

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 6th January 2026 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: PCSO Bramley, two members of the public and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe

- 127/01/26. To receive apologies for absence.** Apologies were accepted from Cllr Ms Drury. Apologies were received from Cllr S Wakefield and Mrs N Francis-Bellamy.
- 128/01/26. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda.** Cllr Bellamy declared a personal interest in item 136/01/26 a) as he knows the applicant for application 46/25/0028/CQ.
- 129/01/26. Co-option of a Councillor.** It was resolved to co-opt Mrs Francis-Bellamy onto the Parish Council. Proposed by Cllr Mrs Moore and seconded by Cllr Paul.
- 130/01/26. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 25/11/25 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.
- 131/01/26. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda (for information only).** No matters arising.
- 132/01/26. Reports**
- a) Somerset Councillors.** Cllr Wakefield will be sending a written report tomorrow, 7th January.
- b) Police Report.** PCSO Bramley reported that not a lot had been going on apart from some overnight shed thefts. People need to be aware this is happening. The thieves are looking for copper wire, tools or anything they can sell. As a security measure PCSO Bramley suggested installing alarms that make a lot of noise, lights that light everything up and locks with alarms, which he felt were better than CCTV. Paul Prettejohn Garden Machinery has been burgled a number of times and they now have excellent security. PCSO Bramley was asked about digital marking systems but he wasn't aware of any officers that had the means to read these. He suggested marking with paint.
- 133/01/26. Democratic Period.** Two members of the Ham Stream Flood Group reported on the outcomes of flood relief work which had been completed in late summer 2025. The first waterway is flowing well and has been holding the water well but after very heavy rain the road still flooded. Thanks to the work that had been carried out it did go down significantly quicker. Today they had a meeting with Gwyn Hughes, (Somerset Council Assistant Highway Service Manager), Luke Aplin (Five Farmers) and the tenant's manager to discuss extending the project. This means submitting another full application to Somerset Rivers Authority for funding. The group were of the understanding that Highways had cleared both culverts but they found out today that Highways had been unable to clear one because they didn't have the equipment. Five Farmers could clear the culvert and it would have an impact on the second waterway. The second phase of the

project has four priorities and each priority has been costed. The total cost of the project would be £12,300 excluding VAT.

134/01/26. To discuss a request to support a second application for funding for flood relief work at Ham. Councillors agreed to support a second application and the Clerk will work with members of the group to complete the paperwork which has to be submitted in the Parish Council's name. Any financial contribution from the Parish Council will be part of the budget discussion.

135/01/26. To continue to discuss broadband issues in the parish. No progress.

136/01/26. Planning:

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

Notification only: 46/25/0028/CQ Change of Use of agricultural Barns (Barn 1 and Barn 2) to 2 dwellinghouses (Class C3) and associated Operational Development pursuant to Class Q of the Town and Country Planning Act General Permitted Development Order, 2015 (as amended) Catsbear Farm, Ruggin Road, West Buckland.

Neighbouring parish: 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 178 No. dwellings and associated infrastructure on land north of Taunton Road, Longforth Park, Wellington. Comment: Councillors were concerned that the access onto the highway is very close to the roundabout. This is already an issue for traffic leaving Lidl and the increased traffic from this development will exasperate the problem, particularly if the station is

added.

b) To receive decisions from planning applications determined by Somerset Council. No decisions when the agenda was published.

c) Any other planning matters. An alleged planning breach was omitted from the minutes of the meeting held on November 25th 2025. A new access has been created off Gerbestone Lane (What3Words location: massive.spirits.sparkles) into the poultry unit at Gerbestone Manor Farm. No evidence of the submission of a planning application has been received. This will be reported to planning enforcement.

137/01/26. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SC. Hockholler Lane has a lot of potholes.

b) To note the response on outstanding highways work (Kerb at Dyers Close and drainage in Silver Street. Gwyn Hughes has now replied to the Clerk and has offered some dates to meet with councillors. There was limited availability on the suggested dates and he will be asked for some other dates.

c) Update on plans for SIDs. The Clerk has seen some information from the Crewkerne and Ilminster LCN working group which said that after consultation with the traffic manager about volunteer training it was agreed that if sufficient risk assessment was carried out by the Parish Council prior to the work commencing and the correct insurance was in place then there was no reason not to undertake the work in relation to SIDs. This would be with the understanding that the Parish Council would accept the liability in the event of a claim being made. The Clerk has emailed Kate Brown, Traffic Engineer SC, to

confirm this is correct.

d) Any other highways matters. None.

138/01/26. To inform Councillors regarding the new Assertion 10 on the 2025-26 Annual Governance Statement and to discuss the requirement for the Parish Council to have either a .org.uk or .gov.uk email address for the Clerk and domain name for the website. The Clerk briefed councillors about the new Assertion 10 which will require evidence of proper governance for digital presence, IT, and personal data. Websites will need to meet stricter accessibility guidelines and the Parish Council will need an email address with either a .org.uk or .gov.uk domain name. It was agreed to use a .org.uk domain name. This will require further work by the Clerk.

139/01/26. 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	2526/58
Jill Larcombe	£331.79	Clerk's salary & expenses for December	2526/59
HM Revenue & Customs	£58.00	PAYE for December	2526/60

Since the last meeting the following payments were made:

F J Orchard & Son - £518.40 hedge cutting playing field etc 2024-25 & 2025-26 (Payment ref: 2526/54)

Mrs J Larcombe - £129.95 – refund for Keysafe (payment ref; 2526/55)

Ben Dearsley - £456.00 (Payment ref: 2526/56)

Nigel the Locksmith £40.00 (Payment ref:2526/57)

Since the last meeting a bank service charge of £6.00 was paid from the account on 30th November and 31th December

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 £1,0

b) To note any receipts since the last meeting and the bank accounts

balances. Since the last meeting bank interest of £110.30 has been received.

Mr & Mrs C Winter gave a donation of £143.00 towards the keysafe and installation and £40 towards hedge trimming

The current account balance is £960.00 and the Instant Access Account balance is £18,129.57.

c) Bank reconciliations for 30.11.25 and 31.12.25. Deferred due to a misunderstanding about whether a payment was due to Cllr Silverlight for padlocks and a chain. It was clarified that there was no payment due and it was discussed to confirm that the chain and padlocks purchased were replacements for ones supplied by Cllr Silverlight and used in the play area to prevent a swing being used. These were lost when the swings were replaced.

d) To discuss the draft budget for 2026-27. Councillors received a budget v actual comparison for the period April to December 2025 and the predicted outcome for 2025-26 alongside the first draft of a budget for 2026-27. The playing field budget line was increased to cover cutting down any trees on the playing field hedge that need removing. With the Clerk's workload increasing additional hours have been requested and will be considered. Any contribution to the flood relief work at Ham will need to be included. The budget will be finalised at the next meeting on 27th January.

140/01/26. Update on plans for the first monthly meeting for older members of the parish on 28th January and adoption of a Safeguarding Policy. It was agreed to move this item forward on the agenda as Cllr Mrs Moore needed to leave the meeting very soon. She confirmed that the first Talking Café will be taking place on 28th January. Attendance is not limited to older people. Cllr Ms Drury has volunteered to help that afternoon. The Village Agent will be attending to provide support and advice. She is arranging for some leaflets to be printed. They will be coming this week and will be used to advertise the event. A copy will be sent to Cllr Silverlight. The Parish Council will cover the cost of light refreshments. A draft Safeguarding Policy needs to be produced and agreed.

141/01/26. Playing Field:

a) Any points to note from the regular inspection. None.

b) To minute the installation of the ‘Police’ approved secure key safe. The key safe has been purchased and installed.

c) Any other playing field matters. The condition of trees on the playing field hedges will be assessed and quotes will be obtained to remove any trees that are a risk.

142/01/26. Footpaths:

a) To note the response received following the complaint about not replying to emails about an unsafe stile. The Clerk has received a reply from Peter Hopley, Public Rights of Way Service Manager. He apologised for the lack of a response to the email from the Clerk, which Cllr Wakefield had brought to his attention, but said it is simply not possible to keep on top of all email traffic that he receives and the email from the Clerk was one that had slipped through the net hence why for network defects and issues they encourage reporting through the Explore Somerset website, which he noted had already been done for the issue referred to. He said the responsibility for the stile goes with whoever is responsible for the ownership boundary and it would be the landowner that would ultimately be liable were an accident to occur. They have in excess of 4000 issues only 6 Area Wardens to try and assess and resolve/close them. It is a ‘fire-fighting’ situation, hence why they are encouraging Parish Councils to use their statutory powers to help maintain Rights of Way. They will get to the stile as soon as they can, but he was unable to advise quite when that will be due to the sheer volume of issues they are managing at present.

142/01/26. Update on reconnection of EV Charging Point to wi-fi. The Clerk has been told that the Treasurer of the Village Hall Committee had contacted Hydra EVC to order a sim but it hadn’t arrived. The Clerk will contact Hydra EVC to find out if one had been sent. An antenna will also be required.

143/01/26. Correspondence. No further correspondence.

144/01/26. Any urgent business at the Chairman’s discretion (Not for Decisions). No urgent business.

145/01/26. To note the date of the next meeting. 27th January 2026.

Signed:
Chair

Date:

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.