

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 28th November 2023 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room, at West Buckland Village Hall.

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

In attendance: Somerset Cllr's S Wakefield and R Henley, three members of the public and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

103/11/23. To receive apologies for absence. No apologies.

104/11/23. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. No disclosures.

105/11/23. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 31/10/23 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.

106/11/23. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda (for information only). No matters arising.

107/11/23. Reports: Somerset Council Report. A written report was circulated by email earlier in the month.

Cllr Henley will clarify with the planning officer what the actual end date of the consultation period for application 46/23/0018 is. It was 8th December but now appears to be 14th December. The planning notices have been put up. As Cllr Henley and Cllr Wakefield are on the planning committee, they cannot make their views known at this point. 14 objections to the application have been received at present. There have been no comments in support. Cllr Wakefield felt it should go to committee for them to make the decision because it is outside of the settlement limit.

The next Local Community Network (LCN) meeting will be held on 12th December when Somerset Council's financial emergency will be the main theme of the meeting. A senior officer is expected to attend the meeting to brief those present and representatives will be able to have a proper discussion about the situation. The SC Executive are meeting on 6th December to go through financial reports.

108/11/23. Democratic Period. A member of the public asked if the plans for application 46/23/0018 were available. It was explained that they are available to view online.

A parishioner has offered to help people in the parish if they have no access to the internet.

Cllr Henley and Cllr Wakefield left the meeting.

109/11/23. Planning:

a) To note that planning application 46/23/0018. Application for Outline Planning with all matters reserved, except for access, for the erection of 12 No. dwellings (25% affordable) on land at Silver Street, West Buckland will be discussed at a meeting on 3rd December. Noted.

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

46/23/0017. Variation of Condition No's 02 (approved plans) and No. 03 (time limit) for the time limit of the road widening scheme to be extended to 31 Dec 2024 at Blackdown Garden Centre, West Buckland. Comment: West Buckland Parish Council recommend refusal for the variation of condition 3 (time limit) because the applicants have had more than adequate time to arrange for this work to be carried out and would have been aware of this condition when they purchased the garden centre. There has been a long history of submitting planning applications to vary the condition for the time limit for this work and it should be done as soon as possible.

46/23/0019A. Display of 4 No. non-illuminated advertisement/sponsorship signs On Chelston Roundabout, Wellington, A38/205. Comment: no objections.

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

46/22/0008 Creation of wetland with associated development including construction of an in-take/out-take to Haywards Water, earthworks and landscaping and excavation of land in field southeast of Park Lane, Hockholler, West Buckland. Decision: conditional approval granted.

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

110/11/23. Update on broadband issues. Matt Barrow, Stakeholder Engagement Officer Connecting Devon & Somerset, was invited to the meeting but did not reply to the email. He will be invited to the Parish Council meeting on January 30th 2024.

111/11/23. Update on the Housing Needs Survey proposals. No update.

112/11/23. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SC. It was reported that an A frame advertising sign that the Worlds End have put at the front of their premises is blocking the visibility of vehicles turning right onto the A38.

Somerset Council are not interested in removing the graffiti on the bridge under the M5 at Junction 26.

Flood relief work has been carried out on the river at Sawyers Hill. A pool has been created to catch water and slowly release it. The field has been left in a messy condition where the work was carried out.

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

c) To note the fingerpost sign on Buckland Hill has been repaired. The damaged arm has finally been replaced.

d) To discuss with Somerset Councillors the negative response received when fly tipping on Buckland Hill was reported by a member of the public.

Since the last meeting a commercial ice cream freezer has been dumped outside Catsbeer Farm, Ruggin Road and 4 dumpy bags of asbestos roofing material in Buckland Farm Road in the footpath layby at the village end. Cllr Miss Drury reported both to SC. Four other people had already reported the asbestos waste. There was concern about the amount of time taken to remove the asbestos waste even when Cllr Wakefield had reported it.

e) Any other highways matters. No other highways matters.

113/11/23. Finance:

a) To approve the pay award for the Clerk as agreed by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services. Councillors approved the pay award.

b) To agree and authorise any payments. It was resolved to make the following payments: Mrs J Larcombe - £477.94 Clerk's salary and expenses for November (Payment ref: 2324/40)

H M Revenue & Customs - £57.80 PAYE for November (Payment ref: 2324/41)

Blackdown Hills Parish Network - £50.00 annual subscription (Payment ref: 2324/42)

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

c) To note any receipts since the last meeting and the bank account balances. Since the last meeting a payment of £71.47 has been received from Hydra EVC Ltd, income from the EV charging point.

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council can only insure the EV charging point with their insurers if they own it and are responsible for its maintenance. She suggested the Parish Council retains ownership. A follow up meeting will be arranged with the Chair and Vice-chair of the Village Hall Committee and it was suggested that their treasurer should attend.

The current account balance is £1,071.47 and the Instant Access Account balance is £19,047.00.

d) To note the letter from Cllr Bill Revens, Leader of Somerset Council, and the implications for West Buckland. A letter about the enormous financial challenge facing Somerset Council and the opportunity for asset and service devolution has been sent to all city, town and parish councils in Somerset.

The letter points out that Somerset Council is limited in how much it can raise for local services through Council Tax, but city, town and parish councils have far more freedom to raise their precepts to protect those services their communities value. It suggests that neighbouring parishes and other stakeholders may wish to work together, to see how valuable services can be protected and delivered in the future. This could involve groups of parishes working in clusters or across boundaries to take on delegated responsibilities from Somerset Council. Further information is needed from Somerset Council regarding the services that West Buckland Parish Council might be expected to take over and officers are working hard to provide information to parishes as soon as possible. The Clerk advised this could include the cost of emptying the dog bin and waste bin at the playing field, grass cutting on the area of open space at Ham and maintenance of the ditch and play area at Lee Park. There was discussion at the last Wellington and Wiveliscombe LCN meeting about parishes contributing towards the cost of a Highway Steward. Further information is expected from Somerset Council before the next Parish Council meeting.

e) Budget planning 2024-25. The Clerk presented the first draft of the budget for 2024-25. Somerset Council has told the Parish Council that it will not be receiving the £1,705 grant towards the upkeep of the playing field, churchyard and footpaths that it has received in previous years. Councillors will need to decide whether to cover the £800 received towards the churchyard grant or reduce the amount paid to the PCC. The budget will be discussed further at the next meeting and the amount of the precept requested for 2024-25 will need to be agreed as the precept request needs to be submitted by 19th January 2024.

114/11/23. Playing Field:

a) Any points to note from the regular inspection. The net on the basketball post has come loose.

Cllr Paul will arrange the purchase of an apple tree to replace the one that died and he will prune the fruit trees that were planted earlier in the year.

b) Update on repairs to self-closing gate. This has still not been done. The Clerk to follow up.

c) To agree which company will carry out the Annual Playground inspection. It was agreed to book the inspection with Wicksteed Leisure Ltd.

d) To discuss providing dog poo bags. Cllr Mrs Moore reported that she had looked into the cost of purchasing a dispenser and providing bags. A dispenser will cost £79 plus VAT. Brackets/fixings are extra. Economy bags for the dispenser are in cases of 800 and cost £25.15 plus VAT per case. This will be discussed further at the next meeting as part of the budget item for 2024-25.

115/11/23. Footpaths:

a) Update on problems on Footpath WG14/11. Carried forward. The Clerk to contact the SC Footpath Warden.

b) Any other footpath matters. It was reported that an electric fence is blocking Footpath WG14/8 at one point and a person using the footpath suffered an electric shock. It was suggested that they report it online as they will be able to identify where on the footpath the problem is.

116/11/23. To discuss borrowing the thermal imaging camera from the BHPN to carry out simple heat loss surveys of parishioners' properties. Cllr Miss Drury has volunteered to do the training and carry out the surveys. The Parish Council will need to insure the camera. Something will be put on Facebook to see if there is any demand.

117/11/23. Correspondence. There was no further correspondence.

118/11/23. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion (Not for Decisions). It was reported that a councillor had been contacted by a parishioner regarding an incident where they had been bitten by a neighbour's dog. The Police had advised them to contact the Council but should have explained it was Somerset Council. The Parish Council has no powers to deal with this.

119/11/23. To agree the date of the next meeting. The next Parish Council meeting will be held on 9th January 2024.

Signed:
Chair

Date: