

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 30th April 2024 at 8pm in the Committee Room, at West Buckland Village Hall.

Present: Cllr's C Silverlight (Chair), S Bellamy, Mrs B Moore and M Wilson.

In attendance: Somerset Cllr S Wakefield and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe

188/04/24. To receive apologies for absence. Apologies were accepted from Cllr Ms S Drury and Cllr A Paul. Apologies were received from Cllr R Henley.

189/04/24. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. There were no disclosures.

190/04/24. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 26/03/24 as an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and they were duly signed by the Chair.

Cllr Mrs Moore was concerned that item 183/04/24 b) only recorded the Clerk's comments during the discussion and did not record that she was against threatening to ban dogs from the playing field if anti-social behaviour continued.. Councillors were reminded that they can ask for an item to be included on the agenda by contacting the Chair or Clerk.

191/04/24. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda (for information only). No matters arising.

192/04/24. To continue to discuss broadband issues in the parish. From discussions on Facebook it is evident that people are very aware that Airband as a company are not delivering what they promised and are experiencing difficulties. Cllr Wakefield reported she had written to Cllr Richard Wilkins, Lead Member for Transport and Digital Somerset Council, to make him aware of the frustration felt by many of the Blackdown parishes, particularly in the Neroche villages area, about the lack of progress being made by Airband after they started the rollout and installation of poles and fibre last year. Nothing seems to be happening and no information is being given either. She told him she is being asked what Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) itself is doing at the moment with all of the money, government and local authority, that it was given in order to supervise and commission the roll out of broadband in Somerset and whether CDS is still active and if so what is it doing? She told him that Matt Barrow, with whom West Buckland have been liaising (or trying to) for months was due to attend their February meeting but he cancelled that on the morning of the PC meeting without explanation. She pointed out that this was not good for West Buckland Parish Council or for Cllr Henley and herself who are trying to make sense of this and to assist them where they can. She asked for a full reply on this, including what is happening elsewhere in the county, as she knew that Mendip's contract was cancelled. Has anything else been put in its place? There are village and hamlets in her ward that are fearful of being totally cut off if and when BT disconnects the copper wire signal for phones and this is the only connection that some have got in certain hard to reach areas. Cllr Wakefield will share the email response from Cllr Wilkins.

CDS need to be open about what is happening. There has been £30million of

funding to provide a superfast broadband service across Devon and Somerset. Cllr Silverlight said he had written to Rebecca Pow MP about the difficulties being experienced and she had told him she would find out what was happening. She has not given that information to Cllr Silverlight.

193/04/24. Democratic Period. No members of the public present.

194/04/24. County Cllr Report. A monthly Somerset Council Report will not be produced any longer. Cllr Wakefield will report on matters affecting the parish. She noted that it took Wiltshire Council five years to get their community groups up and running when they became a unitary council. She realises the LCN's rely on people giving their time. Farmers should be cleaning their ditches and where they create entrances they need to put in a big enough drain. She was asked how they could be made to do this and she explained there is a nuisance law that can be used. Referring to the issue of people not picking up dog poo in the playing field she said she knew of playing fields where dogs had to be kept on leads because of this issue.

195/04/24. Planning:

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

46/24/0006 Application for Outline Planning with all matters reserved for the erection of 1 dwelling at Robins Oak, Orchard Gardens, West Buckland. Comment: West Buckland Parish Council has considerable concerns about the viability of the access onto Hockholler Lane. The visibility splay is inadequate and the diagram is misleading and contains errors. There is very little detail in the plans. Another concern is the possible environmental impact due to the removal of the hedgerow. The Council recommend refusal until more detail is known about the visibility splay.

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

c) To note that the following application will be decided by the Somerset Council Planning Committee on 1st May: 43/23/0056 Outline application with all matters reserved, except for access, for a mixed use development of up to 200 No. dwellings, employment land (Use Classes E & F), an internal spine road to facilitate a rail halt/station, public open space, drainage & associated infrastructure on land north of Taunton Road, Longforth Park, Wellington. (Departure from Local Plan). Noted.

d) Any other planning matters. None.

196/04/24. West Buckland Housing Needs Survey – any feedback. Amy Green, Development Enabling Specialist Somerset Council, has reported that she is in the process of reviewing the responses to their Housing Need Survey and analysing the data gathered. She hopes to have the draft report ready for review in the next couple of weeks. They had 88 responses overall, a response rate of 18%. They aim for around a 20% response rate so this is really close to that

197/04/24. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SC. Cllr Silverlight raised

concerns about potholes on Gerbestone Lane.

b) To receive an update on outstanding highways work (Kerb at Dyers Close and drainage in Silver Street). No update. As this is the start of a new financial year, Highways will be asked for an update.

c) To discuss purchasing Speed Indication Devices (SIDs). It was agreed to defer to the next meeting when more councillors are present to discuss.

d) Any other highways matters. It was reported that one of the bollards on the edge of Silver Street Green is missing and one is damaged. Cllr Silverlight will have a look at the condition of the remaining bollards and report to the next meeting.

The advertising sign that staff at the Worlds End are putting out at the front of their building is blocking visibility for vehicles wanting to turn right out of Silver Street. This has been raised with the staff in the past but is happening again.

198/04/24. Finance:

a) To agree and authorise any payments. It was resolved to make the following payments: Mr N D Richards - £90.00 grass cutting in the village (Payment ref: 2425/01)

Mrs J Larcombe – Clerk’s salary for April and expenses (Payment ref: 2425/02)

H M Revenue - £37.60 PAYE for April 2024 (Payment ref: 2425/03)

W F Orchard & Sons - £300.00 hedge trimming (Payment ref: 2425/04)

Somerset Playing Fields Association - £15.00 annual membership (Payment ref: 2425/05)

Blackdown Hills Parish Network - £50.00 annual membership (Payment ref: 2425/06)

Somerset Association of Local Councils - £100.00 payment for 4 training courses (Payment ref: 2425/07)

Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd - £135.17 playing field and play area grass cutting (Payment ref: 2425/08)

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 accounts balances. Since the last meeting bank interest of £119.78 and the precept of £11,782.00 have been received.

The current account balance is £12,782.00 and the Instant Access Account balance is £16,300.26.

c) To confirm that Unity Trust Bank has added the new signatories to the bank accounts. The Clerk has received confirmation that Cllr Bellamy has been added as a signatory. Cllr Wilson has not been confirmed and he has not received any paperwork. The Clerk will contact Unity Trust Bank to see why he hasn’t been added as a signatory.

199/04/24. Playing Field:

a) Any points to note from the regular inspections. The pedestrian gate is still very heavy to open. The Clerk will remind the contractor to have another look at this. The basketball net is not hanging properly. The hedge in the play area was not cut during the winter but cannot be cut properly until September. Cllr Bellamy will trim the hedge around the bench. This bench needs a good clean. The bench by the basketball post is also in need of attention.

Grass cutting started later than planned due to water lying on the field because of the wet weather.

b) Any other playing field matters. An email was received earlier in the day asking for permission to extend the annual one day dog rally/trial in late September to a 2 day event. The organiser has already started making arrangements for a 2 day event. There was concern about parishioners not having full access to the playing field for both days of the weekend, particularly if the weather is good. There was also concern about a number of dogs using one specific area of the field for toileting and possible hygiene implications. More details will be obtained from the organiser so this can be discussed in more detail at the next meeting.

c) To discuss the issue of people not picking up poo from their dogs (anti social behaviour). This item was deferred to the July meeting as Cllr Mrs Moore is not able to attend the May meeting. Now the field is dry enough for regular grass cutting to take place reminders will be given on Facebook.

200/04/24. Any footpath matters. No footpath matters.

201/04/24. Report from LCN meeting held on 22nd April. Cllr Bellamy represented West Buckland Parish Council at the meeting and reported the following: Highways Working Group and Transport Group. Both working groups gave feedback of not surprisingly similar issues such as pot holes, ditches and the Transport Working Group were focusing on improving bus services to various parishes.

Exmoor LCN reported some good progress with their Highways Working Groups and Council where they have resolved several issues by focused use of contactors. Other LCN's have also reported good progress.

Jack Johnston gave a presentation on the "Level up project" 19M to redevelop Tone Dale Mill and dye works. He gave an interesting presentation on how the buildings are being restored and repurposed within the constraints of being a listed building. There has been lots of engagement with the Taunton Council and Colleges to assist... leading to a space for art exhibitions, early days yet but the plan is to create large exhibitions. Meantime Wellington Town Council is running "tours" of the site as it progress. More info: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/a-vision-for-tonedale/>. There were several questions regarding the location of the sites and logistics of parking for the exhibitions once the project is completed. The parking is a potential problem as there is little room on the sites.

202/04/24. To agree a second person to check on defibrillator when necessary. Cllr Mrs Moore will liaise with Cllr Silverlight about what is involved.

203/04/24. Correspondence. There was no further correspondence.

204/04/24. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion (Not for Decisions). No urgent business.

205/04/24. To note the date of the next meeting. It was agreed to move the date of the next meeting, the Annual Parish Council Meeting, to May 21st. Cllr Mrs Moore and Cllr Wilson were not available for either date and gave their apologies.

Signed:
Chair

Date: