

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 29th July 2025 at 7.30pm, in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall.

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

In attendance: Somerset Council Cllr S Wakefield, Syed Shah, Public Liaison Office J26/Chelston Scheme, Jane Brown and Geoff Hamlyn, Wellington Association Football Club, and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe

36/07/25. To receive apologies for absence. Apologies were accepted from Cllr A Paul and Cllr Mrs B Moore. Apologies were received from Cllr R Henley, Somerset Council.

37/07/25. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. None.

38/07/25. J26 to Chelston road project – update from Syed Shah, Somerset Council Public Liaison Officer. Mr Shah reported that the contractors were working extremely hard, putting in a lot of shifts and time and the work is going well and is on time. Councillors were shown a video of the work that had taken place. The first half of the roundabout has been completed, except for the final layer of tarmac, and the second half of the roundabout has been dug out. Proper kerb stones have been laid with drainage underneath as per the drainage scheme. There have been one or two issues with businesses at Foxmoor when people haven't been able to have immediate access during short periods when the work being carried out meant they couldn't get through. It was discovered that far more rubbish than expected had been dumped to the sides of the lay bys. Trees have been cut back and the sides can now be seen. Other companies are carrying out work now to save traffic management being put in place at a later date. A request to drop the kerb at the end of Haywards Lane was received but this cannot be done as it is not a public right of way. People are sending up drones without line of sight. There has been social media activity about things that haven't or will not happen. Cllr Ms Drury said she had always wanted to see the work being done but there was concern because the information had been given out so late. It was heartening to see work going on at a pace. Everyone has been kept informed and lots of things like the predicted gridlock haven't happened. Some of the traffic has been displaced ie to the top road. The majority of the perceived fears haven't transpired. Mr Shah has the most up to date information and the newsletters he has circulated have made the information clear. He wants people to be as happy as possible. He explained the scheme had come at Somerset Council quite quickly and it had to be done. Roadworks at East Reach should be finished next week and at Silk Mills in early September. His opinion was that the current Somerset Highways team is switched on and people orientated. The Chair thanked Mr Sha for attending the meeting and asked him to carry on the good work.

Mr Shah left the meeting at 7.53pm.

39/07/25. Democratic Period. At the last meeting it was agreed to invite Mr Allan, Football Development Manager, Somerset Football Association Ltd to a meeting to speak

to councillors about Wellington AFC youth teams possibly using the West Buckland playing field. Mr Allan had felt it was better for officers from Wellington AFC to speak to councillors.

Mrs Brown and Mr Hamlyn gave some background information about the number of Wellington AFC teams which include senior teams, boys teams from under 7 to under 18, girls teams from under 11 and a disability team. They do not have enough pitches for all of their teams and have recently lost one pitch. At present 2 teams do not have a home. They would require male and female toilets and somewhere for the teams to change. Should the playing field be used these facilities would have to be provided in the Village Hall, with the agreement of the Village Hall Committee. There are minimum pitch sizes and the pitches would need to be marked. The existing goal posts on the field do not correspond with pitch sizes. A risk assessment would need to be supplied along with a copy of the Public Liability insurance. It was agreed that officers from the club would come out and measure up and then get back in touch.

Brown and Mr Hamlyn left the meeting at 8.15pm.

40/07/25. Report from Somerset Councillors – to include request for street lighting at Ham.

A written report from Cllr Wakefield was circulated by email earlier in the month. Cllr Wakefield reported there are 862 displaced persons in her ward compared with the average of 260 for wards across Somerset. Not enough housing has been built recently and people are living differently due to societal changes and requirements.

Beds are being closed in three hospitals in Somerset including the maternity unit at Yeovil Hospital. The NHS are not explaining their case to the public. The NHS is in a state of flux following the announcement of the end of NHS England.

Immigrants cannot renew their visas if they earn less than £25,000 per year and need to have leave to remain, Calculations are now being made for a thirteen-week period as per the Working Time Directive. At present there are enough care workers but if they have to leave there will not be enough.

The Independent Living Centre is moving from Wellington to Taunton Library on 29th July.

Cllr Wakefield reported that she had spoken to Matt Barrow and Amanda Williams, Stakeholder Engagement Officers for Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS).

She was told that Airband would finish installing fibre to the premise broadband in C13 (not this area). The bottom 5% in England for broadband connectivity includes the Southwest. Schemes are too bureaucratic and it puts companies off from getting involved. The voucher scheme has not reopened but Mr Barrow thinks it might. From Somerset Council's point of view poor broadband connectivity is damaging the economy. Some places only have Starlink as an option. Cllr Wakefield will speak to Gideon Amos MP.

A hold has been put on new planning applications and there will be a twelve week period of trying to get through the planning backlog. The Council has been going through the pay grading stage and planning is just about to fall over.

Cllr Wakefield was given details of the request from a resident for street lighting

along the road to Ham and agreed to follow this up.

Cllr Wakefield left the meeting at 8.40pm.

41/07/25. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 24/06/25 as an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chair.

42/07/25. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda (for information only). None.

43/07/25. To continue to discuss broadband issues in the parish. Discussed under item 40/07/25.

44/07/25. Planning:

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

46/25/0020 Erection of food store (Use Class E) with associated works including Parking, access and landscaping on land to the south of the A38 and east of West Buckland Road, Wellington. This application was only received a few hours before the meeting and councillors had not had time to read the documents. The application was deferred to the August meeting. Information about the application will be put on the Council's Facebook page to make residents aware the application has been submitted and they have the opportunity to comment.

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

46/25/0018 Erection of a first floor extension to the side with various internal and External alterations at 22 Dyers Close, West Buckland. Decision: conditional approval.

c) Any other planning matters. None.

45/07/25. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SC. Cllr Ms Drury has been reporting potholes and repairs are being made.

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

c) Chapter 8 training in order to take the SID project further. This was deferred to the next meeting as Cllr Paul was not present and he might be willing to undertake the training.

d) To discuss the repairs to the arm of the fingerpost at Blackmoor. Cllr Paul have agreed to try and carry out the repair. The Council will need to arrange for someone with a Chapter 8 qualification to put the arm back on the fingerpost and there will be a cost. R W Gale Ltd were suggested and there will be a cost. The cost is likely to be within the range where the Council's Financial Regulations say the Clerk has to seek best value.

e) Any other highways matters. Notes from the Local Community Network's Highways Working Group were circulated. No one from the Council is able to attend these meetings at present.

46/07/25. Finance:

a) To agree and authorise any payments. It was resolved to make the following payments: Countrywide - £143.77 Grass cutting contract for the playing field (Payment ref: 2526/25)

Somerset Council - £101.40 Emptying dog bin April – June 2025 (Payment ref: 2526/26)

West Buckland Village Hall Trust - £84.00 room hire (Payment ref: 2526/27)

Mrs J Larcombe – £371.20 Clerks salary for July plus expenses (Payment ref: 2526/28). It was agreed to pay the pay award agreed by The National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services for 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 backdated to 1st April 2025.

HM Revenue & Customs - £58.20 PAYE for July (Payment ref: 2526/29)

Since the last meeting a bank service charge of £6.00 was paid from the account on 30th June. Another payment of £6.00 will be taken on 31st July.

The following payments have been made since the last meeting:

The Community Heartbeat Trust - £171.54 new defibrillator pads (Payment ref: 2526/22)

TLS Security Systems Ltd - £76.03 for the padlock for the playing field security gate (Payment ref: 2526/23)

Western Fabrications Ltd - £1,464.00 for the installation of the new security gate for the playing field (Payment ref: 2526/24).

Transfers were made from the Current Account to the Instant Access account to bring the balance back to £1,000.00. An internal transfer will be made to bring the Current Account balance to £1,000.

b) To note any receipts since the last meeting and the bank accounts balances. Since the last meeting bank interest of £131.16 has been received. The current account balance is £1,039.35 and the Instant Access Account balance is £23,618.18.

c) Bank reconciliation 30.06.25. The reconciliation was circulated.

d) To receive a report on budget v actual for April to June 2025. The report was noted. It included costs of £10,007 incurred following the travellers moving onto the playing field in early April. The cost of additional hours paid to the Clerk needs to be added to that. As a result reserves have been reduced.

47/07/25. Playing Field:

a) Any points to note from the regular inspection. Inspections for the last month have been carried out by Cllr Mrs Moore but she was not present. Cllr Bellamy will now carry out the inspections again.

b) Update on the request for the Parish Council to consider allowing Wellington Football Club youth teams, particularly under 7 to 11, to use the playing field. Covered under item 39/07/25.

c) To minute the installation of a security gate for the playing field and arrangements for access to the key for the padlock. The installation of the security gate has been completed. It was agreed to purchase a keypad to install on the wall of the Village Hall subject to the approval of the Village Hall Committee.

d) Any other playing field matters. None.

48/07/25. Footpaths: any footpath matters. Cllr Silverlight has reported an issue with a stile on Footpath WG14/30 at the junction with WG14/27/27a. A repair was bodged three or four years ago and the tree stump to which the stile was attached to has now rotted.

49/07/25. Update on setting up a regular monthly meeting for older members of the parish. At the June meeting it was agreed It was agreed that Cllr Mrs Moore would lead on arranging a regular monthly slot for people to meet to socialise over a cup

of tea or coffee and a piece of cake. If the right support can be found this could be extended to helping people access services through the internet. Cllr Mrs Moore was not present to give an update. The aim is to get this up and running for September. This will be carried forward to the next meeting.

50/07/25. Update on the campaign to recruit more councillors. The Clerk had produced a poster which will be put on the notice board, Facebook page and website. Information about the risk of what West Buckland would lose if the parish council was lost will be put together and used to make parishioners aware in the hope that volunteers will come forward.

51/07/25. Correspondence. There was no further correspondence.

52/07/25. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion (Not for Decisions). None.

53/07/25. To note the date of the next meeting. The next meeting will be held on 26th August 2025.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed:
Chair

Date: