

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman – Cllr C Silverlight
Perry House
Blackmoor
West Buckland
Wellington
TA21 9LH
Tel 01823 663109
email: ccsilverlight@googlemail.com

Clerk – Mrs J Larcombe
6 The Old School
Chapel Street
Tiverton
EX16 6ND
Tel 01884 252647
email: westbucklandclerk@gmail.com

www.westbuckland.org

The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 26th September 2023 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room, at West Buckland Village Hall.

Present: Cllr's C Silverlight, S Bellamy, J Nutt and A Paul.

In attendance: Somerset Council Cllr R Henley, Amy Green, Jo Humble, 17 members of the public and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

Cllr Silverlight welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed the meeting would follow the set agenda.

68/09/23. To receive apologies for absence. Apologies were accepted from Cllr Ms S Drury.

69/09/23. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. There were no disclosures.

70/09/23. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 29/08/23 as an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed by the Chair.

71/09/23. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda (for information only). No matters arising.

72/09/23. Amy Green, SC Development Enabling Specialist, to discuss affordable housing. Amy Green introduced herself and her colleague Jo Humble. As the Parish Council has been approached by 2 developers about consultations for 2 proposed developments in the parish she said she would like to carry out a Housing Needs Survey (HNS), in conjunction with the Parish Council, if they are interested, to find out the housing need in the parish. This would include affordable rented and low-cost housing to part buy. The HNS survey would be carried out in the normal way to find out what the need is. Land on which affordable housing could be built would need to be identified to find the most suitable site. A willing landowner might be able to provide a rural exception site but it might need to include some open market housing to make it viable. The HNS would inform comments and site opportunities going forward. Ms Green would work informally with the planning team. Ms Green answered questions.

1. How long does a HNS Survey take to do? Suggested questions would be shared with the Parish Council and reviewed to produce what is needed. Additional questions can be added. It can take 2 months to do the survey. The questionnaire would be circulated online and by hand. People would be given a month to reply. An average response rate of 25% is good. If the response rate is only 4 to 5% a decision would be made whether it was worth looking at the survey results. Once responses are received it will take a couple of months to analyse the results and present a draft to the Parish Council for agreement.
2. Would it be similar to the 2019 survey? Survey forms will be available online and paper copies will be left in the Village Hall, school etc. Ms Green said she was very aware that not everyone had access to the internet. It will need to be advertised widely.
3. Cllr Silverlight said the 2019 survey was interesting and it had made him aware of the different options ie affordable, social housing and part purchase/part rent. It is important that residents understand the different options. West Buckland already has a good stock of affordable housing but there is a need for social rented. There has only been one property available for social rent in the last 5 years and 40 people applied. House prices make housing unaffordable for local people.
4. Cllr Bellamy asked if there was a differentiation between a need for people to be in the area as opposed to want to be in the area? Ms Green said Homefinder gives a choice of 3 areas in which you can bid for housing. Rockwell Green and Wellington are very popular.

Three to five years is usually the life of a survey but this one would be coming a bit earlier.

73/09/23. Somerset Council Report. A written report sent by Cllr Wakefield was circulated by email earlier in the month. Cllr Henley reported that he had been working to enhance the bus service for West Buckland and has been talking to the bus operators and Somerset Council. It was the wrong decision to remove the bus service in 2017. Buses for Somerset will consider the 22 bus service route when it comes due for review. They don't want the 20 bus service to come through West Buckland. Cllr Henley would like to trial a one day per week bus service from West Buckland to Taunton on a Friday to provide evidence of need. In conjunction with Cllr Wakefield, he is going to do a letter drop around the village because he wants to see if there is a demand for the service. He was concerned that the developer conducting the pre-application consultation for a proposed development in Silver Street had contacted the Clerk to the Parish Council but hadn't contacted him or Cllr Wakefield. He would like to talk to the developer. No formal application has been made but if an application is submitted it will be tested through a public consultation. Residents will be able to comment once an application has been received and validated and he will make people aware once this has happened. Most planning applications are decided by officers but one this size might go to committee for a decision. Both Cllr Henley and Cllr Wakefield are on the planning committee.

74/09/23. Democratic Period. Cllr Silverlight explained to the members of the public present that the Parish Council cannot form an opinion until an application is received and he explained the process for members of the public to ask questions or make their point/s.

1. If people move into the village there is no shop, no bus service and the school is full. What are they coming here for?
2. Traffic flow is a concern. You can only get out of the village by car and there is chaos in the village in the mornings. Lots of children are driven into the village to go to the school. There is a lack of pavements in the village. There have been more accidents at the Worlds End junction with the A38. Horses and cyclists also use the roads and the problems with traffic will escalate over time. There are wider issues for everyone. When we moved into the village several years ago we struggled to get our children into a secondary school.
3. The site is open countryside and is not an allocated site for housing, The storm drain for the village comes to the site under neighbouring properties. There is a flooding risk. There are lots of wildlife on the site. Unless the width of Silver Street is tripled it will not be able to cope. The roads are jammed when there are accidents on the motorway and people are seeking an alternative route. You cannot get a dentist. Why would someone want to come and live in this development.
4. The development would change the landscape. It would overshadow/overlook existing dwellings and would dominate the setting. It would change the feel of the village.
5. We are in the process of moving to the village and our children have started at the school. We are concerned about what would happen in the area of the school at the start and end of the school day.
6. We moved into the village because it is beautiful. If this site was developed it would ruin the village. If permission is granted on unallocated land it will open up the village to more development. The proposed entrance is on a single track road and there is no way the road can be made wider.
7. Trying to get to work in the mornings is actually ridiculous because of the traffic. There is no shop or Post Office. We moved here because it was a village.
8. We moved out of Taunton to come to a village. In the last 4 years traffic has increased. Traffic use Crown Hill and Silver Street as an alternative route when there is an accident on the M5 and the village becomes gridlocked. Any additional traffic will cause more problems.
9. It is key that we don't give up. Everyone was encouraged to complete the form from the developers. If people do not have internet then help can be given to fill in the form for them. There are no jobs in Wellington and Taunton and people are travelling to Bridgwater to work.
10. It will cut out lots of animal movement. Cllr Silverlight said an ecological report is part of the planning process.
11. We live in Orchard Gardens, the boundary of the village. There is a Right of way at the top of the field on which the development is planned. The applicant also owns more fields down to the A38 and if this development is approved it could lead to more development.

Jo Humble referred to comments about people coming into the village. The HNS would be looking at providing local homes for local people. It would be looking at what is needed by people connected to the village. If there are less than 25 affordable homes in a development a tie can be put on so they are offered to local people first. A local connection clause could be part of the S106 agreement. The HNS would provide evidence of the size of affordable homes needed. The proposal is for the Silver Street development is 3 affordable homes. There is no detail of size and whether they will be affordable or social housing for rent.

Cllr Silverlight encouraged everyone to fill in the developers form to make their points to the developer. Cllr Henley was asked to clarify how many objections an application needs before it has to be decided by the planning committee. The Parish Council would like to convene a meeting with the developer pre-application to ask questions before it goes to the application stage.

Everyone in a household can have their individual say when the application is submitted.

12. I live in the village and have been on Homefinder for 2 years. My partner lives in reading and cannot live with us.

Amy Green said a willing land owner would be needed to provide the affordable housing need identified by the HNS to provide local homes for local people. Other applications can be submitted but she is coming from a different way than a developer.

13. How many houses at Rumwell are affordable? 465/495 will be affordable through Live West.

14. How many properties on a development have to be affordable? Apart from Rural Exception sites 5 to 6 would trigger a need for 25% to be affordable.

15. How do you define affordable housing? It is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) There are also definitions of social rented, affordable rent, part buy/part rent on the SC website.

16. What is a Rural Exception site? It could be in the settlement but it could also be outside. A viability report would be produced and it might need some open market housing to make it viable. A Housing Association would be the developer. 25% would have to be for social rent or low-cost purchase.

Cllr Silverlight thanked everyone for coming and said the Parish Council would ask the developer for a meeting.

Cllr Henley, Ms Green, Ms Humble and 16 members of the public left the meeting.

75/09/23. Update on broadband issues. There was no update. Cllr Ms Drury has not received a reply from Matt Barrow, CDS.

76/09/23. Planning:

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

46/23/0012/CLA Notification for prior approval for the installation of 1 No. 25 metre high lattice mast with 6 No. antenna and 2 No. 600mm dishes, ground based equipment cabinets and associated ancillary development thereto on land at Manley Farm, off Gerbestone Lane, West Buckland. No comment agreed at the meeting.

b) Withdrawn application - 46/23/0011/FULL Formation of sand school with erection of building for jump storage and associated works at Moonview, Calways Lane, West Buckland (resubmission of 46/23/0006). Noted.

c) To receive decisions from planning applications determined by Somerset Council. No decisions.

d) Consultation on proposed development on land at Silver Street, West Buckland. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Simon Collier, Collier Planning, to arrange a public meeting.

e) Any other planning matters. The Parish Council agreed that they would like a HNS to be carried out by SC.

The Clerk has received an email from Simon Fox, SC Major Projects Officer (Planning) in connection with a development proposal which is emerging on the periphery of the built-up area of Wellington in West Buckland parish. This is for 257 – 293 new homes on land to the north of Taunton Road. The separate land parcel to the north is put forward as Phosphate Mitigation and not for residential development. As the proposed site borders other parishes they will be involved in the pre-application consultation. The proposal is by the Carden Group and initial pre-application advice was sought from the Council at the end of last year. A refreshed look is being taken at the proposal and the applicant and Simon Fox have seen value in presenting the scheme to Town/Parish Councils and Somerset Councillors in order to gain local feedback and insight that can be used to frame the proposal moving forward. An online session is planned and 3 suggestions were put forward for dates/times. Cllr Nutt and Cllr Paul gave their availability.

77/09/23. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SC. There was a query whether the defect on the road at the top of Buckland Hill had been repaired.

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

b) Update on repairs to fingerpost sign on Buckland Hill. The fingerpost has still not been replaced. The Clerk has sent an email reminder.

d) To discuss email correspondence regarding complaints about speeding on the A38. The Parish Council was cc'd into correspondence between the owner of the Blackbird B & B and Dan Morrow, Police Road Safety Office, who has 27yrs experience of collisions on road policing, in particular fatal and serious. He is aware of every aspect of this junction and has raised all that has been mentioned before. He is well aware of the dynamics of speed and the speeds at this junction. This junction dynamic is not related to the 40mph limit, which the Police then enforce at 46mph. 46mph past the Blackbird B & B is very fast and nearly all are under as he has stated. The issues come from the limited view for that speed and the sheer volume of traffic. The traffic volume is good in one sense as it slows it all down, but it is difficult to leave the side road. This is not a speed limit enforcement issue, it is a speed in relation to view issue which SC are well aware of and have digested this in various meetings. Any issues need to come from the parish council to have one point of contact or it goes around in circles achieving very little. He feels this point was passed three years ago and believes various changes were going to be planned. That does not include a roundabout. If money was not an issue we would all have everything. Sadly these projects take vast amounts of money, which must be used wisely on those sites where serious collisions occur, such as Whiteball in Wellington. There is a long history of minor damage collisions at this location, they could have been serious but fortunately they have not been.

e) To receive clarification about the comment Kate Brown made in an email about a scheme planned shortly to improve the West Buckland junction area which is on the back of the housing development at Rumwell. Details of the scheme are included in the S106 agreement for planning application 42/14/0069.

f) Any other highways matters. Cllr Nutt reported that work had started to remove vegetation from the stream at the bottom of Sawyers Hill.

78/09/23. Finance:

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

Mrs J Larcombe - £321.94 Clerk's salary and expenses for September (Payment ref: 2324/29)

HM Revenue & Customs - £18.80 PAYE for September (Payment ref: 2324/30)

Mr N Richards - £140.00 grass and hedge cutting (Payment ref: 2324/31)

Somerset Association of Local Councils - £310.11 Annual Affiliation fee (Payment ref: 2324/32).

Since the last meeting a payment of £84.00 has been made to Somerset Council for moving the waste/recycling bin from the play area into the playing field (Payment ref: 2324/28).

A transfer will be made from the Current Account to the Instant Access 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 there have been no receipts.

The current account balance is £1,000.00 and the Instant Access Account balance is £20,923.17.

c) To discuss the renewal of Blackdown Hills Parish Network (BHPN) membership. It was agreed to make a payment of £50 for the Parish Council's membership of BHNP.

Thanks to a generous grant from the AONB BHPN has purchased a Flir C5 Thermal Imaging Camera which is available to all Parish Councils in the AONB to borrow. This will enable a nominated representative to carry out simple heat loss surveys for their parishioners of their properties. This will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

79/09/23. Playing Field:

a) Any points to note from the regular inspection. No points to note.

b) Update on repairs to self-closing gate. The Clerk to chase up the contractor about repairs to both gates in the play area.

80/09/23. Footpaths:

a) Update on problems on Footpath WG14/11. The Clerk has emailed Robert Coate, SC Senior Rights of Way Officer (Maintenance) for an update.

b) To note the new Rights of Way Officer. The new Rights of Way Warden is John Melrose and he started working for Somerset Council on 6th September. His email is john.melrose@somerset.gov.uk

c) Any other footpath matters. Mr Mitton, PPLO, has emailed the Clerk to inform the Parish Council that he has inspected the stiles, gates and bridges on Footpaths WG 14/14, 14/15 and 14/16. He has cleared the vegetation/foliage which was obstructing a number of the stiles and repaired one of the stiles. He will send the Clerk a copy of the report which he will be submitting to the Rights of Way Team which will include recommendations for further action by them. Stile 44108 on Footpath WG14/30 is now dangerous. ROW is planning to replace this stile with a kissing gate and Cllr Silverlight has provided Mr Coate with details of the landowner.

81/09/23. Correspondence. There was no further correspondence.

82/09/23. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion (Not for Decisions). No urgent business.

83/09/23. To agree the date of the next meeting. The next Parish Council meeting will be held on 31st October 2023.

Signed:
Chair

Date: