

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 25th June 2024 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room, at West Buckland Village Hall.

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

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

18/06/24. To receive apologies for absence. Apologies were accepted from Cllr Ms Drury.

19/06/24. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. There were no disclosures.

20/06/24. To agree the minutes of the annual meeting held on 28/05/24 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.

21/06/24. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda (for information only). No matters arising.

22/06/24. To continue to discuss broadband issues in the parish. Airband are still in contract to CDS which means that no one else can take on the work that has been started. The analogue phone network was due to be retired at the end of 2025 but that has been extended until 2027.

23/06/24. Democratic Period. No members of the public present.

24/06/24. Reports

a) Somerset Council. Cllr Henley reported that he had drafted the form for the survey about traffic speed that he and Cllr Wakefield are planning to carry out in West Buckland. A question about buses will also be added. It is planned to circulate the survey after the General Election on 4th July and report back to the Parish Council at the end of July. He has been looking at Somerset Council's maintenance at Lee Park following a complaint and has met residents on site to discuss their concerns. Somerset Council took this on from Somerset West and Taunton and it is something Somerset Council could ask the Parish Council to consider taking on. White line markings on the roads in the village are almost non-existent. The Clerk will ask Kate Brown, Traffic Engineer, for a site visit. Cllr Henley and Cllr Wakefield will also try to attend this. There has not been an appeal made yet against SC's decision to refuse the planning application for development off Silver Street.

Cllr Wakefield and Cllr Henley left the meeting.

b) Any other reports. No other reports.

25/06/24. Planning:

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

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

46/23/0016 Change of use and alterations to skittle alley to create 5 No. en-suite rooms for holiday accommodation at The Merry Harriers, Blackdown Hill Road.
Decision: conditional approval granted.

46/24/0006. Application for outline planning with all matters reserved for the erection of one dwelling at Robins Oak, Orchard Gardens, West Buckland.
Decision: permission refused.

c) Any other planning matters. No other planning matters.

23/06/24. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SC. The pothole at the top of Buckland Hill is getting bigger and there are other potholes waiting to be repaired.

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

c) To note the discussion on purchasing a Speed Indication Devices (SIDs) will be an item for the July meeting. This item has been deferred until the results of the survey are known.

d) Any other highways matters. Cllr Silverlight reported that a resident had complained to him about the severe impact on the movement of agricultural vehicles at a busy time of year caused by Wessex Water closing part of West Buckland Road for 5 days recently. It was horrendous going through the diversion. This will be fed back to Somerset Council.

24/06/24. Finance:

a) To agree and authorise any payments. It was resolved to make the following payments: Mrs J Larcombe - £327.14 Clerk's salary for June and expenses (Payment ref: 2425/15)

H M Revenues and Customs - £37.60 PAYE for June (Payment ref: 2425/16)

Mr N D Richards - £170.00 grass cutting and footpath vegetation clearance (Payment ref: 2425/17)

Wicksteed Leisure Ltd - £158.40 play equipment annual inspection (Payment ref: 2425/18)

A transfer will be made from the Instant Access Account to the Current Account to bring the balance back to

£1,000.00.

c) To report on the purchase of insurance for 2024-25. Following the last meeting the Clerk obtained further quotes for the annual insurance and asked Clear Councils (formerly BHIB Councils) if they were able to reduce their quote. Clear Councils offered a small reduction if the Council entered into a 3 year long term agreement. Following consultation with councillors a quote of £599.00 from Zurich Municipal, which met the Council's needs, was accepted giving a saving of over £100 (Payment ref: 2425/14).

c) To note any receipts since the last meeting and the bank accounts balances. Since the last meeting there have been no receipts.

The current account balance is £1002.40 and the Instant Access Account balance is £25,615.14

d) To receive the report from the Internal Auditor for 2023-24. Deferred to the next meeting.

e) To agree the Annual Governance Statement for 2023-24. It was agreed that all boxes could be ticked yes and the statement was duly signed by the Chair of the meeting and Clerk.

f) To agree the Accounting Statement for 2023-24. The Accounting Statement

was agreed and having already been signed by the RFO it was duly signed by the Chair of the meeting.

g) To agree to sign the Certificate of Exemption for 2023-24. It was agreed that the Council would declare itself exempt and the form was duly signed by the Chair of the meeting and the Clerk/RFO.

25/06/24. Playing Field:

a) Any points to note from the regular inspections. The cable ties attaching the basketball net to the ring on the post have failed and the net has come off. Cllr Bellamy has the net. It was reported that someone has been putting a number of bags of dog poo in the waste bin and this will be monitored.

b) To discuss the annual inspection report. The Clerk had only recently received the report. It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate the report and it would be discussed at the next meeting.

c) To discuss dog fouling in the playing field. This is not a problem at the moment. Longer hours of daylight and the grass being cut regularly are helping.

d) Any other playing field matters. Contractors will be asked to quote to replace the bollards on Silver Street Green on a like for like basis.

26/06/24. Any footpath matters. Mr Mitton, West Buckland's Footpath Liaison Officer, is unhappy that the SC Public Rights of Way Officer has not replied to his email about Footpath WG14/11. The landowner has not been maintaining the hedge in accordance with the regulations to keep the footpath at least 1.5 metres wide, and preferably 2 metres as recommended. The NFU guidance on hedge cutting was noted. To protect nesting birds, hedges should not be cut until the start of September.

A resident from a neighbouring parish has contacted the Clerk about overgrown vegetation on the footpath from Haywards Lane to the M5 junction which is preventing him from using the footpath. In the past he has trimmed the path during the summer season but is no longer able to do this. He was aware that the Parish Council had also been cutting back the vegetation on this path. Although this footpath is not the Parish Council's responsibility it has been paying for it to be cut back annually at the end of the summer because it is in the public interest to do so. It was agreed to continue to cut it back at the end of the summer and look to see if this could be done with a flail hedge trimmer. It was questioned whether the footpath should be adopted but that couldn't be discussed at this meeting.

27/06/24. Parish Council vacancies. The Clerk is waiting for Somerset Council to provide the official notice to advertise the vacancies. The election team are busy preparing for the General Election.

28/06/24. Correspondence. There was no further correspondence.

29/06/24. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion (Not for Decisions). No urgent business.

30/06/24. To note the date of the next meeting. The next meeting will be held on 30th July 2024. Cllr Bellamy gave his apologies.