers Close, but he is not happy with the work, so he has asked them to lower and replace the kerb which

still has the orange paint on. This will mean highways will have to carry out some resurfacing to get the levels of the footpath correct. This work will be ordered up, but in reality will now probably happen next financial year. He managed to get the contractor to agree the works at Frogs Land at the last minute, all the approved permitting covered them.

**d) Update on requests to Highways for a speed check and 40 mph speed limit request.** The Clerk has still not received a reply and will chase this again.

**e) Update on fingerpost sign refurbishment.** No further work has been carried out as the weather has been too wet and cold.

**f) Update on work by landowners to alleviate the flooding risk at Park Bridge, Sawyers Hill.** The watercourse on both sides of Park Bridge has now been cleared.

**g) Request from PCSO Hallett on the Council's opinion on the Worlds End junction and if it feels the reduction of the speed limit has benefited residents of West Buckland. Does it feel the reduction of the speed limit is enough or does it think it needs to be reduced more? As well as the speed he would really like some general feedback on councillor's views of the junction.** Cllr Ms Drury said it was not just speed, it is also a lack of visibility at the junction. A speed reduction would assist in lessening the collision impact. She noted that roundabouts have been put in at Gerbeston. Cllr Lacey said the sheer volume of traffic using the A38 is horrendous and between 4pm and 6pm weekdays there is a queue from Chelston roundabout to Sheppys. Councillors said they were not using this junction to turn right onto the A38 and it is not going to get any better. Cllr Thorne thinks the decrease in the speed limit to 40mph has made it worse as cars are travelling closer together. Cllr Mitton didn't agree that it was any worse. Crashes at 30/40mph are less dangerous than those at 60mph. The preferred option would be a roundabout at the junction and the second a left hand turns only order. A temporary 30mph speed limit was put in place when the road surface was slippery and it felt safer. The speed limit should be reduced now.

**h) Any other highways matters.** There were no other highways matters.

#### **118/12/21. To note any reports from:**

**a) County Cllr.** A written report from Cllr Thorne was circulated by email on 29<sup>th</sup> November. The Structural Changes Order has been prepared and from May 2022 there will be 55 divisions with 2 councillors per division. It is being assumed, but has not been said, that the town and parish council elections will be brought in line with the unitary elections. Cllr Mitton, as Chair of SALC, has written to the team to ask if they have seen the order which becomes law in March 2022. It needs to be sorted out by February for the elections in May. He said the reason why it is important that Taunton has a town council is that all parish councils have been subsidising the unparished area of Taunton. If Taunton has a town council it will have to pay for things itself. Cllr Habgood said Taunton Town Council would have no more powers than any other parish council and questioned the need to take in surrounding parishes. The decision went against officer recommendations. The new Town Council could have been in place by the May elections. Two consultations are going on now and are setting parish councils against each other. He felt it was a ridiculous thing to do and added that 2 Liberal Democrat councillors had gone against their own leadership. The chair had been bullied and it has caused a huge rift. It can be stopped if people respond no to the consultation but there is a lot of confusion and a lot of people will not understand.

It has caused grief when councillors could have looked at changing boundaries afterwards.

**b) District Cllr.** Cllr Habgood reported that 2 design guides are expected to go through Council tomorrow and these will very be helpful for the Planning Committee. Despite expected housing numbers being reduced they are still not being met. If the 5 year land supply is not met it will be open season for developers and could affect this parish. If the phosphate issue goes away it should be alright.

**c) Police.** No report.

**d) Somerset Council Action Plan Meeting.** Cllr Mitton reported that the advisory board meeting at Chedzoy had been very lively as members of the public turned up to express their dislike, but it was too late to protest. The Structure Changes Order is awaited. At the next meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December the job description for councillors and their role in the Local Community Networks (LCN) will be looked at. The meetings will soon be coming up with suggestions for areas and the general role of the networks. Cllr Mitton told councillors town and parish clerks were supposed to be being invited to fortnightly Zoom meetings. However, this Council's clerk is not receiving the invites. Cllr Mitton will be making the point that the town and parish councils pay the clerk's salary and it should be up to them whether the clerk or a councillor attend. Cllr Habgood said the LCNs are critical and a lot of effort needs to be put into setting them up otherwise it will be a disaster.

**e) Somerset Bus Partnership – to note the representative and any update.** It was noted that Mrs Eunice King from West Buckland WI has agreed to be West Buckland's representative. There was no update.

**f) Blackdown Hill Parish Network AGM.** Cllr Silverlight reported that he had attended the virtual AGM. He said the meeting had covered the same subjects that the Council discusses. Parishes in, or partly in, the Blackdown Hills are getting together to discuss common issues and approaches. As part of this parish is within the Blackdown Hills it was decided to find out from the co-ordinator what the annual subscription charge would be.

**g) Cycle route update.** Cllr Bellamy reminded councillors of the email he had circulated about a mass cycle ride on Sunday March 20<sup>th</sup> 2022 to really publicise the W2T Cycle Route campaign. Cyclists will ride along the A38 between Wellington and Taunton with the riders in single file from both directions doing the route there and back with a stopover at Sheppy's Cider for an event which will involve political speeches as well as a sort of carnival of cycling element. The riders will have protection back and front of the columns from vans and the police will be fully involved. The public will be forewarned of traffic disruption on that day. The Action Team are divided into 2 sub-committees - one considering the detail of the cycle ride, the other working on the Sheppy's event, both are to report back at the next full meeting of the team on Jan 13<sup>th</sup>.

**h) Any other reports.** There were no other reports.

#### **119/12/21. 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 expenses for November (Payment ref: 2122/32)

Wicksteed Leisure Ltd - £72.00 annual inspection of the play area (Payment ref: 2122/33)

Somerset Playing Fields Association - £15.00 annual membership for 2022  
(Payment ref: 2122/34)

Mrs J Larcombe – £297.00 Clerk's salary and expenses for December (Payment ref: 2122/35)

**b) To note any receipts and the bank account balances.** No receipts since the October meeting. The Clerk reported that the current account balance was £5,389.20 and the Instant Reserve Account balance was £21,686.98.

**c) To note the bank reconciliation checks by Cllr Mitton.** Deferred until the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022 meeting.

**d) To discuss the budget for 2022-23 and the precept to be requested.** The Clerk presented a draft budget for 2022-23 and the following two years. Cllr Mitton suggested a 3% increase to the budget line for the clerk's salary rather than 2%. At present the Council receives grants totalling £1,705 from SW&T Council towards the upkeep of the playing field, churchyard and footpaths. Councillors were warned that this funding is likely to disappear when Somerset becomes a unitary council. Councillors were able to see how quickly the Council's reserves would be used up if the precept wasn't increased. Cllr Mitton proposed starting with a small increase to the precept now. Cllr Ms Drury felt the Council should wait until the grant goes as it would be easier to explain the increase. Cllr Mitton said parishioners would not take much notice of a modest increase but they would notice a big increase. There is also a risk that the government could put a cap on precept increases. Cllr Habgood asked if there were any things the Council would want to take on when they became part of a Local Community Network under the new unitary authority as they would need to include that in the budget. Cllr Silverlight said the alternative to increasing the precept was to reduce some of the costs such as the churchyard grant and the grant to the CAB. A modest increase of £2 a year for a Band D property was suggested. This amendment was made to the budget and it was agreed. It was agreed to request a precept of £10,756.00. Proposed by Cllr Mitton and seconded by Cllr Ms Drury.

#### **120/12/21. Playing Field**

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

**b) Report from the annual inspection.** The report from the annual inspection had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. The Clerk will obtain quotes for the repairs.

**c) To discuss a request from the Village Hall Committee to use part of the field for a celebration for the Platinum Jubilee on Saturday 4th June 2022.** Councillors agreed to the request from the Village Hall Committee subject to a copy of public liability insurance for the event and a risk assessment being provided.

**d) Update on ordering a Parish Council commemorative tree for the Platinum Jubilee.** It was agreed that the Clerk will order a 2 metre Acer Campestre Queen Elizabeth tree at a cost of up to £140. It will be delivered to Cllr Nutt's address. It was decided to make a formal event of the planting and to invite the previous Chair to officially plant the tree. The Clerk will invite Mrs Blogg.

**e) WI request to plant a Rowan tree to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee.** The request was agreed.

**f) Further discussion on planting/siting fruit trees in the playing field.** Councillors agreed that they would like to plant 7 fruit trees in a group in the

bottom left hand corner of the field but decided parishioners should be asked if they thought it was a good idea and what type of fruit tree they would like before the trees were ordered. Councillors also discussed whether the grass should be allowed to grow up in that corner (it would need to be kept clear immediately around the trees). Rewilding can involve a lot of work. Councillors were reminded that the trees will need a lot of watering in the first year.

- 121/12/21. Footpaths: to discuss any footpath matters.** Cllr Mitton reported that he had met with the Footpath Warden in his role as PPLO and is now waiting for her to report back to him, particularly about footpath 14/32 at Ruggin, but he is not very hopeful. Some work has been carried out on the blocked footpath at Gerbestone and it is partially reopened. SCC have brought in contractors to do the work even though it is really the landowner's responsibility.
- 122/12/21. Emergency planning.** This was deferred to the late January meeting.
- 123/12/21. Correspondence.** A resident of Dyers Close, whose husband is disabled, had emailed the Council regarding a problem with vehicles parking opposite their driveway, making it difficult for them to access their property directly. There was also a concern about access for emergency vehicles. They were asking for the Council's support to request either a disabled parking space to be put opposite their driveway that could be used for access or a white H line opposite to ensure that there is constant access to their property. Councillors noted there is no legal standing for either of these, and even when put in anyone can park on them. Highways are unlikely to agree to put either of these opposite the property and it is not in the Parish Council's jurisdiction.
- 124/12/21. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion (Not for Decisions).** There was no urgent business.
- 125/12/21. Date and arrangements for the next meeting.** The next meeting will be held on 4th January 2022 at 7.30pm.