

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 28th October 2025 at 7.30pm, in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall.

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

In attendance: Somerset Cllr S Wakefield, one member of the public and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe

090/10/25. To receive apologies for absence. Apologies were accepted from Cllr Mrs B Moore.

091/10/25. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. None.

092/10/25. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 30/09/25 as an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. It was noted that under item 85/09/25 Village Agency should have been Village Agent.

093/10/25. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda (for information only). None.

094/10/25. Report from Somerset Councillors. Cllr Wakefield asked if there had been issues with flags being put on buildings etc. One was put on the bridge over the M5 but National Highways soon removed it once they were made aware. Somerset Council removed some but they were put back up again. Some people feel intimidated by them. They will be left until Remembrance is over and then removed. She asked Councillors for their views on Sunday parking. A public consultation on proposals to introduce Sunday charges in Somerset Council car parks has just finished. Bridgwater, Wellington, Taunton and Yeovil do not charge at the moment but other places within the five former District Council areas do. The Sunday charging proposals are the start of a process aimed at harmonising parking charges. Councillors felt the number of parking apps is an issue and it would be better if there was just one.

The slinky bus can be booked but if someone wants to use it for something like attending a hospital appointment, it needs to be booked about a fortnight ahead.

The recycling of thin plastic film is being looked into.

The Government has given money for warm winter hubs which could help people with their heating costs.

Cllr Wakefield will follow up a request made by the Clerk for the potential cost to install street lights at Ham. Streetlights are being converted to LED to save costs. Somerset Council has received Household Support funding from the Government for people in hardship. Some of the funding has been used to provide free school meals in holidays for those who receive them in term time. In the past people who received funding from the Household Support Fund didn't pay Council Tax but this has changed following changes to ESA and Universal Credit. Funding is received annually

Cllr Silverlight told Cllr Wakefield he was concerned that if planning application 46/25/0026 were to be approved then drivers could choose to turn right instead

of left when leaving the facility even though there are 'No right-hand turn' signs at the Foxmoor Business Park exit.

Cllr Wakefield left the meeting.

095/10/25. Democratic Period. The member of the public said she wouldn't support application 46/25/0026. There are facilities at Chelston and charging points at Budgens, West Park.

096/10/25. To continue to discuss broadband issues in the parish. Openreach are installing fibre to the premise broadband in Lee Park to improve their service. Cllr Ms Drury once again raised concerns about the parts of the parish with poor broadband who do not feature in any plans for fibre to the premise broadband. She felt that trying to get something done felt like you were banging your head against a brick wall. The final deadline for the analogue switch-off is January 2027, only fifteen months away. The Clerk was asked to contact Gideon Amos MP to let him know that fibre to the premise broadband is being provided to a small area of the parish and to ask him what about the rest.

097/10/25. Planning:

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

43/25/0088 Application for Approval of Reserved Matters following Outline application 43/23/0056 for the layout, landscaping, scale and appearance of the erection of 161 No. dwellings and associated infrastructure on land north of Taunton Road, Longforth Park, Wellington (Neighbouring parish application). Neighbouring parish application. No comment.

46/25/0026 Proposal: Erection of a food and beverage drive-thru unit with installation of 16 No. EV charging spaces, associated substation, LV switchboard and ancillary works to form drive-thru charging hub, with wayfinding totem, on land adjacent to Foxmoor Business Park, Wellington. Comment: West Buckland Parish Council has concerns about vehicles turning right onto the highway as they exit the facility, the scale and impact and the impact on the Blackdown Hills Designated Dark Skies area. They would also like clarification on the how the additional Biodiversity Net Gain will be managed and it is hoped that it would stay in the local area.

46/25/0027A Display of 1 No. internally illuminated totem sign on land adjacent to Foxmoor Business Park, Wellington. Comment: West Buckland Parish Council recommends refusal because of the impact on the Blackdown Hills Designated Dark Skies area. The Blackdown Hills is officially recognized as the fifth darkest National Landscape in England.

b) To receive decisions from planning applications determined by Somerset Council. 46/25/0024/LEW Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for the existing change of use of annexe into 1 No. dwelling at The Pool House, Corams, Chelston Road, Wellington. Decision: approval.

c) To note the update from Somerset Council Planning Services. Somerset Council's planning service operated a temporary "Prioritising Decisions Period" (PDP) for twelve weeks. This was an exceptional response to a significant and growing backlog of undecided applications. The PDP has now ended. During this time, they reduced the number of on hand applications from around 1,600 to

around 1,300 applications, a reduction of 20%. They focused on making confident, proportionate decisions and streamlining their internal processes. Many of those improvements will now continue as standard practice.

d) Any other planning matters. None.

098/10/29. Highways.

- a) To note any required work to be reported to SC.** Cllr Ms Drury reported the poor repair to the bridge over the M5 and further work has been done. The other side has started to shift. A request will be made for a structural engineer to look at the bridge to see what is happening.
- b) To receive an update on outstanding highways work (Kerb at Dyers Close and drainage in Silver Street,** No update despite the Clerk requesting one.
- c) Correspondence from Gideon Amos MP - Pedestrian & Cycle Access to Foxmoor Business Park Wellington.** The Clerk was cc'd into correspondence from Gideon Amos MP to Cllr Richard Wilkins, Somerset Council Lead Member – Transport & Waste Services. Mr Amos requested a planned solution to pedestrian and cycle access to Foxmoor Business Park from Wellington as part of the administration's commitment to active travel and to support the interests of residents. He had been contacted by a constituent who runs a business at Foxmoor Business Park who is frustrated that people are discouraged from walking both along the Link Road verge and along Haywards Lane (the only alternative) but a new footpath was not constructed during recent works on the link road. Although Haywards Lane is not a Public Right of Way West Buckland Parish Council has paid for it to be kept clear for a number of years. It was agreed to request that Haywards Lane be added to the Definitive Map as a Public Right of Way. Cllr Bellamy will research Local Council Network documents regarding cycle paths and a letter will be written to Cllr Wilkins asking for a cycle route to be extended from Haywards Lane to West Buckland.
- d) Chapter 8 training in order to take the SID project further.** Another date has been provided by the training provider. Cllr Paul will check if he is available.
- e) Update on repairs to the arm of the fingerpost at Blackmoor.** Taunton Model Engineers were thanked for mending the arm. Cllr Silverlight will write to their Chair to thank them.
- f) Update on the cost of street lighting on the road from the A38 to Ham.** No update.
- g) Any other highways matters.** A tree is overhanging the pedestrian pathway/cycle way on the A38 and will force people into the road.

099/10/25. Finance:

- a) To agree and authorise any payments.** It was resolved to make the following payments:
 - Countrywide - £143.77 grass cutting contract for playing field (Payment ref: 2526/41)
 - Mr N Richards - £1,160.00 grass cutting in the village, trimming footpaths and hedge trimming field (Payment ref: 2526/42)
 - Mrs J Larcombe - £331.79 Clerk's salary and expenses field (Payment ref: 2526/43)
 - HM Revenue & Customs - £58.00 PAYE for October field (Payment ref: 2526/44)
 - Royal British Legion - £50.00 donation field (Payment ref: 2526/45)

Cllr S Bellamy - £15.09 glue for rubber tiles at play area (Payment ref: 2526/46) Since the last meeting a bank service charge of £6.00 was paid from the account on 30th September. A bank service charge of £6.00 will be paid on 31st October. Transfers were made from the Current Account to the Instant Access Account. 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 £133.27 has been received. The current account balance is £999.97 and the Instant Access Account balance is £22,635.52.

c) Bank reconciliation 30.09.25. Checked by Cllr Paul.

d) To receive a report on budget v actual for Quarter 2 2025-2026. The report was considered. Councillors noted that general reserves would be less than one year's precept at year end. The cost of removing the travellers and cleaning up the playing field have reduced the general reserves.

100/10/25. Playing Field:

a) Any points to note from the regular inspection. Cllr Bellamy has replaced the bolt on the framework of the basket swing and glued down some of the rubber tiles around the roundabout.

b) To agree the purchase of a 'Police' approved secure keysafe. Cllr Mrs Moore had researched Police approved key safes and had emailed everyone to recommend the Key Safe ark Tamo™ Pro Maximum Security Key Safe. It was agreed to purchase this and to pay for installation. A parishioner has agreed to provide funding for the purchase of the key safe.

It has been suggested to the Village Hall Committee that they might like to replace their key safe and order a more secure one as part of the Parish Council order. They have declined as they are moving to a new booking system. They have given permission for the Parish Council to put the new key safe on the wall of the Village Hall.

c) Update on Wellington Football Club investigating the use of the playing field for a youth team. No update.

d) Any other playing field matters. None.

101/10/25. Footpaths: any footpath matters. The broken and hazardous Stile (Asset 44108) on Footpath WG14/30 is now dangerous. The Clerk will write to Somerset Council Public Rights of Way to ask for it to be removed and replaced with something other than a stile. As this stile is on the boundary between Hill Farm and Higher Ruggin Farm Somerset Council are responsible for maintaining and replacing it.

102/10/25. Update on reconnection of EV Charging Point to wi-fi. The Village Hall Committee will be asked to restore the wi-fi connection to the EV Charge Point. Income is being lost as it cannot be used until the wi-fi connection is restored. Cllr Ms Drury and the Clerk will attend the next Village Hall Committee meeting if possible. If it cannot be connected to the new router there is an option of an antennae and sim card. Once the connection is restored a written agreement between both parties setting out responsibilities needs to be signed.

103/10/25. Update on setting up a regular monthly meeting for older members of the parish and adoption of a Safeguarding Policy. Cllr Mrs Moore was unable to attend the meeting but had circulated the following report to councillors prior to

the meeting.

Progress is being made on arranging the Talking Café, which will be a monthly session for local residents to enjoy tea, a warm and welcoming community space, and the opportunity to access information or support about local services.

The Village Hall can be made available once a month for the Talking Café at no charge to the Parish Council. The Booking Secretary has requested that some potential dates and times are provided so she can check availability. Cllr Mrs Moore will confirm suitable options. Volunteers to assist during the session are being confirmed. Cllr Ms Drury has volunteered.

Cllr Mrs Moore's next step is to contact the village agent to check their availability before confirming proposed dates with the Booking Secretary.

104/10/25. Progress with recruiting more councillors. A member of the public was present to get an experience of a Parish Council meeting as they are being encouraged to consider putting their name forward for co-option. Cllr Ms Drury will again contact another person she thinks would make a good councillor.

105/10/25. Correspondence. Blackdown Hills National Landscape Management Plan. Cllr Silverlight will attend the annual Remembrance Service at the War Memorial to lay a wreath and to read out the names of the parishioners who lost their lives in WW1 and WW2.

106/10/25. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion (Not for Decisions). No urgent business.

107/10/25. To note the date of the next meeting. 25th November 2025.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Signed:
Chair

Date: