

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 25th July 2023 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room, at West Buckland Village Hall

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

In attendance: Cllr R Henley, Somerset Council, PCSO S Bramley, Mr D Mitton (West Buckland Public Paths Liaison Officer) 4 members of the public and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

33/07/23. To receive apologies for absence. Apologies were received from Cllr S Wakefield, Somerset Council.

34/07/23. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. No disclosures.

35/07/23. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 20/06/23 as an accurate record of the meeting. With the amendment of the last sentence of 22/06/23 to 'Cllr Nutt to find out how they are setting up control nodes in Bedfordshire' the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed by the Chair.

36/07/23. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda (for information only). No matters arising.

It was agreed to bring reports forward on the agenda.

37/07/23. Reports

a) Police Report. PCSO Bramley reported that he had no matters of concern to report for West Buckland or Wellington. He visited West Buckland Primary School on the last day of the summer term and some plans on how to slow down traffic by the school were discussed. Part of his work with the children will be carrying speed watches in the village using hand-held speed detectors. Cllr Ms Drury mentioned that in another area the adults caught speeding during this type of speed watches were invited into school to explain to the children why they were speeding and putting lives in danger. Cllr Bellamy said there was a problem with vehicles parking on the zig zag lines by the school during drop off/pick up times. The registration numbers of vehicles parking on the zig zag lines should be reported to the Police. Members of the public asked whether there was a speed watch scheme in West Buckland and were told that although there had been

interest in the past there wasn't a scheme now. The Police and the Parish Council will look at trying to start a community speed watch scheme in the village. PCSO Bramley confirmed the bollards by the school are only advisory. The members of the public said speeding was not just an issue during school time. They were concerned that vehicles park on the Lee Park junction causing an obstruction when the school holds a big event. Local residents have asked the school to request Police attendance to look at parking when there is a big event. While there was concern about vehicles parking on pavements PCSO Bramley said it isn't illegal to park on the pavement unless the vehicle is causing an obstruction. Councillors agreed the playing field could be used for additional parking for events such as sports day, as long as ground conditions permit. The Clerk will email Mr Mann, Headteacher, to offer parking on the playing field and to ask him to email PCSO Bramley to ask for support when a big event is being held at the school.

b) Somerset Council Report. Cllr Henley reported on the first LCN meeting which he felt had been positive, he was pleased to have been elected as Chair. Only 2 or 3 parishes were not represented and they will be reached out to before the next meeting. The LCN will meet bi-monthly and the next meeting will talk about the priorities identified at this meeting. Some good ideas had come out of the discussions and some positive things are going on. Stakeholders will be encouraged to attend the next meeting and to be part of developing the key priorities. The survey to see what the priorities are will be wider than just the town and parish councils and officers are looking at how people in the parishes can be reached.

He has been invited to meet Amy Green, SC Development Enabling Specialist, to talk about affordable housing. There are 23 people with a local connection to West Buckland on the housing waiting list. Amy Green has been in contact with the Clerk and a date will be arranged for her to talk to the Parish Council. Cllr Paul suggested asking someone on the housing waiting list to come and speak to the Parish Council.

Cllr Nutt asked if a lengthsman service had been discussed at the LCN meeting. This will be discussed at the next meeting. There is a possibility of a lengthsman being shared between a group of parishes.

Hatch Beauchamp are starting their weekly trial bus service to Taunton next week. If it is successful other parishes could also carry out a trial service to demonstrate the need for a permanent service. If West Buckland were to do so this could encourage a bus company to divert a service through West Buckland.

Cllr Silverlight informed Cllr Henley about a problem with Footpath WG14/11 and asked for his support to get the matter properly resolved as despite a number of online reports being made to SC it is not being properly dealt with. The owner of the field below the playing field, through which this footpath passes, has erected a fence which has electric fencing on the top. Overgrown vegetation is contributing to making the footpath very narrow where it is fenced and because of the electric fencing it is felt to be dangerous to walk along and people don't feel they can use it. Cllr Ms Drury reported that she had received an email to inform her that her report has been closed because the warden has arranged for vegetation clearance/cut and this will widen the path. There was no mention of dealing with the electric fencing. Mr Mitton, PPLO for West Buckland, has also been in contact with the SC Public Rights of Way team to try and get the problems resolved. He said he had been appointed as PPLO by SCC and he didn't feel SC were doing their duty. This is a footpath which has been well used for a large number of years. The landowner has fenced off the path because of the issues of people wandering

off the footpath and uncontrollable dogs and it is within their rights to put a fence along the footpath. In the past when he asked SCC how wide footpaths need to be he was told 6 feet. This path is only 18 inches in places. The Clerk reported that shortly before the meeting she had received an email from Robert Coate, Senior Rights of Way Officer (Maintenance) to say that one of the wardens had been out to site today and has arranged for the path to be cut this week which will immediately restore width to the path and prevent walkers passing close to the electric fencing. They will be following up with the landowner to address the electric fencing and alert them to their responsibilities regarding hedge management. There was concern that even if the vegetation is cut back the path will still be too narrow. Cllr Henley will follow up the matter with Mr Coate.

c) LCN Meeting on 6th July. A written report from Cllr Bellamy had been circulated prior to the meeting. There were 32 attendees including 4 who had attended online.

There are 27,000 people in our community network area.

Link Officers to support each of the 18 areas will be appointed, probably in July/August. There will be interim support until Link Officers are appointed.

Attendees broke into 8 groups to list priorities to focus on using the 3 questions below:

1. What topics were there in our areas ... any examples
2. What could be done to resolve them
3. Who should be in our links to help solve these

Cllr Henley had been elected as Chair of the LCN and he got each group to focus on just two and then share their discussion in the room. The topics included: broadband; mobile network; car parking; congestion; information on roadworks/road closures; town/village environment improvements; a lengthsman scheme (highways/ditches); flooding, inadequate primary healthcare; public transport/community transport; local group co-ordination; implementing slower speed limits; affordable housing; youth activities; safer community routes and mad tractor drivers. It may well take till August/September to draw these ideas together. Attendees agreed to meet every other month, enough to keep momentum up. Minutes will be produced and circulated. lcns@somerset.gov.uk for further comment

38/07/23. Democratic Period. A member of the public said she had also reported the problems on Footpath WG14/11 and had received a similar response by email. Concern was raised about a van/cherry picker, owned by someone living in Crown Hill parking it backed onto to a fence on a grassed area of private land in Lee Park. There was felt to be a safety issue. Photos will be taken when it is next parked there. PCSO Bramley was asked whether this was a civil issue or a police issue and he will look into it and advise.

The Parish Council was asked to look at having a 20mph speed limit through the village. It was explained that the Parish Council had looked into this but would have to pay for this to be done, even if SC agreed, and the cost would be about £14,000. Even if a 20mph speed limit was introduced there would still be problems enforcing it. SC officers will give support with the process of reducing the speed limit. Oake has 'sleeping policemen' on the road through the village but

that would probably cost more. The Clerk advised that she was attending a SC virtual meeting for City, Town and Parish Clerks the following day and traffic management, including the introduction of 20mph speed limits, was one of the topics on the agenda. There were rumble strips at the entrance to the village but

these have worn away and highways need to be asked to renew them.
A member of the public asked who is responsible for the maintenance of the ditch in Lee Park. With the forming of a unitary council this has now passed from Somerset West and Taunton Council to Somerset Council. Cllr Henley agreed to go and have a look at the ditch.
A damaged stile was reported on the footpath through to Manley Farm.

Cllr Henley, PCSO Bramley, Mr Mitton and the 4 members of the public left the meeting.

39/07/23. Update on broadband issues. No update for this meeting and broadband speed continues to be poor in certain areas of the parish. Cllr Ms Drury hopes to have heard from Matt Barrow by the next meeting.

40/07/23. Planning:

a) To consider any planning applications received by the Parish Council prior to the meeting. No applications received.

b) To note that 46/23/0006 Formation of sand school with erection of building for jump storage and associated works at Moonview, Calways Lane, West Buckland has been withdrawn. Noted.

c) To receive decisions from planning applications determined by Somerset Council.

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. Decision: conditional approval granted. The Parish Council's concerns were limited to concerns about traffic and a traffic survey was carried out.

d) Any other planning matters. No other planning matters.

41/07/23. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SC. There are plans to surface dress Calways Lane with tar and chippings once the potholes have been filled in. The overgrown hedge at School House has been reported and SC have taken photos and will be contacting the owners.

Cllr Nutt reported that he had got nowhere when he had reported graffiti on the roundabout at Junction 26 of the M5. Cllr Ms Drury has also reported this to SC and National Highways.

The tributary at the bottom of Sawyers Hill is becoming overgrown once more which could cause flooding. Cllr Nutt has reported this.

b) To receive an update on outstanding highways work (Kerb at Dyers Close and drainage in Silver Street). No update.

c) Update on repairs to fingerpost sign on Buckland Hill. The damaged fingerpost has still not been replaced despite the Clerk being told it would be replaced earlier this month. The Clerk will contact Kate Brown again and will ask for the contact details of the person at IDVerde who is responsible so she can chase them until the arm is replaced.

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

42/07/23. Finance:

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

Mr N Richards - £60.00 grass cutting (Payment ref: 2324/18)

Mrs J Larcombe - £323.04 Clerk's salary and expenses for July (Payment ref: 2324/19)

HM Revenue & Customs - £18.80 PAYE for July (Payment ref: 2324/20)

F J Orchard & Sons - £300.00 Hedge cutting (Payment ref: 2324/21)

Karen Ward - £60.00 internal audit (Payment ref: 2324/22)

Somerset Council - £884.75 Grass cutting at Playing Field and dog bin emptying Quarter 1 (Payment ref: 2324/23)

Since the last meeting a payment of £450.00 has been made to DCW Polymers Ltd for a bench (payment ref: 2324/16) and £220.00 has been paid to Mr N Richards for grass cutting in the village and cutting back vegetation on footpaths (Payment ref: 2324/17)

A transfer will be made from the Instant Access Account to the Current Account to bring the balance back to £1,000.00.

b) To note any receipts since the last meeting and the bank account balances. Since the last meeting a VAT repayment of £2,394.07 has been received.

The current account balance is £961.20 and the Instant Access Account balance is £27,507.72.

c) To receive the bank reconciliation at 30th June 2023. The bank reconciliation was circulated to councillors and signed by the Chair.

d) To receive a report on budget v actual for Quarter 1, 2023-24. The Clerk explained the changes to the earmarked reserves following the purchase of play equipment and the report was noted.

43/07/23. Playing Field:

a) Any points to note from the regular inspection. Nothing to report.

Cllr Silverlight and Cllr Ms Drury have put the goal nets on the goal posts. The grass seeds sown in the goal mouth have grown but some more grass seeds will be added in September.

b) Update on installation of new swings. The swings have been installed but are still fenced off to allow the grass to grow through the grass matting safety surfacing. The Clerk will email the contractor and ask him to open up the fencing at the earliest opportunity.

It was agreed to replace Cllr Silverlight's padlock which had been used with chains to take a damaged swing out of action and then lost when the swings were taken down. A combination padlock will be purchased to replace the padlock on the playing field gate which needs a key.

Cllr Ms Drury reported that she had spoken to a young person who was asking whether the Parish Council could install a dirt track for bikes on the playing field. She had explained that it wouldn't be viable and had discussed other options to provide additional facilities for young people. It was agreed Cllr Ms Drury would investigate the cost of cricket nets and astroturf and whether there is any grant funding available.

c) Update on repairs to self-closing gate. A standard gate closer will be tried. The waste and recycling bin has been moved out of the play area into the playing field.

44/07/23. To discuss the charges for the EV charging point. It was reported that the industry standard is approximately 66p per KWh. It was noted that the EV charging point in West Buckland is not on any maps. A meeting will be arranged between the Chair and Vice-chair of the Parish Council and the Chair and Vice-chair of the Village Hall Committee and the charge can be discussed and agreed during the meeting. The EV charging point will be added to the Parish Council's insurance policy.

45/07/23. Footpaths: any footpath matters. At the last meeting it was reported that SC would be replacing stiles on Footpath WG14/30 at 44102, 44106 and 44107 with kissing gates. The stiles have been replaced at 44102 and 44106 but the stile at 44107 is still to be replaced because the Rights of Way Warden didn't know who the landowner is. The details of the landowner will be passed on to the Warden so that permission can be obtained for work to take place to replace the stile.

46/07/23. Website. Some of the pages on the parish website had become out of date and contact details were incorrect. Village organisations have been contacted and the website is being updated. More regular reviews of website will take place and it will be an annual agenda item to ensure information is kept up to date.

47/07/23. Correspondence. Details of training courses offered by SALC have been circulated and councillors will contact the Clerk if they would like a place booked on a course.

48/07/23. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion (Not for Decisions). No urgent business.
There was discussion about how much information should be shared with councillors by email between meetings. There was a difference of opinion between the Clerk and the Chair about cc'ing all councillors into most email correspondence between meetings. The Chair explained that he wanted all councillors to know what was happening. The Clerk had concerns about the number of emails this was creating and possible problems with GDPR. While initially the Chair asked for a motion on the agenda for the August meeting it was decided that every effort would be made to keep councillors up to date on anything that was happening between meetings there was no need to share every email.

49/07/23. To agree the date of the next meeting. The next meeting will be held on 29th August 2023.

Signed:
Chair

Date: