

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 30th September 2025 at 7.30pm, in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall.

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

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

72/09/25. To receive apologies for absence. Apologies were accepted from Cllr Ms Drury. Apologies were received from Somerset Cllr S Wakefield.

73/09/25. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. None.

74/09/25. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 26/08/25 as an accurate record of the meeting. With an amendment in item 64/08/25 to change roundabout to basket swing the minutes of the meeting were agreed as an accurate record and duly signed by the Chair.

75/09/25. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda (for information only). No matters arising.

76/09/25. Report from Somerset Councillors. Since the last meeting Junction 26 and the Chelston Link Road have reopened.

Blackdown Medical Centre has merged with Wellington Medical Centre and is now closed on a Friday. Although not legally necessary a review on the impact of merging has been carried out for quality assurance. The pharmacy next to Wellington Medical Centre has been closed for some time. Wellington Town Council have tried to find someone to take it on. There are now only two pharmacies in Wellington which is resulting in long queues. Most people are choosing to go to Boots.

The new no 27 bus service on a Tuesday and Thursday which includes West Buckland continues to thrive. The Welly Hopper which used to run on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday doesn't seem to be running. Cllr Henley will make enquiries and find out why.

Now Somerset is a unitary authority it is trying to align charging for Sunday parking across the former district council areas where some charged and some didn't. Charging will impact on people who have no parking at their home and use Somerset Council car parks for parking when they are not working on a Sunday. Rural counties who are not unitary authorities are being pushed by the Government to become unitary. Cllr Henley has been to Kent to talk about his experience of Somerset changing to a unitary authority.

Somerset Council has improved the security of its Park & Ride sites to prevent travellers from moving onto them illegally. This has resulted in them looking for other sites to move onto. It was reported to Cllr Silverlight that travellers had made another attempt to get onto West Buckland Playing Field last night. Fortunately, they were unsuccessful due to the measures that have been put in place. A break in at Middle Stoford last night has also been reported. Fear is being created in the community by a group of people who are just taking advantage.

Cllr Mrs Moore asked Cllr Henley for information about the plans for traffic calming measures at the Worlds End junction with the A38. He will find out what is

happening.

77/09/25. Democratic Period. A member of the group of residents at Asham Lane who put together a flood prevention scheme and worked with the Parish Council to submit a successful application for funding to Somerset Rivers Authority reported on the completion of the scheme. Photos taking during the work had been circulated to councillors and submitted with the completion report. Alongside the scheme Gwyn Hughes, Somerset Council Assistant Highways Service Manager arranged some other work including clearing the bottom of the lane which was overgrown. Unfortunately, some bollards and a bank were knocked down by a tractor. Mr Hughes is now claiming that the road where the houses are opposite the stream is SC's responsibility. He has looked at the work that has been completed and has praised what has been done but felt it was a shame that more hadn't been done and suggested applying for further funding to extend the dredging. Any such bid would need to be submitted by the Parish Council. Councillors agreed they were happy to support a bid for further funding. The scheme did bring highways to the table and they are now more willing to help.

Cllr Henley and the member of the public left the room.

Cllr Mrs Moore agreed to help to try and recruit more councillors by promoting what the Parish Council did to remove the travellers so quickly and the liaison with highways during the Junction 26/Chelston Link Road scheme.

78/09/25. To report on the completion of the project to prevent flooding at Asham Lane and the submission of the forms to receive the grant funding. The completion of the project was discussed under item 77/09/25. The completion forms were submitted and the grant was received today.

79/09/25. To continue to discuss broadband issues in the parish. No further update. Gideon Amos MP to be asked for an update.

80/09/25. Planning:

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

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. No comment.

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

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

81/09/25. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SC. There are lots of potholes in Hockholler Lane which was used more when Junction 26 and the Chelston Link Road were closed.

The crack on the bridge over the M5 has been repaired but it has left a bump in the road which does have the benefit of slowing down traffic.

The repairs to the road going up the hill were not completed as they contractors appear to have run out of time when they got to Mole End.

- b) To receive an update on outstanding highways work (Kerb at Dyers Close and drainage in Silver Street.** No update. The Clerk to nag Gwyn Hughes for an update.
- c) Chapter 8 training in order to take the SID project further.** Cllr Paul was away on 7th October and couldn't attend that session. The Clerk will find out when there is another session. The SIDs used by the Police did work well and the Clerk will ask if they could be used in West Buckland again.
- d) Update on repairs to the arm of the fingerpost at Blackmoor.** Dave Lacey was thanked for removing the arm from the Fingerpost. The arm has now been delivered to the Taunton Model Engineers who will try to repair it.
- e) To consider jointly funding street lighting on the road from the A38 to Ham.** Although there is no money in the budget at present it was decided to find out what the Parish Council would have to contribute.
- f) Any other highways matters.** In response to a question, it was noted that Somerset Council are responsible for the park and open space in Lee Park. Before Somerset became a unitary authority it was the responsibility of Taunton Deane Borough Council. A reminder is needed.

82/09/25. 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: 2526/35).
Mr N Richards - £60.00 grass cutting in the village (Payment ref: 2526/36)
Mrs J Larcombe - £347.78 Clerk's salary and expenses for September (Payment ref: 2526/37)
HM Revenue & Customs - £50.20 PAYE for September (Payment ref: 2526/38)
Since the last meeting a bank service charge of £6.00 was paid from the account on 31st August and 30th September.
The following payment has been made since the last meeting: Mr L Aplin – £4,387.20 flood prevention works at Asham Lane (Payment ref: 2526/34)
Transfers were made from the Instant Access account to the Current 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 agree to pay a grant of £100 to Citizens Advice.** Agreed (Payment ref: 2526/39). The Council will consider increasing this for 2026-27.
- c) To agree to pay the Churchyard Grant.** It was agreed to pay West Buckland PCC a grant of £1,300, the amount in the budget (Payment ref: 2526/40). They will be asked to complete a grant application form for a grant for 2026-27.
- d) To consider a request for a donation of £30 to Somerset Art Works.** It was decided to ask them to complete a grant application form.
- e) To note any receipts since the last meeting and the bank accounts balances.** Since the last meeting a grant of £3,100.00 has been received from Somerset Council for the flood prevention work at Asham Lane.
The current account balance is £4,100.00 and the Instant Access Account balance is £20,003.97.
- f) Bank reconciliation 31.08.25.** The bank reconciliation was checked and signed by Cllr Paul.

83/09/25. Playing Field:

- a) Any points to note from the regular inspection.** The monthly inspection report has been emailed to the Clerk by Cllr Bellamy. The frame of the basket seat

swing still needs two new screws. An attempt to repair it failed and a pilot hole needs to be drilled. Cllr Bellamy will try again next week. The risk is low. The rubber matting around roundabout has a small trip hazard. Cllr Bellamy will try to glue the tiles down again. The goal post arms are still to be repaired.

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

c) Any other playing field matters. It was agreed to accept a quote from Mr Richards to cut the top of the play area hedge. His quote to quote the inside hedge has already been accepted. The Clerk mistakenly believed the hedge trimmer could cut the top of the hedge when the playing field hedge was cut. Since the new play equipment was installed there isn't room for the tractor to fit between the hedge and the equipment.

The two-day dog event held on the playing field was well organised.

Cllr Mrs Moore questioned the security of the new keypad for the key to the padlock on the new playing field gate. She will find out details of key safes that are approved to be safe by the Police. In the mean time the key will be moved to a more secure location. Cllr Mrs Moore will look into the options available.

84/09/25. Footpaths: any footpath matters. Following the Junction 26/Chelston Link Road scheme the entrance/exit to Haywards Lane has received a section of tarmac which has improved it. Although West Buckland Parish Council pays for the vegetation on this path to be cut back annually it is not a recognised Public Right of Way.

The issue with the stile on Footpath WG14/30 at the junction with WG14/27 27a has been assigned to Clare Hoskins. Cllr Silverlight noted the number of red dots denoting reported issues on the online map on SC's Public Rights of Way website page. These include approximately nineteen for footpaths in West Buckland. Walking is good for health and wellbeing and it is concerning that SC is not keeping up the maintenance on its footpaths.

The Parish Council will advertise for a Public Paths Liaison Officer to replace Mr Mitton.

85/09/25. Update on setting up a regular monthly meeting for older members of the parish. Cllr Mrs Moore reported on her research into how a 'Talking Café' could work and how this service could be offered in West Buckland

The Village Agency currently attend 'Talking Cafés' in Wellington, Bishops Lydeard, Galmington and Taunton and they have advised Cllr Mrs Moore that a member of staff could attend once a month at a Talking Café in West Buckland, providing the Parish Council host it. They are able to provide information and signposting and possibly a volunteer from SPARK a charity which identifies volunteers who can offer IT support. Cllr Mrs Moore will visit one of the Talking Café to get a better understanding of how they run. The Parish Council would need to secure the use of the main hall at West Buckland Village Hall for two hours once a month and have at least two volunteers each session to organise tea/coffee and biscuits. However, she felt it would need a minimum of at least four volunteers on the team to ensure it could be consistently provided at the same time each month. The Council agreed to support these plans.

Cllr Bellamy suggested that someone might need to attend a course on serving hot drinks. The Clerk felt that a risk assessment would be adequate.

Cllr Mrs Moore will contact the Chair of the Village Hall Committee about using the Village for these monthly events and to see if any of their members are willing to

volunteer.

86/09/25. Progress with recruiting more councillors. Discussed under item 77/09/25.

87/09/25. Correspondence. No further correspondence.

88/09/25. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion (Not for Decisions). Due to the Village Hall wi-fi router being moved and the cable to the EV Charging Point being disconnected it is no longer connected to wi-fi and is not working. The charging point needs to be reconnected to the wi-fi before it will work again. Meanwhile a service is no longer being provided and income is being lost. The Clerk will write to the Village Hall committee and ask for the charging point to be reconnected to the wi-fi.

89/09/25. To note the date of the next meeting. 28th October 2025.

The meeting closed at 9.43pm.

Signed:
Chair

Date: